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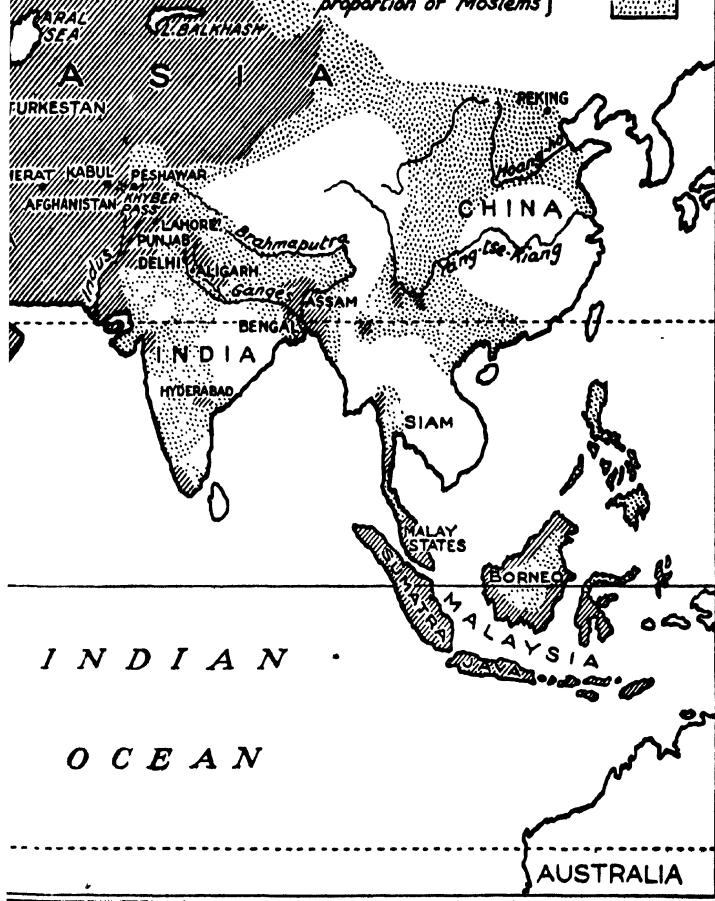


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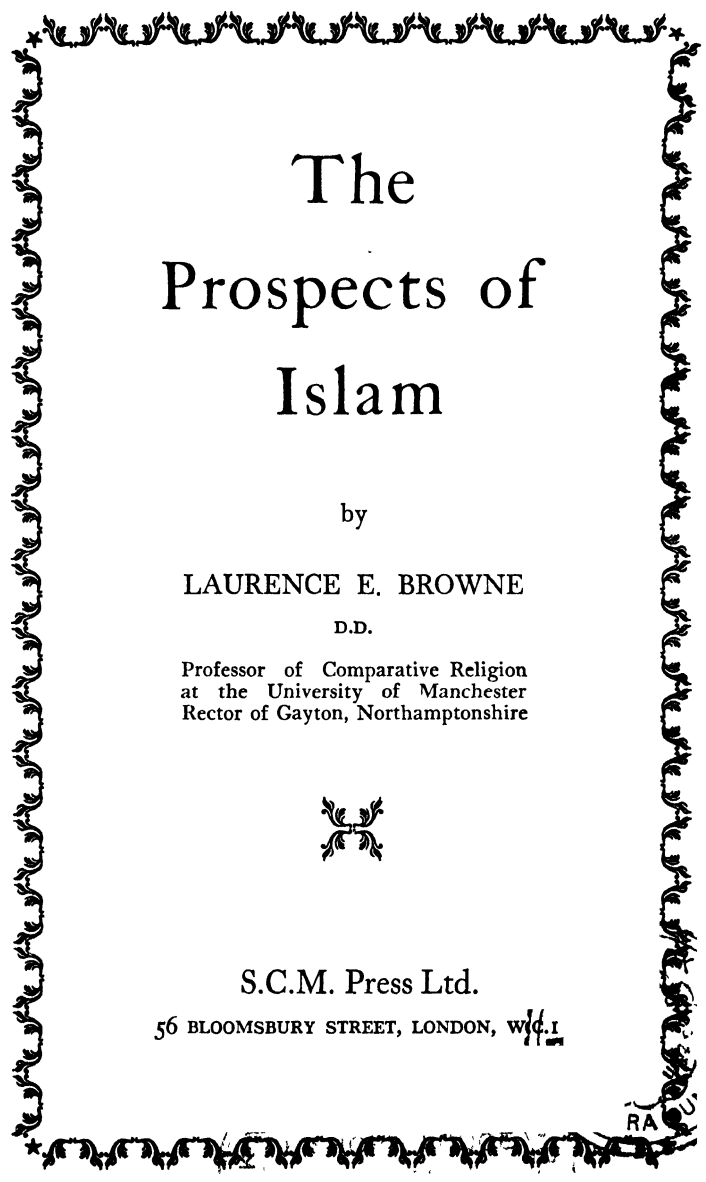
THE MOSLEM WORLD

Countries where Islam prevails.

*Countries with a minor
proportion of Moslems*



THE PROSPECTS OF ISLAM



The Prospects of Islam

by

LAURENCE E. BROWNE

D.D.

Professor of Comparative Religion
at the University of Manchester
Rector of Gayton, Northamptonshire



S.C.M. Press Ltd.

56 BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON, W.C.1

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THIS BOOK IS PRODUCED IN
COMPLETE CONFORMITY WITH THE
AUTHORIZED ECONOMY STANDARDS

First published March 1944

*Distributed in Canada by our exclusive agents
The Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd.
70 Bond Street, Toronto*

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
NORTHUMBERLAND PRESS LIMITED
GATESHEAD ON TYNE

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The substance of the first six chapters
was delivered as a series of four lectures
at the University College of North Wales,
Bangor, in February 1943



INTRODUCTION

THERE are probably few intelligent people who have not some opinions about the future of the Jews, and few who do not realize that difficult problems are involved in the fact that the Jews live in many lands, with no nationality of their own; that though they make no converts they hold fast to their religion.

It is perhaps strange that the same number of intelligent people are not concerned with the problems of Islam. Muslims too are scattered in many lands, the great majority under non-Muslim Governments. Though there are some Muslim states, and though there is a strong sense of solidarity between all Muslims, there is no such thing as Muslim nationality. Like the Jews they hold fast to their religion. Unlike them they are exceedingly zealous to win converts to Islam.

The Jewish problem has forced itself upon our minds by the distribution of the Jews in large numbers in all the great cities of the world. The peculiarities of Jewish culture, both good and bad, and their success in trading and finance on a large or on a small scale, have given occasion to unscrupulous Governments seeking a scape-goat for their troubles. A similar thing happened with the Armenians under the Ottoman Empire. The Armenian massacres cried aloud to the heart of humanity, and the Jewish massacres cry out still. Their persecutors have accused them of aggression; but every unbiased observer knows perfectly well that the Armenian and the Jew may be irritating and cunningly successful, but that the only sort of aggression they show is that of the worm that turns and bites the man who persistently treads on it.

The Muslim problem is different. Muslims have in

the past been definitely aggressive. Europe in days gone by had reason to fear Muslim invasion. As early as A.D. 714 the Muslims laid siege to Constantinople for two years. Fortunately the Greeks of those days had a powerful invention called Greek fire, and this advantage, added to hunger, frost and pestilence, brought the attack to nought. Sixteen years later France was in danger from Muslim invasion through Spain, but was delivered by the victory of Charles Martel at the battle of Tours. Those two victories of the eighth century delivered Europe from Muslim invasion. Spain remained Muslim for a long time, but aggressive invasion of Europe did not begin again till the fifteenth century when the Muslim Turks conquered Constantinople and spread throughout the Balkan Peninsula.

In our own times Muslim aggression has been religious rather than political, and we have seen a contest in Central Africa and in the Netherlands East Indies between Christian missionaries and Muslim traders for the conversion of Animists to their respective faiths.

Thus the main difference between the Jewish and the Muslim problems is that the Muslims have never been a down-trodden minority. There was, of course, a time in the eleventh and twelfth centuries when Europeans were the aggressors against the Muslims; but fortunately for the honour of the cross, which the aggressors falsely took as their banner, that aggression came to nothing, and the Muslims of Palestine were not subjugated. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries also European powers waged aggressive wars against Muslim Governments, adding Muslim territories to their dominions. The results have no doubt been in some respects unpleasant for the populations concerned, but they have not raised the problems of persecuted minorities or the Ghetto. It is therefore particularly interesting to observe that in the two places where there are serious Muslim problems to-day, namely Palestine and India, the Muslims appear to be afraid of becoming an oppressed

minority, though to outside observers they do not appear to be as yet anywhere near such a position.

The foregoing facts will explain the purpose of this book, which is to investigate the forces material and spiritual which are surging or lying latent in present-day Islam, and to consider whether those forces are likely to work for the betterment of mankind, or whether they are a menace to be resisted.

It will be recalled that in times past our flesh has been made to creep by those who warned us of the Jewish peril, the Yellow peril, or the Bolshevik peril. Things have not turned out as scaremongers threatened. We have found the Jews our friends, and their persecutors our bitterest foes, the Bolsheviks our allies, and of the Yellow races the greater one the champion of democracy against the rapacious aggression of the other. So prophecy is a dangerous pursuit. A cynic might say that the wise prophet should protect himself by putting his prophecies so far ahead that his book will be out of print long before he is proved to be wrong.

There is, however, more to be said than that. Modern Old Testament study has shown that foretelling is not the chief function of a prophet. It is true that sometimes he casts his message in the form of predictions, but the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of his predictions is not the test of his genuineness as a prophet. For instance, Jonah in the story was a true prophet in predicting the destruction of Nineveh, although Nineveh was not destroyed. He was speaking the truth because he was declaring the natural and appropriate result of their manner of life. Actually they repented, and so the threatened destruction was averted. The same may perhaps be said of those who in the past warned us of various coloured "perils" which have not eventuated. The task of the prophet then is to weigh the moral values that appear in word and action, and to declare the result which will follow if those values remain unchanged.

When it was proposed that a book should be written on Islam as a force in the world to-day, it soon appeared that the task involved prophecy. It is not possible to look at a nation or the followers of a religion and label them with any significant ticket unless they are already dead. Such treatment is suitable for fossils. A living nation, or a living religion, is not static but dynamic. Its force can only be measured in action. The state of affairs to-day is the result of the forces of yesterday, and the forces working to-day are scarcely recognizable apart from the effects which they will produce to-morrow.

Therefore any reader who expects to be entertained by blood-curdling pictures of the world when Islamic hordes get loose in it, or on the other hand by a Utopia to be entered upon when Islam, the religion of peace, holds sway, had better close this book and engage in his day-dreams by himself. The serious student will follow the more laborious path of learning what this Islam is, what Muslims have done, what regular trends and tendencies can be traced in their long history, in what direction the tendencies now seem to point, and to what extent the Muslims of the present day appear to be influenced by ideas external to their own system.

The distribution of Muslims over the world to-day is very different from that of the Jews. The Jews are wanderers over the face of the earth, and seek places where they can peacefully carry on their business, usually preferring the great cities. The Muslims are not individual wanderers like the Jews. The spread of Islam has been connected with conquests and migrations, with the result that, though thirteen centuries have passed since the days of Muhammad, Arabia is still the focus from which radiate out the lines of Muslim population rather like a splash of ink on a sheet of paper extending its tentacles irregularly in all directions. From Arabia westwards a line runs through Egypt along the whole north coast of Africa. From Egypt there is a

southwards branch into the Sudan, and, skirting Christian Ethiopia, in widening ramifications into Africa, East, Central and West. Starting again from Arabia and going northwards, a line goes through Palestine and Syria across Asia Minor and the Caucasus into Southern Russia; while from Asia Minor a branch turns westwards across the Bosphorus into the Balkans as far as Albania. Returning to Arabia, and following a north-easterly course, we trace a line through Iraq and Persia¹ up into Turkestan in Central Asia, and beyond into the north-western Chinese provinces of Kan-su and Shen-si. Finally from Arabia eastwards through Persia a line passes through Afghanistan and Baluchistan into the North-West Frontier Province of India, the Panjab, the United Provinces and Bengal (with some less marked branches southwards into South India and Ceylon), then turning south-east across to the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra and Java, and finally ending up in the Sulu Archipelago of the Philippines.

The contrast with the Jews must next be seen in their racial origins. Although the Jews have not kept their blood as pure as is commonly supposed, one can say, generally speaking, that neither proselytism nor intermarriage have contributed much to the extension of Judaism, but that all over the world the Jews are predominantly of Jewish parentage. Exceptions no doubt could be found, such as the Black Jews of Cochin in South India, who are partly the descendants of converts, and partly the descendants of Jewish men and their slave wives.

The Muslims on the other hand are not in the main of Arab parentage. It is true that Arabs from the Hadramaut visit Java and intermarry with the Javanese, true that a certain amount of Arab blood must have trickled through into India via Persia, and perhaps true that many of the Muslims of Yang-chow can be distinguished from the ordinary Chinese by the Semitic cast

¹ More correctly known as Iran.

of their countenance. But on the whole the Muslims of North India are as "Aryan" as the Hindus, the Muslims of China are Chinese, of Malaya and Java are Malay, Javanese, Soendanese, and so on. This important fact is partly obscured by the common liturgical use of the Arabic language. In every land (except Turkey) Muslims pray their set prayers in Arabic, just as Roman Catholics hear the Mass in Latin. But Arabic is not their language unless they live in the Near or Middle East, and the meaning of the words used is frequently unknown. Another thing that helps to obscure the non-Arab origin of Muslim populations is the habit that has grown up of referring to the Muslims of Palestine as Arabs. Living so near to Arabia they have, of course, some Arab blood, and their language is, of course, Arabic, but their main ancestry is exactly the same as that of the Palestinian Christians, namely the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites and Hebrews whom we meet in the Old Testament.

It is this variety of racial origin of the Muslims which gives rise to the claim of Islam to be a universal religion, a claim we shall have to consider later from various points of view. The explanation of the racial diversity in Islam is simple. Islam began with great Arab conquests. The vast land of Arabia had become so dry and inhospitable that it was full to bursting point. The Arabs under the first Caliphs (or Khalifas, i.e. Successors of Muhammad) swarmed out in the seventh century A.D. into the lands they conquered. But they were nothing like numerous enough to conquer and hold all the lands. Wherever they went they gathered more soldiers to their armies like a rolling snowball. The Islamic brotherhood which they proclaimed was a real thing, and a new experience among Eastern nations. It is doubtful whether Christian Syrians ever felt the same sense of brotherhood with Christian Persians as Muslim Syrians did with Muslim Persians; for the political conditions of age-long hostility between Rome and Persia

had deeply affected the Christians and given rise to their bitter ecclesiastical opposition. On the basis of submission to Allah (which is what the word Islam means) the non-Arabs were enlisted in the Muslim forces and promised a share in all the booty of this world's victories, and in the even more luxurious delights of paradise to come. In this way the army was continually replenished and able to pursue further enterprises. It is sometimes said that the Muslim advance would have been checked in France by exhaustion of the army even if they had not been defeated by Charles Martel. That is only true in the sense that Christianity in Europe was sufficiently strong not to be attracted by the offer of the New Muslim Order, so that for the first time the invaders had no appreciable numbers of the invaded peoples to swell their invading army.

The brotherhood of Islam, which thus played an important part in the early conquests, is one of the most permanent things in Islam. It was created by Muhammad himself. In his time the only recognized bond between man and man was the loyalty to one's own tribe, and Muhammad realized that it was this tribal loyalty that was the bane of Arabia, being the cause of the continual tribal feuds and of the resultant inability of the Arabs to act together as a nation. When the first Muslims had fled from Mecca, and found asylum in Medina, in order to create unity between the Muslims of the two cities, Muhammad united in a tie of solemn brotherhood a number of pairs of men, one of whom was a citizen of Medina, and the other a refugee from Mecca. There was no precedent for such a thing in Arabia. The nearest to it was a custom, common among the ancient Hebrews as well as amongst the Arabs, by which a sojourner (Arabic *jār*, Hebrew *gēr*) belonging to one tribe was allowed to attach himself to the tribe amongst whom he dwelt. But in that case the new loyalty was still to a tribe. Muhammad's clear-sighted policy was to make a brotherhood which should supersede all other

loyalties. The particular experiment of personal ties at Medina was soon abandoned, no doubt because Muhammad was working towards the wider brotherhood of all Muslims. This at any rate was recognized as Muhammad's intention, for immediately after his death there grew up the policy of allowing men of any race to profess themselves Muslims, and then to enjoy the status of Arab Muslims, and all their privileges.

As one can well imagine, this policy met with a certain amount of opposition. So long as men were urgently needed to fill the ranks of the army, the Arabs were well content to grant them the privileges; but when things had settled down, and there was no more fighting to be done, there was some reluctance to accept converts, who would share the privileges of the Muslims and no longer pay the taxes imposed on subject peoples. Incidentally these well-established facts dispose of the idea so widely fostered in Christian writings that the Muslims, wherever they went, forced people to accept Islam at the point of the sword. Some of the "Traditions", i.e. the books called Hadith which purport to hand down the stories of Muhammad's words and acts, reflect the controversy, but reflect it as a controversy won by the foreigner. By the time the Hadith was completed, the pride of place was claimed by the Persian rather than by the Arab. One of the Traditions says, "Despise not a Persian, for no one despises a Persian without God taking vengeance on him in this world and in the world to come."

Now this Islamic brotherhood, realized under the difficult conditions of conquest, has never been lost. Sectarianism has been unable to destroy it. True, there was one early sect, the Kharijites, which called all other Muslims infidels; but that bad precedent has not been followed. Though Sunnis and Shi'ites (the two principal sects) will not pray together, they would not deny the name of Muslim to one another. The important thing is that Muslims of different countries, of different educational standards and social positions, will meet and treat

each other as equals. A Muslim in distress could be certain of board and lodging from the hands of Muslims in any part of the world where he might be. That surely is a very great achievement of Islam, and Muslims may be pardoned if they aver that Islam points the way to world peace and to a kind of league of nations. In fact, of late years they have explained "Islam" and "Muslim" as meaning "the religion of peace" and "a man devoted to peace" by deriving them from the Arabic root meaning peace. The true derivation was from a different root of the same three letters SLM meaning "submission", for Islam was originally the religion of subjection to Allah, and a Muslim was one who so subjected himself. Though the modern derivation is historically unsound, it is a better one, and we should be ungracious to cavil at it. We ourselves benefit from the error of grammar of the man who mistook *Biblia* for a feminine singular instead of a neuter plural, thus changing a collection of books into the Book.

NOTE

The following short statement about Islam is intended for readers who are making their first acquaintance with the subject. Islam is the religion founded by Muhammad (also spelt in various less correct ways) in A.D. 621 in Arabia. The followers of the religion are called Muslims (also spelt Moslems). Europeans often call the religion Muhammadanism and its followers Muhammadans, but they themselves object to these names. In India they often call themselves Musalmans, a corruption of Muslim. The sacred book of Islam is called the Koran (more correctly Qur'an). It was uttered at various times by Muhammad, and either memorized or written down by his followers. After his death the scattered material was collected and put together in a somewhat haphazard way, the arrangement being neither chronological nor according to subject matter. The chapters of the book are called Surahs. Except in Turkey, the Koran is always read and recited in Arabic, though in many countries printed editions with the

Arabic text, and a vernacular translation between the lines, are available.

The one essential thing for every Muslim to believe is that there is one God and one only, and that Muhammad was the last and greatest of the prophets sent to teach men about God. Earlier prophets include Jesus and a number of Old Testament characters. The duties incumbent on all Muslims are (1) to perform five times a day the set prayers, which are of the nature of adoration of God, and are chiefly made up of quotations from the Koran; (2) during one month in the year to fast completely from dawn to sunset; (3) to pay certain legal alms; and (4) once in a man's lifetime to go to Mecca in Arabia and perform certain ceremonies there. The two most dreadful crimes are to believe in more than one God (and Christians are supposed by Muslims to come under this condemnation), and to worship idols. Women have the same spiritual privileges as men, but some of the duties are not obligatory on them. Islam has been seriously criticized by Christians on account of the status of women in matters of marriage and divorce, and their subjection to the law of *pardah*, i.e. seclusion from the company or sight of men except the nearest relatives. Muslims believe in heaven and hell, and both are described in the crudest way in the Koran.

Throughout the most important days of their history all Muslims lived under Muslim rule, the head of the state being called the Caliph. Islam was the name both of the religion and of the body politic; and even nowadays, when for instance one speaks of the power of Islam, it may mean the power of the religion, or the political power of a Muslim state or states.

The greater number of Muslims are called Sunnis, which means that they follow the traditional practices of the Prophet Muhammad. There is also a large body called the Shi'a (i.e. Sect), individual members of which are generally called Shi'ites. The Shi'a is the religion of Persia, and of a considerable number of Muslims in Iraq, and smaller numbers elsewhere. They do not recognize any of the long line of Sunni Caliphs, except the fourth one, Ali, the son-in-law of Muhammad, and to him they pay special honour. They have books of Traditions different from those of the Sunnis. There are and have been smaller sects of varying import-

ance; and in one or two cases, like the Druzes and the Baha'is, they have departed so far from Islam as to be new religions. Mystics or Sufis have existed from early times. They are found in all parts of Islam, and do not form a sect of their own. They are organized amongst themselves into a number of Orders, and a man is not reckoned as a Sufi unless he has been duly admitted as a member of one of the Orders. Every Sunni Muslim follows one of four legal schools, which have slight differences in such matters as the laws of inheritance. These legal schools are not religious sects.

Muslims can pray in any clean place, and frequently carry a special mat on which to stand and to prostrate themselves. Prayer must be made facing Mecca, and must be preceded by correctly performed ablutions. On Fridays and festivals the men should pray in the mosque; but although such prayers are said simultaneously, even by as many as 50,000 men, they are the same as individual prayers. There is, therefore, nothing quite like Jewish or Christian congregational worship. The so-called Friday sermon is usually more a political oration than an exhortation to good works. There are no priests or clergy in Islam, although a good deal of power is held by the maulvies or teachers. Any Muslim can lead the prayers in the mosque. Friday is not a day of rest, except in some places where it has been adopted in imitation of the Christian Sunday.

The Arabic language has a number of sounds not found in European languages. The sign ' which is found in many words, such as Shi'a, represents a sound made by a vibration of the vocal chords slower than in singing one's lowest note. Most Europeans simply omit the sound in pronunciation of such words. The Muslims reckon their years from A.D. 621, the year when Muhammad fled from Mecca to Medina, and such dates in European books are distinguished as A.H., that is, Anno Hijrae, the year of the *hijra* or flight. The Muslim year is about eleven days short of the solar year, and consequently the date A.D. cannot be got by simply adding 621 to the date A.H. The year 1363 A.H. will begin on December 29th, 1943, if the new moon is seen the previous evening by two credible witnesses.

II

THE CALIPH AND HIS POWERS

THERE has been, through a large part of Muslim history, an attempt to give expression to the brotherhood of Islam as a political unity. One can imagine many politicians or public men of other nations being quite unmoved on being told of Islamic brotherhood. One can imagine one of them saying, "It's very nice their being so friendly with one another, and it really doesn't interest me very much if they restrict their charity to Muslims and feel no duty to extend it to the Hindu, Jew or Christian." But if these same politicians or public men heard that all the Muslims of the world proposed to form a single political unit, they would immediately prick up their ears and take notice. For after all it would not do much harm to the rest of mankind if 200,000,000 Muslims were invariably kind to one another; but if they should suddenly become one political unit, acting together, they might menace the security of the world. For this reason it is necessary for us to study the political history of Islam in the past, in so far as it tended to the establishment of a single Muslim state, and the political theory of that state.

At the outset we may say that political theory outran historical fact, and there is a close parallel with the theory and the history of the Christian Church. Large numbers of Christians have believed that the Christian faith was that which was believed by all Christians everywhere at all times, though obviously there has been no such consensus of opinion, and to this day multitudes confess their faith in one holy catholic and apostolic Church, although the visible Church may be charged with being neither one, nor holy, nor catholic, nor apostolic. The Christian who subscribes to this article

of the creed is, of course, expressing his belief in an ideal which he hopes to see realized. Similarly in dealing with Islam, we must not be satisfied with following the historical course of events: we must also listen to the theorists who propound what the ideal Muslim state should be. The conflict between fact and theory was well exemplified by a Conference of Muslims from all over the world, which met at Cairo in 1926, to decide what should be done after Turkey had expelled the Caliph and abolished his office, the Caliphate. The Conference, after hearing proposals of different kinds, passed a resolution which spoke of the Caliphate as "the soul and the manifestation of Islam", and agreed to work for the establishment of the Caliphate, but excused themselves from doing so then and there on the grounds that the Conference was not sufficiently representative of all Muslim peoples. In effect the Conference agreed that there should be a Caliph, but did not think that the time was opportune for appointing one. That would seem to be a very important decision, for it showed that the Muslim leaders were not satisfied with the present state of the Muslim world, and felt an imperative need for change.

Before looking forward, as we shall have to do later, to see what changes in the present structure of Islam are possible or probable, we must look back in some detail to the past.

When Muhammad died, with Islam still confined to Arabia, and with many of the Arab tribes very unwilling subjects of Allah, steps were taken immediately to maintain the unity of the Muslims by the appointment of a single head. He could not be called shaikh, for Islam had superseded the tribal system; and they were not yet in touch with other races to think of calling him a king. So they simply called him Successor to the Prophet, which in Arabic is Khalifat an-Nabi, usually anglicized as Caliph. It remained to be seen in what way he succeeded to Muhammad. One thing is clear

at the outset, he was never conceived of as succeeding to the prophethood as Elisha succeeded to Elijah with a first-born's share of his prophetic spirit. That is not mere theory but plain fact, for none of the Caliphs ever pretended to have any revelation from God.

There were four successive Caliphs in the first days of Muslim conquests, Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali. Except Ali, who was Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, none of the Caliphs was a near relation of Muhammad. But they were all Arabs of Muhammad's tribe of the Quraish. Abu Bakr was the only one who died a natural death. Umar was slain by a Persian slave, Uthman by rebel Muslims from Iraq and Egypt, Ali by men of the schismatical sect of the Kharijites. Yet, in spite of these signs of conflict, the Muslims were held together as a unity (except for the Kharijites) under the sole command of the Caliph.

After the death of Ali in A.D. 661, a difference came over the Caliphs. They were still Arabs of the tribe of Quraish, but they were a dynasty, of the family of Umayya, and they reigned as kings in a fixed capital, Damascus. They still had control of the whole extent of the Empire, which now extended as far as Spain. It is at first sight remarkable that the Muslims should have been content to have Arabs to rule over them, seeing that already the non-Arabs were becoming more powerful than the Arabs. But for the sake of Muslim unity, and in memory of the Arabian origin of Islam, which Muslims never forget, they were content to have these Arab Caliphs as their rulers. The Christians of the occupied countries were also content to be ruled by Arab Caliphs, for the Byzantine Emperors had persecuted those who would not accept the European form of Christianity, while the Caliphs naturally were completely indifferent in the matter of Christian sects.

The Umayyad dynasty of Damascus lasted till A.D. 750. By that time Iraq had become thoroughly Muslim and settled, and of far greater importance in every way

than Syria. It was therefore time for the centre of Empire to be transferred to Iraq. There were also weighty reasons for a complete change of dynasty if Islam was to continue as a religion. For non-Arabs to have Arab Caliphs over them was reasonable for the sake of Islam, so long as they were good Muslims and upholders of the faith. But these men had proved themselves to be worldly and mere political rulers. Rebellion broke out all over the Empire, the Umayyads were ejected, and another family of the Quraish tribe, called the Abbasids, ascended the throne. It would not be strictly correct to say they came into power, for the tide had now turned definitely against the Arabs, and the real power from henceforth rested with the Persians. It is of the highest importance to realize that though the Abbasid Caliphs sat on the throne—at Kufa from 750 to 762, and from then till 1258 at Baghdad—they never ruled over the whole Islamic Empire. The Muslims of Spain never acknowledged the Abbasid Caliphs. Nearer home their power dwindled, and the political history of those five centuries is a curious interplay of fact and fiction, as successive princes managed to secure practical independence, and at the same time, when it suited them, to pretend to acknowledge the authority of the Caliph. By the time that the Mongol Hulagu sacked Baghdad in 1258, the Caliph's dominions scarcely extended beyond the city walls. With such dwindling power, and in view of the contempt so often shown by the real rulers towards the Caliph, it is rather wonderful that the Caliphate did not simply become an object of derision. But it didn't. For the theologians did their best, and built up a theory of the Caliphate by which a Caliph was necessary for Islam, and they were ably seconded by the Arabian Nights, which were read and re-read in every corner of the Muslim world, and covered the Caliph's palace with such a halo of romance that the office won a permanent place in the imagination and affection of the people.

Before we consider the theory of the Caliphate, and the powers the Caliph was supposed to exercise, we must trace briefly the history of the office after the fall of Baghdad. One of the Mamluk Sultans named Beibars who reigned in Egypt fetched from Syria a man of the Abbasid family and set him up as Caliph with great pomp and show. Shortly afterwards an attempt was made to make him a Caliph in actual fact by marching on Baghdad. There he was met and slain by the Mongol Governor of Baghdad. Thereupon Beibars secured another Abbasid and brought him to Cairo with the title of Caliph, but with no more powers than a Court chaplain. This nominal Caliphate continued till 1517 when the Ottoman Turk Selim I conquered Egypt. Then the office ceased to exist, and the name had become so cheap that any Muslim ruler could add it to his other high-sounding titles without being called in question.

Then, towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid I noticed how the Russian Empress Catherine II as head of the Orthodox Church claimed to have powers of jurisdiction over Orthodox Christians in Turkey. About the same time the comparison was made between the Caliph and the Pope. With these parallels in mind, Abdul Hamid I adopted the title of Caliph, and claimed jurisdiction over Muslims in Russia. His claim was accepted by Russia, for the treaty of Küçük-Kainarji of 1774 recognized the right of the Sultan as Sovereign Caliph of the Muhammadan religion to protect the interests of Muslims wheresoever they might be, and to legislate for them in so far as they were bound to conform to the regulations which their law prescribes for them.

Abdul Hamid I supported his claim to the Caliphate by reference to a supposed transaction by which Mutawakkil, the last Abbasid Caliph in Egypt, had handed over his rights to the Ottoman Sultan Selim I. Both the claim to this transfer of the Caliphate, and also the claim that the Caliph had such powers, flew in the face of fact

and theory, as we shall see presently. But nevertheless the claim, now accepted by Russia, was repeated by his successors. When Abdul Hamid II came to the throne in 1876 he promulgated a Constitution in which it was stated that "His Majesty the Sultan as Caliph, is the protector of the Muslim religion". As the Ottoman Empire was the most powerful Muslim state, the claim was tacitly accepted by the rest of the Muslim world.

It remained for the First World War to put the claim to a real test. Turkey at that time was fighting on the side of Germany, and the Sultan in his capacity as Caliph solemnly called the whole Muslim world to war against the Allies as infidels. It is to be noted that this call to *jihad* or holy war is precisely one of the powers that does belong to the Caliphate, but never before had a Caliph tried the experiment of issuing the call to any but his own subjects. The main idea no doubt was to raise a revolt of the Indian Muslims against the King-Emperor. The appeal fell completely flat. Indian Muslims ignored it, and soon the Arab and Iraqi subjects of the Ottoman Empire were in revolt against the Sultan.

Yet, curiously enough, though the Indian Muslims did nothing at the time, they began to take serious notice after the War, when it appeared that the policy of Britain and France was so utterly to dismember the Ottoman Empire as to bring the Caliphate into disrepute. For this reason they started the violent Khilafat Movement, which combined well with the simultaneous violent Hindu demand for Indian Home Rule. Meanwhile things were moving fast in Turkey. In 1922 the Sultan Mehmed VI Vahid ud-Din had seen what was coming and escaped in a British man-of-war. He was succeeded as Caliph, but not as Sultan, by Abdul Mejid Efendi, who was confirmed in the Caliphate in the proclamation of the Republic in October 1923. But in March 1924 he was exiled, and the Caliphate was abolished.

The Sultans of the Ottoman Empire before the revo-

lution used to claim to be Caliphs on the following grounds: (1) the supposed transfer of power from Mutawakkil, the last of the Abbasid Caliphs, to Selim I, (2) the guardianship of the holy places, Mecca and Medina, (3) the possession of certain relics of the Prophet, and (4) the right of the sword. Of these, the first was without any historical foundation that can be traced. The second and third, though interesting, were not points that had been made by ancient jurists. The last one, the right of the sword, was the only reason of weight. But one condition had been made by ancient lawyers, namely that the Caliph should be an Arab of the tribe of the Quraish, and this requirement was obviously unfulfilled by the Turkish Sultan.

We have so far spoken of the powers of the Caliph without defining what those powers are. Muhammad, like Moses, had been everything to his people—prophet, priest, king, lawgiver and judge. Of all these, the one that impressed itself most on Muhammad's contemporaries and followers was his prophethood. He was the Prophet *par excellence*; no one ever afterwards dare claim the name or the function; and later ages declared definitely that he was the Seal of the Prophets, that is the last prophet, since in him prophecy had been completed.

Respect for Muhammad also made it difficult for his successors to make new laws. Of course they had to do so, but some way had to be devised to make it appear that they were not doing so. For instance, the early conquerors found it neither possible nor desirable to convert all the Zoroastrians of Persia to Islam. Yet it seemed to be clear from the Koran that they should be offered the alternative of Islam or death. At first, we are told, Umar, the second Caliph, used to follow this principle, until someone pointed out to him that Muhammad had accepted a cash payment from Zoroastrians in Arabia instead of submission to Islam, whereupon Umar ordered the Zoroastrians to be treated like

the "people of the Book". This term had been used by Muhammad for Jews and Christians who possessed the Bible. The commentator who records this incident of Umar says rather apologetically that the Zoroastrians "have something like a book". Whether in this case the tradition of Muhammad's action is true or not, or even whether the story about Umar is true or not, is not material to us. The point is that a way had been found to accommodate the law to existing circumstances.

Such precedents as this gave the hint to Muslim lawyers how to make laws without seeming to do so. What was written in the Koran was obviously the Word of God, and could not be touched. But since Muhammad was a prophet, every word and action of his was guided by God, and all that was necessary was to find some saying or act of the Prophet bearing on the matter in hand. The process of producing these legal fictions went on apace, till the mass of them became so unwieldy as to be unmanageable. Then codifiers came in to sort out the traditions which were to be accepted as genuine. Their method of selection was not very scientific, but it did reduce the number, and, what is more, it prevented the creation of new traditions, after the authorized collections (the Hadith) were completed in the ninth century A.D. As the traditions, or the quotations from the Koran, did not always bear exactly on the point at issue, the lawyers allowed themselves to make deductions by analogy. Moreover, things that were already established customs could not be rejected, so they were accepted as being the consensus of opinion of the faithful. In this way the law was codified in the ninth century A.D., and as conditions of life did not change appreciably till modern times, there was no longer any need to make provision for further alterations in or additions to the law.

In all this it will have been noticed that the Caliph played no part. The lawyers had to decide what were true traditions, what was correct analogy, and what was

the consensus of the faithful. The claim of some prominent lawyers to be allowed to use their common sense, in cases not already provided for, was quickly suppressed. No one ever thought of the Caliph issuing laws.

In what we have been saying, the word "law" must be taken in its broadest sense, not only the civil law, but also the ecclesiastical law and the whole dogmatic system of Islam. The Caliph then had no power to alter the penalty attached to a particular offence, nor to make a declaration on any matter of doctrine. In a word, the only function of Muhammad which was inherited by the Caliphs was to be the political head of the state, and as such to protect Islam against aggression or to wage war against the infidels. There is no doubt that this would be the position held by all Sunni lawyers at the present day. The Muslims of Persia, who belong to the Shi'a, hold different opinions, as they do not recognize any of the Caliphs except Ali.

What then can we say about the claims of Abdul Hamid I? It is possible that he was ignorant of the theory of the Caliphate, and was more influenced by the powers which he saw being exercised by the Pope of Rome. At any rate, the last Abbasid Caliph certainly had no actual powers to hand over to Selim I, and Abdul Hamid could not exercise spiritual oversight over the Muslims since the Caliph has no spiritual functions.

It now becomes clear what was the meaning of the resolutions of the Cairo Conference. The decision that there ought to be a Caliph is tantamount to saying that all Muslims ought to be united in one Empire under the command of one head. Without an approach to such conditions the appointment of a Caliph would be merely in name without any reality.

CHANGES IN THE CHANGELESS LAW

WHAT, then, are the chances of all the Muslims of the world uniting once more, as in the days of the Umayyads, into one Muslim Empire under one Caliph?

The question must necessarily be put in this form, for it is obviously impossible to foretell the sort of alignment of nations that we see, for instance, at the moment of writing when Germany, Italy and Japan are united as a band of international brigands. No one can tell whether the Arabic-speaking countries of Arabia, Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Iraq will form a federation, nor whether in some future world war the armies of Egypt, Iran, Afghanistan and the Panjab might find themselves not only in alliance, but under one commander-in-chief. But it is possible to express an opinion whether the Muslim countries are ever likely to be united in one Muslim Empire, under one Caliph, with one system of laws. The very existence of such a state, bound together by the peculiar tenets of Islam in so far as they differ from the tenets of the rest of mankind, would be a menace to the world, just as in the case of other states which are guided by a peculiar ideology.

The last sentence sounds provocative, and was intentionally so. It raises the question: What are the peculiar tenets of Islam, and why should they be regarded as a menace to the world if they were incorporated in the structure of an Empire? A first answer can be given even before we consider what the tenets of Islam are. If any people hold that their system is infallible, being given by divine decree, and that it is therefore their duty to impose it on the rest of mankind, the rest of mankind have every reason to fear for the loss of their liberty.

From what has been said it will have been seen that

the rule of law in a Muslim state has already been determined and fixed. The Caliph has no right to alter it, nor have the people in any sort of assembly. Once upon a time it was fixed by the jurists, on the supposed basis of the Koran, the Traditions of Muhammad, Analogy to be drawn from these, and the Consensus of Muslim opinion in those days. Since that time, that is, the ninth century A.D., there has been no machinery whereby this legal system can be altered, so that theoretically it is for ever binding on a Muslim state. One or two examples of this "unchangeable" law may be given. It is the duty of the Caliph to wage war against the unbelievers either (according to one of the juridical schools) until they accept Islam, or (according to another school) until they accept Islam or agree to pay extra taxes. All Christians and Jews within the Caliph's dominions must pay this extra tax. If any Muslim renounces his faith and changes to another religion, the penalty is death. The penalty for stealing is for the thief's hand to be cut off. Everyone knows that these laws are nowadays rarely if ever enforced, and the question arises whether it is simply that the Muslim Governments are not strong enough to carry out what they know to be the law, and would do so if they could, or whether behind the façade of an unchangeable religion they have altered the law to suit modern conditions.

The answer is that Muslim countries have been profoundly affected since early in the nineteenth century by the European Powers, partly by the forcible loss of territory, and partly by the pressure of higher civilization and better laws.

Lest it should be suggested that the failure of the *shari'a* (as Islamic law is called) to hold undivided sway is entirely due to the oppression of Western Powers, it is interesting to recall that when the Muslims invaded India they allowed some Hindus to accept Islam without accepting Islamic law. The descendants of these converts have for centuries observed the rules of Hindu law

in matters of inheritance. The British allowed them to continue following this "customary law". But now in recent years it has been the Government of India which has extended the sway of the *shari'a*. In 1935 a law was passed substituting the *shari'a* for customary law in the North-West Frontier Province, and in 1937 a somewhat similar law, the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Act, was passed for the whole of India.

In order to understand the extent of Western pressure on Islam it is necessary to bear in mind the great loss of territory to non-Muslim Governments since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Up till 1822 the Ottoman Empire included the whole of the Balkan Peninsula, Asia Minor with an extension on the east bank of the Black Sea as far as the Caucasus, Syria and Palestine, Iraq and Arabia, Egypt and Libya. (Half a century earlier the lands bordering the northern coasts of the Black Sea were also included.) The rest of North Africa consisted of the independent states of Tunis, Algeria and Morocco, under their Muslim rulers. Along the whole of the North African coast the only non-Muslim possessions were four little Spanish settlements on the north coast of Morocco, two of them mere rocky islands, which the Spaniards had held since the sixteenth century. Persia, besides extending up the west bank of the Caspian Sea, also extended northwards into Turkestan to within a hundred miles of the Sea of Aral.

Early in the nineteenth century Russia began extending into Transcaucasia. In 1822 the Greeks began their war of independence, which they finally secured ten years later. In 1830 the French attacked Algeria, and completed the conquest of it as far as the north border of the Sahara by 1847. In 1878, after the wars between Turkey and Russia, the independence of the Balkan States was recognized, namely Serbia, Montenegro and Rumania; while Bulgaria was to be autonomous but tributary to Turkey. The other European powers ob-

jected to this treaty and certain changes in boundaries, etc., especially affecting Bulgaria, were made shortly afterwards. 1878 also saw Russia's farthest penetration southwards from the Caucasus, the cession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria, and of Cyprus to Britain. Between 1878 and 1883 the French established their protectorate over Tunisia. By 1885 the Russians completed their penetration into Turkestan and Persia, which had been going on for some time. In the early years of the twentieth century Morocco was the subject of diplomatic rivalry between France, Spain, Germany and Great Britain, which almost led to an outbreak of war in 1906. Eventually in 1912 France obtained a treaty with the Sultan of Morocco, by which Morocco became a French protectorate. Spain had to be satisfied with a sphere of influence along the north coast. The last stage of aggression of European Powers was in 1911 when Italy invaded Libya and Tripolitania and annexed from Turkey its two chief provinces of Tripoli and Benghazi. This invasion was resisted by the Sanusi of the desert, and it was not till 1930 that their last oasis, Kufra, was captured.

Such in brief is the story of how in little more than a century enormous tracts of territory, once ruled by Muslims, passed into the hands of non-Muslim powers. It must have seemed to many Muslims, as it did to Europeans, that the days of Islam were numbered, and that never again would a great Islamic Empire sway the destinies of the world. To other Muslims these dark days were an incentive to new lines of development in which were envisaged new glories for Islam. But for the moment our interest is not in recent political dreams and plans, but in the results of the impact of Western systems of law.

It would be natural to suppose that when so many Muslims came under non-Muslim rulers they would soon become accustomed to man-made laws, and, finding them more equitable than the supposedly divine laws of

Islam, would in one way or another encourage Muslim rulers to reform their own laws. To some extent that is what has happened, but we must recall some ancient history to explain the exact process. During the days of the Baghdad Caliphate, the non-Muslims were organized as protected communities within the state. Each separate community was called a *milla*, and its members were called *dhimmis*. In all matters relating to religion and personal life they were made subject to their own religious head, the Nestorian Christians being under their Catholicos, and the Jews under their Chief Rabbi. Some such arrangement was inevitable if these people were not to be forced to be Muslims, for a great deal of the *shari'a* was by its nature only applicable to Muslims. Thus, although the *shari'a* is one and undivided, embracing what we call civil and ecclesiastical law in one code, there grew up in men's minds a distinction between personal law and public law. The result was that, when Muslims came under non-Muslim Governments, they did not mind being subject to non-Muslim public laws so long as their personal law was left untouched. Of course they had not much choice in the matter; but they probably scarcely realized the full implication of their submission to this arrangement. If the Muslims agreed to be judged by the State law in criminal and civil matters, and were only allowed to use the *shari'a* in personal and religious matters, they were putting themselves very much in the position which Christians and Jews had held in Muslim countries.

We must now pass to the details of the legal position in various countries, and India must claim our attention first. In view of the many charges levelled by Indians at the British administration, it is important to realize that the British were extraordinarily slow to introduce any innovations in the law. In 1773 the East India Company assumed the duties and powers of the *Diwani*, i.e., the fiscal and civil administration of the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Actually the *Diwani* had been sur-

rendered to the Company ten years earlier by the Mughal Emperor of Delhi, but until 1773 they did not feel able to take over the powers. Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General, laid down the principle that the Company's authority should be founded on the ancient laws of the country. The Hindus and Muslims were to be judged in family matters according to their own laws, while the Islamic criminal law, which had been in force under the Mughal Emperors, was to be continued for all. In the case of the Hindu personal law there were the greatest difficulties in finding out what the law really was, because the ancient books, which were first treated as codes of law, appeared on further experience to contain in many cases precepts which had never been legal enactments, and consequently had not been customarily followed. Muslim personal law was not so hard to discover, though some difficulties arose in its actual administration. The British Government was obliged to introduce some amendments to the existing laws where they were intolerable to Western opinion, e.g., the Hindu practice of *sati* or self-immolation of widows on the husband's pyre, exclusion of a Hindu from inheritance on the ground of apostasy from Hinduism, and the institution of slavery. In the criminal law, which followed the *shari'a*, change was made only very slowly. One reason for this was that the penal laws in force in England at the time were very severe, and in the matter of capital punishment the *shari'a* was far more merciful. Some changes had, however, to be made, the chief being the abolition of the Muslim law that only the evidence of a Muslim could be accepted. Punishment of a thief by the amputation of his hand was not abolished till 1791. As late as 1789 fourteen dacoits were condemned to have their right hands and left feet cut off. Another law which had to be abolished was the curious one that sons of a murdered person might pardon the murderer, which made it possible for a son to have his father murdered and go unscathed. For seventy years the Islamic

penal law was administered, with such small amendments, over the greater part of India. The work of producing a new penal code began in the Panjab in 1846. The Indian Penal Code which was eventually made was in many respects an improvement on English law, and was indebted to other foreign codes.

Apart from the Penal Code, India had to be provided with all the other departments of law, for the *shari'a* was entirely lacking in such things as contract law and the laws of evidence and procedure.

Thus as far as Islam is concerned the result of the British connexion with India has been to establish on a firmer basis the Muslim personal and religious law, making only such changes as were absolutely necessary, while all the rest of the *shari'a* has been abolished.

Turning now to other Islamic countries, we find first in Egypt that the same distinction has been drawn between matters of personal status, such as marriage, inheritance and guardianship, and all other matters. The former are judged by the Courts of the Cadis according to Islamic Law. To maintain the orthodoxy of these courts they are under the control of the Grand Cadi, who must belong to the legal school of the Hanifis, assisted by a Council one of the members of which is the Shaikh of the Azhar Mosque who is of the legal school of the Shafi'i. For all matters other than personal a system of jurisprudence was introduced in 1884, which was modelled on that of the French Code and has been revised more than once since then. With the abolition of the *shari'a* except for the personal status of Muslims, there remained no further excuse for the special legal privileges of foreigners called the Capitulations, and they were eventually abolished in 1937.

Palestine under British control has the same distinction in its legal systems. The ordinary law was based on the Ottoman law, amended as necessary by ordinances of the British administration. Cases of Muslim religious law, personal status, and religious endowments (*waqfs*)

are dealt with by the Shari'a Courts under the Muslim Supreme Council.

In Rumania, for the Dobruja, and in Bulgaria, there are still courts to deal with Muslim personal matters, according to the latest number of the *Near East Year Book* which was published in 1931-2.

On the other hand Albania and Turkey have both become secular states. Albanian Muslims disavowed allegiance to the Caliph as early as 1923, and decided on certain reforms, such as the law of monogamy (which was already the general practice) and the abolition of the compulsory veiling of women. New statutes were drawn up in 1929 governing the two Muslim communities, the Sunnis and the Bektashis,¹ following the promulgation of the new penal and civil codes, which were based on those of Italy and France, in 1928 and 1929. Turkey, too, has adopted the Swiss Civil Code, the Italian Penal Code, and a commercial code based on that of Germany; and, of course, these changes include the abolition of polygamy and the establishment of equality of men and women in the matter of divorce. The Muslim religious affairs have been put under the Faculty of Theology of Istanbul University, which has fixed the principles of reform of religious practice.

Afghanistan and Sa'udi Arabia are the only two countries in the world to-day where the whole law of the land is still the *shari'a*.

The position in Persia is peculiar. As Persia is a Shi'a country, and the Shi'a does not recognize any of the Caliphs or the Sunni *shari'a*, and as there are still officials called Mujtahids who theoretically have the power of making doctrinal decisions, one might have thought that it would have been easier to reform the law. But it has not proved to be the case. In the fourteenth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* Sir Percy Cox describes, in

¹ The Bektashis are one of the Sufi or mystic orders. In Albania they form a distinct sect, organized with officials known as the Archgrandfather, Grandfathers, Fathers, Dervishes and Priests.

his article on Persia, the extraordinary position in which the Persians have landed themselves by making the Islamic law supreme. Although progress had been made in producing modern codes of law based on European codes—and more progress has been made since Sir Percy Cox wrote—a committee of five doctors of the law have the power of vetoing any legislation which in their opinion infringes Islamic law. Many laws have been passed without submission to this committee, leaving open the possibility that they might at any time be declared invalid.

The late Sir Benjamin Lindsay, after speaking of the substitution of the Indian Penal Code for the penal laws of the *shari'a*, said,¹ "In taking this step the British in India were merely anticipating the action which has since been taken in other oriental countries in which the Islamic code has been largely superseded, and has been replaced by new systems both of substantive and procedural law based upon the model of one or other of the codes of continental Europe. In these countries too it has come to be realized that a body of law which was supposed to have reached the limits of perfection by the eleventh century, and was declared to be unalterable by human agency, has long outlived its usefulness. The Muslim doctrine that legislation is not within the competence of an earthly sovereign was never, indeed, anything more than a pious fiction, which was consistently ignored by strong-minded rulers, who arrogated and freely exercised the right of framing the laws which best suited their purpose." Sir Benjamin does not give examples of such law-giving, and, as the *shari'a* remained unchanged until the modern influence of the West, it must be assumed that any such enactments of strong-minded rulers against the *shari'a* only lasted during their lifetime, and were recognized by the lawyers as lawless acts. Moreover Sir Benjamin's statement gives a wrong impression by not distinguishing between the

¹ O'Malley, *Modern India and the West*, p. 136.

public and the personal laws of the *shari'a*. As we have now seen, the public law, criminal, civil, and so forth, has been abolished for the most part; and this was almost inevitable in countries where Muslim and non-Muslim lived side by side, unless the objectionable *milla* system of states within the state was to be revived. But the Muslim personal law has been adhered to almost everywhere with only the smallest modifications. This fact is emphasized by Mr. O'Malley as follows:¹ "The Muslims show no inclination to amend their personal law as the Hindus have. A certain number hold that it should be reformed or adjusted to liberal principles, particularly as regards divorce, arguing that the spirit of Islamic law will not be violated if it is altered so as to allow, for instance, wives to divorce their husbands on grounds of cruelty and desertion; but this is not the view of the majority. Hindus, they say, may rewrite their *sastras*, but the Koran is the final word of God, and it is not for a Musalman to add to it or alter it, or to create sanctions in conflict with its injunctions. In their ardour for westernization and secularization, the Muslims of Turkey have not scrupled to reform their law and have introduced a civil code based on the Swiss model in place of the Muslim religious law, but the Indian Muslims cling to the Shariat or canon law as an integral part of their religion."

¹ *Modern India and the West*, p. 622.

IV

A MUSLIM EMPIRE?

FROM a variety of sources we learn that unity is strength, that a kingdom divided against itself comes to nought, and that the cynical principle for alien rulers to follow is *Divide et impera*. The implications of these sayings on our present study is that if all the Muslims of the world were to unite into one Empire, they might be a great curse and menace to the rest of the world, or alternatively they might be an outstanding blessing; but if they remain divided they would not make much difference any way, except in so far as separate individuals or societies can be a blessing or a curse.

What then are the chances that the Muslims of the world will unite into one Empire? Perhaps it would be a fairly safe generalization to say that a great Empire must be the creation of a great man. No one can foretell when such a great man will appear, but we can see that formidable difficulties would stand in his way. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that an outstanding personality arises in Iraq, and sets out to make himself the master of a united Muslim Empire. To give him every possible advantage, we shall suppose that he is of Arab descent of the tribe of the Quraish. The first consideration for such a monarch would be the kind of law that he is to have in his kingdom. Presumably he would elect to retain European civil laws, with various religious laws for his various subjects—Sunni and Shi'a Muslims, Christians, Mandæans, and so forth. He could indeed scarcely do otherwise. Our study so far will have made it quite clear that no one system of law, whether European or Muslim, could possibly satisfy all his subjects. He would then turn to his nearest neighbour, Persia. It is quite conceivable that Persia would

agree to come in under those conditions, for there too European law and customs have made great headway, and the Persians would be satisfied so long as they were allowed to observe Shi'a personal law. The ruler of united Iraq and Persia would then turn his attention, and force of arms if necessary, to Arabia, and the entry of Arabia into the scheme would certainly seem to be necessary for a respectable Islamic Empire. We can imagine the ruler of Arabia sending to enquire whether the new monarch claimed to be the Caliph of the Prophet and Commander of the Faithful, or whether he styled himself Shah-in-shah, Vicegerent of the Hidden Imam. It should be explained that the Shah of Persia does not hold a religious office, but holds his political power as vicegerent for the last of the twelve Imams who disappeared about A.D. 873 and will some day return as the Mahdi and take over the reins of power. If the monarch answered that he was Caliph, the Persians would at once denounce him, because they do not accept any Caliph except Ali, and the Arabs would ask him to prove his claim by enforcing the *shari'a*. If he replied that he was the Shah, the Arabs would beg pardon from God for having heard the blasphemous suggestion that they should subject themselves to a civil ruler who did not recognize the holy law. This no doubt is conjectural, but it is a fact that since Arabia freed itself from the hated rule of the Ottoman Sultans it has become far more orthodox and loyal to primitive Islam, and would not willingly go back to the degree of secularism that prevailed in the Ottoman Empire. If by some feat of arms and diplomacy our conquering monarch made himself master of Arabia, and turned to Palestine, he would find such large Christian and Jewish sections of the population that it would weaken rather than strengthen the homogeneity of his Empire. There is no reason to suppose that he would find the Jewish problem any easier than the British have done. In Egypt he would find a people proud of their nationhood—won

again in recent times after long subjection to Ottoman Sultans—quite unprepared to barter their independence to a monarch who did not know whether he was a Shi'ite or a Sunni, and at the best could not be as sound in the faith as the learned doctors of al-Azhar. If he turned to Turkey, he would be told that Turkey was a European Republic which had disestablished Islam. In Afghanistan his rebuff would be not unlike what he had received in Arabia. If he approached the Musalmans of India, he would as likely as not find that they had suddenly changed their minds on the question of internationalism, and, rather than become subject to a foreign Caliph, would prefer to be governed by the British, or even by the Hindu Congress, because, after all, they would remember that India is one and indivisible.

Try as one may, by letting one's imagination run riot, it is hard to see under what possible circumstances a united Muslim Empire could arise. But the last sentence of our imaginary reconstruction will have indicated that the really uncertain factor of the situation is the Muslims of India. To them we must now devote more attention.

Going back to the time of the First World War, we recall that the Sultan of Turkey in his capacity as Caliph called on all Muslims to rally to his side, which was also Germany's side, in the fight for Islam against the infidel. Whether the Indian Muslims were cute enough to see that there was something wrong in the Caliph allying himself with German infidels against English infidels, or whether contact with Englishmen had made them seem not quite so infidel as they theoretically are,¹ or whatever the reason may have been, they did nothing. Yet it would be quite wrong to put down their lack of response on that occasion to any weakness in their attachment to Islam. The Muslims of India are not only keen on the

¹ A Muslim bearer in Calcutta, who was accused by his fellow Muslims of having shown an Arabic Koran to his English master, excused himself by saying that his master had a bath *every* day, and therefore was as clean as the Muslims.

observances of their religion, but they are as wide awake as any Muslims to the world-wide aspects of Islam. It was in India, and India alone, that a movement was started to try to save the Caliphate when it was in danger. Nor is that altogether surprising, for Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Arabia knew what it was like to be under the heel of a Caliph residing in Constantinople, and could hardly be expected to bestir themselves to preserve a system which had done them so much harm. But Indian Muslims had never been under a Caliph, and they could look at the matter from a more theoretical point of view, or, as they would have said, in truer perspective.

Unfortunately the zeal of the Indian Muslims on that occasion was doubly disappointed. In the first place they were made to look rather foolish for so utterly misjudging the situation in Turkey. They had supposed that the British, by their acquiescence in the dismemberment of Turkey, were the prime movers in the degradation of the Caliph and his high office; but one morning they woke up to discover in their daily papers that the Turks themselves were the aggressors, and that it was they who had exiled the Caliph and abolished the Caliphate. In the second place the Indian Muslims realized the mistake they had made in playing second fiddle to the Hindus, who, so far from caring for Muslim interests, were only further emboldened to work for a purely Hindu settlement of the Indian Constitutional problem. That was in 1924, and at the time of writing, nearly twenty years later, the political situation in India has altered considerably. The Hindus are no longer content to ask for Home Rule, but want complete independence from Britain, and an independence from any sanctions that would protect the minorities of Muslims, Sikhs and Outcastes from a purely Hindu Government. The support the Congress gets now from any non-Hindu communities is, as far as one can judge, more or less negligible. Yet the Congress insists that it has the interests

of the whole of India at heart, and that India is essentially indivisible. The Muslims, likewise, are no longer content to demand Home Rule for themselves in certain portions of an undivided, self-governing India, but now insist that those areas where Muslims are in a majority (however small the majority) must be free to enjoy complete independence.

We are not here concerned to apportion the blame for this distressing state of affairs. There is no doubt that rightly or wrongly the Hindus have feared what the Muslims might do, and the Muslims have feared what the Hindus might do; and their fears were increased by the knowledge that while the Muslims wielded the sword, the Hindus wielded the pen, and it might be questioned which was the greater potential danger. The curious balance between the Hindu majority wielding the "babu's" pen and the Muslim minority wielding the sword as soldiers, is likely to be upset by the large recruitment of Hindus in the army since the beginning of the war. Nor are we here concerned with the problem of how the Government of India is to act in face of these irreconcilable claims. But it may be as well to indicate how difficult it would be to admit either claim. If the Hindus won their claim, and had not learnt the gentle art of "give and take" before taking office, they would find it impossible to govern the country and maintain its unity. It is doubtful whether, without Muslim co-operation, they could defend the country against foreign aggression. If the Muslims won their claim, they would not find it easy to run Eastern Bengal without Calcutta, to which they could not establish a majority claim. In the Panjab they could claim a majority in Lahore, but not in Amritsar. If Calcutta were included in an independent Muslim Bengal, and Lahore in an independent Muslim Panjab, the problems of the Hindu minority in Bengal, and of the Sikh minority in the Panjab, would be even more acute than the problem of a Muslim minority in an undivided India.

Our concern in this book is not to find a solution of this impasse, but to try to see what lies behind the Muslim claim. Certainly there must be something very big behind it, if it means abandoning the ideal of a united India which was held, until recently, by all educated Indians.

The demand for an independent Muslim state was given definite form in 1933 when the Pakistan Movement was started by Mr. C. Rahmat Ali. His plan was for a union of the Panjab, the North-West Frontier Province (inhabited mainly by Afghans), Kashmir, Sindh and Baluchistan. From the initials of Panjab, Afghan, Kashmir and Sindh, and the last three letters of Baluchistan, he formed the name Pakistan. Though that is said to have been the origin of the name, it immediately suggests to a hearer "the Land of the Pure", for *pāk* is the ordinary Urdu word for "pure" or "clean", and *stān* is a Persian termination meaning "place". Nor is this merely a sound piece of etymology. It also crystallizes the Muslim conception of Pakistan. For centuries now Muslims in India have been compelled to live side by side with Hindus, people who insult the majesty of God by making and worshipping idols, who commit the unforgivable sin of polytheism to the most fantastic degree by believing in, if not worshipping, 330,000,000 gods, and offend the ears of Muslims by singing obscene songs in their festivals. It is not surprising that the prospect of being freed from this offence to eyes and ears, and of living in a Land of the Pure, appeals to the imagination of the Muslims. Needless to say, such a consummation could only come about by an interchange of populations on a vast scale of millions of human beings, compared with which all previous exchanges would be put into the shade.

And here is a warning to all, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, who think to ease the situation by such a method of segregation. The Muslims believe that it is their destiny to rule the world, a world in which there has

been no promise that all men will become Muslims. Is it the best training for domination over non-Muslims that they should now abandon the attempt to live peaceably with non-Muslim neighbours, and to suggest by implication that their neighbours are *nā-pāk*, unclean? It is part of modern Muslim propaganda to represent Islam as the religion of peace, the religion destined to bring peace to the world. One would suggest to them that the only way to attain peace is for people of divergent interests to learn to live peaceably together, and that Muslims in India have a unique opportunity of showing how it can be done.

Going back again to the origin of the idea of Pakistan, it is important to notice that some years before it was given definite shape by Rahmat Ali, it was put forward by the late Sir Muhammad Iqbal of Lahore, a distinguished poet and an exponent of a very definite philosophy of his own. This philosophy was fully developed by 1915 when he published in Persian a book called *Asrār-i-khudī*, which appeared five years later in English translation by Professor Nicholson under the title *Secrets of the Self*. The enthusiastic reception that this and other writings of his had in the Panjab suggest that we might find some connexion between his philosophy and the emergence of the demand for Pakistan.

Iqbal was a follower of Nietzsche, and the future seemed to him to lie with the superman. That fact alone would cause us some disquiet, remembering how much Nietzsche's influence was seen in the frame of mind of the Germans which brought about the First World War. For Iqbal the superman did not belong to one race, which is different from the Nazi conception of the Nordic race as the *Herrnvolk*. That, of course, is natural, since Muslims do not belong to one race; and thus Iqbal could attack what he understood by nationalism and imperialism, and Muslims who follow him could speak of a Muslim world-supremacy as a kind of League of Nations. The most striking section of *The*

Secrets of the Self is one that bears the following title: "A tale, of which the moral is that negation of the Self is a doctrine invented by the subject races of mankind in order that by this means they may sap and weaken the character of their rulers." The tale is a fable of a band of tigers, who leapt forth from the jungle, and manifested their strength and prowess by completely overcoming a flock of sheep, depriving them of freedom and devouring them. One of the sheep, more cunning than the rest, thought of a plan to weaken the tigers. He posed as a prophet, and went and preached to the tigers, now satiated with their luxurious idleness, telling them that violence brings misery, that self-denial is the way of life, and that the vegetarian is pleasing to God. The tigers foolishly accepted this advice, embraced the sheep's religion, took kindly to a diet of fodder, lost their courage and vigour, sank to poverty and low-mindedness, and called their decline moral culture.

At first sight this parable would seem to be an attack on the vital principle of Christianity that the cross is the way of life; and indeed no Christian can read it without a feeling of horror that the tigers ravishing the defenceless sheep should be the heroes of the poem. But it is doubtful whether Iqbal had Christianity in mind, for Christianity does not usually appear to the outsider as a religion of self-abnegation, particularly in India where the extreme forms of asceticism are commonly seen, and the more successful and prosperous nations of the world are the so-called Christian races. Had Iqbal lived two thousand years ago, one would have supposed that he was attacking Buddhism, which was at that time filling India with a doctrine that encouraged men to lose their sense of individuality. Much of that type of thought has persisted in Hindu philosophy, the goal of which is the loss of identity of the self through absorption into the Absolute, rather than (as we believe) the perfection of the self by union with God. It is possible that Iqbal may have been repelled by such Hindu

philosophy. But the next section of his poem suggests that he is thinking of some weakening that has overtaken the Muslim people. That next section is headed by these words: "To the effect that Plato, whose thought has deeply influenced the mysticism and literature of Islam, followed the sheep's doctrine, and that we must be on our guard against his theories." The reference here, of course, is not to Plato himself, but to the philosophy known as Neo-platonism with which Islam came into contact in its early formative centuries. The Christians of Asia were themselves greatly influenced by Neo-platonism, and they handed on this, and their other Greek inheritance, to the Muslims, whose system when fully developed was very largely based on such Greek ideas. Islamic mysticism in particular, the one element in Islam which many outsiders regard as its greatest religious achievement, was particularly influenced by Neo-platonism. In Iqbal's view it was this sort of doctrine which has acted as an opiate on Islam and robbed Muslims of activity. If that is so, the only thing for Muslims to do is to go back behind all the development of the early centuries to the primitive Islam of Muhammad and the days of conquest. Iqbal was not the first to raise the cry of "Back to the Koran", but neither he nor any of the others have thought out what it really would involve. The rejection of all that Islam learnt from medieval Christianity, and through it from Greek thought, would result in something rather like the Wahhabism of modern Arabia, only more militant. But as Wahhabism could not exist outside Arabia in the twentieth century, it would be necessary to add as much as possible of modern ideas and practices—based largely on Christianity—including the evolutionary hypothesis and historical criticism, and in doing so it would be impossible to avoid bringing in again some inheritance from Greek thought. Some of the things thus added would be not altogether unlike some of the things subtracted in the process of going back to the Koran. All

this is really tantamount to saying that the modern world is so closely inter-related that seventh-century Islam can find no place in it except in some out-of-the-way corner. The only Islam that can survive is one that is adapted to the modern age. In his attempt to go back to primitive Islam, would Iqbal also include those religious wars which gave Islam its Empire and its temporal greatness? The answer is undoubtedly yes. Section XV of *The Secrets of the Self* is headed, "Showing that the purpose of the Moslem's life is to exalt the Word of Allah, and that the Jihad (war against unbelievers), if it be prompted by land-hunger, is unlawful in the religion of Islam." Even more explicitly in the poem itself he says:

"Whatever thou doest, let it be thine aim the: ein to
draw nigh to God,
That His glory may be made manifest by thee.
Peace becomes an evil, if its object be aught else;
War is good if its object is God.
If God be not exalted by our swords,
War dishonours the people."

This perfectly plain statement takes us back to the early days of Muslim conquest, when the warriors were said to be striving *fi sabil Allah*, "in the way of Allah". In later times, under what Iqbal would have called the softening influence of mysticism, the "way of Allah" was to be found by works of mercy. Prominent among such works of mercy was the erection of public fountains, which to this day are called *sabil*. Iqbal would have the Muslims go back to the days when ruthless unprovoked conquest could be undertaken, so long as the aggressive Muslim army persuaded itself that its purpose was to extend the reign of Allah.

Is this sort of thing really what is in the mind of the protagonists of Pakistan? Their language, and the increase of their demands, suggests that it is. At its annual session in 1940 the All-India Muslim League

unanimously adopted a resolution that areas where Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the north-west and east of India, should be grouped as an independent state, of which the constituent units should be autonomous. Mr. Rahmat Ali says:¹ "We must do all we can to recover our lost position in the world, by saving our people from the serfdom of 'Indianism' and our land from the shackles of its provincialism. When that is done, we must, and we will, build on the solid and secure foundations of Pakistan, Bengal and Usmanistan three independent nations which will be larger, bigger and more powerful than any that have ever existed in our history." In its most extreme form the Pakistan Movement is claiming not only Pakistan as already defined, but Bengal and Assam which it calls Bang-i-Islam, and Hyderabad-Deccan which it calls Usmanistan. The claim of the Muslim League is not only for independence from Britain and from Hindu India, but liberty to make treaties either with them or with any other powers. Behind this claim it is impossible not to see a desire to build up again a great Muslim Empire, beginning with alliances between the Muslim parts of India and other independent Muslim states.

Seeing then that the plans of the Muslim League and the Pakistan National Movement are fairly evidently inspired by the ideas of Muhammad Iqbal, we might study his ideals more closely to see the means by which he imagined that the political greatness of Islam could be restored. In 1934 he published a book called *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. On page 151 he reproduces with approval a summary of a poem by the Turkish nationalist poet Zia, written before the Turkish revolution: "In order to create a really effective political unity of Islam, all Muslim countries must first become independent; and then in their totality they should range themselves under one Caliph. Is such a thing possible at the present moment? If not to-day,

¹ *Daily Sketch*, August 24, 1942.

one must wait. In the meantime the Caliph must reduce his own house to order and lay the foundation of a workable modern state. In the international world the weak find no sympathy; power alone deserves respect." Iqbal was not at all put out by the fact that Zia's scheme necessitated a Caliphate, and that there had not been even a nominal Caliph since 1924. He put forward the amazing suggestion that the Grand National Assembly of Turkey had exercised the ancient right of *ijtihād*, i.e. the right to formulate doctrinal decisions, and by that right had appointed itself as a corporate body to be the Caliph. Naïvely he said that the religious doctors of Egypt and India had not expressed an opinion on the point. The fact is, of course, that the Grand National Assembly has made no such claim, and, were it made, it would be absurd since the main task of the Caliph is to defend the *shari'a* which the Grand National Assembly has abolished! Such a minor difficulty as the absence of the indispensable Caliph having been thus disposed of, Iqbal proceeded to explain in fuller detail how Zia's plan was to be worked out. "These lines clearly indicate the trend of modern Islam. For the present every Moslem nation must sink into her own deeper self, temporarily focus her vision on herself alone, until all are strong and powerful to form a living family of republics. A true and living unity, according to the nationalist thinkers, is not so easy as to be achieved by a merely symbolical overlordship. It is truly manifested in a multiplicity of free independent units whose racial rivalries are adjusted and harmonized by the unifying bond of a common spiritual aspiration." The supporters of Pakistan are trying to follow this advice to the letter. They have begun by sinking into their own deeper self and temporarily focusing their vision on themselves alone. The metaphor seems more appropriate to a Hindu Yogi seated in wrapt contemplation and gazing intently on the tip of his own nose. But the application of the metaphor is obviously what the Indian political Muslims

are doing, viz., pursuing a perfectly self-centred aim. Further, they have in view the adjustment and harmonizing of the rivalries of the various independent Muslim nations. For this sort of adjustment there are no plans, nothing to suggest a way out of the differences between Sunni and Shi'ite, Wahhabi and Modernist, alluded to earlier in this chapter. In other words, the plans, either of Iqbal or of the present Muslim political leaders of India, have not included any consideration of the problems dividing the Muslim nations; the problems of Caliphate and *shari'a* have not been tackled, and the only contribution towards future world relations is an increasing bitterness towards their fellow Indians, of the same racial stock, who follow the religion of Hinduism.

The conclusion we would draw, from the facts presented in this chapter, is that, while the present militant attitude of the Indian Muslims must needs cause us anxiety lest it should result in aggressive violence, there is no reason to expect a combination of Muslim states in one Empire on any political grounds.

There does, however, remain a possibility we have not yet considered. It is referred to at the end of the last quotation from Iqbal's *Reconstruction*, "the unifying bond of a common spiritual aspiration". The next chapter must investigate the common spiritual aspiration of the Islamic peoples.



THE SPIRITUAL URGE

THE sudden rise of Islam in Arabia, unheralded by any Arab equivalent of John the Baptist, the sweep of Muslim armies over all Western Asia and Egypt, and the establishment of an Empire in these more or less civilized countries under the powerful but uncivilized Arab Caliphs, are facts needing explanation. The Arabs were there in Arabia, had been there unchanged for centuries as a rough and sturdy people, but until the seventh century A.D. they had caused no more trouble to the Sassanian and Byzantine Empires than occasional raids over the frontier into the date groves of the civilized inhabitants. The only new thing the conquering Arabs had, which their predecessors had lacked, was unity amongst themselves. This unity arose from a spiritual urge, the recognition of a spiritual fact expressed in the terse formula, "There is no God but Allah. Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah." Here was no spiritual aspiration, no seeking after God if haply they might find Him, no striving to attain some high ideal. The unity of the Arab tribes was the outward expression of a fact, of which now at length they had become aware, the fact that Allah alone reigned supreme. They explained their previous ignorance by saying that the same truth had indeed been revealed from time to time to different nations in the past, by prophets like Moses, David and Jesus; but the truth had been forgotten, and now again had been revealed, this time to the Arabs through Muhammad.

The force of Muhammad's message lay in its simplicity: one God, one prophet, one religion, one day of judgment, one heaven and one hell, all perfectly definite and clear-cut. For heathen Arabs, with their confused

and hazy polytheistic ideas, the simple Muhammadan creed brought order out of chaos in the same way that Newton's law of motion brought order into mechanics in the seventeenth century, and Dalton's atomic theory brought order into chemistry in the nineteenth century. There is a close parallel between Dalton's atoms—small, hard, indivisible lumps, of which nothing could be predicated except their weights and valencies—and Muhammad's God, one and indivisible, of whom little else but His unity could be told. There is a parallel, too, between Newton's moving body which continues in uniform motion in a straight line and God the eternal in past and future who always was and ever will be unchangeable. But, for the rest, Newton's laws and Dalton's hypothesis needed knowledge and thought to understand them. Muhammad's creed needed neither, and consequently could appeal to every Arab.

It is not quite so obvious why Syrians, Persians and Egyptians, all of them more educated than the Arabs, and many of them Christians, accepted the Muslim message, and joined Islam. It has been cynically said that the Christians were tired of theological disputes about whether our Lord Jesus Christ had two separate natures, one human and the other divine, or one nature which was at the same time both human and divine; and that they took refuge from such controversies in the simple faith of Islam. This suggestion is not supported by what we know of Asiatic Christianity. It is true that in the fifth century A.D. there had been bitter controversies in the West on the subject of our Lord's nature. It is also true that the two great branches of the Church in Asia, commonly called the Nestorian Church (in Iraq and Persia), and the Jacobite Church (in Syria), adopted the two views which the Catholic (or European) Church had declared to be heretical. Incidentally the story of the Council at which Nestorius was condemned as a heretic is one of the worst scandals in Church history. Now whatever may have been the reason for the adop-

tion of the "one-nature heresy" by the Christians of Syria and Egypt, the reason why the Christians of Iraq and Persia adopted the "two-nature heresy" of Nestorianism is perfectly plain. It was simply a political move to satisfy the Persian Government that Persian Christians had no dealings with their hereditary enemies in Europe. It remained the custom for Nestorians and Jacobites to call the European Christians heretics, but they were not really interested in the old controversy, which probably very few of them had ever understood. The statement, so frequently printed in books on Islam, that the Asiatic Christians in the days of Muhammad belonged to some strange heretical sects, must be denied emphatically as disproved by their writings which have survived; and must therefore not be used, either to explain Muhammad's curious misunderstandings of Christianity, or to explain the conversion of Christians to Islam. The probability is that the Christians who joined Islam joined it as a successful movement—and success to them was an evident mark of divine approval—and as for the theology, they probably noticed very little difference between Christianity and Islam. St. John of Damascus, who was a Catholic, and is often spoken of as the last great doctor of the Greek Church, admitted as much when he spoke of Islam as a Christian heresy. It may imply great ignorance of their faith to suggest that Christians could look on Islam as only a variety of Christianity; but the same thing has actually been reported in recent times from Cape Province, where some of the ignorant Christians have become Muslims just as readily as they might have changed from one Christian denomination to another. After all, Christians and Zoroastrians alike would have said that the Islamic creed put in the forefront what they themselves believed, the unity of God. Christians might have regretted that Jesus was not given a higher place in the new system, but anyhow He was not omitted altogether, and His virgin birth and miracles were safeguarded.

Zoroastrians—if they knew anything of Zoroaster's own teaching—might have regretted that Islam did not so clearly distinguish moral values, the Truth and the Lie, but at any rate Islam did provide a very efficient heaven and hell, and the approach to heaven was over the bridge of razor-like narrowness that was familiar to Zoroastrians. But Christian and Zoroastrian alike would be inclined to welcome the simple faith that had brought under one banner people who had been traditional enemies for hundreds of years, a truly wonderful achievement. That practical result was visible to all; and if learned Christians had asserted, what was perfectly true, that there was very little in Islam that had not been borrowed from Christianity or Judaism, the greater impression would still have remained on men's minds of the marvel of the religion which had united diverse nations, never united before, and made of them an Empire stretching from Baluchistan to Spain.

That is the sort of feeling of spiritual power behind Islam in the earliest days, shared alike by all Muslims whatever their racial origin. As time went on a new kind of greatness began for Islam, a greatness of culture. As far as Western Asia was concerned, the vanguard of civilization was the Nestorian Church, which acted as a bridge-head over which all that survived of Greek culture came as far as Iraq and Persia. The Christians of Iraq formed a considerable proportion of the population. In Persia they were less numerous, but widely spread throughout the whole land. The culture which Christianity had brought with it was of course not the possession of every Christian but of the educated classes, the clergy, doctors, philosophers and scribes. With the Muslim conquest these educated people were given a greater scope than before. Whether they embraced Islam or remained Christian, many of them were employed in the service of the state. The large financial arrangements of the Empire, including the system of taxation, needed men with qualifications that no Arab

had. But the Arabs, though ignorant at the time of the conquest, were not lacking in brains, and before long were learning medicine, philosophy and mathematics from the Christians. We must understand that the Muslims were at a disadvantage in not receiving Greek culture at first hand. They did not receive the authentic works of Aristotle and Plato, but rather the works of the later Neo-platonists. What books they did receive came to them by devious paths, being for the most part translated from Greek into Syriac, and from Syriac into Arabic. Considering these limitations the Muslims did fairly well in their studies, in some of them, such as mathematics, not merely preserving, but adding to, the tradition they had received. Thus it came about that, while Europe was sinking into barbarism as a result of the break-up of the Empire, Muslim Asia and Egypt became the sole repository of Western civilization. At different times the chief centres of the world's learning were Baghdad, Cairo, Bukhara, Samarqand and Ghazna.

The Muslim therefore in those days could look out on the world with the pride of religion, feeling that the true faith which he held had given Islam the cultural primacy of the world, while outside the borders of Islam was the land of darkness and ignorance inhabited by polytheists and worshippers of idols. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that they divided the world into *Dar al-Islam*, the Abode of Islam, and *Dar al-harb*, the Abode of the Sword, the land, that is to say, where Islamic swords must go to carry the blessings of the true religion and all that it entailed.

We can well understand then that it was a real spiritual urge that sent the Muslim invaders into India, and made them attack with violence the Hindus and their idolatrous objects of worship.

It seems that it was first in India that Islam really failed. It failed because, in spite of many converts, India as a whole was too conservative to throw over its ancient inheritance, and adopt Islam as its national re-

ligion even when ruled by Muslim rulers. The more one studies India the more evident it becomes that India is religiously conservative. Everyone will at once point to Buddhism as a religion which tried very hard, and seemed on the point of driving out Hinduism, but in the end it failed. Though successful in foreign lands, Buddhism disappeared from India, leaving as its memorial some considerable influence on the Hinduism which survived. A more striking example, though not so generally recognized, is the failure of the Aryan invaders to impose their religion on India. It was those invaders who, after they had settled in the plains of the Panjab, composed the hymns of the Rigveda, hymns of man in the infancy of polytheistic religion, addressing the gods of nature with joyous confidence, seeking material blessings from them, and seeking to appease their displeasure if by an oversight it had been aroused. The greater number of the gods whose praises are sung in the Rigveda are little more than memories. Shiva or Rudra, it is true, is greatly worshipped to-day, but then he probably was not an Aryan god, and indeed there is some reason for thinking that he was worshipped by the people of Mahenjodaro in the Indus Valley a thousand years before the Aryans appeared. Vishnu is an Aryan god, but a large part of the devotion directed towards him is really devotion to his "incarnation", the un-Aryan Krishna. As yet we do not know the origin of the theory of *karma* and the ceaseless rounds of deaths and rebirths, the grim theory accepted without question from one end of India to the other, perhaps apart from caste the most characteristic feature of Hinduism, but it is certainly not Aryan, and in some sense must owe its origin to the aboriginal religion. Perhaps, above all, when we hear modern Indians speaking of God as Mother rather than Father, we realize that it is the old pre-Aryan aboriginal religion which has prevailed in the hearts of the people, for in that old religion goddesses played the great part, and not gods as with the Aryans.

We are not to suppose that religion has stood still in India. There has been great progress, especially in the realm of pantheistic philosophy; but nowhere has there been a complete break with the past.

The Muslims realized in the end that it was impossible to go on endlessly killing Hindus, idolaters and polytheists though they were. The Hindus would tolerate Islam in the land, but they would not tolerate its exclusiveness. When Gandhi in our own times said, "I cannot put Christ on a solitary throne," it was the old India speaking, the old India that did not know how to be exclusive. The zeal for the further spread of Islam in India was blunted. Moreover there was something else than the obstinacy of the Hindus. Hitherto the Muslims had looked on idolaters and polytheists as ignorant and stupid savages. They could scarcely remain a few centuries in India without realizing that the Hindus were no more savages and fools than the Muslims, that in the moral life and in religious devotion there was little to choose between them, and that they had a philosophy of religion, completely different from that of Islam, but no less profound. Since the British connexion with India the Muslims, unwilling perhaps in the first instance to learn from the Power that had displaced them from the throne of sovereignty, have lagged behind the Hindus in education. We can begin to understand Iqbal's plaint that Islam has lost its spiritual urge. The two traditional forms in which the spiritual urge had shown itself in Islam, first the urge to aggressive war against unbelievers, and then the pride of intellectual pre-eminence, have disappeared. It can scarcely be hidden from the eyes of thinking Muslims that their aggressive wars, apart from any intention of their own, were bound to come to an end because at length they found themselves in every theatre faced by more powerful non-Muslim forces, as we have seen in the summary in Chapter III of European encroachment on Muslim territory during the nineteenth and twentieth

centuries. Few if any even of the thoughtful Muslims have yet come to realize that their loss of pre-eminence in learning is due to the stultifying influence of their stereotyped intellectual system. To that we shall return. With regard to the failure in aggression, it is to be noticed that numerous Muslim voices, especially in India, have declared that *jihad* does not mean war with the sword, but spiritual striving. It would be wrong to suppose that they merely gave up the intention to wage aggressive war because they lacked the power. Rather, this change of attitude is one that has its roots far back in the history of Islam, and to that we must now turn.

In our references to Islamic history so far we have noticed the existence of sects, the two most important of which, lasting through the ages, are the Sunnis and the Shi'a, while in ancient days there were sects like the Kharijites, and in modern days sects like the Wahhabis. There are others too, both ancient and modern, of whom we shall have to speak. These sects arose partly on political and partly on theological grounds. We have noticed also schools of law, such as the Shafi'ites and the Hanifis. There are four such schools, concerned mostly with rather minor points of the law. In no sense are they sects. Any Muslim, unless he is very ignorant, can tell you whether he is a Sunni or a Shi'ite, a Shafi'ite or a Hanifi, for the distinctions between them show externally. The Shi'ites observe Muharram, the days of mourning for Hasan and Husain the sons of Ali, the Sunnis do not (except in India when they join in the processions as in a carnival). The Shafi'ites and the Hanifis divide a man's inheritance differently amongst his relatives.

But there is another distinction in Islam of far greater importance than these, a distinction with no clear-cut lines of demarcation. It will be clearest if we depict the extremes on either side. On the one side there is the Muslim of the type that we have already dealt with, the stern monotheist, the upholder of the

shari'a, the follower of the scholastic system of mediæval philosophers. On the other side there is the mystic, who cares for the nearer presence of God, and feels himself above the written law, whose philosophy if he has one is more pantheistic than monotheistic. The difference between these two types is far greater than that between any two of the sects; it is indeed little less than the difference between some Muslims and some Hindus. Yet they are not separated in distinct sects, and can worship together behind the same leader in the mosque, which Sunni and Shi'ite cannot do. It is convenient to speak of the first or monotheistic type as the orthodox, and the latter or pantheistic type as the Sufi or mystic, though it must be remembered that the Sufis have never been condemned as unorthodox.

The fact is that both grew up side by side in the early history of Islam, and both claimed to find support in the Koran. The claim in the case of the Sufis is slender, but it is there, for undoubtedly Muhammad had a mystic side to his nature, even though the practical tasks he had to undertake tended to emphasize rather his dogmatic side. There is reason to think that Muhammad and his contemporaries were struck by the lives of Christian monks and hermits. There is a Tradition that Muhammad said that there was no monastic life in Islam. Muhammad might have said it, but at any rate it expressed the feeling of the majority in the days of the early Caliphate. There was no room for asceticism in a faith that was to conquer the world with the sword. Soldiers must be well fed; and in those days they needed the enticement of booty in addition to regular wages. But the mood of the spirit that led Muhammad to say that God was nearer to a man than his own neck-vein was present among the Muslims and only waited the opportunity for expression.

Monasticism was common amongst the Egyptian and Asiatic Christians, a monasticism that in many ways was a poor caricature of Christianity. It was extremely

ascetic and very earnest. Above all, the terror of hell filled their minds, and from these terrors it was the untiring effort of ascetic practices rather than the love of Christ that would save them. Perhaps the best we can say of that Christian monasticism is that it was the religion attributed to the angels in a well-known children's hymn:¹

“ They know not Christ as Saviour,
But worship Him as king.”

Here obviously was a point of contact with Muslims, whose chief conception of God was of a tyrant king. The Koran itself had sensuous pictures of heaven and lurid pictures of hell, which are believed to have been borrowed in the main from contemporary Christian sources. So it came about that some early Muslims copied the Christian monks, dressed in the ascetic robe of wool (*suf*) and called themselves Sufis. From their Christian models they learnt the mystic way of approach to God, but their original asceticism was soon dropped and forgotten, so completely forgotten that it needed modern research to rediscover it. Some of the leading Sufis are regarded as the saints of Islam, and there is no doubt that they made great progress in the mystic way.

Meanwhile two other movements were at work in Islam, and both, like Sufism, were influenced by the thought of the eastern Christians, which, of course, carried a Greek inheritance. The first movement is the one that we call orthodox. It began with the conception of Allah, the Despot God of the Koran, whose ways are above being questioned by mere man, and of whom therefore nothing can be predicated that indicates the way He will act. There is a long passage in the Koran teaching this doctrine. It is a story of how Moses went with an unnamed person, usually interpreted as being

¹ Albert Midlane's "There's a Friend for little children".

the legendary figure known as al-Khidr, and was puzzled by certain actions wrought by Khidr, which seemed on the face of them unreasonable and unjust. In the end Khidr explained the reasons for each of his actions, which Moses apparently accepted as satisfactory, though they would scarcely satisfy us that his actions were justifiable. The moral of the story is that we cannot expect to understand the ways of God because the circumstances are necessarily hidden from us. Actually Muhammad went much farther than that, and believed that under no circumstances could we be in a position to say how God would act. To our minds that would imply lack of moral character in God. To Muhammad it implied almightiness and distinction from mere creatures. This difference between the Christian and the Muslim point of view of God is felt by anyone who tries to translate the expression "the character of God" into Arabic or Urdu, for the usual word for "character" means "how one is created" and therefore cannot be used of God. When the Muslims came into contact with Greek thought they identified Muhammad's almighty Allah with the Absolute of the Greeks, the Unknowable. The result was, not only that His character was unknown, but also His attributes. Of course the attributes given Him in the Koran, "loving", "knowing", "merciful" and so on, might still be used; but they were robbed of their meaning by the ruling that they must not be understood in the sense in which those words were commonly used, nor might synonyms of these names be used. It was the same school of scholars who developed the legal system of Islam, and it will readily be seen how extremely strong and unassailable their position was. God was unknowable, and the Koran was the perfect revelation of His will. There was no question about this point, no need to argue for the inspiration of the Koran. It bore its character in itself. The uniqueness of the Koran was a self-evident axiom. The acts and words of Muhammad were only in a

slightly lesser degree beyond question, for (again by self-evident axiom) prophets are without error. Thus the whole system of theology and law, which these scholars deduced from the Koran and the Traditions, was absolutely unquestionable, even though to mere human minds some things might seem unreasonable.

For even in early days there were people who dared to say that some of the doctrines of the orthodox were unreasonable. The people who said this were called the Mu'tazilites, and they also were indebted to the Greeks. They said that all things must be adjudicated at the Court of Reason, and they challenged very effectively some of the conclusions of the orthodox. But unfortunately they were not highly intelligent men, and the Reason which they enthroned was their own very fallible intellect, an intellect that was too rationalistic and too little spiritual. This lack of spirituality they showed in the days when they were in power under Caliph al-Ma'mun and his two successors, A.D. 813-847. Their rationalism did not produce a liberal spirit. They became bitter persecutors of the orthodox. Anyone who dared to say that the Koran was eternal, or that the eye of man after death would see God, was imprisoned, scourged, or even put to death. The stupidity of persecuting people on such dogmatic grounds brought about the fall of the Mu'tazilites, who themselves suffered extreme tortures, like those of the Inquisition, at the hands of al-Mutawakkil who restored the orthodox faith in 847. Apart from this outbreak of fanatical cruelty, it was undoubtedly a triumph for religion, if something of a setback for reason, when the Mu'tazilites fell from power. Their final fall came early in the tenth century through the labours of the great scholar al-Ashari. He saw that reason was not to be despised, but must be kept in its place. He therefore brought into his system as much human reason as possible, which meant in effect the use of reason as a method of argument but not in the establishment of the axioms. In so doing he took

over into orthodoxy all that was best in Mu'tazilism, which then ceased to exist as a separate school of thought.

For a long time Sufism, or the mystic path, was carried on without the approval of the orthodox. It speaks very well for Islam as a religion that Sufism was never condemned as a heresy. Undoubtedly it was an "innovation", which is the Muslim definition of a heresy, for the general tendency of the Sufis has been towards pantheism, the belief that God is not distinct from His creatures, but that all that exists is God. One of them, al-Hallaj, went so far in his pantheism that he declared that he was God. He was executed, but ostensibly for reasons other than heresy or blasphemy. It must have been very distressing for the orthodox, who were trying to establish their barren monotheism, and their stereotyped system of law, to have at their elbow Sufis who were pantheists, and whose mysticism led them to believe that they were above the restrictions of the law. All the more honour to the orthodox who refrained from excommunicating the Sufis, or perhaps to Muslim public opinion which would not allow them to do so. The Umayyad Caliphs had been driven out for being irreligious; the Mu'tazilites had fallen because they were rationalistic; the Sufis were allowed to remain because, whatever their heresies, they were religious. At length Sufism won itself a recognized place in Islam through the personal influence of one of the greatest of Muslims, al-Ghazzali, who died in A.D. 1111.

Thus it comes about that ever since the time of Ghazzali there have been two entirely different currents in Islam, the one official, stern, unbending in devotion to the law; the other unofficial, popular, and among its best exponents, mystic. The experts in the mystic art are duly enrolled under a master, go through long courses of training, and eventually become members of one of the many thoroughly well organized Orders of dervishes. Many other Muslims are in contact more or

less with Sufism. Some attend the Sufi *dhikrs*. These, as the name implies, were originally services for the recollection of the name of God. A company of men gather together and repeat the name of Allah, or it may be the first half of the creed, "There is no God but Allah", in unison, working up their emotions at the same time by united physical movements, until they reach a state of tense excitement. In perhaps the majority of these exercises the emotional element is far more in evidence than the religious. In some cases the *dhikrs* were so debased that their influence was generally regarded as entirely evil; and the Turkish Government were probably quite justified in closing the monasteries and disbanding the dervish Orders. But in other cases the *dhikrs* have been the gathering point of genuine mystics. Other Muslims, and these must be very numerous, who are neither members of Sufi Orders, nor attend the *dhikrs*, are influenced by their ideas, thus bringing into Islam a softening of its hardness, an indifference to its hard and fast regulations, and a tolerance towards other religions. Mysticism always tends towards tolerance; for among mystics, rightly or wrongly, the distinction of religions is blurred. Hindu mystics, Muslim mystics, Christian mystics, are not so far apart as the orthodox exponents of these religions. Thus the influence of Sufism has been to make a large section of the Islamic people more tolerant of other religions, and in particular more tolerant of Hinduism which has its strong *bhakti* or mystic side. This tolerance has been won at the expense of sitting rather loose to the formal orthodoxy, and has also allowed the continuance of types of religion such as saint worship. Here we have a result which might be criticized from the position of higher orthodoxy, but not from the position of genuine spiritual experience. There is no excuse for Iqbal's accusation that Sufis have weakened the spirit of Islam and brought about degradation under the pseudonym of moral culture. It is the Sufi influence that has dared to change

the meaning of *jihad* from aggressive war against infidels to the enduring struggle of the noble spirit against the evil within him. Here, and not in the formal orthodoxy, nor in the primitive religion of the early conquerors, is spiritual aspiration. Often the aspiration flags, or wanders off the line to find satisfaction in purely physical excitement. But among the best of them, the saints of Islam, there has been and still is the search for God. Barren orthodoxy has been satisfied, as Hindu philosophers have been, to speak of God in negative terms that tell us nothing, and can only reply "No, no" to every question we pose about Him. That orthodoxy has been perhaps a support for the weak, like the old man's stick on which he rests his unsteady limbs. It has been no guide to direct the adventurous spirit who seeks the way. So the mystic has gone his own way, without the guidance of the intellect that he sorely needs, but in some cases he has won through and been led by his aspiration near to the Truth he sought.

WHEN SUFIS LOOKED TO JESUS

It was indicated in the last chapter that the old forms of the spiritual urge that once drove Muslims on to conquest and to Empire had lost their force, and that a new urge, which could be described as a spiritual aspiration, had entered Islam with the Sufi movement. It was also indicated that Sufism had long existed under tolerance in Islam, but first attained an acknowledged place through the labours of that great man al-Ghazzali, who died in A.D. 1111. Further, it was suggested that the influence of Sufism had extended far wider in Islam than the numbers of those who are actually members of the Sufi orders. These are large claims, and it is right that they should not be made without the support of an authority on the subject. Professor Nicholson¹ explained how Ghazzali resigned his professorship of theology and canon law in the Nizamiya College at Baghdad, and went into retirement as a Sufi, having been able through personal religious experience to accept the truths of Sufism and combine them with the orthodox position. He then went on to say, "By frankly accepting the main Sufi position Ghazzali gave a new meaning to Islam and an assured place within its fold to many earnestly religious men and women whom the formalists would have driven out if they could. Henceforth Islam is in large measure a mystical faith."

Naturally the acceptance of Sufism as a permissible form of Islam must have given it a great impetus; and it is not surprising that some of the greatest Muslim mystics belong to the period after Ghazzali, e.g. Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani who died in 1166, Ibn al-Arabi who died in 1240, and Jalal ad-din ar-Rumi who died in 1273.

¹ E.R.E., vol. xii, p. 14, art. Sufis.

In speaking of the origin of Sufism the influence of Christian monks has been mentioned. Some writers have seen the influence of Buddhism or Vedantism in the pantheism that is found in Sufism, and that may well be the case though it is difficult to prove. But there can be no doubt that Christian influence was very great, not only in the beginnings of Sufism, but also in its development, and particularly in the reverence for Christ Himself conceived of as the great ascetic.¹ There is a passage in Ghazzali's book, *The Precious Pearl*, which shows how he gave a unique place to Jesus, but yet as an orthodox Muslim quoted the Koran against the supposed Christian trinity of God, Jesus and Mary. In this passage Ghazzali tells a story of how departed souls wandered from one prophet to another seeking someone to intercede for them with God. Each prophet refused, and sent them on to another. Moses sent them on to Jesus, saying, "But go to Jesus, for He is of all the apostles the one who offers most guarantees for certainty, the one who knows God best, the most ascetic and the wisest of them. Perhaps He will intercede for you. . . . Then they went to Jesus and said to Him, Thou art the Spirit of God and the Word of God. To thee God has given the highest title in the world below and in the world to come. Intercede therefore for us with God to pronounce the judgment. Jesus replied to them, Men have taken me and my mother as Gods in the place of God Most High. How dare I intercede for you with Him by the side of whom they adore me, and of whom they say that I am His Son and He is my Father?" The asceticism of Jesus which is here referred to is emphasized even more in another passage in the same book. In the Judgment some poor people were led in and were asked, "Who has turned you away from living according to the will of God Most High?" They replied, 'God proved us in the world below by wretched poverty which turned us away from living according to His will.' Someone

¹ See *The Eclipse of Christianity in Asia*, pp. 132ff.

said to them, 'Who is the poorest, you or Jesus?' They replied, 'Certainly Jesus.' It was said to them, 'That did not turn Him away from living according to the will of God Most High and from consecrating Himself to remember Him.' . . . O reader, take Christ as your model, for it is said that He had no purse. For twenty years He wore the same shirt of wool (*suf*); on His journeys He carried nothing but a mug and a comb. One day He saw a man drinking out of the hollow of his hand. Immediately He threw away His mug and used it no more. Then He passed by a man combing his beard with his fingers. Immediately He threw away His comb and used it no more." To us this caricature of Christ is pathetic. The Gospels show clearly that He would not have acted as this story relates, for there is all the difference in the world between giving one's coat to a poor man in need, and throwing away mug and comb and benefiting no one by doing so.

It may be that this idea of an ascetic Jesus began with the oriental Christian monks, but the development to His becoming the greatest of the ascetics was probably due to Sufis, who also regarded Him, doubtless on account of His asceticism, as the greatest of the saints. Anyhow, whatever the cause may have been, we find in the great Sufis of this period a wistful longing for Jesus, but a Jesus whom we can scarcely recognize, for He was neither the historical man of Nazareth, nor the divine being that Christian theology declared Him to be.

Al-Jilani was deeply influenced by Christianity, and by Christ, and by the asceticism associated with Him. Baron Carra de Vaux says of him:¹ "One cannot fail to recognize a certain Christian influence in [Jilani's mysticism]; especially in the importance given to the virtues of charity, humility, meekness, in his precept of obedience to the spiritual director, and in the aim held before an ascetic, which is spiritual death and the entire self-surrender of the soul to God. Al-Jilani's respect for

¹ E.R.E., vol. i, p. 11, art. Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani.

Jesus was very great, and the tradition of this respect is still kept in his order. His love of poverty recalls that of St. Francis of Assisi." Carra de Vaux, of course, did not mean that there was any actual influence on Jilani from St. Francis. St. Francis personally must have made a great impression on the Saracens when he crossed no-man's-land between the Frankish and the Saracen armies and went and preached Christ to them; but that was in a later generation, for he was born in 1182, sixteen years after Jilani's death. Ibn al-Arabi spoke of Christ in these high words of praise, "Surely the seal of the saints is an apostle; and in the world He has no equal. He is the Spirit and the Son of the Spirit, and Mary is His mother." The expression "seal of the saints" means the last and greatest of the saints, and is modelled on Muhammad's title "the seal of the prophets".

Jalal ad-din Rumi has one passage in which he brings out forcibly the principle of life through death, as a principle connected with Jesus. He tells a long story of a parrot who pretended to be dead, and so achieved its object of being thrown out of its cage, and was able to fly away free. Then comes the beautiful moral: "The meaning of dying as conveyed by the parrot was self-abasement: make thyself dead in supplication and poverty (of spirit), that the breath of Jesus may revive thee and make thee fair and blessed as itself." But though Jalal ad-din could thus speak in praise of Jesus, he could also speak in contempt of Christians, "See the ignorance of the Christian appealing for protection to the Lord who was suspended on the cross! Since according to the Christian's belief He was crucified by the Jews, how then can He protect him?" Jalal ad-din lived at the end of the period of the Crusades. He may have heard of the saintly Francis and his efforts to commend the gospel to Muslims; but whatever good impressions of Christ were conveyed by St. Francis, the Crusaders themselves had left a very different impression of Christians.

The period after Jalal ad-din is very instructive for the understanding of Islam, because we see then the results of earlier tendencies. Eighteen years after his death the Crusades came to an inglorious end with the fall of Akka in 1291. Right up till that moment Asiatics had thought that there might be some strength in Christianity and in the European Christian Powers. Indeed the Mongols were till then undecided whether it were more advantageous to turn Christian or Muslim, and had seriously entertained the idea of treaties of alliance with European Powers against the Turks. The final failure of the Crusades settled their minds: they became Muslims, and began in 1295 the terrible persecution of the Christians which almost wiped out Christianity from Western Asia. It is not surprising that under the circumstances of such a time Muslim Sufis no longer spoke in praise of Jesus.

It is more surprising to find that the same period was one of political and cultural decay. War had done its work—the two centuries of desultory war in Palestine against the Frankish invaders, and the shorter but more ghastly invasion of the barbarian Mongols. The picture of destruction and desolation drawn by the traveller Ibn Batutta after his journeys through Syria, Iraq, Iran and Transoxania in the early part of the fourteenth century is most impressive: towns in ruins, towns become mere villages, towns standing empty totally unoccupied. It is only in Transoxania, in the cities of Bukhara and Balkh, that he attributes the destruction to the invader. Elsewhere he gives no reason, or speaks of the feuds of Muslims with one another, or of the raids by Arab nomads. These things are the signs of misgovernment, partly no doubt resulting from the Mongol invasion, but partly dating back further to the political failure of the Caliphate that had not been able to control the princes of Persia and Iraq who had made themselves more or less independent. Ibn Batutta also speaks with sorrow of the decay of culture. In Basra, once the centre of Arabic culture, he could not find a preacher who could speak

without breaking the rules of grammar. Kufa, sacred in Muslim history, always associated with learning, lay a heap of ruins. What Ibn Batutta saw was the beginning of the end. Within a century of his time Muslim culture was dead; but in the mercy of providence the Muslims had been allowed to hold that torch of learning until they had handed it back to Europe whence it had come. Learning returned to Europe in the fifteenth century, and in the same century learning departed from Islam.

Once in Hebrew history, when the Ark was captured and everything seemed lost, the cry went up "Ichabod!" "The glory is departed." But when the Israelites realized that they had failed because they had confined the presence of God to a wooden box, the glory returned. We may take comfort from this historical parallel as we contemplate these sad events in Islamic history which resulted from what had gone before. Though we may not be able to see the details, the general outline is clear. Another parallel to be drawn from our Old Testament studies is that we have learnt to recognize the stereotyping of the Law, which took place when the Pentateuch was completed in the fifth or fourth centuries B.C., as one of the causes of Israel's spiritual decline, and particularly of her loss of her most unique power, the gift of prophecy. When it was supposed that the whole of God's will was written in a book it was only natural that anyone who dared to proclaim God's will, otherwise than from the Book, was regarded as an impostor. In Zechariah xiii prophets are called deceivers, they are coupled with unclean spirits, and prophets are threatened with execution at the hands of their parents.

In Islam the stereotyping process took place in stages. It may be said to have begun as soon as people talked of the Koran as infallible. The later extravagant doctrines of the Koran as uncreated and eternal added to the process. And when, on the supposed basis of the Koran and the Traditions, with Analogy and Consensus of

opinion thrown in, the collections of the *shari'a* were established as the unchangeable law for all time, the process was complete. If the theory of the Caliphate had not been stereotyped as it was, there might have been political developments which would have held together the Muslim Empire in some sort of federation of autonomous states. Again if the Koran had not been regarded as infallible, it would have been possible for Muslims, who were attracted to Jesus, to enquire from the Christians about Him. But they were bound to accept as all-important the odd assortment of facts and legends that the Koran contains about Him. In the wider field of learning the same thing happened on a larger scale. Muslims had shown themselves capable of intellectual study, and they had made a good beginning in all the different branches of learning known in those days. But, having reached a certain stage, they progressed no further, and it can scarcely be doubted that their progress was thwarted by a closed system which treated every innovation as a heresy.

The condition of utter decay that had come over the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century, so that it was pathetically spoken of as the Sick Man of Europe, was simply another result of the same process. On-lookers regarded the slackness that allowed, for instance, the irrigation system of Iraq to fall into decay, as a result of Muslim fatalism. It was in a way; but that fatalism was not merely the philosophical theory of predestination, but an attitude of mind engendered by the whole system of Islam.

If, even in the most general way, this attempt to see the causes of the decline of Islam in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the orientation of her ideas during the preceding centuries is substantially correct, the recognition of this fact might have important results.

In 1935 the present author gave an address to a meeting of Muslim students in Rangoon, and dealt with the principal subject matter of this chapter, namely the wistful

longing for Jesus of the great Sufis of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and the cessation of their search for Him. It was suggested that the hope for Islam was to pick up the threads of the search where their forefathers had laid them down, and to attempt once more to find Jesus. The Muslim chairman rather naturally resented the suggestion and spoke for half an hour to refute it. But after the meeting a number of the audience rushed forward enthusiastically towards the platform, and one of them in particular shook hands vigorously with the lecturer. It was as if something in the suggestion of going back, not to Arabia of the seventh century, but to the days of Islam's greatest period of development, appealed to the audience, as if they realized that the Sufis of that age were on the verge of a great discovery, and that the history of Islam would have been very different if they had pursued their search.

We have seen that the *shari'a* provides no cement by which a new Empire of Islam can be bound together; and that the orthodox principles of Islam supply no spiritual urge sufficient to restore its political greatness. We have also seen that there are elements in Sufism which have in them what may be called "spiritual aspiration". Our next subject of enquiry must be whether, among all the modern movements of Islam, there are any tendencies towards developing this spiritual aspiration and freeing Islam from the legal shackles which have hitherto retarded or inhibited its growth.

VII

THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF MODERN MOVEMENTS

WE have found some reason for believing that within the moribund shell of Islam there are some elements which are distinctly spiritual, and some men of whom it may be said that they are moved by a spiritual urge, or even by spiritual aspiration. It would indeed be surprising if this were not the case, for out of two hundred million persons one would expect to find some who are dissatisfied with the spiritual deadness around them and are seeking greater spiritual satisfaction.

In Islam outstanding men have always been sure of a following, and men outstanding in religion have very readily been accepted as saints and accorded veneration after their decease. It is, however, to be noted that the saints whose tombs are venerated are remembered as a rule for their miracles rather than for any particular contribution to the knowledge of God, the systematization of theology, or the revival of the religious life. What we now have to investigate is whether any modern Muslims, who have tried to revive the religious life around them, have succeeded in winning like-minded disciples and so starting a movement for the quickening of religion. For it is only by the formation of such movements that the more spiritually minded individuals can hope to influence the body of Muslims. In Islam, as we have already seen, the religious and the secular go hand in hand. A Muslim would therefore call a movement "Islamic" whether it was what we should call political or religious; and though the Muslim may refuse to make the distinction, we are bound to do so. In searching for signs of forces working within Islam which might make it a power to be reckoned with, we are not

particularly interested in merely political movements. The significant movements are those which are inspired. Without attempting to give a complete history of any of the modern movements, we shall look to see to what extent their ecclesiastical, political, educational or controversial activities are caused by underlying spiritual ideals.

In India we turn first to the Ahmadiyya Movement, familiar to most people for its strongly anti-Christian controversial activities. The founder of this movement, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian in the Panjab, reminds us in many respects of Muhammad himself. Like Muhammad he saw visions and heard voices, and was what nowadays might be called a pathological case. Both felt called by genuine spiritual experience to remedy the religious ills of their day. Both made extravagant claims for themselves beyond all reason. Almost all these things could equally well be said of Alexander Cruden of the eighteenth century, a man to whom many generations of English-speaking people are indebted beyond measure for his Bible Concordance. He believed that he was entrusted with a divine commission to reform England, and thought that his authority to do so should be recognized by the King in Council, and that he should be nominated "Corrector of the People" by Act of Parliament. His contemporaries thought he was more than merely eccentric, and shut him up from time to time in lunatic asylums. Probably modern doctors would not have certified Cruden as insane, though they would have called him a pathological case. Genius in some cases seems to be associated with unusual mental states, and to say that the Mirza, or even Muhammad himself, suffered in this way, is not to detract from their originality and greatness. To continue the comparison between the two, both were interested in the other religions around them, and learnt a good deal from them, but took no trouble to investigate their beliefs seriously, and indeed seemed completely in-

capable of forming a balanced judgment about them. Both had personal charm, but in dealing with opponents were ruthless in attack and vituperation. It is scarcely too much to say that if we could understand the extraordinary inconsistencies and mixture of characteristics that went to the make-up of the Mirza, we should be nearer to understanding the baffling character of Muhammad.

To attempt to understand the Mirza it is necessary to go back to the year 1889, when, at the age of fifty, he announced his first revelation, and to consider the religious atmosphere in which he found himself. The ordinary types of Hinduism were nothing new: Muslims had perforce lived in their presence for centuries, and had never recovered from their first disgust at the polytheism and idolatry. There was, however, one religious element in Hinduism which did not escape his attention, and that was the devotion to the Lord Krishna, as we shall see presently. Of the monotheistic Brahmo Samaj he was almost unaware, probably because its followers were few and mostly far away in Bengal. He had only contempt for the Arya Samaj, which he looked on as political, rationalistic and aggressive. Of Islam as he saw it he almost despaired. It was in the hands of the maulvies, who upheld the stereotyped system which had throttled the life out of Islam. Their ignorance, and their slavery to the letter of the law, appalled him.

In 1875, only fourteen years before the Mirza had staked his claim to *bai'at* (i.e. the homage due to a religious leader), Sir Syed Ahmad Khan had founded the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh in the United Provinces. To our minds the movement that he inaugurated was of the greatest benefit to the Muslims of India, who had been left behind by the Hindus in the march of education. No doubt his high valuation of Western learning had the effect of making him value less the traditional wisdom of Islam; and in claiming the right of reason to be heard against tradition he seemed

to be following in the footsteps of the old Mu'tazilites, the rationalists of the ninth century A.D. Syed Amir Ali, who belonged to the same movement, actually admitted his sympathy with the Mu'tazilites. Now Mirza Ghulam Ahmad might have been expected to show sympathy with people who were opposed to traditional Islam, seeing that he was so strongly opposed to traditionalism as seen in the maulvies; but he regarded the Aligarh leaders, not as religious men who were out to reform Islam, but as rationalists who were prepared to abandon it. It must be admitted that the Aligarh Movement was not a development of Islam from within, but an attempt to introduce into it from without the elements of Western learning which it lacked. The Mirza, in spite of his frequent quoting from Western books, especially such as provided a handle for attacks on Christianity, was totally unversed in Western methods of thought and argument, and therefore felt no sympathy whatever for this aspect of the Aligarh Movement. In one place he couples his condemnation of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Syed Amir Ali by saying that they "could go no further, nor see deeper into the facts, for they had no assurance of the open voice of God and His clear word, of a superhuman power and of an external revelation that did not proceed from the human heart".¹

The All-India Muslim League was founded in 1906, two years before the Mirza's death. He rightly saw that its only interest was politics, and for that reason condemned it. Though politics and religion have always gone hand in hand in Islam, the true instinct of Muslims has always been to oppose those, like the Umayyad Caliphs, who cared only for political power and not for religion. There has been a lack of continuity in the politics of Indian Muslims generally as well as in the Muslim League, showing itself in the support given at one time to the Congress, the definite alliance with

¹ *Review of Religions*, quoted by Walter, *Ahmadiya Movement*, p. 66.

Hindus during the time of the Khilafat agitation, and in recent times in the sharpening of their demands for complete independence both from Britain and from Hindu India. This lack of continuity is due to the absence of any principle of action, a clear evidence that the policy is not directed or controlled by the dictates of their religion. A parallel is seen in the lack of principle in foreign politics of which the Hebrew prophets complained.

The Mirza saw Christianity through two different pairs of spectacles. On the one hand he believed all that was said about Christ in the Koran, including the charge that Christians had taken Him and His Mother as two Gods beside God. On the other hand he saw Christianity in the aggressive proselytism of the missionaries. We do well to remember that a great deal of the preaching in those days was very provocative and aggressive, and was far too ready to point out the weaknesses of other religions without taking enough trouble to ensure an accurate judgment, and far too slow to acknowledge the truths to be found in non-Christian religions. The sort of arguments used by missionaries in those days were often ill-considered. For many years there was a tract in vogue which sought to prove that, since the promise of God was made to Isaac and not to Ishmael, it must be fulfilled in Jesus, the descendant of Isaac, and not in Muhammad, the descendant of Ishmael. When the Mirza took up his parable against the Christians, his controversial arguments went much further than this in baseless futility; but it must be admitted that Christians had shown him the way.

That, then, was the religious background of the Mirza who in 1889 announced that a divine revelation had authorized him to accept *bai'at*, or the homage due to a religious leader. A few disciples attached themselves to him, and then in 1891 came his startling claim to be the Messiah and the Mahdi. Both terms are familiar in Islam, and the former in Judaism and Christianity. The

use of the term Messiah by Jews and Christians is too well known to need defining here; but of course when the Mirza said he was the Messiah he took it in the Christian sense and meant the second coming of Christ. Muslim views about the Messiah and the Mahdi have varied somewhat. The Messiah is identified with Jesus in the Koran, and the second coming of Jesus at the end of the world is referred to in Muslim Traditions which find support in certain ambiguous verses of the Koran. The later Traditions also refer to the Mahdi who will appear with the Messiah as a separate person. The Shi'a Muslims make much more of the Mahdi for, instead of the Caliphs, they acknowledge a series of historical leaders whom they call Imams, the last of whom disappeared in A.D. 874; and they believe that this last Imam is in hiding, and will some day return as Mahdi. The Mirza's claims at once roused opposition from orthodox Muslims, and a legal pronouncement that he and his followers were heretics was issued over the signatures of a number of important Indian maulvies. His excommunication has been taken seriously in Afghanistan, where four Ahmadis, who had come to propagate their doctrines, were executed by stoning, two of them as recently as 1924. In India itself the excommunication has not been taken so seriously, for the Ahmadis have served the cause of Islamic controversy well by their intensive anti-Christian propaganda.

In his claim to be the second coming of Christ, the Mirza seems to have believed that in a mystic way he had become identical with Mary, and then with Jesus. At other times he claimed to be greater than Jesus. There was one difficulty in claiming that he was the Mahdi, for it was generally agreed that the Mahdi would lead the Muslims forth in a victorious *jihad*, a literal war against the infidels. This was not only ancient theory, but was fresh in people's minds, for it was only six years earlier, in 1885, that Khartoum had fallen and the Mahdi Muhammad Ahmad, who had

stirred the whole of the Sudan to revolt, had been killed. The Mirza entirely repudiated any intention of revolt, and consistently declared his loyalty to the British rule in India. As far as one can make out he intended to repudiate the idea of *jihad* altogether, and not merely against the British Government in India. Thus he went further than Sir Ahmad Khan who, out of loyalty to the Government, which he had supported right through the Mutiny, declared that India was *Dar al-Islam*, the Abode of Islam, and not *Dar al-harb*, the Abode of the Sword. The Mirza's followers take *jihad* in the sense that the Sufis call the greater *jihad*, i.e. striving against sin. The Mirza's repudiation of *jihad* must be reckoned as one of his most progressive acts, though in his dealings with his personal enemies he was the reverse of gentle. Indeed it became his habit to foretell the death of his enemies, and some of them did actually die under suspicious circumstances, so that the Government had to restrain him from making any further damaging prophecies.

It is not quite clear what relationship the Mirza claimed to the Prophet. In one place he went so far as to say, "The wise and knowing God has raised Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian with the same spirit and power, the same blessings and favours, and the same miracles, with which he raised the Holy Prophet."¹ This would certainly seem to be a claim to equality with Muhammad, but elsewhere he speaks of himself as "the Messiah of Muhammad, as Jesus was the Messiah of Moses", and he also speaks of Muhammad by the common title "Seal of the Prophets" which means the last and culmination of the prophets. In one passage he explains his relationship to Muhammad in a mystic way distinctly reminiscent of Sufi language, "All the doors of prophethood are closed save one, i.e. that of losing one's individuality in that of the Prophet. One that

¹ This and the following quotations are borrowed from Walter's *Ahmadiya Movement*.

approaches the Almighty through this door begins to reflect the same old prophethood of Muhammad. He becomes a prophet, but we cannot call him a new prophet for he is one with his master." The same Sufi tone appears in his allegorical treatment of the pilgrimage to Mecca, which he, perhaps for health reasons, never made in the literal sense. He said, "The *hajj* represents the last stage for the spiritual wayfarer when he has all his lower connexions entirely cut off, and he is completely engrossed with divine love. The true lover finds his highest satisfaction in sacrificing his very heart and soul for the beloved one's sake, and the circuit round the house of God is an emblem of external manifestation of it."

His claim to be a spiritual manifestation of Krishna was first made public in 1904, when he said that he had been told repeatedly that he was Krishna for the Hindus. He thus appeared in a new role as he addressed the Arya Samaj with the words, "As Krishna I now warn the Aryas of some of their errors."

That, then, is a brief picture of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, and one can summarize it by saying that he had a genuine religious sense, and felt a genuine call to reform, not only the Islam he saw around him, but all other religions with which he came in contact. His personal claims, absurd as they sound, were only an expression of his conviction that he was called to reform the various religions.

What for our purpose is more important than the study of this particular man is the question whether the really religious aspects of his life and teaching have been continued as a Movement amongst his numerous followers. In 1914 a schism took place amongst them. Those who followed their founder most closely are now known as the Qadianis, and they still regard him as a prophet. The more numerous and active party, the Ahmadiyyas of Lahore, pay no regard to any of his extravagant claims beyond regarding him as a reformer.

Mr. Walter, writing in 1918, saw the greatest hope in the Qadian group. He spoke of them as "a community where there existed abundant enthusiasm and zeal for religion, of a vigorous, positive kind unusual in Islam in India at the present time". Since his time, it has been seen that the Lahore Ahmadiyyas are the most vigorous and growing section, though unfortunately the greater part of their energy has been devoted to attacks on Christianity. One of their most prominent assertions is that Christianity is a religion of ideals impossible of fulfilment, whereas Islam is a practical religion suited to men as they are. No claim could more clearly express the fact that the Ahmadiyya group is lacking in the urge to spiritual aspiration. Only two of the new ideas put forward by the Mirza seem to be carried on, one the spiritual interpretation of *jihad* as the struggle against sin, and the other the belief that the mere performance of the external laws of the *shari'a* without the religious spirit behind it is of no avail. It is important to notice that both these ideas were borrowed from Sufism, although the Mirza and his followers of the Qadian party reckoned Sufis as infidels. The Mirza was evidently influenced by Sufism more than he realized; and it seems likely that the abiding value of the Ahmadiyya Movement will be the introduction of such Sufi ideas into ordinary Islam.

It does not yet appear that the Lahore Ahmadiyyas have sufficiently thought out their position to know exactly what they stand for. An article in their English paper, *The Light*, summarized by Mr. Bevan Jones,¹ gave their main objects as follows: (1) a liberal Islam, believing that all the religions of the world have a divine origin, (2) a united Islam, contending that there are present among Muslims no sectarian differences worth the name, and that all are agreed on the essentials, (3) a rational Islam; the Koran, and not the books of the law, is their guide, so "Back to the Koran" is their

¹ *The People of the Mosque*, p. 216.

clarion call. They encourage the free use of reason and a free interpretation of the Koran in the light of new world conditions. (4) a free Islam: at all costs the yoke of the maulvies must be cast off, (5) a perfect Islam, thus making unnecessary a second advent of either a Christ or a Mahdi, and (6) a triumphant Islam: it is the Muslim's duty to carry Islam to the ends of the earth. Comments are necessary on the first four points. (1) The belief in a liberal Islam is only an extension of Muhammad's own belief in previous revelations, and in effect it does not mean much, because it remains possible, for instance, to attack Christianity saying that Christians have not preserved intact their original revelation. (2) The belief in a united Islam, of course, refers to religious and not political unity. It cannot be said that the Ahmadiyyas have as yet done anything towards reconciling themselves with the Qadianis or the Sunnis, let alone reconciling Sunnis and Shi'ites. (3) There is an inconsistency which is difficult to understand in the demand both for rationalism and for a return to the Koran. Rationalism in Islam has usually meant the free use of reason, as is exemplified in modern times by the Aligarh Movement. As the Ahmadis do not seem to have any liking for the Aligarh attitude, we must assume that they use the word "rational" in a different sense. But they can scarcely be said to be entirely honest in their claim to rest everything on the Koran. Perhaps the most striking evidence for this charge is the attempt to prove—against the plain statement of the Koran—that Jesus had a human father, one writer in *The Light* going so far as to say, "It is therefore in the best interests of Islam that Jesus should be brought down from his divine pedestal. In crediting him with a miraculous birth as well as a miraculous flight to heaven, the Musalmans are only confirming the Christian contention that Jesus was divine, not human. It is, therefore, the crying call of the day to prove that Jesus was born in exactly the same way as any man is born, and that,

like all the rest of mortals, he too had to drink the cup of death." Such opinions would be perfectly feasible for rationalists, but are unreasonable for those who make the Koran their basis. A study of the translation of the Koran by Muhammad Ali, the head of the Ahmadiyya community, gives the impression of one who is trying to find his own views in the Koran, and not one who takes the Koran as the basis of his faith. Some of the early lawyers of Islam tried to use their own opinion or common sense (*rae*) as a basis of the law, but were prevented from doing so. One can only suspect that the Ahmadiyyas are unconsciously doing the same thing. (4) The demand for freedom from the influence of the maulvies is one of the most constant demands of the Ahmadiyyas, and is really a strong point because it means the yoke of the traditional law. Yet even the maulvies of India are being influenced by modern ideas, as was seen a few years back when a newspaper invited opinions about the future lot of a good-living Hindu and an evil-living Muslim. The orthodox answer to the problem undoubtedly is that the good-living Hindu goes to hell and the evil-living Muslim to heaven; but the great majority of the maulvies who answered the question would not give that answer.

It would be more effective if the Ahmadiyyas directed their attacks at the *shari'a* itself rather than at the maulvies who uphold it. The maulvies or mullahs of India hold greater power than ever before. They are the men trained in Muslim theological colleges, who in Arabic-speaking countries are known as the *'ulamā*. In India they are now organized in a body called the *Jam'iat ul-'ulamā-i-Hind* with its headquarters at Delhi. This body has annual conferences, and from time to time issues *fatwas* or legal decisions on important matters. It would be within their power to issue a *fatwa* to the effect that *jihad*, in the sense of war of the sword against unbelievers, was incompatible with Islam as the religion of peace. If they did this, and if, further, they

acknowledged as correct the present legal *status quo* which obtains in most Muslim countries, viz., that the *shari'a* is only obligatory in religious and personal matters, it would be of very great service in the interests of world peace, and would do more than anything else to prepare the way for a reconciliation between Muslims and other communities in India.

Although the Ahmadiyya Movement has not at present any properly thought out policy, they have an unexpressed divine discontent, which shows itself in its various pugnacious activities. They are discontented with the spiritual life of modern Islam, with its leaders, with its laws, with its legal bases. The absence of any clear principle of action, or of any constructive proposals for reform, are warnings to us not to expect too much from them. But on the other hand, so long as this divine discontent lasts, there remains the possibility of a genius emerging from amongst them capable of enunciating the principle for a thorough-going reform.

We turn now from India to Persia to deal with the Babi and Baha'i Movements. The late Professor E. G. Browne had great hopes of something coming out of these movements, and indeed it is hard to deny spiritual force behind a movement which led many people to martyrdom. However, the importance of the movements from our point of view is that they illustrate positively the so often contraverted dictum of Lord Cromer that Islam reformed is Islam no longer. For these movements have failed to remain within the bounds of Islam. What we have to consider, then, is (1) whether the separation from Islam was due to the reforms; and if so, whether it was simply due to too great haste in their application, as happened in the case of King Amanullah's rash attempt to modernize Afghanistan, or (2) whether the separation was due to innovations which in themselves were completely incompatible with Islam.

The history of the two movements briefly is this. In

1844 a certain Mirza Ali Muhammad of Shiraz in Persia, a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, declared himself the Bab or door through which approach could be made to the hidden Imam, the last of the twelve Shi'ite Imams who had not been heard of since his disappearance in A.D. 874. This was a regular Shi'ite conception, and had the Bab stopped there the Shi'ite authorities would not have had a very strong case against him. But he went much further than that, for he borrowed from the Isma'ilian branch of the Shi'a the conception of Universal Intelligence, the first of a series of emanations from the unknowable God, and declared that he himself was an emanation from this Intelligence. Now the Isma'ilians not only erred by believing in seven Imams instead of twelve, but their whole history showed them to be capable of the worst heresies. The acceptance, therefore, of a purely Isma'ilian doctrine was enough to brand the Bab as a dangerous heretic in the eyes of the Persian Shi'ites. He was consequently executed by the Government in 1850. Before his death he had also claimed to be the returned Imam, a claim which in itself was not necessarily heretical since all Shi'ites do look forward to the return of the last Imam. Besides his personal claims, the Bab proposed extremely drastic reforms of Islam, including the abolition of the *shari'a*, equality of the sexes, abolition of circumcision and ablutions, and the legalization of interest on loans. While these reforms alone would no doubt have raised the most serious opposition, it cannot be maintained that they were the cause of his condemnation to death.

For two years after the Bab's death his followers attracted no notice, but in 1852 three or four of them made an attempt on the life of the Shah. This foolish and criminal act gave occasion for a terrible persecution of the Babis, who showed such constancy in the face of death as to win many converts to the new faith. The two sons of the Bab, known as Subh-i-Ezel and his elder half-brother Baha'ullah, escaped the persecution and

reached Baghdad. Subh-i-Ezel was supposed to be the head, but Baha'ullah was older and of a more forceful character and gradually supplanted him. The Persian Government did not like to have this somewhat turbulent movement so near their frontiers, and brought pressure to bear upon the Turkish Government to remove the two half-brothers to European Turkey. At Adrianople in 1866 Baha'ullah decided to take the lead openly. He declared that he was the one whom the Bab had foretold would be manifested by God. Then he proceeded to cut loose altogether from Islam. He called his new religion Baha'ism, and presented it, not as a reformed Islam, but as a new universal religion. The rites of Islam were abolished, *jihad* was abolished, monogamy was encouraged and more than two wives definitely forbidden, prayer could be offered when and where one wished. This new policy of Baha'ullah was opposed by Subh-i-Ezel and other Babis, and the two half-brothers quarrelled so seriously that they were exiled to different places, the former to Akka in Syria, and the latter to Cyprus. Baha'ullah died in 1892, acknowledged by most of the party. Subh-i-Ezel lived quietly till his death in 1912. The same sort of quarrel arose between the two sons of Baha'ullah, and in this case too the power eventually went to the more progressive brother, who took the name of Abdul Baha and completed the break-away from Islam. In the East the Baha'is seem to have dwindled, though they have found some success in America and Europe. Baha'ism, being a new religion, has no further interest for us as a reform movement in Islam, and it is impossible to draw any conclusions from the episode about the possibility of introducing into Islam the reforms that were attempted. At one time the number of Baha'is in Persia was estimated at between 800,000 and 1,000,000, say between five and seven per cent of the whole population. If this were true it would suggest that under favourable conditions Muslims might be prepared to change their faith in something like a mass

movement, and that perhaps Muslim races are not so indissolubly bound to the faith of Islam as is commonly assumed. Mr. J. R. Richards,¹ however, tells us that the number of Baha'is in Iran has been greatly exaggerated. He also pointed out that the great number of martyrs, on whose account the Movement gained such respect in the West, were mostly Babis and not Baha'is. He had not a high opinion of the Baha'ism as a religion, and gave reasons for thinking that the conversion of a Muslim to Baha'ism was not the acceptance of a new religion so much as a step on the road to materialism.

From the extreme innovations of the Babis and Baha'is we pass to the extreme conservatism of the Wahhabis. Taking their inspiration from Ibn Taimiyya, a Hanbalite of the fourteenth century A.D., the Wahhabis became a puritanical sect in the area of Central Arabia known as Nejd during the eighteenth century. Ibn Taimiyya had objected to the acceptance of Consensus of Muslim opinion as a basis for the law, the use of speculative reason, and the cult of the saints. These and similar points formed the armoury of the eighteenth-century Wahhabis. They would not accept any basis of law except the Koran and the earliest Traditions of Muhammad. Their dislike of the cult of the saints led them to attacks on their tombs, even going so far as to plunder the tomb of the Prophet at Medina. After a short period of warlike successes they were curbed by the Turks, and retired to their desert homes in the Nejd. The existence of this strongly puritanical sect of Hanbalite Wahhabis excited some interest in other parts of the Muslim world. But Muslims living under more civilized conditions were not likely to adopt a creed that made the use of tobacco and the cult of the saints illegal. Since the First World War the Wahhabis have come into political power in Arabia. Abdul Aziz Ibn Sa'ud, whose capital was at Riadh in Southern Nejd, conquered his rival in Northern Nejd, and then seized the holy

¹ In *The Moslem World* for October 1931.

cities of Mecca and Medina and made himself the master of the greatest part of Arabia, now known by his name as Sa'udi Arabia. This kingdom is ruled capably and sternly in accordance with the Koranic law by Ibn Sa'ud. The cult of saints is strictly forbidden, but the tomb of the Prophet is cared for, and the pilgrimage to Mecca is now organized as never before for the comfort of the pilgrims. Innovations which are not concerned with religion are not necessarily forbidden. Ibn Sa'ud has his fleet of motor cars, and medical missionaries have visited Riyadh at his invitation. He has introduced wireless, aeroplanes, and new methods of administration and education. This fact is extremely interesting when we remember that at one time motor cars were forbidden in the Ottoman Empire because they were an innovation not mentioned in the Koran or Traditions. Ibn Sa'ud evidently has a more reasonable view of what constitutes an innovation, i.e. a heresy. However, among the things which he considers innovations are the arts, music, silken clothes, wine and smoking. These are forbidden, and it is equally impossible to alter the law that prescribes amputation of the hand as the penalty for theft. As we have seen, it is a Wahhabi principle to base the law on the Koran and the Traditions alone, without the use of Analogy or the Consensus of Muslim opinion, which were used by the great lawyers of antiquity. We are told by Mr. Rom Landau¹ with reference to Ibn Sa'ud that "the Koran afforded him a complete spiritual and secular code of action . . . There need be no discrepancy between the dictates of the Prophet and those of modern civilization, provided that these latter were treated with discrimination." Now any student of the Koran knows that that book only deals with a fraction of the questions that arise in common life. We can only suppose that Ibn Sa'ud also applies his discrimination to the Koran itself, and that he reads into it (and presumably into the Traditions also) far more than they con-

¹ *Islam To-day*, p. 36.

tain, and that if he were not so autocratic there would be other learned men who would question some of his deductions. Under the conditions of desert life his method may work quite well, but it would not work in the more varied types of life found in more civilized societies; and we can be fairly sure that his method could not possibly be applied in any other country than Arabia. Therefore, while we can admire his achievement in Arabia, and recognize the spiritual background of his thought, we can be certain that what he has achieved for his own people gives no guidance for the future direction of the wider Muslim world.

An opinion was quoted just now that the acceptance of Baha'ism in Persia was often only the road to materialism. The modern drift to materialism or secularism, which is also in evidence in Christian countries, is an open abandonment of religion and disregard of its practices. This is a process which has gone further in Turkey and Egypt than in Persia, and much further than in India. That is not to say that all Indian Muslims are exemplary in the performance of their religious duties; but the number who ignore the fast of Ramadan and join in none of the great festivals must be very small indeed. Some ten years ago a Muslim lady in Lahore was quoted as speaking against the abolition of the veil on the ground that those who had abandoned it had also abandoned Islam. The statement indicated that the fear of secularism was present; but it was certainly on a small scale, for at that time it was reckoned that not more than half a dozen well-known ladies in Lahore had given up the veil. The contrast is seen in a case which came to the author's notice a few years earlier in Cairo. A charming couple, a young man of the Greek Orthodox Church, and a young Muslim woman, called at the house of the Anglican Bishop. They wished to get married, and as there was no provision in law for such a mixed marriage, they wished the girl to be converted into an Anglican Christian. On being asked whether she knew

the principles of Christianity, she replied, "Pas du tout!" Complete indifference to religion could scarcely go further. The explanation of the greater tendency to secularism in Egypt than in India is to be found in the outside influences. There are in Egypt a large number of Europeans with a purely secularist outlook. In India the proportion of Europeans who are either actively engaged in missionary work, or at least professing Christians, is much greater, and the number of Indian Christians, including those of Muslim origin, is considerable. Even the Hindus, however much they may be despised as idolaters and polytheists, are religious, and put religion first. India is a religious country, and religion is universally respected. The Christian padre is honoured, just as the Hindu sadhu and the Muslim faqir, because they are looked on as men of God. No doubt the difference in Turkey is even greater, for there, until recently, all Christian missionary work was prohibited, and the falling away to secularism since the abolition of the Caliphate has been considerable. Those whose knowledge of Islam is chiefly connected with India must bear in mind the difference of background here described, because the orthodox Muslims of Egypt are always afraid of reforms, suspecting them of being attacks upon the Faith. Heresy hunting, as is well known, often has the effect of turning a man of an enquiring frame of mind into a real heretic. Thus it comes about that the would-be reformer in Egypt has to go extremely cautiously if he is to achieve any positive result. Incidentally, the Christian missionary in Egypt, more than anywhere else, must take care to give a positive presentation of the gospel; otherwise he may be undermining Islam and leading Muslims towards Agnosticism rather than towards a fuller Faith.¹

The man in Egypt, whose very cautious moves towards the reform of Islam have had a lasting effect,

¹ For a fuller explanation of this point see the author's remarks in *Essays Catholic and Missionary*, p. 31.

was Muhammad Abduh. He was a great man, and the foregoing remarks were necessary to explain why so great a man was so extremely cautious in the reforms he advocated.

Muhammad Abduh lived from about 1849 to 1905. Born and brought up in an Egyptian village, he had none of the advantages which would have marked him out for a position of leadership. Until the age of sixteen he found no interest in school lessons or in religion. His awakening came after a few days' contact with a great-uncle of his who was a member of one of the Sufi orders, a comparatively well educated and travelled man. It was the mystic approach which made the study of religion appear worth while as contrasted with the dry-as-dust studies of the ordinary orthodox schools. His interest in Sufism was more than a passing phase. He entered into it with great zeal, and it became the dominant note of his life. For four years he knew no other ideal, until in 1869 he met Jamal ad-din al-Afghani, who, himself a Sufi, was able to lead Muhammad Abduh to see beyond the limits of mere mysticism. It is well known that mysticism, divorced from the controls of orthodoxy, in Islam as elsewhere, is apt to lead to so vague an outlook as to rob life of clear-cut purpose. Moreover, the personal experience of mysticism is so real that its followers are often held by its attractiveness from seeking the definiteness of a more objective faith.

Now Jamal ad-din, Sufi though he was, was a man of very definite purpose in life, in fact to many people he seemed first and foremost a political agitator. He was always getting into political trouble, because he believed that drastic political action was the only way to restore Islam as a religion. Jamal ad-din's chief aim was to unify all Muslim peoples under one Caliph, and he did not mind whether this Caliph was the Ottoman Sultan or some other ruler. His methods were revolutionary. At different times he was exiled from Turkey, Egypt and Persia, and "permitted to leave" Afghanistan and India.

But with all his impatience to carry out external reforms by force, he was intensely keen on a religious revival of Islam, a regeneration of the people, and the reconciliation of Islamic theology and philosophy with modern scientific thought.

When Muhammad Abduh first met this dynamic personality, their conversation was on Sufism. By this means Muhammad Abduh was attracted till he held Jamal ad-din in great affection and admiration. In Cairo Muhammad Abduh attended gatherings in his house, where the studies included Arabic works not read in al-Azhar and translations of modern European books, and the method of study was not the mere memorizing that was the rule in al-Azhar. After completing his course as a student of al-Azhar, Muhammad Abduh became a lecturer there. He also engaged in literary work, and lectured at other institutions; and in all of this work he broke loose from the existing methods of instruction. He suffered exile from Egypt from 1882 to 1888, but after that time he returned and was given high legal appointments which enabled him to carry out some of the reforms he had at heart. Eventually in 1895 he succeeded in getting a representative committee appointed by the Government for the control of al-Azhar. He and a friend of his were appointed on this committee as representing the Government, and by his tact and personality he was able to introduce the first reforms into this venerable University. Many of the reforms were concerned with such external matters as the rations of bread for the students and the salaries of the teachers. The actual achievement in the reform of the teaching may seem small, but the great thing is that he laid down the principles, and succeeded in getting the first necessary changes made in what must have been one of the most conservative institutions in the world. The significance of this small beginning is seen in the fact that in 1925, just twenty years after his death, an official was appointed to reform the educational system

of al-Azhar; and this appointment, though made by the Government, was not forced on an unwilling University: it was in response to repeated demands by the students themselves, with the sympathetic approval of the shaikhs.¹ It is also indicative of later approval of Muhammad Abduh's policy that 1,300 men assembled to honour his memory on the seventeenth anniversary of his death, and the greater number of them were his old pupils or pupils' pupils.

One of Muhammad Abduh's principles of reform was to return to the days and ways of the first four "Rightly Guided" Caliphs, who exercised the power called *ijtihad* of making doctrinal or legal decisions. At the same time he urged the need for obedience to the law. It is, of course, true that the chief defect of the *shari'a* is its unchangeableness, and the restoration of the power of *ijtihad* would give it the flexibility it needs. Muhammad Abduh and his followers claimed this right of *ijtihad* for themselves, though they did not have much opportunity to put it into practice, for the department of law with which Muhammad Abduh was concerned when he was a judge was not the *shari'a*. In 1899 Muhammad Abduh was appointed Mufti of Egypt. Now the Mufti of Egypt is the official interpreter of the *shari'a* for Egypt, and when questions about the *shari'a* arise, the Mufti issues decisions called *fatwas*. In some of his *fatwas* Muhammad Abduh seems to have gone beyond interpreting the *shari'a* to contradicting it, as for instance when he allowed Muslims to eat meat killed by Jews or Christians, and when he allowed Muslims to accept interest from deposits in the Post Office Savings Bank. His excuse for contradicting the *shari'a* in these matters was that they were not mentioned in the Koran. To a non-Muslim it is quite sufficient explanation that the *shari'a* cannot be expected to legislate for changed conditions of a future age; but that is an attitude which Muslims have been slow to adopt.

¹ O. A. Morrison in *The Moslem World*, April 1926.

Muhammad Abduh's followers, as represented by the journal *Al-Manar*, maintain that the development of theology and jurisprudence robbed Islam of its original simplicity; that the Companions of the Prophet made decisions according to the general welfare of the community. Muslims should therefore return to the practice "of the early days of the first four Caliphs, whose *sunna* (i.e. custom), together with his own *sunna*, the Prophet commanded Muslims to hold fast to, and they should lay aside everything that has been introduced into Islam that is contrary to that practice".¹ It will be seen that this dependence on the Koran and the customs of Muhammad and his companions, together with consideration for the welfare of the community, would give a considerable amount of freedom to legislators; and, moreover, it is a much more honest proposal than the pretence of the Ahmadiyyas to base everything on the Koran and on reason.

One thing that causes concern to some thinking Muslims is the divergence between the four legal schools. To an outsider the differences seem so small as to be negligible; but presumably they assume an importance in Muslim eyes because they all claim to have been based on the same four infallible bases. Hence if one is right, the other three must be wrong. A proposal of *Al-Manar* in this matter was that the practices of religion enjoined by all the four schools should be binding on every Muslim, and that when the schools differed any Muslim might be free to choose what was directed by one of them. Even the acceptance of this amount of give and take would represent an advance on the present position, but nothing like so great an advance as the proposal to have no ancient bases for the law beyond the Koran and the customs of the Prophet and his companions. In the case of laws dealing with what we should call secular matters, *Al-Manar* wishes them to be based on the Koran

¹ Quoted from *Al-Manar* by C. C. Adams, *Islam and Modernism in Egypt*, p. 191.

and the Sunna, but capable of revision from time to time. Two examples are given by Dr. Adams,¹ the erection of public statues of men, and the acceptance of the witness of a Muslim teacher of Music, whose very profession according to the orthodox law makes him an unbeliever. These two examples might perhaps be regarded as matters of religion. But, in any case, the suggestion that laws dealing with secular matters should still to any extent be based on the Koran would seem to be ultra-conservative, if not a retrograde step. Dr. Adams² summarizes the influences that have weighed both with Muhammad Abduh and with the party represented by *Al-Manar* as those of (1) al-Ghazzali, the great theologian of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, who combined Sufism with orthodoxy, (2) Ibn Taimiyya and al-Jauziyya of the fourteenth century, whose dependence on the Koran and Sunna alone, and rejection of later developments as heretical innovations, has influenced the modern Wahhabis, and (3) the demands of modern progress. The attempt to combine such diverse principles is bound to produce a result which on the whole is strongly conservative, but at the same time it does represent some measure of advance, and opens the way for further cautious advance in the years to come. The insistence on even a modified kind of *ijtihad* indicates a realization that in some degree the spirit of God can still work through the minds of men. It is satisfactory to note that some of the works of Muhammad Abduh and his followers have been translated into Urdu and Turkish; and that the Muhammadiyya Movement, the most promising movement for the reform of Islam in Java, is particularly influenced by the ideas of Muhammad Abduh.

¹ op. cit., p. 193.

² op. cit., p. 202.

ISLAM'S LACK AS A RELIGION

SOME years ago the author unintentionally caused great offence to a Hindu friend who dropped into a church and heard a sermon intended for Christians. It was a missionary sermon, in the course of which something was said implying that Islam was a better religion than Hinduism. It was a new and appalling idea to the Hindu that anyone could think Islam as high a religion as Hinduism. And yet probably most Englishmen, who had not given the matter any great consideration, would class Judaism and Islam along with Christianity as monotheistic religions contrasted with the rest of the world's religions which they would call heathen. This rough and ready classification only takes account of one element in religion, the unity of God. Important though this point is, it by no means follows that its acceptance is more important than any other. That there is a difference between the monotheisms of Christianity and Islam is readily admitted, though many people imagine that Christianity starts with something like the monotheism of Islam, and then adds to it an ornamental frill called the doctrine of the Trinity. It is not so readily recognized that there is any difference at all between the monotheisms of Judaism and Islam.

The simplest way of realizing how great is the difference between the three monotheisms is to remember that the Christian doctrine of God is compatible with the doctrine of the Old Testament, but incompatible with the doctrine of God in Islam. The Christians of the first generation began by accepting the Jewish doctrine of God, and added to it new elements which produced the essentially Christian doctrine; but those Muslims who become Christians cannot build upon the

foundation of the Muslim doctrine of God, but have to start afresh. There is an historical explanation of this curious fact: in Judaism the revelation of the unity of God to the eighth-century Hebrew prophets came simultaneously with the revelation of His moral holiness, and indeed the two beliefs were casually connected, because the unity of God was accounted for by the unique holiness of Yahweh. Then, when Christ came, and men beheld His holy character, and when the holy character produced by the indwelling Spirit was observed, Christians had to bring Christ and the Holy Spirit within the orbit of deity, and they saw no reason to change their belief that God was one. On the other hand, in the case of Islam, the revelation of the unity of God, as announced by Muhammad, was something like an axiom. It was the one fact about God which seemed absolutely certain in its utter simplicity. In all other respects the Muslim was reduced to silence about God. Standing in awe before His greatness and His majesty, Muslims felt that any definite statement about God, other than His unity, was not permissible to mortal man. The Christian doctrine, however philosophically or tactfully expressed, seemed in Muslim eyes to bring variety or plurality within the axiomatic unity of God. This extraordinary emphasis on the unity of God as the one and only thing that can with certainty be postulated about Him has overshadowed the whole of orthodox theology.

There is, however, one exception to this general statement. We have already drawn attention to the widespread mysticism in Islam, and have also alluded to the fact that with mysticism in Islam there generally goes pantheism. Pantheism is the belief that all that exists is God. It contradicts the belief in God as creator. Though mysticism, within or without the Sufi orders, and pantheism, are so very widely prevalent, and have not been declared to be heretical, yet they have no place in the ordered system of Islamic theology. Indeed, it

would be true to say that there is no pantheistic system of theology in Islam. Among the mystics there may be spiritual experiences and beliefs of value, and worthy of preservation. We have already seen that part at any rate of the value of the Ahmadiyya and the Muhammad Abduh movements is the incorporation into their systems of mystic ideas or mystic enthusiasms. Apart from such systematization it is not possible to consider the floating mass of mystic and pantheistic ideas in our criticism of Islam. Islam as a system must be judged by its systematic statements of belief.

An objection may well be raised at this point: Why not judge Islam by the life of Muslims rather than by official doctrines? There are two outstanding things in the life of Muslims, the one praise-worthy and the other blame-worthy. On the one hand there is the strong and remarkable sense of brotherhood between all Muslims, an example worth copying by people of other religions. On the other hand there is the treatment of women, including the right of the husband to divorce his wife without giving any reason, and without the wife having any right to appeal against the decision. The treatment of women in Islam, and the fact that it is approved of by the great majority even of educated Muslims, creates a very unfavourable impression on non-Muslims. To take no other examples of Muslim life than these two, it would be hard to strike a fair balance and speak of the whole system as "good" or "bad". The addition of other examples would complicate the problem rather than make it easier.

But there are a few Muslims who would like to see the divorce laws altered, and believe that it could be done without destroying Islam. If then we condemned Islam on the ground of its divorce laws, we might find ourselves in the position of those who condemn Christianity on the ground that for many centuries Christians kept slaves. We have discovered that slavery is contrary to Christian principles. In another generation the Mus-

lims might discover that the traditional divorce laws were contrary to the principles of Islam. Something approaching that has already been happening in the matter of polygamy. Not only do the greater number of Muslims restrict themselves to one wife until death or divorce, but quite a considerable number of modern Muslims believe that polygamy is implicitly forbidden in the Koran by the verse that says that if a man has more than one wife he must treat them equally, an obvious impossibility.

We therefore have to remember that reprehensible customs may be altered, and our most certain criteria will be the doctrinal bases of the religion on which behaviour must in the last resort be based. We must, of course, take the precaution of seeing that the doctrines we depend upon for our judgment have as nearly as possible the unanimous approval of Muslims. As explained above, we are bound to ignore for this purpose the doctrinal views of mystics and pantheists, which at present can only be regarded as uncondemned heresies.

Let us begin by considering some points from a catechism composed by Fudali who died in A.D. 1821. This small catechism is based on a famous catechism of three centuries earlier composed by as-Sanusi, but has added proofs to the dogmatic statements. Fudali's catechism became one of the well-known textbooks at al-Azhar, and is highly prized to the present day. It begins by saying that every Muslim must know fifty dogmas and their corresponding proofs. Fudali quotes not only as-Sanusi but also the great Ibn al-Arabi as saying that if a man accepts these dogmas on authority and does not know the proofs he is an unbeliever. As these proofs are highly philosophical, the catechism evidently had in mind educated people, and we can make allowances for its very intellectual bias. In actual practice, of course, a man is not accounted an unbeliever for being unable to explain his religion intellectually. Whatever may be said in the schools of the learned, there are many

millions of Muslims with no intellectual understanding of their faith. The stated prayers must be said in Arabic, and their validity is in no wise compromised by the fact that many Muslims say them without understanding the language.

The first and most important part of Fudali's catechism deals with twenty necessary characteristics of God. The first three are His existence, His eternity in past time, and His everlastingness in the future. His existence is proved by the origin of the world in time, because it could not have come into existence without a creator. His past eternity is evident, or else He would have had an earlier originator, and since He has always been, He is not liable to non-existence, and consequently must be everlasting in the future. These arguments for the existence of God may be cogent, but they are cold. We have seen such arguments in the West. The old argument from design was excellent as proving an intelligent First Cause. A very strong case for a First Cause follows from the Second Law of Thermodynamics: a world that is like a clock running down must have had an originator to wind it up. Arguments of this kind, whatever their logical or scientific value, are of little value in religion, for they do not point to a God with whom men can enter into relation.

The fourth characteristic of God is His diversity from created things. He is generically different from every creature, whether man, spirit or angel. "Between God and temporal things there is no sort of similarity in any point whatsoever." This statement may be paralleled from an article in the creed known as *Fiqh Akbar II*,¹ "All His qualities are different from those of the creatures. He knoweth, but not in the way of our knowledge; He is mighty, but not in the way of our power, etc." The principle here enunciated is an accepted orthodox statement intended to avoid two opposing heresies which have been the subject of much con-

¹ Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed*, p. 189.

trovery.¹ On the one side there is the heresy of describing God's attributes as like those of men. On the other side there is the heresy of divesting God of all attributes. The orthodox mediating position is to say that God has attributes, and to describe them by the words actually used of Him in the Koran, but to say that these words must be used without asking "How?" That is, they must not be used in the sense in which we ordinarily use them. The result is that no name or attribute which we apply to God has any meaning that we can understand. We therefore know nothing about Him, and above all we can make no assertion about His moral character.

Fudali brings out the same point again in dealing with God's sixth characteristic of Unity; for under this heading he has three subdivisions: (1) God has unity of substance, i.e. His substance is not made up of parts, nor is there any other substance like the divine substance. (2) God has unity of characteristics, i.e. He has not two characteristics which are alike, such as two almightinesses, and "no thing other than God has a characteristic similar to that of God". This last sentence is of vital importance, for it is in direct contradiction with two of the greatest sayings of the Old and New Testaments, "Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev. xix. 2, etc.), and "Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful (Luke vi. 36). (3) God has unity of activities, i.e. no creature has an activity of its own. "Events like the death or wounding of a person, if for instance they befall a holy man, come even in this case from the creative activity of God." "No other thing than God can produce any effect, e.g. the fire in burning, the knife in cutting, and the food in satisfying man. Rather it is God who creates the burning in the object which the fire has seized, and exactly at the moment when the fire seizes it, etc." These two examples make God directly responsible for all the evil

¹ Encycl. Islam, s.v. tashbih.

deeds in the world; they make nonsense of the scientific observation of cause and effect; and they take away from man those qualities which we have come to regard as most divine, namely the power of creative activity.

The catechism deals with God's two characteristics of almightiness and free will—not, of course, the free will of man which orthodox Islam does not in any sense admit. It says that both these are related only to what is possible: "It is folly to assert that God has the power to give Himself a Son, because almightiness has not the impossible as its object, and for God to have a Son is impossible." The bias of theological controversy is here visible. The impossibility quoted against the Christians simply rests on the Koran, and therefore needs no proof. There is no mention of the real limitation to the almightiness of God that He can do no evil. It would have no meaning to an orthodox Muslim to say that God can do no evil, for evil is merely what God does not choose to do or to command. In controversy with the Mu'tazilites the question came up whether there was an absolute right and wrong. The orthodox answer was that there was no good or evil which could be declared to be such by the power of reason: murder is abhorrent because God has forbidden it; it would not have been evil if the divine law had not declared it to be so.¹

The thirteenth characteristic of God dealt with by Fudali is the Word. This is a subject which has occasioned great controversy in Islam. As against Christ the Word of God, and as against what is said about the Word in the opening chapter of St. John's Gospel, Islam made the Koran the Word of God, and fierce controversy raged round the question whether it was uncreated or created. The statement in Fudali's catechism is intended as a compromise in this controversy: "The Word is an eternal characteristic attached to the substance of God. . . . By the term Word of God, which must be attributed to Him, one understands not the words of the

¹ Goldziher, *Vorlesungen*, p. 106.

Koran, which were revealed to the Prophet; for these originated in time, whereas that characteristic of the Word, which is attached to the substance of God, is eternal. . . . The contents of the Koranic words correspond to what that eternal characteristic utters if the veil were removed from our spiritual eyes and we could perceive the divine Word. . . . Both the eternal characteristic of God, and the words of the holy book, are indeed called Koran and Word of God; yet the material words of the holy book are created and written down in heaven on the preserved tablet."

Although the Koran speaks of prophets earlier than Muhammad, and the books that had been sent down to some of them, viz., the Torah to Moses, the Psalms to David, and the Gospel to Jesus, in practice these books have been but little studied by Muslims as revelations from God. The reason for this was chiefly the belief of the surpassing excellence of the Koran, and partly the popular belief that the Christians and Jews had perverted the text of their scriptures. Thus, in the controversy about the Word of God, it has always been, as in this catechism, the Koran alone which is the Word of God. With this conception of the Koran as the full and perfect revelation of God for all time, never to be added to, since Muhammad is the "Seal of the Prophets," let us compare three different conceptions of revelation which are familiar to us all: (1) that the Old and New Testaments, a series of books composed over a period of a thousand years or more, books of many different types, and dealing with many subjects, are a full revelation of God as instructing us in all things necessary to salvation; (2) that the Bible is indeed inspired as God's revelation to men, but that it does not stand alone, for every good word spoken or written from Plato to a modern village sermon, contains some revelation of God; (3) that the full revelation of God can only be expressed for men in a human life, and has been so expressed in Jesus Christ. As judged by com-

parison with any of these three, the Koran as a revelation of God appears small in compass, limited in scope, and parochial in outlook. This fact is not realized at present by Muslims for two reasons, first that the laws and doctrines which they follow are not for the most part directly based on the Koran, even when agreeing with it in substance, and they do not realize that the Koran alone is an insufficient basis, and secondly that there has been hitherto no critical study of the Koran by Muslims like the Christian study of the Bible. But we are hearing on various sides the cry "Back to the Koran!" and when that cry is followed Muslims will have to relate their laws and doctrines to the Koran itself; and eventually an honest study of the Koran will inevitably lead to historical and literary criticism, and to comparison of its doctrines with those of other religions. When that time comes, it is doubtful whether the serious Muslim scholar will continue to maintain the uniqueness of the Koran as the Word of God. This is a weakness of modern Islam, the Islam as the reformers would have it; for undoubtedly the old fourfold basis of the Koran, the Traditions, Analogy and Consensus was a foundation which could withstand far more violent shocks than the Koran alone. It is the custom of modern Muslims to depreciate the ancient scholastic theologians. But they were giants in their way, and it is doubtful if Muhammad Abduh or any modern Muslim has been their equal.

There is, however, one good that may come from going back to the Koran. Muhammad was a plain man, and no philosopher, and when he said that God was holy, grateful, artful, generous, merciful, clement and loving, he meant what he said in the sense in which those words were usually understood by his contemporaries. There can be no doubt that the Muslim theologians, in their attempt to honour and magnify God, have taken away what little knowledge of Him was available in the Koran.

The idea that God is diverse from His creatures in all

respects, and that no creature has a characteristic similar to that of God, cuts at the roots of religion in two respects. It means that we cannot say, "God is like the most merciful man I have known, but more so." Yet, curiously enough, the Koran in one place actually does make such a comparison between a quality shared by God and man, though by God in higher degree: "They plotted, and God plotted, but of plotters God is the best."¹ Not only does the doctrine of diversity prevent us from using the one and only way of getting any idea of God, but it also hinders human progress Godwards, for there is no encouragement to imitate Him. It is for this reason that the Muslims do not like to speak of God as Father, and not only for fear of suggesting His Fatherhood of Christ.

At this point a glance must be cast at Muslim pantheism, because pantheism does bring God and man together. Pantheism goes to the other extreme from transcendentalism. It so completely bridges the gap between God and man that there is no gap to bridge. "He is all" is the meaning for the Persian word for pantheism. God is then reduced to a level in which the commonplace jostles with the sublime, as Hafiz sang,²

"Love is where the glory falls
Of thy face—on convent walls
Or on tavern floors, the same
Unextinguishable flame.

Where the turbaned anchorite
Chanteth Allah day and night,
Church bells ring the call to prayer
And the cross of Christ is there."

Furthermore man loses the incentive to rise toward a God who is high above him. The mystic element in Islam, when it is accepted into orthodoxy, gives hope of

¹ viii. 30.

² Quoted from Nicholson's *Mystics of Islam*, p. 88.

new life, for it teaches that God and the soul of man are not so diverse as the scholastic theologians insisted. But so long as mysticism remains apart, and mingled with pantheism, it has no power to stir men to great endeavours to explore and to scale the mountain of God.

Earlier on we have referred to the Muslim charge that Christianity is a religion of ideals impossible of attainment, but that Islam is a practicable religion. We now return to this subject in greater detail, as to our minds it is a condemnation not of Christianity but of Islam as a religion. We quote from the Introduction by Michel and Abdel Razik to their French translation of Muhammad Abduh's work *Rissalat al-Tawhid*, page lxxxii. The authors are summarizing Muhammad Abduh's account of the history of religions, the rise of Christianity and its failure, and then proceed as follows: "The opinion expressed by Shaikh Abduh about this new religion, in which one can easily recognize Christianity, is shared by all Muslims. They find that Christianity, by preaching an excessive charity, the mortification of the body, and detachment from this world, forgets what is the nature of man and what are his inner propensities; whilst Islam teaches that this nature is double, that man has duties to fulfil towards his body quite as much as towards his soul, and he puts these duties on the same level; in short, in his moral obligations, he takes count of the material needs of man, and imposes nothing which is above human powers. Thus the Muslims eagerly carry out the duties of their religion, while the Christians are obliged to neglect theirs or to modify them according to the exigencies of life. Thus Islam has obtained results more effective than Christianity in the moral education of its followers, and thereby has shown its superiority. All the more attention deserves to be paid to this point of view because, in the sphere of morals, it constitutes the principal opposition between the two religions. Then came an age when humanity reached its maturity, and when the vicissitudes of history prepared it for the right under-

standing of its rôle; 'then came Islam, and addressed itself to reason and intelligence, which it associated with sentiments and feelings.' It is therefore a religion eminently rational, and as such it has freed men's spirits, and therein lies the greatest quality which Shaikh Abduh recognizes in it. Its liberating action has been exercised in all spheres. In the religious sphere Islam has freed man from the authority of the clergy; and it has set him face to face with God, and taught him not to count on any intervention; and thereby the human soul has been set free and has gained in nobility. In the scientific sphere it has urged man to search for the solution of the riddles of the universe, and to deepen his knowledge of himself, being guided solely by reason. Europe only entered on the path of progress after the sixteenth century when she borrowed the scientific methods elaborated by the Muslims. In the social sphere it has freed man from the fanatical spirit by allowing the followers of all religions to live in the midst of the Muslim community and by abolishing the distinctions of race. Finally, in the moral sphere it has freed man from asceticism which is an obstacle to the free development of humanity."

A few remarks must be made about certain of the statements in this quotation before we deal with its chief claim. Christianity is not in itself ascetic, as can clearly be seen by studying the Gospels or by looking at modern Christianity, though there have been times when asceticism was rife. Similarly it is not quite true to say that Islam is distinct from Christianity in having freed man from the authority of the clergy. Christianity has at times suffered from ecclesiastical pretensions. To judge from the writings of many modern Muslims, the maulvies of the present day are almost as great a burden to Islam as priestcraft ever was to Christianity. It is true, and greatly to the credit of Islam, that it allowed people of other religions to live within the Muslim state when such toleration was not known in Europe; and also that

it abolished distinctions of race. The statement about scientific progress is not quite accurate: the Muslims received from Oriental Christians some of the inheritance of the Greeks, and added somewhat to it before bringing it back to Europe again in the fifteenth century before they lost hold of it themselves. This is not the place to go into the subject fully. It is sufficient to say that the high hopes of scientific progress by the Muslims were disappointed. After a good beginning, learning died out, possibly under the stultifying effects of the scholastic system. At any rate, there is no comparison between the progress made in learning and discovery under Islam and the enormous strides made since the European Renaissance in the freer atmosphere of Christianity.

We turn now to the main theme of the quotation that Islam knows the true nature of man and directs his life accordingly, but Christianity does not. It simply is not true that Christianity ignores the bodily side of man's nature. The Christian position was put plainly by Christ when He said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things (the things needful for the body) will be added unto you." This, and other passages in the Gospels, including the Lord's Prayer, recognize the needs of the soul and of the body, and always put the things of the soul first. It probably is true, as the quotation asserts, that Islam puts the duties towards the soul and the body on the same level. This is a real distinction, and the conclusion to be drawn from it is that Christianity regards the soul of man as his real self, even in this world, and able to become master of the body and to use the body as its instrument; that religion is the harmonious fellowship of the souls of men with God; and that God's love for us extends to the care of the bodies with which we are temporarily endowed. The claim that Islam puts the duty of man towards his body on a level with that towards his soul suggests an undervaluation of the

eternal part of man or an overvaluation of his temporal body. The asceticism which has from time to time been found among Christians is due to failure to realize how the body, though temporary, may be the instrument of the soul. One explanation which has been offered for the Islamic position is that Islam is essentially a materialistic religion. This is so startling a suggestion that it will need special consideration; but before dealing with that, we must finish with the matter in hand and ask whether it is true that more has been achieved by the rational treatment of man in Islam than by the idealistic treatment of him in Christianity.

How are we to judge what has been achieved? If both the religions had rules and regulations as their first concern, it might be possible to make a comparison. Actually the rules and regulations in Christianity are mostly of local or sectarian validity, and even then are not given the place of supreme importance as are the obligatory duties of Islam. We could no doubt gather statistics for the proportion of Muslims who observed the fast of Ramadan, compared with the proportion of Roman Catholics who fasted on Fridays; or the proportion of Muslims who paid the legal alms compared with the proportion of Christians of a particular denomination who supported foreign missions. The results might show larger proportions for the Muslims, for the simple reason that for the Muslim the performance of the external rite or duty is an end in itself. The statistics would not show the amount of spiritual achievement in the sense of how near the followers of each religion had drawn to God, and how much they had exerted themselves in works of mercy to their fellow men. In fact, the real difference between the two systems is this: Islam presents its followers with a certain definite number of practices to perform. Some need to be carefully learnt, like the correct use of the tooth-brush and the method of ritual ablutions; others need an effort of the will until they become habitual, like the all-day fast

throughout the month of Ramadan; but all can be performed by a person in normal health. Christ tells His disciples to love God and love their neighbours, both without limit, thus laying it upon each man as a duty to seek daily and hourly the guidance of God as to how he can carry it out. In this way, there is no hard and fast rule as to the actions to be performed, but they will vary from day to day as the circumstances alter, and even the circumstances are to some extent the results of the man's actions already performed. For the Christian, therefore, there is no point at which he can say, "I have done my duty for to-day," or in the poet's words: ¹

"Never at even, pillowed on a pleasure,
Sleep with the wings of aspiration furled."

Perhaps we Christians should welcome the statement that Christianity is an impracticable religion, and add that with God's help all things are possible. A system in which all the duties can be carried out with a man's unaided strength is to our mind more like school rules than a religion. If it is true—as indeed it appears to be—that Islam "imposes nothing which is above human powers" it can scarcely be called a super-human religion. When on all sides, in the world of nature, there are signs of advance and progress, it would be very distressing to learn that man had reached his goal already and could advance no further. For, if the rules and regulations of Islam contain all that is required of men, and if those requirements are carried out by the great majority of Muslims, then Muslim countries should show man at his highest possible level. Yet all the world over, men of religion are dissatisfied with the present state of human nature, and believe that by God's help it can be improved; and those with loftier and wider outlook can see no limit to human advance. The religion that will

¹ Frederic Myers' *St. Paul*.

not allow man to rest on any intermediate ledge, but from that vantage point beckons him on to new heights to be won, is the true religion which alone can lead men upwards to the throne of God.

The suggestion referred to above that Islam is essentially a materialistic religion is the main theme of Professor Levonian's book, *Islam and Christianity*. He rests his case mainly on the meaning of the Arabic word for "spirit", *ruh*. Without accepting all the conclusions that he draws from the evidence, we can certainly agree that many words and expressions used by Muslims have not the same spiritual connotation as their counterparts in other religions. Originally *ruh* meant "breath" as the word for "spirit" did in many languages. That is what one would expect in the Animistic stage, in which every object is indwelt by a spirit. With such beliefs, "spirit" cannot have a very exalted meaning, and as a rule is not much more than what we should call a property of matter. Levonian's point is that Islam has never grown out of that materialistic conception of spirit. It is certainly true that Animism still has a great hold on Muslims as it always has done. The modern Muslim believes in nature spirits called *jinn* capable of doing harm to men just as the Arabs believed in Muhammad's day; and they still fear magic and practise it, as was done then. The last two chapters of the Koran—two of the earliest to be uttered—are passionate cries of the prophet as he takes refuge in God from the workers of magic and from men and *jinn* who are tempted by Satan to harm people. The fact that Islam has not provided a refuge from these evils of the spirit world suggests that Muslims have not quite caught from their founder the sense of security against all lesser spirits which he found in the power of the one and only God. Wherever we find people believing in Animism or in magic we have reason to suspect that they have not a strong sense of God as a beneficent spiritual being. It is therefore possible that Muhammad had in fact a less materialistic

conception of spirit than his followers. At any rate, Traditions assert that he refused to define *ruh*. His followers have not been so reticent, and have adopted the natural tendency of trying to explain the unknown in terms of the known. Just as the early workers on electricity called it a fluid, so Muslim theologians have spoken of the *ruh* as a subtle body, running in the body as sap in wood. In either case it is difficult to know whether the comparison is to be taken literally, or whether it is merely given as the best that the poverty of language can provide. On the face of it, it appears that many, even of the educated Muslims, thought of the *ruh* as something that literally ran in the veins. In the Koran Jesus is spoken of as a *ruh* proceeding from Allah. This clearly did not mean that Jesus was the Spirit of God Himself. Muslim theologians have stated this definitely, and have asserted that this spirit from God was a created thing, as the souls of ordinary men are created things. We could not, on this account alone, claim that *ruh* is not spiritual because it is created; for many or most Christians also would say that the souls of men are created, and are not emanations from the Deity, but yet have the potentiality of fellowship with Him.

There are, however, other considerations lending colour to the view that *ruh* to Muslims is not spiritual. In the ordinary sense of the word, the uneducated Muslim is a materialist. Many of them take the descriptions of heaven and hell in a materialistic sense. The background of thought of the Arabian Nights, in which the powers of the *jinn* are forced by magic to serve man's material ends, is essentially materialistic. The Arabian Nights are the literature of the common people, but the learned are no better. D. B. Macdonald says that Muslim theology has always admitted the fact of the use of the *jinn* in magic, though judging varyingly its legality.¹ We frequently call people of the West

¹ Encycl. Islam, s.v. Djinn.

materialistic, although they believe in the existence of spirit, because in their scheme of values the material ranks higher than the spiritual. That is the point of view certainly of those Muslims who believe in a heaven of physical delights. It might be thought that such men were no more good Muslims than our Western materialists are good Christians. But Levonian's book disposes of such an idea, for of all the great theologians of Islam, al-Ghazzali seems to be the only one who boldly spoke out for the immaterial nature of the spirit of man, and he alone saw some semblance between the spirit of man and God.

One more point may be noted before leaving the subject of materialism. In Christianity and in Judaism, as in Islam, external and material actions accompany the words of worship; but there is a difference between Christianity and Judaism on the one hand and Islam on the other. Each external or material action in Christianity or Judaism, whatever its origin may have been, is explained and understood as implying some spiritual fact. For instance in Judaism, the Jew when putting on the scarf called the *tallith* says, "Even as I cover myself with the *tallith* in this world, so may my soul deserve to be clothed with a beauteous spiritual robe in the world to come in the Garden of Eden. Amen." In many Christian churches where candles are lit on the altar at the time of the Eucharist, actually perhaps a mere survival of the use of artificial light in the catacombs, the candle light is thought of as symbolizing the spiritual presence of Christ. Christianity, moreover, has exalted certain material acts, such as the breaking of bread and the pouring of water, as something more than symbols of spiritual realities, treating them as channels through which, or by which, spiritual forces operate. Such material actions are called sacraments, i.e. pledges that the external action is accompanied by some spiritual reality. In Islam, on the other hand, there are numerous external actions, such for instance as the lifting of the

hands to a particular position, with the thumbs close to the lobes of the ears, at the commencement of the prayers, and the exact details of performing the ablutions, the origin of which is mostly forgotten. These actions are considered essential to the correct performance of the devotions, but they are not regarded as symbolic of spiritual realities. They are, in fact, ceremonial regarded as an end in itself, which is materialism.

The greatest difference between Christianity and Islam is seen in the Christian belief in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men. There were forecasts of this belief in the Old Testament, when, for instance, Moses is represented as saying, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His spirit upon them!" (Num. xi. 29), when Jeremiah said, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it" (Jer. xxxi. 33), and when Joel said, "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh" (Joel ii. 28). In Christianity these hopes of the few have become the experience of the many. Ordinary Christians believe that they are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and they identify this Spirit in essence and in holy character with the Father in heaven, and with Jesus Christ whom they regard as the manifestation of the Father in human life. They believe that this Holy Spirit not only guides to knowledge but also strengthens to the development of the divine character of holiness. The nearest approach to anything like this in Islam is the sense of nearness of God which is felt by the Sufis; but their mystic way is accompanied by a pantheistic theology which confuses God with His creation, and thus lowers God to the level of His imperfect creatures instead of raising the creatures to Himself. In orthodox Islam there is nothing like this. There is an expression, "Holy Spirit," which comes in the Koran. It is believed to be synonymous with the angel Gabriel, and is always understood, not as being God's own Spirit, but a spirit created by Him. Closely

connected with this lack of any doctrine of what we know as the Holy Spirit, there is the very much restricted and very mechanical theory of inspiration. Arabic has two words for inspiration, one the inspiration of prophets given to them to be declared to others, and the other the inspiration of prophets or saints for their own use. Both kinds of inspiration are alike in being restricted to certain types of men, in being infallible in their contents, and independent of the spiritual receptivity of those to whom they are given. In actual practice the only inspiration of which the Muslims are aware consists of the words of the Koran which were communicated to Muhammad thirteen hundred years ago.

IX

THAT NOTHING BE LOST

It is with no pleasure that we have been led to the conclusion that Islam is lacking in the spiritual aspiration, the spiritual urge, and even in the sense of the indwelling Spirit Himself, which alone can make a religion a power to raise men to higher things. There seem to be two possibilities, either for Islam to remain as it is at present with no prospects of raising its followers to a higher level, or for Islam as a religion to cease to exist. One can see no prospect of Islam becoming a vital spiritual force in the world. That is not to say it is impossible; for the mercy of God is so great, and His search for man so untiring, that he may yet find a way of breathing life into the valley of dry bones. All we can say is that as far as we can see there is no movement at present in Islam, no programme, and no personality, that hold out the hope of such a recasting of their system of thought and life as is necessary for spiritual progress. As we see it, the amount of change required in Islam to make it a progressive spiritual force, is so great that it needs to be inaugurated by a prophet. So far Muslims have been agreed that there can be no prophet after Muhammad; and the history of Babism and of the Ahmadiyya Movement is not such as to encourage high hopes if a prophet should arise, for what has survived in these two movements has not been the most spiritual side of the founders' work.

It is, of course, possible that the name of Islam might continue to be applied to a political body which had no religious significance. Such an outcome would be very distressing to all who have known the contribution of Islam in the past to religion and culture. Much of the

cultural inheritance of Islam was handed over to Europe as long ago as the fifteenth century. Is there any way in which the religious inheritance can in like manner be saved? The answer of those who know God as Father is Yes, for He who values every good work of His children will not allow the good works and good thoughts of Islam to be lightly thrown away. Of course, good works and good thoughts are not of themselves immortal like good men. They are rather like torches handed on in a relay race which will remain alight so long as they are handed on and are not allowed to fall to the ground. There are in this world a great multitude of people who are true children of God, and are sufficiently advanced in the spiritual life to recognize things of spiritual value when they see them. It should therefore be possible to preserve and hand on to future generations what valuable elements are to be found in Islam.

There are three points which might be marked out in Islam as particularly valuable religious elements. The first is worship. The word "worship" is used in many ways, but the idea behind it is the recognition of the greatness of God compared with man. We commonly speak of the *puja* which a Hindu performs before his idol as worship. But the effect of idolatry is to narrow and degrade the conception of God, so that while the Hindu thinks that he is exalting God by his offering at the shrine, he may from another point of view be regarded as belittling God, the very antithesis of worship. However much we may decry the obligatory prayers of Islam as being deficient in petition and deficient in co-operation of the intellect (being for the majority performed in an unknown tongue), we are bound to acknowledge them as worship. Here is worship of a highly exalted transcendent God by a slave in deepest self-abasement, an attitude of awe and even dread before His majesty. The writers of the Old Testament Wisdom Literature recognized that this attitude towards God was the first necessary stage of

religion. They used to say that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom". They used the word "wisdom" much as we should use the word "religion", and the word translated "beginning" means, exactly as in English, the first stage. Thus their favourite expression might be put in modern English, "the fear of the Lord is the first stage of religion", a profound discovery, which has been amply borne out by modern study of primitive religions. The sense of unmitigated awe in the presence of the numinous is the first stage of religion. Both Sufi and Christian have passed beyond it, for they have realized in experience that "perfect love casteth out fear". The attitude of awe and terror is sublimated, and becomes one of reverence, when the relation of the worshipper to God is no longer that of slave to lord, but that of lover to Beloved and of beloved child to loving Father. Yet, though Christian and Sufi can see the way beyond the attitude of awe, that attitude must come first. What is wrong with many people to-day, who are not interested in religion, is that they have never felt the sense of awe in the presence of a great spiritual Being. With perhaps no attempt to think out a philosophy of their own, they have more or less assumed that the human mind is supreme in the universe. Islam can supply the requisite emphasis on worship and adoration of the majesty of God.

A second valuable element in Islam, worthy of preservation, is the sense of brotherhood between Muslims. This brotherhood is a thing to be seen and experienced, rather than the performance of any legally appointed duties. It has, for instance, little if any connexion with the legal alms, which is one of the obligatory duties. There is simply the plain fact that a Muslim in distress anywhere in the world will receive at least board and lodging, given without reluctance, in any Muslim home. It is as though the natural hospitality of the desert, offered to any stranger who did not belong to a hostile tribe, had been transferred to the whole house of Islam.

Christians are bound to admit that, though Christianity can show greater examples of self-sacrificing love, e.g. in Father Damien, than any non-Christian religion, and though Christian teaching inculcates a love without limits of race or religion which is not taught by other religions, yet the ordinary run of Christians do not show the same average level of kindness towards one another as is seen everywhere in Islam.

The third element in Islam which must be preserved is zeal. There are countless ways in which this zeal shows itself. Muslims will put themselves to a great deal of inconvenience in order not to be absent from the celebration of one of the great feast days. Muslim merchants in non-Muslim lands are missionaries of Islam, and are successful in winning many men of primitive animistic tribes to their fold. If a Muslim apostatizes to another religion in India, where he can claim the protection of the law from the penalty of death, they will spare no effort to recall him to Islam. For as much as twenty years they will go on with their attempts, offering every kind of inducement to his return. Of the zeal of the Babis for their new variety of Islam, and of the propagandist zeal of the Ahmadiyyas, we have already spoken. Contrast now this zeal for Islam with the refusal of Hindus and Parsees even to accept converts, and the refusal of Hindus to re-admit one who has accepted Christian baptism. Jews are by no means anxious to win proselytes to Judaism; and while Christianity and Buddhism are missionary religions they can neither point to any such universal zeal as is seen everywhere in Islam. •

Here then are three things in Islam of real religious value, their worship, their brotherhood and their zeal. How can they be preserved? and will they lose in intensity if they are separated from the system in which they have been developed?

The answer is that they can be, and are being, preserved by Muslims who are converted to Christianity,

and are at the same time being conveyed to wider circles of people, and are attaining to a fulfilment which they lacked in Islam.

To many people this statement may come as a surprise, for the belief is still widespread that Muslims cannot be converted to Christianity, just like the corresponding belief that Jews are never converted to Christianity.

The actual truth about conversions to Christianity is this. It is difficult for members of any of the highly organized religions to abandon their religion, their community, and their system of life and thought, and adopt Christianity. This applies almost equally to Brahmans, Buddhists, Jews and Muslims. A glance at any missionary statistics will show that the greater number of the converts to Christianity in Burma are Animists, not Buddhists; the greater number of converts in India are outcastes or people of the lower Hindu castes; and practically all the converts in the Malay Peninsula are Chinese and Tamils. It is natural that missionaries in such lands should turn their attention chiefly to those who are ready to hear and welcome the message, and to leave the members of the more organized religions alone after the first unsuccessful attempts.

These facts by no means signify that Muslims cannot be won for Christ. The names of a number of the Anglican clergy in the diocese of Lahore show that they or their fathers came from Islam. In two countries, where the population is purely Muslim, and the efforts of the missionaries are therefore of necessity directed towards the Muslims, the number of converts is considerable. These two countries are Persia and Java. In Persia the converts from Shi'a Islam run into hundreds. In Java the converts from Sunni Islam, as distinct from the Christians of Animist origin who have come to Java from other parts of the Netherlands Indies, amount to at least 60,000.

Until the numbers of these converts is larger, it is perhaps difficult to say whether their addition to the

Christian ranks will add to the intensity of worship. It is already clear that the converts have brought with them their zeal for propagating what they now believe to be the true religion. Malang in Eastern Java has been made a strategic centre for Christianity. The Christian students of the theological college there go out Sunday by Sunday into the district to preach Christ, and the number of adult baptisms in this district has been about fifty a year. Christians from Modjowarno in Eastern Java, the centre of what was once the Hindu kingdom of Madjapahit, have gone to the neighbouring Hindu island of Bali as missionaries, and the Balinese, who in days gone by received their Hinduism from Madjapahit, now welcome the new religion of Christianity that comes to them from their old spiritual home. From Lahore we have an example, not only of zeal, but also of brotherhood. A number of young men, who were converts from Islam to Christianity, formed themselves into a society which they called the Brotherhood of Andrew, for the purpose of helping and encouraging Muslim enquirers and converts. Their original idea, based on the brotherhood of Islam, was to restrict membership of their society to converts from Islam. But when it was pointed out to them that to make a distinction among Christians according to their Hindu or Islamic origin would tend to divide the Christian Church into two camps, they readily agreed to admit into their brotherhood any Christians who were in sympathy with the movement. As anyone who knows India will understand, the help an enquirer or convert needs is not only spiritual but material. He is almost always turned out of his home. If he is employed by a Muslim he is almost certain to lose his job; and even if he is a Government servant, he will now discover that he is competing for the small number of posts reserved for Christians instead of coming in on the large quota reserved for Muslims. The converts therefore almost always need support for a while until they can find new work. In

many cases they have to be removed to a distance for fear of physical violence. Thus their care calls for a great deal of work and thought and generosity on the part of those who would help them. In this great work the Brotherhood of Andrew is bringing over into the Christian Church some of the most valuable elements of Islam.

Christianity suffered great reverses in the early days of Islam. For century after century it seemed as if Islam was always winning and Christianity always losing, until many a land which once was Christian had become almost entirely Muslim. So long as one used names as counters, and started with the formula, "Christianity is better than Islam," this defeat of Christianity was an insoluble problem. Muslims explained it by the opposite assumption, "Islam is better than Christianity," and supposed that the preaching of Islam was a new and better gospel which the Christians had gladly received. Historical research has shown that there were weaknesses in the Christianity of the countries involved, not so much formal heresies as an unchristian outlook on life. One of these weaknesses was a kind of materialism which showed itself in the belief that worldly success was a sign of divine favour, so that the Christians, seeing the political success of Islam, supposed that Islam was the religion most favoured by God. When one thinks of it, that belief was tantamount to a denial of the way of the cross, and thus was a contradiction of the Christian way. Thus, though Islam conquered, it was not really Christianity that it conquered, but a system that denied the Christian way. The battle was fought, so to speak, on the ground of materialism; and it was no spiritual ascendancy of Islam which gave it the victory.

Since those days much has happened in Christendom, and without claiming yet to have attained our goal, we can perhaps say that we are nearer to the mind of Christ than the Asiatic Christians of the seventh century. We ought now to be able to see that the issue of the spiritual

struggle will go in favour, not necessarily of those who call themselves by one name or another, but of those who are led by the spirit of God. The missionary zeal of the Churches in modern times is a measure of the working of the Spirit. The neglect of the missionary call for many generations was a sign of neglect of the Spirit's promptings. Modern missionary work amongst Muslims has hitherto been mainly concerned with undoing the wrongs of past neglect and past bitterness. The handful of converts already received from Islam are the first-fruits; and, if we allow ourselves to be guided by the Spirit, they will be the first-fruits of a great harvest. We may confidently look forward to the time when all that is good in Islam will be preserved in the Christian Church, in an atmosphere congenial to the fruits of the Spirit; and all Muslims who are seeking to follow in the way of the Lord will find in Christ the Way that leads to the heavenly Father.

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GLOSSARY



Al-Azhar. Ancient mosque and university of Cairo.

Animism. A state of religion in which spirits are thought of as dwelling in all sorts of natural objects. These nature spirits are not sufficiently developed to be called Gods.

Bhakti. The loving faith and devotion of mystic H'indus to the God of their choice.

Caliph (Khalifa). Head of the Muslim state as successor to the Prophet Muhammad.

Dervish. Member of a Muslim mystic Order.

Faqir. A Muslim holy beggar or ascetic.

Hadith. Traditions, the books that contain the *sunna*.

Ijtihad. The authority to determine points of law.

Isma'ilians. The section of the Shi'a which accepts seven *Imams*.

Imam. (1) The leader of prayer in a mosque. (2) The *Imams* were a succession of twelve (or seven) leaders of the Shi'a Muslims, the first being Ali. The last is in hiding, and will some day return as the *Mahdi* or "guided of God".

Jacobites. The Church of Syria. Like the Copts of Egypt they were condemned as heretics by the European Christians on the charge that they confused the divine and human natures of our Lord.

Jihad. Holy war, i.e. war waged against infidels until they submit to Islam or pay a special tax.

Karma. According to Hinduism, the burdensome accumulation which results from works, especially bad works, and binds one to continued earthly existence.

Khilafat (Caliphate). Office of Caliph.

Koran (Qur'an). Sacred book of Islam.

Mujtahid. One who has authority to determine points of law.

Mystic. One who believes that God is directly approachable by the human soul.

Nestorians. The Church of the East, which once extended from Iraq to China.

Pantheism. The belief that all that exists is God.

Quraish. The Arab tribe to which Muhammad belonged.

Sadhu. A Hindu holy beggar or ascetic.

Shari'a. The law of Islam, fixed by ancient lawyers on the basis of the Koran, the Hadith, Analogy from these, and Consensus of Muslim opinion.

Shi'a. The sect of Islam in Persia and elsewhere which pays special honour to Ali.

Shi'ite. A member of the Shi'a.

Sufi. Muslim mystic.

Sunna. The traditional customs of Muhammad.

Sunni. An orthodox Muslim. One who follows the customs of the Prophet.

Yogi. A Hindu mystic who follows a method of breath control called *yoga* to assist meditation and to evoke the mystic state.

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