

PRESENTED TO THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDY, SIMLA

BY



Proceedings of the Central  
Asian Society

---

PAN-ISLAMISM

BY

PROFESSOR D. S. MARGOLIOUTH, M.A., D.LITT.

*READ JANUARY 12, 1912*

 Library IAS, Shimla

PH 950 Ma 232 P



00016493



11.10.63

73

PH  
050.95452  
Ma 232 P

## PAN-ISLAMISM

THE RIGHT HON. SIR MORTIMER DURAND presided, and briefly introduced the Lecturer.

PROFESSOR MARGOLIOUTH said: Of this somewhat difficult word we may quote a definition published by the man who unquestionably knows most about the subject, viz. the Sayyid Rashīd, editor of the *Manār*, the most instructive of all the journals composed by Moslems in the Arabic language. According to this authority, it is a phantasm abstracted from the Moslem profession of religious fraternity and magnified by the European imagination, while it is embraced by Moslems owing to their supposed need of it. The author adds that both the fears of the Europeans and the hopes of the Moslems on this subject are futile, because, as a matter of fact, phantasms do not materialize.<sup>1</sup>

If we endeavour to elucidate this definition, we shall find that what it means is this: There are in the world, chiefly in that part of it which is termed the "heat-belt," a multitude of persons, variously estimated at from 200 to 300 millions, who claim the title "Moslem" in virtue of their all accepting certain propositions. They are, however, otherwise seriously divided; in the first-place into a number of sects, whose relations vary from complete mutual toleration to violent hostility; in the second into a number of nations with distinct languages, and interests which are by no means identical, and often conflicting. Far the greater number of Moslems in the world are incorporated in European States, of whose rulers in many cases they are the loyal and respected subjects, enjoying full freedom for the exercise of their religion, so far as it does not interfere with their fellow-subjects' rights and privileges; and by the ordinary tests which are used for gauging the prosperity of communities, these are in most cases flourishing. The least flourishing Moslem communities are those which enjoy complete independence, so far as that term can be

<sup>1</sup> *Manār*, 1325, p. 586.



made to include subjection to Oriental despots ; and the relations between these States are far more often strained than are their relations with non-Moslem powers. The tendency, however, of the nineteenth and the twentieth century has been to reduce ever-increasing areas from independence of the sort described to dependence on European Governments ; and the process is now going on so fast that it is difficult to keep pace with it. Within the last six months European Powers have established themselves more firmly than before in Morocco and Persia ; and Italy has, at any rate for the present, appropriated to itself a large slice of the African territory of Turkey.

Pan-Islamism, supposed to be a union among all Moslems to resist further European encroachment, and, if possible, oust European Powers from Asia and Africa, is, then, according to the *Manār*, a phantasm, because the amount whereon Moslem communities are united is so very slight compared with the matters whereon they are divided ; and the experience of the last six months, as, indeed, of the whole of this century and of the last, is in accordance with this view. And so when Mr. Stead, visiting Constantinople in connection with the Tripoli affair, suggested a union between Moslems as an expedient for the difficult situation in which the Ottoman Empire found itself, the *Tanin* made some statesmanly observations on this suggestion. If he meant that Turkey should obtain the aid of Morocco and Persia, those Empires had quite enough to do in dealing with France and Russia respectively ; if, on the other hand, he meant that the Moslems of the Ottoman Empire should unite in opposition to their Christian neighbours, such a policy was the very contrary of what the Constitution had in view as the best means of strengthening the Empire—viz. the sinking and obliterating to the utmost of all differences between the populations which compose it.

We can, however, go somewhat further than the *Manār* ; not only is there no unity between Islamic communities, but there never has been. Before the Prophet's death heresy and schism had commenced ; there were poets who hoped to curry favour with him by satirizing the "Helpers" or Medinese ; a heretical mosque that had been built is denounced in the Koran. Between the Prophet's death and his burial the schism between the Sunnah and the Shi'ah had commenced, in addition to that which already existed between the Refugees and Helpers ; the latter indeed closed, but the former widened. Before the jubilee of the Flight a third schism had arisen which proceeded to split into further

divisions. Of the Prophet's successors the second, the third, and the fourth fell by Moslem swords; in the case of the third and the fourth the assassins represented numerous and well-organized parties. Before the centenary of the Flight both the religious capitals of Islam had been stormed by Moslem troops, and the Prophet's Refuge, Medinah, had been given up to pillage by his followers. The internecine struggles of Moslems with one another were repeated century after century; those of the first century sink into insignificance when compared with those of the second; those of the fourth are outdone by those of the fifth. Much the same happened in these centuries as we have seen going on before our eyes in the few years that have passed since the Ottoman constitution was proclaimed; Moslems have been fighting Moslems in Arabia, Syria, and Albania; in Persia and in Morocco. Agreement on certain propositions, however important, is no guarantee against violent disagreement on others. The appeal to the brotherhood of Islam in such a case is as futile as the appeal to the brotherhood of man. And just as it is no disgrace to man that he has split into a variety of groups, so Islam is in no way discredited by its subdivision into sects. There is no English reader of the story of the Armada who is not proud of those Roman Catholics who at that time preferred the interests of their country to those of their sect. Co-operation between units is necessary for the existence of a nation, but religion is the concern of the individual soul.

In describing Pan-Islamism as a phantasm abstracted from a pretension, the *Manâr* is then probably right; it is also right in saying that it is embraced because of a supposed need rather than a real need. For, so far as Islam is a religious system, it is not attacked by Europe collectively or by any European power; judged by all ordinary signs, it thrives far more under European protection than when left to take care of itself. The presses whence Mohammedan literature is issued in the greatest quantities and of the best quality are where the administration is European; as a seat of Moslem learning Cairo has distinguished itself far more since the British occupation than before. And whereas in Christian countries Christ and Christianity may be, and constantly are, virulently attacked, similar attacks on Islam and its founder are discouraged, if not absolutely forbidden, in Islamic countries governed by Europeans. So far, therefore, as Islam claims recognition, claims that its followers shall not be impeded in the practice of their religious obligations, that claim is nowhere denied it; the Moslem subject of an European Government can pray and fast

without interference, and facilities are provided for him if he wishes to go on pilgrimage. Complaints from Moslem of ill-treatment by Europeans are rare; and have a tendency to be ridiculous—*e.g.*, certain in the *Muayyad* of December 21 that in Cape Town a gun was no longer fired to indicate the commencement and termination of the fasting hours in Ramadan, or that a newly-built theatre bore upon it the notice, "Reserved for the use of Europeans." The *Muayyad* asks whether this exclusion of Asiatics from a theatre is in accordance with the principles of the Gospel; a question which might puzzle an expert theologian. Only so far as Islam denies similar rights to other religious communities are its claims disallowed; only so far as a Moslem by virtue of his Islam demands superiority in the eyes of the law is his demand repudiated. Its caste system has had to follow and submit to the fate of all other caste systems, owing to the progress made by mankind in scientific jurisprudence and scientific morality. And it is because the Ottoman Constitution professedly abandons that caste system, while maintaining Islam as the State religion, that there is any hope of its becoming a blessing in the midst of the earth.

Hence, a society having for its object to restore the political power of Islam would seem to be following as useful an aim as that of Swift's inventor of an expedient for producing woolless sheep. Those countries where Islam has, or has had, the most absolute control must be taken as examples of its efficiency as a political power; and Arabia with Morocco, where this is the case, are bywords for misgovernment, absence of security for life or property, retrogression or at best stagnation. Yet, Arabia in pagan days was proverbial for its wealth. But it must be added that this is not necessarily because Islam is a bad religion, but because the function of the priest in the State is wholly different from that of the political ruler, and only in the most primitive communities has government on a religious basis failed to be disastrous. Now, Pan-Islamism in the sense of an attempt to soften religious differences between Moslem sects would not be magnified by the European imagination, since it would be as academical as the movements in favour of reunion among Christians; movements which provide materials for discussions at Church Congresses, and which have a tendency to promote sympathy and good feeling; but the effect of which on politics is so remote that it can be neglected. It is the thought of an offensive and defensive alliance between 300,000,000 Moslems against the European rulers of Asia and Africa which renders the phantasm alarming. And the alarmists are so far in the right that

this is the end which the movement called Pan-Islamism compassed and compasses. Whether the spirits which it summons from the vasty deep will come or not may be questionable; but it certainly summons them.

The personage who is credited with originating the Pan-Islamic idea is one Muhammad Jemal al-din the Afghan, who lived from 1839 to 1896. One of his biographers compares him to Socrates as having founded a school but left few literary monuments. He resembles the philosopher in having excited a good deal of interest, and in many places having had something of the effect produced by a gadfly. Prof. Browne has probably given the best biography of him which we possess, in the opening chapter of his work on the Persian Revolution, to which a collection of letters published by Mr. Wilfrid Blunt in his work *Gordon at Khartum* must be added. Some more materials have long been promised us in the biography of the Egyptian Mufti Muhammad 'Abdo, which we have been expecting for many years from their disciple, the Sayyid Rashid. It is sufficient to say here that Jemal al-din belonged to a wealthy and illustrious Afghan family, and held high offices both in his native country and afterwards for a time in Persia. He had the distinction of being expelled from a large number of countries—India, Persia, Egypt, and Turkey; though near the end of his life he found refuge in the last country mentioned, and it was there that he died—some say not without State assistance. At various periods of his life he published journals; one which he issued jointly with Muhammad 'Abdo in Paris during the year 1884, with the title, "The Firmest Handle," has recently been reprinted in the form of a volume,<sup>1</sup> and from the articles here embodied a clear idea can be obtained of his intellectual and political capacity.

One quality is displayed by the writings of Jemal al-din about which there can be no question—detestation of England and the English. England is in his opinion the implacable and the treacherous enemy of Islam; her political ambition consists in depriving all Moslems of their independence, seizing their possessions and generally humiliating them. To this end there is no device, however mean, but the British will resort to it. Aware that the Mahdi was gaining followers in India, a number of Englishmen, he tells us, adopted and professed Islam; not out of conviction, but in order to conciliate the feelings of the Indian Moslems; unfortunately, according to Jemal al-din, the trick should have been tried before. It came too late to deceive any one—and indeed it appears

<sup>1</sup> Cairo, 1327.

not to have come at all. The method employed by the English when they wish to conquer a country is not the straightforward and honourable one of fighting ; no, they have got hold of a third of the world by craft and treachery. In reality ravening lions, they put on the garb of bleating lambs ; if they find the ruler of the country which they mean to appropriate competent, and likely to be an obstacle in the way of their designs, they cause internal troubles in his dominions ; they make his subjects dissatisfied with him ; they induce some member of the ruling house to dispute the throne with its occupant ; they make the ministers conspire to dethrone him, and establish some weakling in his place. They then take advantage of the ruler's weakness in order to seize his treasures, get control of his forces, and obtain supremacy in his dominions. In this policy they are, it is true, greatly aided by the inability of the Oriental sovereign to distinguish between shadows and realities ; so long as the sovereign is left the title of sovereign, and in general the regalia, he is fully satisfied.

The action of the English in the East is, however, according to him, not only disastrous to the Easterns, but it is based on a deep design against the Western nations also. The purpose of the English in seizing Egypt, for example, was to monopolize Egyptian trade, and since Europe in general depends on its trade with the East, all Europe will be impoverished thereby. However, he assures his readers—in 1884—that Great Britain has at last gone too far ; the feelings of indignation which she has aroused in Europe are about to find vent in a general alliance against her, and she is on the eve of being crushed.

Every one of Jemal al-din al-Afghani's predictions seems to have been falsified by the event ; and this was to be expected, since he wholly erred in his assessment of values. In one place he taunts the English with their failure to conciliate the Irish when the religion of the two countries is the same—Christianity. Surely anyone who knows anything of the facts is aware that the *difference* of religion is what has constituted a grave difficulty in the relations between the two countries. Now, the differences between Shi'ah and Sunnah are not less than those between Catholics and Protestants, while those between the Sunni schools are not much less serious than those which divide Nonconformist sects in this country. When in Europe politics were subject to religion, the claims of the Papacy rendered co-operation between the great divisions of Christianity impossible ; the Greeks preferred the Turkish yoke to subjection to Papal authority ; the Pope preferred the ruin of the Byzantine

Empire to helping it to retain an independent Church. Similarly, the Islamic world could only be united by the Sultan abandoning his claim to be Caliph, Sovereign of 300,000,000 Moslems,<sup>1</sup> or the other divisions of Islam recognizing that claim; and there is no reason why any of these courses should be adopted. Co-operation between Islamic nations is not, perhaps, impossible; but it can more easily be brought about if some bond be discovered which is not itself Islam. Now, it may be observed that Jemal al-din was a firm believer in force; he expresses some astonishment that, whereas the Koran is obviously addressed to a military nation, whilst the Gospel prescribes turning the other cheek, all military inventions and discoveries are made in Christian, not Moslem, States; clearly, by right the conditions should be reversed. Though not himself, it would seem, an adept in the military profession, he regularly recommended warlike methods; and, in default of open war, was satisfied with assassination; thus, he certainly advised the assassination of the Persian Shah, and was even supposed to have been implicated therein. So he thought the disaster which befell Gordon gave the Porte a magnificent opportunity for interference with the English in Egypt, and reclaiming the country as a province of the Ottoman Empire; the English could be driven from Egypt with the greatest ease, and Turkish authority effectively re-established. Similarly, he assures the Porte that Turkish troops could advance on India by the route followed by the earliest Moslem invaders, would, on their way, be joined by countless enthusiastic followers, and so with great ease reconquer India for Islam. The sole cause of British power in India was the religious dispute between the Persians and Afghans, and once this was either settled or ruled out of controversy, the English would have to go. What astonishes the reader of such irresponsible vapourings is not that they should be found in an amateur political pamphlet, but that any importance should ever have been attached to the opinions of the men who uttered them. Yet not only did Jemal al-din obtain high office in Persia, though speedily to fall from it, but he apparently persuaded Mr. Blunt that he had influence with the Mahdi; influence so vast that if Great Britain chose to lick the dust before the Mahdi, the Mahdi, out of respect for Jemal al-din, would not kick Great Britain during the process. Our statesmen, for some reason or other, preferred not to put Jemal al-din's powers to the proof.

He who conceives the reunion of Islam for a political purpose—and as such the removal of European influence from Asiatic and

<sup>1</sup> *Tanin*, December 20, 1911.



African territories must be designated—must have some notion in his mind of the form which such a union should take. The most obvious mode would be to unite the whole Moslem world under one of the claimants to the Caliphate or successorship of the Prophet ; among whom the most important is certainly the Sultan. As we have seen, there is no reason why those communities which have rejected the Sultan's claim for centuries should suddenly acknowledge it.

The other suggestion which is attributed to Jemal al-din is the introduction of constitutional government into Islamic States. Taufik Pasha is said to have banished him from Egypt because prior to the accession of the former he had promised Jemal al-din that in the event of his becoming Khedive he would grant Egypt a constitution, and when he became Khedive Jemal al-din reminded him of the promise which he was not now disposed to fulfil. Now, experience would seem to show that constitutional government is workable only in certain climates, whence the endeavour to introduce it into the tropics and sub-tropics is of doubtful expediency. But whether this be so or not, one fails to see what connection there can be between constitutional government and the union of Islam. For the growth of constitutional government in Europe has done nothing whatever for the reunion of Christianity. Yet, in associating democracy with Christianity, philosophers have a case. The earliest Christian community was socialistic almost to a degree that would have satisfied Plato ; it appointed officers by lot, which, according to Aristotle, characterized the most advanced democracy. Yet, in ascribing political theories to early Christianity we should probably be committing an anachronism. But in the case of Islam we are committing no anachronism in asserting that it began with absolute monarchy and contemplated the continuance of the institution. The Grand Vizier, in a speech on December 30, suggested that it was against Islam to deprive the Sultan of the right to dissolve the Chamber, since where the sovereign had not that right there was a Republic. The commonplaces of constitutional government, the expedients which are so obvious that no one thinks of them as meriting the slightest admiration, government by boards, office-holding for a term of years, periodical scrutiny of officials, the referendum, the ballot, etc., are wholly unknown to Islamic historians and philosophers who have not come under strong and direct European influence. That a community must be governed they know by instinct ; that a Government can be exceedingly bad they know by experience. But for twelve centuries of Islamic Govern-

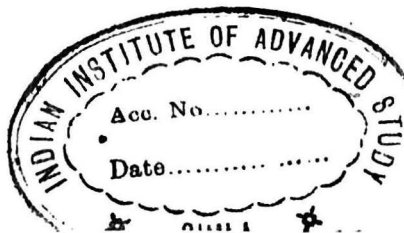
ments there is not one example of any automatic check on bad government having been devised. Jemal al-din, when asked how the condition of Persia could be improved, said by decapitating a number of persons. And that is the answer which Islamic political philosophy has regularly given to this question, with the occasional substitution for decapitation of some other form of execution, or possibly imprisonment.

Granting, then, that an instrument of government which is suitable to the climate of England or France would be equally suitable to that of Egypt, Persia, or India, we should still require evidence that Islamic union would gain anything by its adoption. A United States of Islam is not a conceivable project, because in all the populous Islamic countries there is either a minority or a majority of non-Moslem population.

The ideas of Jemal al-din have not been absolutely unfruitful, and it would seem that one party, at least, within the Ottoman Empire aims at reuniting Islam under the Ottoman Caliph. The *Times* of December 27 states that the following decisions were among those arrived at by the Salonika Congress of 1911 of the Committee of Union and Progress :

#### MEASURES OF PAN-ISLAMISM.

“ A Congress of delegates, summoned from all the Moslem countries of the world, ought to meet annually in Constantinople, to discuss questions of interest to the Moslem world. Branches of the Committee should be formed in all Moslem countries, especially in Russia and in Persia. The Mohammedans of Russia ought to be persuaded to make revolutionary propoganda among Russian soldiers. As many Tartars as possible should be induced to become members of the seven branches of the Committee which already exist in Russia. Efforts should be made to bring about an understanding between Persia and Turkey, with the ultimate object of effecting a political and economical union between the two countries. The Turks in Bulgaria and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, who should be advised not to emigrate, should be organized in such a way that they would be in touch with the Committee of Union and Progress. Large numbers of Turkish boys from Bulgaria ought to be educated in Turkey, and subsequently sent back as masters to the Bulgarian schools. Schools must be opened with the object of pushing the Turkish language among the Pomacks (Moslem Bulgarians), in the hope of making them forget the Bulgarian language. Turkish teachers should be also sent to





Bosnia and Herzegovina, and attempts made to persuade the Turks in these provinces not to favour the Servian aspirations and to learn German rather than Servian in the schools."

The *Times* correspondent has, indeed, had little sympathy with the Young Turks; but an author who is not only one of the most competent, but also one of the most impartial, judges of Eastern affairs, M. René Pinon, in his treatise on "Europe and Young Turkey,"<sup>1</sup> published in the autumn of last year, has a paragraph which is in agreement with the statements of the *Times* :

"The Young Turks have undertaken the noble task of restoring Ottoman patriotism, but the notion of country correlative to that of nation has had hitherto no existence in the Empire. Among the Turks who have never known any other than religious patriotism, the awakening of national patriotism could only result in an outburst of Pan-Islamism. If this word is of Western invention, the idea is Eastern and Moslem. The Moslem is a brother, the Christian an enemy, the Sultan the master. This was the naïve conception of politics in the breast of the good Turkish peasant. A long series of years must pass before it can be modified. The Young Turks, then, will do well to watch carefully the Pan-Islamic intrigues which certain subaltern agents would like to conduct. At the Congress of Salonika in 1910 there was a talk of sending Turkish emissaries among the Indian and Caucasian Moslems; it is certain that an active anti-French propaganda is carried on among the Algerians established in Syria, and that agents have been sent into Algeria. Permanent relations have been established between certain Young Turkish clubs and the Young Egyptians societies. Our officials, who after so many efforts have secured the peace and safety of the Sahara, find the traces of Turkish intrigues in the Sahara, and as far as the oases of Kwar and Bilma. Under pretence of a dispute about frontiers, the Turks have occupied part of Azerbaijan, of which the importance has always been considerable from the point of view of communications between Persia, Armenia, and the Caucasus. On this subject a Turkish journal made the statement: 'We have the right to interest ourselves in Persian affairs because Persia is a Moslem power.'"

This last assertion has been repeatedly made in Turkey by authorized persons since M. Pinon wrote, and especially in connection with the recent Russian complication.

<sup>1</sup> *L'Europe et la Jeune Turquie*, 1911, p. 134.

In an article headed, "A Grand Day for Islam," which appeared in the *Tanin* of January 3, 1912, there was an account of a meeting held at Kabul, where the sympathy of the Afghans with their Turkish coreligionists was voiced by the Amir himself, and a sum of 2,000 rupees collected on the spot. It is observable that the demonstration was participated in by Hindus resident in Afghanistan, whence its importance as a striking example of Islamic fellow-feeling must be somewhat discounted.

On the other hand, the *Manār* of February, 1911, published a letter which was the joint composition of various Persian and Ottoman subjects belonging to the legal profession, who met at the Shi'ite centre, Nejed, in which they, as representing the two main divisions of Islam, assure their coreligionists that there is no difference of principle between Sunnah and Shi'ah, and recommend alliance and co-operation between the two Empires. The *Muayyad* of November 26 republished that letter with another, wherein attention was invited to the Italian descent on Tripoli, and subscriptions were solicited from both sects for the maintenance of the Ottoman cause in Africa: "Are ye waiting to see your countries withdrawn from you one by one till the turn comes to the most revered and sacred, and ye will find yourself humiliated whereas ye once were strong, and divided whereas ye once were united?" In spite of this stirring appeal, one is reminded of the criticism of the *Tanin*, that the Persians have quite enough to do to look after themselves; moreover, the Pan-Islamic idea of union between Persia and Turkey appears to be the incorporation of Persia within the Ottoman Empire. And so in a manifesto published in the *Tanin* of December 20 in favour of restoring to the Sultan his arbitrary power, his divine right to govern 300,000,000 Moslems is alleged, and those figures can only be got by including Moslems of all sects throughout the world. The same figures were used by the Grand Vizier in his speech on January 6, at the stormy reassembling of the Ottoman Parliament after the formation of the new Cabinet: Article 35 of the Constitution infringed the political rights of the Caliph of 300,000,000 Moslems. Since this union would result in the subjection of some millions of Persian Shi'is to a Sunni government, it may be doubted whether, to those who reflect, the prospect offered by Pan-Islamism is any improvement on that of subjection to Russia and Great Britain. The names which the Sunni reveres are held in abhorrence by the Shi'i; the rites and ceremonies practised by the Shi'ah are detested by the Sunnah. As Aristotle says, though the genus is the essence, it is only known in the species;

hence it is in the species that contrariety is apparent, not in the genus. At the time of the Eucharistic Congress it was thought that a procession of Roman priests would have caused a riot, with bloodshed, in the streets of Christian London; a Shi'î ceremony could not have caused more, and would probably have aroused curiosity and amusement rather than indignation. The exercise of self-control sufficient to enable the rival sects to tolerate each other's opinions and practices is no greater than that required to enable members of different religions to live peaceably side by side. Only those will regard the specific difference as unimportant who regard the generic difference as unimportant—*e.g.*, those Jacobites who regard the difference between themselves and Nestorians as insignificant will not attach cardinal importance to the difference which separates both from Moslems. But it is by no means desirable that they should regard these matters as insignificant. What they should be taught is that they concern man in his relations with God only, and have nothing to do with his relations towards his fellows.

The person, however, who claims to be doing most to carry out Jemal al-din's ideas is the Sayyid Rashîd himself, who, as he says, has shouted himself hoarse in proclaiming the unity of Moslems. We should have expected this reformer to have by this time perceived the advantage which a Moslem enjoys from European protection, for he himself quitted Syria for Egypt some time after the British occupation of the latter country, and has clearly found that soil more congenial than any independent Islamic territory. On returning to Tripoli, in Syria, after the proclamation of the Turkish Constitution, he was mobbed; and, going to Constantinople for the purpose of inaugurating a scheme which he believes to be advantageous to Islam, he met little or no encouragement, and, indeed, returned, as the Arabic proverb says, "with the shoes of Hunain"—*i.e.*, disappointed. In Egypt, however, he has met with considerable assistance towards launching it, though there the Nationalist fanatic, Abd al-Aziz Shaweesh, did his best to wreck the project, maintaining that the Sayyid's purpose was not the advantage of Islam, but the exaltation of the Arabs at the expense of the Turks—an accusation for which he presently endeavoured to substitute another. The Sayyid's project is one of extreme simplicity—*viz.*, the founding of a missionary college for Moslems on European lines. Hitherto the propagation of Islam, when peacefully done, has been by settlers and traders. The Sayyid means to train a class of professional missionaries similar to those whom Europe regularly sends out to all parts of the world. Ostensibly, at any

rate, his college has no political object, and one of its rules is that no student may occupy himself with politics or write letters to the papers, and the justification of the school is stated to be the danger which Islam runs in some countries from the success of Christian missions. Thus he tells us—and the admission from a Moslem is remarkable—that in Java baptisms of Moslems take place at the rate of some 100,000 yearly; and the *Muayyad* similarly talks of frequent, though secret, baptisms in Egypt. The purpose of this missionary college is, then, defensive rather than aggressive; it is to provide preachers and teachers who will be able to arm the Moslem who is in danger of being made a proselyte.

The strengthening of Islam in this way is clearly quite compatible with the reduction of all that remains of an independent Moslem world under British or European control; for, indeed, the Sayyid took the precaution of obtaining from Sir Eldon Gorst, not a promise of assistance, but an undertaking that he should not be interfered with; and he quotes the late Mufti for the statement that attempts at benefiting Islam meet with no opposition from English, Copts, or Syrian Christians, but only from Moslems themselves. The fear expressed by Sheikh Shawish that the founding of a missionary Islamic college will cause such alarm and resentment in Europe as to render a fresh crusade possible seems to be absolutely without justification. In the first place, few Europeans could say with certainty that no such college existed already (the assertion is sometimes made that al-Azhar itself is a gigantic missionary establishment of this type); in the second place, if the Sayyid's establishment is for the encouragement of Arabic learning and the training of scholars, as, from the Sayyid's own reputation, there is every reason for believing, he may count on exciting far more sympathy among European Christians than dismay.

In most respects the Sayyid's college, from the nature of its rules, seems calculated to do what Roman Catholic seminaries do—train priests. The students, in the performance of their religious ceremonies, will be under stricter surveillance than in al-Azhar, where laxity is tolerated. There is, however, one of the regulations which has probably never been found before among the bye-laws of a religious seminary, and of which it will be interesting to watch the working. This is the rule that no student is at liberty to suppress any doubt or difficulty which occurs to him. If it be remembered that, according to Fakhr al-din al-Razi, the opening Surah of the Koran alone suggests 10,000 questions, the teachers at the Sayyid's college have their work cut out for them. It must be supposed that the Sayyid's staff are prepared with satisfactory

answers to all these questions; for if they follow the argument whithersoever it may lead them, instead of leading it whither they wish, there is no saying with what form of religion or the negation thereof the Sayyid's college may ultimately identify itself. Supposing a student discovers an unforeseen flaw in the orthodox apologetics of Islam, and convinces his teachers that it exists, unless this rule is to be valueless, that particular defence of Islam will have to be abandoned; yet such an incident seems very likely, since a large portion of mankind is dissatisfied with Islamic apologetics.

In spite of the fact that to some extent the Sayyid's college aims at being narrower than al-Azhar, there are aspects whence it appears calculated to stimulate reform, and therefore push the Islamic world forward. Its founder has regularly, whether successfully or not, endeavoured to identify Islam with all good causes—the abolition of slavery, toleration, purity, etc. He has taken a strong line against the superstitions attaching to the graves of the saints and the various performances whereby the mystics endeavour to induce hypnotism. As a critic of Islamic tradition he can have few equals either for learning or method. If it should prove to be in his power to utilize the latent energies of Islam in the promotion of the higher morality, he will have earned the gratitude of all his fellow-workers; it is not as an advocate of the higher morality that Islam has ever filled Europe with apprehension and dismay. Hence the Sayyid's project may arouse curiosity, interest, or even sympathy, in Europe, but is not likely to occasion alarm.

Our conclusion then is similar to the *Manār's*, that Pan-Islamism is a futile remedy for a disease which has no existence. Islam as a religion spreads faster in countries which enjoy European protection than in those that are without it. Some remarkable facts are quoted by Mr. E. D. Morel, in his recent treatise on Nigeria, which illustrate this statement. It is according to him the *Pax Britannica* which causes the spread of Islam in the Nigerian Protectorate, a spread which he compares with the annual overflow of the Niger diffusing its water over the land. "It brings to those with whom it comes in contact a higher status, a loftier conception of man's place in the universe around him, release from the thralldom of a thousand superstitious fears." It is the sense of security produced by British protection, which, by multiplying facilities for human intercourse among the various peoples of the Protectorate, gives Islam the chance of reaching those nations to whom in this writer's opinion it is well suited. One of the oldest Christian missionaries

in Nigeria confessed to Mr. Morel his fear that nothing could stop Islam from absorbing in time the whole of West Africa. Clearly then European protection affords the most favourable conditions possible for the propagation of Islam.

But the remedy is also futile, because the specific differences of Islam can only be glozed over by undenominationalism and indifferentism; and it is absurd to suppose that a religious bond can be strengthened by thinning the strands which make it up. Jemal al-din was accused by his co-religionists of Babism and infidelity; and similar suspicions will be incurred by all who think they can belong to a genus without belonging to a species, that it is possible to be an animal without being a horse, a camel or a sheep, etc. That different religious systems suit different climates and different races seems to be proved beyond dispute by the experience of Europe; and even within the same climatic and racial areas different systems or variations of systems are specially suited to particular groups, or even to individual minds. That form of government is therefore best suited to men's religious needs which permits the greatest exuberance of religious variety, which, so to speak, admits of the exactest accommodation of the spiritual medicine to individual soul. This is possible where the political and the spiritual authorities are absolutely distinct, as in the British dependencies and Protectorates: when they are identical, difficulties arise which appear to be insoluble.

---

## DISCUSSION

SYED AMEER ALI: As I have the privilege of enjoying the friendship of the Lecturer, for whose talents and learning I have very great admiration, he will, I am sure, pardon me if in the few criticisms I venture to offer he finds anything in disagreement with his standpoint, or with his estimate of the religion I profess. I must say that in the discursive paper he read to us, I did not exactly follow the thesis he was trying to work out. I do not know whether, speaking to an audience mostly consisting of Englishmen, he sought to show that Mohammedans ought to consider themselves fortunate in being under foreign and Christian rule, or whether he wanted to point out that the theory of Pan-Islamism, invented in Europe to justify attacks on Mussulman communities, is really baseless. If the former was his thesis, he has, no doubt, developed it to the satisfaction of this assembly. But I

would remind him that there is such a thing as sentiment in this world, and that the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman once told the House of Commons that nations felt that even bad rule by people belonging to their own race is better than the rule of aliens. I hope that neither the Lecturer nor this assembly will deny all credit to those Mohammedans who are so ignorant as to prefer their own rule to that of foreigners. Surely some weight ought to be attached, even in these days, to sentiment of that character. I believe that in European countries men who fight for their independence and refuse to be subjugated by aliens are usually called heroes; but it seems that Mussulmans in similar conditions are not entitled to be called anything but fanatics. I have come across some Moors who were ignorant enough to dislike being subjugated by France. If anybody wishes to know how they are exploited by Frenchmen he has only to refer to a recent book by Mr. Leeder, entitled "The Gateway of the Desert." It will give him some idea of the "fanaticism" of the Moors. It will show that they object to be exploited by foreigners who want to extract as much from them as possible. They object to their young men being turned into absinthe-drinking *flaneurs*, and their young women into being not usually mentioned in polite society. They say that women are entitled, under the system prevalent amongst them, to certain respect; they do not wish to see them on the stage of the café chantant, or adopting the lax manners often seen in Western cities. I met some time ago an extremely able German diplomatist, and he mentioned to me that these "fanatical" Moors would have preferred an English to a French Protectorate. He was modest enough to put the name of his own country second in this connection, and I think this was very candid on his part. He said the Moors hated French domination largely because it meant the imposition upon them of French civilization in its least agreeable aspect. For my part I abominate that word "civilization," having regard to the abuses it covers. Even religion is not responsible for so much crime toward weak nations as civilization. I hope this assembly will give some credit to these Mussulmans for cherishing sentiments which would here be called patriotic. (Cheers.)

It is a matter of regret that the Lecturer has not said one word in reprobation of the extraordinary enterprise in which Italy is engaged in Tripoli. She is waging there a war against a Power with which she was on friendly terms up to the very moment she broke the peace. The Italians went to Tripoli on the allegation of releasing the Arabs from the Turkish yoke under which they groaned—that they were to be the liberators of the Tripolitans. But these very Arabs are now laying down their lives not to be subjected to foreign rule. The sentiment which has led them to join hands with the Turks can be well understood, seeing that the peace and prosperity which existed in the



Tripolitan oasis have disappeared. Their plantations are ruined, the date-palms have been cut down, and starvation stares the people in the face. That may be civilization, but as I am only a Moslem, it is not a civilization which appeals to me. In saying all this with regard to recent attacks upon Moslem countries, I wish it to be understood that I fully recognize the prosperity the Mussulmans enjoy in India under the rule of Great Britain, and I am persuaded that no Mussulman subject of King George has any feeling other than that of absolute loyalty to the British Crown. But they expect on their side also that some value should be attached to their feelings and sentiments, especially with regard to their cherished traditions.

The subject of the present lecture was brought before the Central Asian Society a few years ago by Mr. (now Sir) Valentine Chirol. On that occasion I ventured to say that this idea of Pan-Islamism—viz. a combination of Mahomedans in an aggressive sense against European Powers—was a European invention with the object of raising a prejudice against Islam, and thus rendering the efforts to subjugate independent Moslem States more easy.

Pan-Islamism is a figment of the brain, an invention designed to help in destroying the liberty of Mussulman nations. If the insubstantiality of Pan-Islamism was the thesis of the Lecturer, then I am in hearty accord with him. I hope you will forgive a personal reference when I say that for the last thirty-seven years I have laboured to bring East and West together, and to keep the Moslem peoples of India steadfast in their devotion to the British Crown. That steadfastness is maintained, but it is perfectly intelligible and absolutely natural that their sympathies should go out to their co-religionists in other parts of the world suffering from troubles which from their nature ought to appeal to every man and every woman of whatever race or religion, and stir the instincts of humanity and generosity in him or her. (Cheers.) From all parts of India, from South Africa, from Malaya, in fact from every country inhabited by Mahomedans, high and low, educated and uneducated, there has come evidence that they feel intensely in respect to, and sympathize deeply with, their people in Persia, in Tripoli, and in Morocco, in the troubles and trials they are undergoing. Everywhere there is the greatest indignation and sorrow at the wanton injustice and sufferings to which they are subjected. You will all admit that these feelings are at least excusable and intelligible, and will not be surprised then that Moslems should look to Great Britain to do what she can to relieve the situation. We recall what was done by Cromwell when the Vaudois were being massacred. One word from him sufficed to stop those massacres, and he left to England a noble memory. Surely the Moslems of India are entitled to express their sympathy and desire to relieve the sufferings of their co-religionists, and no man, certainly no Englishman, will, I



am sure, question their right to do so, or its naturalness or propriety. I believe that in a time not far back the outrage on humanity and international justice, which is so largely observed now with a certain amount of callousness, would have sent a shock through the length and breadth of England, but things are changed !

If the thesis of the Lecturer was that, Islam being divided into sects, there is no possibility of its uniting against any aggressive action of Europe, or any other religion, I am willing to admit that the sects and peoples of Islam have no idea, and have never had any idea, of combining to hurl themselves against the serried ranks of Europe, or that they are ever likely to rise against Great Britain or any other Liberal Government. Still, Europe might well take to heart the lesson presented by Italian aggression in Tripoli. There was no cohesion between the Arabs and Turks there until the invasion took place : but that has had the effect of uniting the Moslems throughout Northern Africa. If European nations indulge in these crusades you must expect the various tribes and peoples and sects to sink their differences and to unite in defence against the common invader. But as to organized Pan-Islamism, I have never come across any missionary of it in the whole of my experience. To the Mahomedans of India the name of Jemalud-Din is scarcely known, and the cult that has been described to us is without any following there. In respect to the Senussi, to whom Sir J. D. Rees referred, they have kept aloof from political movements, for they make a point to avoid political complications with foreign Governments. The Senussi movement is one of a distinct religious kind ; but what the effect of the invasion on Tripoli will be upon its adherents in altering their standpoint I cannot say.

The learned Lecturer had a great deal to say about the divisions of Islam. He seems to have forgotten the divisions in Christendom from the earliest times onwards, and that they continue to this day. I saw a book recently which described no less than 170 to 180 Christian sects. One of these sects, the Christadelphian, holds that the Messianic reign will begin with the massacre of all infidels. •

There is one other point. The Lecturer holds the view that constitutional government is foreign to Islam. Well, I venture to say that if constitutional government is intimately associated with any creed it is that of Islam. No one knows better than our Chairman what a democratic religion it is. It is more socialistic and democratic than any other system I know of, and under it constitutional Government flourished in old times. If the Lecturer will look into the history of Islamic monarchies, he will find that questions of State were settled by Councils, that in some respects they were as representative as the systems which have been evolved by 600 years of democracy in this country. Councils sat and decided important issues at every period when Islam enjoyed any degree of prosperity. Saladin himself had a

Council to which he submitted all questions affecting the progress of his people. In Persia there were Councils at the capital, and each town had its headman presiding over the local corporation. The question will be asked, How it is that a system which was so flourishing was overtaken by decadence. In my judgment this was due to the conflict with Christianity. The Crusades are responsible for the destruction of the civilization and culture of Western Asia. In Spain it was the Inquisition which destroyed the life and culture the Moors had created there.

After mentioning various works throwing light upon this historical argument, the Right Honourable gentleman proceeded: I am sorry that one so gifted and learned as our Lecturer should say that Islam is unsuited to constitutional government, and should overlook the fact that it is the calamities which have come from outside which have caused the decay of self-governing institutions in the Moslem world. The Islamic position has been entirely different from that of England, which has not been overrun by foreign foes since the distant days of William the Conqueror, and has thus been saved the trials and troubles to which the countries of Islam have been exposed. The Tartars reduced the most prosperous cities of Asia to ashes. Multitudes lost their lives in the sack of Bagdad, Herat, Nishapur, and other places. I am sure the Lecturer will excuse me for having pointed out that in my judgment his statements on many points need qualification.

SIR J. D. REES: It is a great pleasure to hear a paper from so distinguished a scholar, and one possessing such first-hand acquaintance with the subject with which he dealt. But I regret that, owing to my own want of hearing or concentration, I was not able to follow entirely the argument he elaborated. It seems to me that the main conclusion of the lecture is that Pan-Islamism is a phantasm, and that there is nothing to be feared from that project of uniting all Moslem nations in one comprehensive whole. There can be no question that the Pan-Islamic movement suffered very much from the death of that astute ruler, the late Sultan Abdul Hamid, who was, I believe, its heart and soul, and the loss of whose capable brain has not been entirely supplied by the community of able men known as the Committee of Union and Progress, which is, in fact, the military despotism now governing Turkey. According to the Lecturer, the movement has long been in existence, and has ramifications in all parts of the Moslem world, and this seems to show that there must be some vitality and force in it. I should be glad if he would tell us whether the success of the Senussi movement does not indicate some vitality in Pan-Islamism? This is a point of importance, as the movement is thoroughly hostile both to missionary Christianity and to British authority in Africa. If these premises are correct, they would raise the question whether Pan-Islamism has not more cohesion and moral force than the Lecturer

was inclined to ascribe to it. It cannot be denied that in various Moslem quarters there has been hostility to Great Britain, an hostility which cannot but be increased by recent events in Tripoli and Persia, however little, as I think, it was possible for the British Government to adopt any other policy than that pursued in regard to both these countries.

I understand that the Pan-Islamic movement is a movement of sentiment, perhaps legitimate sentiment. If that is the case, I should like to know whether the Pan-Islamic policy we have just now pursued in British India is founded upon real and vital sentiment. It is alleged that the transfer of the capital of modern India from Calcutta to Delhi is a concession to Mahomedan sentiment, that it is from an Indian objective a Pan-Islamic policy to cover the blow the Mahomedans have sustained by the cancellation of the Partition of Bengal. In other words, the Pan-Islamic policy of the Indian Government is associated with the far more comprehensive Pan-Bengali policy of revoking the Partition. I should like to know whether it is true that there is in India any Moslem sentiment which will be greatly gratified by the reversion to Delhi. I wonder whether the Mahomedans of Bengal, who are converted Hindus, and live exactly like their Hindu brethren, are gratified by this measure; or whether there will be any enthusiasm for it among the Mahomedans of Malabar and Madras, who are of mixed Arabic descent, and who for so many generations regarded the Moslems of Delhi with contempt and dislike. No one who is familiar with the beautiful poems of famous Persians can hold that the Mussulmans are without sentiment; but I do not believe that there is on the part of Indian Moslems any sentiment towards Delhi. Such sentiment disappeared with the decline and fall of Moghul rule.

The Lecturer seemed to me to suggest that we might do for Egypt what Russia has done for Mongolia, and what Italy wishes to do for Tripoli. I think that the answer would be that as this country is governed by the democracy, it is not able to take advantage of opportunities that may come its way for consolidating its position in countries dependent upon it, in the way that is open to more autocratically-governed countries.

THE LECTURER, in reply, said: I need not answer the question put by the first speaker as to the Senussi, for Mr. Ameer Ali has already done so. Such evidence as there is shows that they are keeping away from politics, and statements to the contrary do not seem to be backed up by sufficient evidence.

With regard to what the Syed himself has said, I do not like to make the suggestion, but as he and I are good friends we may be permitted to indulge in a little chaff. I rather think my lecture may have had the effect with which some good sermons are credited of sending people to sleep. Otherwise, I do not see how Mr. Ameer Ali

could have found ground for some of his criticisms. I thought I had put it as clearly as I could that Christianity was divided into sects like Islam. From my point of view it is no disgrace to either religion that there should be that division ; but, nevertheless, knowing what importance devout believers in either faith attach to points which divide the sects, it seemed to me that his remarks upon that subject were almost identical with what I had said myself. I feel sure he is aware that I should be slow to say anything which could be regarded as an attack upon Islam as a religion. My remarks were directed to its political aspects. What I have held ever since first studying the subject is that any combination of religion with politics, or politics with religion, except in primitive communities, is disastrous. It is a fact that where there is a British Protectorate, religion is not allowed to interfere with politics. It is that interference which causes Islam trouble, just as it causes Christianity trouble.

With regard to the only point in which I feel he has a case, he charged me with not saying a word against the Italian invasion of Tripoli. Well, I feel very strongly on that matter, just as he does. As a private person I regard it as a very terrible misfortune to civilization that Italy should have taken that step. I fear it may lead to the most terrible complications in the future. Believing that any obvious act of injustice is certain to do mischief to those who are its authors, no less than to the victims, I feel clear that Italy will not get off scot free in this matter. But it did not seem to me that this question really came into my subject. And when it is suggested that the British Government should have interposed, one wonders what the British Government could have done. Can one say definitely that the British Government ought to have interfered? I know far too little of politics, far too little of what goes on in the Foreign Office, to venture an opinion. But I will say this : that my study of Blue-books has filled me with the most absolute admiration for the wisdom of our diplomats, and absolute confidence in those to whom the foreign affairs of this country are entrusted. Therefore I should not venture to criticize what the British Government has done, even if I took another view upon the matter. But I do not feel that I can say that in any circumstances it would have been the duty of the British Government to intervene.

There is no time to follow Mr. Ameer Ali over all the ground he took ; but I may say I do not think I said anything which disagrees with the bulk of his observations. With regard to his remarks as to the cause of the decadence of Islam and the democratic character of Islam, these are matters which appertain to historical criticism, and I dare say it would be as impossible for me to convince him as for him to convince me. (Laughter.) So we must be content to differ.

As to the transfer of the seat of the Indian Government to Delhi, I

think that those who are most surprised at this decision will feel as time goes on that this is a step of extraordinary wisdom. But I say so without any special knowledge of the subject.

THE CHAIRMAN: We shall all agree in heartily thanking the Lecturer for an exceptionally interesting paper, which has been followed by an exceptionally interesting discussion. I am sure that Professor Margoliouth had no intention of attacking Islam; that was entirely absent from his mind. But it was very interesting to hear the eloquent and able speech of the Right Hon. Syed Ameer Ali in reply, and I entirely sympathize with the line which he took. I think that as a Moslem he could take no other, and could not feel otherwise. I believe that everybody here goes with him in his feelings of strong sympathy with those Mahomedan populations which had been defending themselves against aggression. (Hear, hear.) I am sure we have felt some such sympathy even when we have been fighting against Mahomedans ourselves. I have had a certain amount of experience in Mahomedan countries, and in serving against Mahomedans, and I am in sympathy with many of the races which have stood up against us, and stood up well.

Mr. Ameer Ali said something about the democratic spirit of Islam. About that there is a good deal to be said on both sides. When I was in Afghanistan some seventeen years ago, I had negotiations with the late Ameer, who was in many respects one of the most despotic rulers the world has ever seen. After the negotiations, he had a great assembly of his nobles, some 400 of them, and put to them every single point of the agreement which had been come to. They were the heads of Provinces, the heads of districts, and so on; and I remember how unfailingly they shouted approval of every point. It was most highly democratic. But I could not help feeling very strongly that if any of those gentlemen had objected it would have gone very hard with them. (Laughter.) But I do not wish to question the statement that there is a great deal of democratic feeling in Moslem countries. It only remains to say that we are very deeply obliged to Professor Margoliouth.

