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# MODERN MOVEMENTS IN ISLAM



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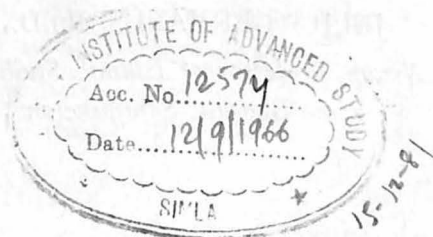


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# NEW MOVEMENTS IN THE WORLD OF ISLAM.

## I

### ARABIA.

The religion of Islam had its origin in the soil of Arabia, at a particular time and under particular conditions of cultural environment. It was, however, destined to spread to countries, the soil, climate, culture, and civilization of which were entirely alien to the Arabic people and to the ideas which they brought along with them. The religion of Islam was proclaimed to universal mankind, though in the Arabic tongue, by an Arabian Prophet. Its marvellous success on the battlefields transformed the community of Muslims into a state, a realm, an empire. The religious teaching gradually developed into a disciplinary force, a system of law, and finally created a culture having distinct characters of its own. The starting point of this mighty culture was Muhammad, the Prophet, and his Book, but the impelling force was supplied by Arab bravery, and a lack of organization on the part of its opponents. Its development was helped by the absorption of practical ideas of statecraft from Hellenistic sources. Arab social life was elevated to another plane than that of the desert, which had given birth to Islam, and Islam in its new interpretation developed into a richer source of culture than it was before the conquests had begun. The religion of Islam extended and broadened into a disciplinary force which satisfied not only the emotional aspirations of the human soul, but regulated his doctrinal belief, jurisprudence and daily life.

In all these developments two factors were all the time acting and reacting upon each other: a revealed doctrine, and the individual interest of the different social groups. Neither of these factors remained stationary or unchanged in their dynamic force or efficiency. The revelation profoundly influenced the moral, mental, and physical habits of those who believed in it, and the inherited moral, mental, and physical traits of the



believers, imperceptibly but nevertheless inevitably, directed the course of the interpretation and application of the doctrine. A mutual adjustment of the two forces at work took place through centuries. New flourishing societies sprang up which making use of the indigenous material developed under the influence of a doctrine which sometimes helped and sometimes checked their growth.

The driving force in human society is the spirit of self-preservation which adjusting itself to the physical surroundings at first concentrates on the mere task of surviving, and then creates a moral and mental environment suitable for its own needs out of the many sympathetic and antipathetic forces of the time. Just as man has to fight against the unfriendly and hostile geographical forces of nature, so he has to carry on a constant war against the social forces of his time, the seemingly unchangeable creeds, beliefs, superstitions, and scientific theories. Man lives in symbiosis with earth by which he is reared, fed, and shaped, and which he at the same time conquers, subjugates, and moulds to his will. Man also lives in symbiosis with his emotions, beliefs, and reasoning. The history of Islam is full of these social struggles of man by which he and his environment, both geographical and social, became mutually adjusted.

But what is Islam? Has the doctrine always remained the same? Was the character of the spiritual life or the type of social life the same throughout the centuries? By no means! Islam is not a ready made edifice immutable and rigid. No human society, whatever the creed it is based on, is. Islam changed in its territorial extension, if we regard it as a state. Its adherents owed allegiance to diverse rulers and inhabited dissimilar climates with dissimilar traditions, subject to dissimilar ethnic influences, if we look at the ethnographical side of Islam. It represented the Arab race against non-Arabs at one time. In later times it stood for the organizing power of a non-racial commonwealth under pious caliphs in whose courts the idea of universalism created a pacifistic air of culture and which became enfeebled by the lack of national consciousness. After the fall of Baghdad it was the watchword of any army

which was in need of a cohesive religion. Islam has many aspects: revelation, religion, community, state, and culture. Each of these aspects has been varied in its changes in different times, and still all are comprised under one word: Islam. The same word is applied to the people too who from diverse origins accepted the creed but were never homogeneous in their economic, social and spiritual aspirations and capacity.

In countless books, written both for and against Islam, the word Islam has been loosely used for a system opposed to Christianity, without clearly defining what Christianity is. Such a counter-position of Islam and Christianity may be useful, when we speak of the role which "Islam" has played in history as an anti-pole to "Christian" interests, or to "Christian" politics. We then distinguish Islam as a socio-political group belonging to the Islamic religion as opposed to the socio-political groups of the Christian creed. It is necessary to remember, however, that in the antagonism between Islam and Christianity of by-gone centuries, it was not the doctrines of religions which were at warfare with each other, but the two communities which happened to profess the two different creeds.

The war between the West and East is everlasting—says Herodotus and when he adds that woman was the cause of all the evil wars, he may be interpreted to mean that hunger, jealousy, love of property, vanity and self-aggrandizement have been the human motives of history. Here also the same motives had their play, but the resulting conflicts produced curious results. Just as in the intercourse of trade and commerce there is both the clash of interests as well as mutual benefit, the conflict of Islam and Christianity led to wars as well as to borrowings of culture from each other. The crusades, enterprises which were entirely unjustified and misconceived from a strategical point of view, were provoked by the capture of the Holy Land by Muslims, an event which appealed equally to the sentiments of the religious devotee and to the lust of the rapacious adventurer. The crusades stimulated among Europeans a healthy curiosity in peoples beyond Europe, and ultimately helped the advancement of knowledge. But did all these indirect but far-reaching effects have anything to do with the

theology of Christianity or Islam? Again, under the pressure of "Islam", Popery could rally its forces and impose itself on secular governments in Europe, but was it the theology of Islam which strengthened the position of the Pope?

Similarly we must be very careful in examining the causes of historical phenomena which are rashly ascribed to the influence of Islam or Christianity pure and simple. Science has progressed immensely in Europe since the 18th century. Literature and general learning have advanced beyond measure. The countries of Islam on the other hand have been stagnating since the 15th century in every department of the human mind. The Muslim armies have made new conquests of territory only, without achieving new conquests of the mind. Is it legitimate to ascribe these phenomena to Christianity or to Islam?

Progress in the Muslim East was more rapid in the 9th and the 10th centuries than in the Christian West, and Arabic was besides Latin the classical language of the middle ages. (*Graeca non leguntur!*). Can we ascribe these achievements to Islam theology? Why did Islam, if its theology or its jurisprudence or its general spirit was so conducive to progress at one time, lose all its mental energy a few centuries later, while the Muslim armies were still irresistible on the battlefields of Europe and Asia? The Ottomans organized a standing army in the 15th century which ushered in all the technical improvements of the implements of warfare in Europe. At one time Turkey had the best gunneries and battleships, and it understood the art of strategy as well as any of the nations of Europe because it had attracted the best experts from different countries. While the whole of Europe could hardly muster an army of 40,000 men under a single command, the Ottomans wielded a fighting instrument of regulars comparable only to the Roman legions. At the same time the Turks engaged Greek architects to build the sumptuous mosques at Constantinople in imitation of the Hagia Sophia, in which they continued to teach scholasticism and the cosmogony of Ptolemy. But Islam learning scarcely advanced beyond its achievements of the 11th century. In the 18th century when Turkey had ambassadors at the courts of France, Germany and England,

who had the opportunity to observe daily the mighty progress of science and literature, Islam still clung to its mosque-schools, and its mediaeval programme. Was Islam responsible for the irresistible armies of Turkey and Christianity to blame for the inefficiency of its generals? Was Islam to blame for the pitiable backwardness in learning and literature, and Christianity to be praised for the advancement of science? We must look elsewhere for the explanation.

In the eternal struggle which man wages against nature and against his own cumbrous mental inheritance, the European peoples succeeded in liberating themselves earlier from the shackles of dogmatism. Discoveries and inventions broke the old fetters. It is true that the study of Aristotle and important discoveries of physical and chemical laws in the 11th century had to a great extent loosened the hold of many orthodox dogmas of Islam, but the Muslim physician did not yet dare to proceed to study anatomy. Christian dogmatism had also similarly obstructed the way to free inquiry, and the blood of numberless martyrs of human progress stains a sombre but sublime Calvary. The Muslim East was not devoid of martyrs, as bold and fearless in their conviction as their Christian brethren, but their life-blood ebbed away in vain. The cause for which they were flayed alive had no connexion with the liberation of the human mind from its stifling fetters. But this difference between these Christian and Muslim martyrs was due neither to Christian nor to Islamic theology.

Men, living in a mild climate, in a geographical situation open to the sea, well-fed, inured to hard work, who had acquired great powers of endurance and strength of character, were more formidable foes to material or mental tyranny than their fellow-beings who were shut in by hopeless deserts and surrounded everywhere by groups of people suffering from a similar autocracy of dogmatism in religion and government to theirs. The Quakers and North-England Protestants could find a new home in the new world, and the thoughts and men persecuted by the inquisition were readily admitted into Protestant countries, just as the persecuted learning of Hellenism had been in the capital of the Abbassides in the 8th century.

Education in Europe liberated itself from the shackles of dogmatism during the Reformation which saw the starting of secular schools and the opening of doors to free investigation. In Muslim countries on the other hand education remained confined to the mosque which claimed to be the supreme adjudicator of all physical and mental activities of man. In Europe contending rulers in the 17th century founded universities and academies which vied with one another for the advancement of learning and enjoyed generous endowments from their rulers for the study of languages, laws, and customs of foreign countries. The several governments, although aware that learning may ultimately turn out to be a disagreeable weapon against autocracy, were incapable in the face of public opinion to check the growth of knowledge and the spirit of investigation. The encyclopaedists are said to have been the fathers of the French revolution, a statement which, if not to be taken literally, still characterises very well the liberal tendencies of science. Voltaire sentenced in France found refuge in England, and persecuted in his native country was invited to the court of Frederick the Great and of the Empress of Russia.

In the Muslim East the dozens of greater or smaller dynasties, although fighting bitterly among themselves, were all equally eager to suppress any attempts at liberating the mind or organizing the people against tyranny. The Church of Islam did not develop movements like those started by the Reformation in Europe, because it was never allowed to represent the interests of the people. Each and every Muslim government forced the Islamic Church to accept the fiction that the ruler is the shadow of God on earth, and that no action against his autocracy could be morally justifiable. Each and every Muslim state was an armed camp ruling over an intimidated population, the best spirits of which in the darkest periods of Islamic history sought for in mysticism an escape from the hopelessness of earthly life. Mysticism, although touching the loftiest chords of the human heart and intellect, is no guide to the knowledge of the realities of earthly life. When the spirit of scientific inquiry had broken the last trammels of a burdensome dogma-

tism in the West, and the human intellect could intrepidly step forward to the philosophic systems of Kant, Comte, or Spencer and vigorously develop new technical discoveries, the East, still immersed in the study of scholasticism, lay a helpless victim to the belief in a heavenly predisposition which only the *mollahs*, secure in their position by their subservience to autocratic rule, were privileged to interpret.

The progress in learning, in science, and in social life made the Western mind more deeply religious and more ethical, while it made Europe incomparably more efficient in man's incessant war against nature. The depth of religious feeling cannot be measured merely by the number of adherents to a church, and consequently this direction of human progress in the West has often been misunderstood. What ethereal heights has the belief in God reached of a man whose mind, trained by philosophers, can encompass the realm of experimental and descriptive sciences, admires and judiciously uses the achievements of technique, becomes enraptured over the heavenly symphonies of a Beethoven and gazes with a thrill at the works of a Rafael—compared with the fanatic who, in the 20th century, ignorant of all arts and knowledge, broods on the supremacy of the Arabic language as the mother of all human tongues. What can mankind learn from such a narrow-minded materialist whose horizon ends with his own puny needs, and who has no concern for the material and spiritual freedom of millions!

In recent times the thing which first most strongly appealed to the Muslim East was the supremacy of the West on the battle-field. No Muslim army was suffered any more to extend the borders of *dar-ul-Islám*, nay, the greatest Muslim power of modern times, the Ottomans, had to give way steadily before the forward march of their subject races. The Turkish armies were gradually withdrawn from the Balkans, and at the same time the Turkish government lost hold on their Muslim subjects in Arabia as well. Thousands of Anatolian Turks who lie buried in the sands of Hidjaz had fought to restore order and maintain the rule of the caliph among the very people to whom Islam had been revealed. The Muslim Turks waged war on behalf of "Islam" against the non-Muslim Slavs of the Balkan

as well as against the Muslim Arabs of Arabia. Was not "Islam" in these wars simply identified with the dynastic ambitions of the Ottomans against the interest of both the Turkish as well as the Arabic people? The Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire were forced to live in ignorance and poverty, shut out from the facilities offered by modern science, heavily taxed, and slaughtered in wars which did not concern them, to serve the purpose of their rulers.

Those Muslims who had slipped under foreign rule slowly acquired a greater freedom and a better economic status than their "happier" brethren inside the *hawzat-ul-Islam*. They came into contact with European civilization and observed with grief that the "frengees" succeeded better in all pursuits of life, and maintained a higher standard of living. Travellers and students who visited Europe and observed its prosperity returned with a sting in their heart, a burning reproach against fate which had allowed "Islam" to sink so low. (It was again this general term "Islam" which was invoked; it was "Islam" which ebbed after its high flow during the conquests, the court of Baghdad, the palaces of Spain, the Ghaznevis, Timurides, Suleymans, and the rest.) They complained about the petrification of the *Idjtihád Mutlak* which lay dead, past resuscitation, and Ulemas were blamed for this deplorable decay. It is inherent in Islamic doctrine to believe that Muslims owe all their directions on life's thorny path to revelation. Naturally the discontented people could think of nothing else but an incorrect exposition and an erroneous interpretation of the Holy Book as the only cause of the evil. The real causes of the evil, manifold and various as they were, were not analysed or examined carefully, but were all lumped together under a single formula by a procedure which Comte would surely have relegated to the theological stage of human progress.

Islamic theology contemplates the whole of the universe and all its phenomena to be subject to the pre-ordained decision of a tribunal consisting of the Holy Book, the traditions, and the consent of God-fearing scholars (*idjma'*). No achievement of the human intellect could escape the *imprimatur* of this mental tribunal which controlled and supervised all worldly phenomena

from a theological point of view firmly rooted in time-honoured traditions. All innovations had to be submitted to the examination of this unseen tribunal working by its own peculiar instinct. This secured a strong safe-guard against radicalism, and acted as a great barrier, very sympathetic to rulers, against the democratization of Muslim states. Innovations unknown at the time of primitive Islam had to be legalised from time to time so that they might not be looked upon as heresies (*bid'a*). For example, the lithography of the Korán and the printing-press were formally declared lawful by a religious decree (*fatwa*) in 1729.

In Arabia itself the divergence between a liberal interpretation of the word and a narrow and literal interpretation was insurmountable. We may trace here the influence of climatic and geographic conditions besides certain factors of a social character. The literal interpretation has been confined to the torrid and arid zone of Arabia, where the scanty crop of the soil has been reflected in the droughty thoughts and emotions brought forth by its theologians. The inspiration for progress in Islamic culture came from outside Arabia and had its origin in non-Arab sources.

A characteristic example of the reaction against a liberal interpretation of Islamic doctrine may be seen in the puritan Ibn Taymiya (died 1328) with the full name: Taki-addin, a Syrian polemic who represented the narrowest formalism of Semitic Islam. He had eyes for nothing but rigid forms and enforced an uncompromising formalism against the freer and loftier speculative methods of Al-Ashári and Ghazáli. He spent his whole life in prosecuting heresies and denied any value to the progressive spirit of learning. He was a pendant to that *muedhin* who in his rapture over the unity of God exclaimed bewildered after chanting the *edhán*: "O God Almighty, forgive me that I pronounce Your Name immediately after the name of a mortal!" Ibn Taimiya waged a relentless war against individualism, against the mystic fraternities of the Súfis, disavowed casuistic interpretations in jurisprudence and went so far in his rigid monotheism as to proscribe the honours rendered to the memory of the Prophet, and discountenanced



visits to the tombs of saints. He led the life of an ascetic of the austere stamp, but in his extreme iconoclasm and narrow bigotry was thoroughly honest. He spent the greater part of his life in the prisons of Cairo and Damascus where orthodoxy had confined him, and died not yielding in the slightest degree regarding the austere doctrines which he taught and adhered to till his death. His disciple Ibn Kayim al-Djawziya continued the work of intransigent puritanism and reaction. By the irony of fate both are being cited and exalted after the lapse of five centuries by the reactionary Wahhábis who swear by their tenets, and by the Muslim modernists who are republishing forgotten treatises in which Ibn Taimiya had drawn his sword against the superstitions introduced into Islam (*As-sárim al-maslúl*). Ibn Taimiya who was an implacable foe to the cult of tombs was himself buried in the cemetery of Súfis, and his tomb is to-day an object of reverential homage of countless visitors!

The seeming contradiction is easily resolved. Ibn Taimiya represents in the eyes of the Wahhábis a return to Arabian Islam in its pristine purity, a return to the religion which was originally revealed in the Arabic tongue, a return to the Arabic spirit as yet devoid of innovations (*bid'a*) and interpretations of foreign extraction and foreign influence. Modernists on the other hand in all countries of the East take their stand on the roots of their own culture, and regard all foreign influences as corruption. Nationalism has become a watch-word in every man's land, and in its rapturous exultation it has succeeded in combining the most heterogeneous elements. Wahhábism and extreme nationalism both accept the same formula: "Return to our own, oust foreign intrusion"!

Wahhábism had its origin in the deserts of Arabia which from time immemorial has been the haunt of highwaymen and nomads who tolerated no rule or social organization other than their own ancestral customs. Even Islam could only temporarily combine them into unstable groups or incite them to unite for a raid. The moral teaching of Islam took root only in the heart of the towns-people. The Bedouins continued their blood-feuds, and their history remained practically the same everlasting story of tribal jealousy and consequent wars as it was before the

advent of the Prophet. As it was the duty of the caliph to safe-guard the passage to the Holy-Cities, the Western coast-routes were more or less under his control. The Ottomans, as holders of the caliphate on no other right than that of being the most powerful Muslim rulers, thought it essential to maintain their authority by the protection of the Holy Cities and the pilgrim-routes. But in every other respect Arabia remained practically independent of the Turkish government. The great Sherifs of Mecca who possessed a nominal ecclesiastic sovereignty were as powerless politically as the Turkish government, and were unable to control the tribes of the deserts.

The inhabitants of towns or oases mostly belonged to the most conservative and rigid of the four orthodox sects: that of Ibn Hanbal, while East-Arabia sheltered some Sháfiites, the coast of Kuwait some Málíkites, and some oases of the East even a few Shiites who were the remnants of Carmathian sects. Economically the whole country was destitute. Not even a slowly increasing population could thrive on its soil, and a constant efflux into Mesopotamia and Syria just served to keep the remainder practically on the border-line of starvation.

As the economic conditions remained stationary, the social conditions have also remained practically unchanged since the time of the Prophet. In Arabia the historian has the rare opportunity to study the original social conditions petrified in their original surroundings, as time seems to have slumbered in the desert. Modern Arabian history often seems to be simply a mirage reflected from the past. Romantic figures of history still rise out of this land in ancient garment with an ancient speech, and, like a spectre, hover on the borderland of European civilization. In recent years Arabian nationalism has found expression in the revived doctrines of Ibn Taimiya, from which Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahnáb (1703-1791) drew his inspiration.

Ibn Abdul Wahnáb was born at Uyaina, a small town in Nadjd. His father's name, who was a Hambalite ulema, although he was far from being in accord with the teachings of his son, gave the appellation to the movement. Wahnábi is more or less a nickname in Arabia; they call themselves

*Muwahhidún* or monotheists, hereby expressing the core of their doctrine.

Muhammad went through the usual curriculum of Islamic studies. He probably developed his enthusiasm for the teachings of Ibn Taimiya at Medina, where he lived for some time. After the death of his father in 1740 he started to preach his doctrines publicly. He denounced all luxury in outward and inward life. He railed at the cult of offering homage to human beings and to their graves. He reproached mysticism for its indifference to the Holy Law. The veneration of saints was abominable to him in any form. He did not recognise the consent of human authority in the interpretation of the Holy Word and preached the return to the two only sources of revelation: Korán and the primitive Sunna. "Ye have the book and the sunna", he said, "study the word of God and act in accordance with it even if the majority of men disagrees with you." He proscribed all speculative explanation in exegesis and jurisprudence and adhered, like the Záhírites, to the literal sense of the Korán and the traditons. He rejected all innovations by which Islam had tried to adapt itself to changing conditions, and waged an implacable war against all laxities introduced by the mundane spirit at the cost of the primitive austerity.

The Ottoman Sultan Murad IV, like other European monarchs of his time, proscribed the use and enjoyment of tobacco-smoking. The Turkish Sultan added coffee drinking to the list. Special decrees of the *mufti* which were passed later to release both from the anathema were based on public opinion of the learned. Ibn Abdul Wahháb refused to recognise the legality of this decree, and made further additions to the prohibited *bid'a*: music, silk-dress, gold and silver jewels. In accordance with the primitive tradition he approved of *istiská*, the prayer tendered to God for rain in drought, but on the other hand, he strictly prohibited any prayer at the tomb of the saint or of the Prophet. He did not go so far as to prohibit the visit to the tomb but he forbade any prayer there.

The teaching of Ibn Abdul Wahháb roused anxiety even among the Hanbalites of Arabia. The pious conservatives pro-

bably sympathised with the tendency of his doctrines, but the insistence on the practice of the puritan tenets frightened those who daily indulged in their transgressions. For Ibn Abdul Wahháb was by no means a man of theory, he insisted on putting into practice whatever he taught. He opposed the usurers and the oppressors of Muslims, against whom he directed the powerful weapon of his fiery eloquence. He was applauded by the common people but secretly feared by the big personages, who finding his intrepid sermons inconvenient in many ways tried to expose and brand him as heterodox. He in his turn delivered a heavy blow against the authority of the ulemas by branding them as *káfirs*, and preached the holy war against them in return. In spite of all this apparent aggressiveness he strictly adhered to the code of morals as laid down in the Korán and Hadith. He regarded all duties enjoined in the scriptures as incumbent on himself, and considered himself nothing more than an obedient, humble servant of the unscrutinizable greatness of God. He never wearied in repeating the admonition: "Do not accept a single word uttered by me unless you are convinced of its truth; I do not pretend to be infallible."

In 1744, owing to the persecution of the ulemas, he was forced to seek refuge at Dariyya, in the house of the Emir Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud, and from this time the theological controversy entered on a political phase. Ibn Sa'ud agreed to become his patron, and concluded a pact with him. The religious propagandist had now gained the support of an executive authority (*asháb us-sayf*) behind him. Those who believed on their own account were invited to defend the faith, those who hesitated were bought over by the prospect of booty, those who resisted were forced by intimidation. The blood-feuds of the Bedouins were forbidden or restrained, and their restless energy was directed against the *káfirs*, at least those whom Ibn Sa'ud and the Wahhábis regarded as such.

The new movement proceeded on parallel lines to its predecessor's in the 7th century. No other line of advance was possible. The state, in accordance with the Wahhábí doctrine, exacted one-fifth of the booty, and also collected the *zakát* or religious taxes from the believers. It converted the

inhabitants of the rebellious province of Kásim into tenants on the principle of *kharádj*. The Arabia of the 7th century revived again. The state was based on the army, and this had to be kept busy to secure its maintainance. The nomads of Arabia, always eager to join promising movements, got interested in Wahnábism, and prospects of booty soon attracted the Bedouins of Central and East Arabia to the camp of Sa'ud. Towards the end of the 18th century Sa'ud and his Wahnábis became the greatest power in the peninsula. They started harassing the pilgrims of Mecca, and robbing the presents of the Sultans. Then they attacked the Shia communities, and pillaged their sanctuaries at Nadjaf and Kerbelá. In 1803 and 1804 they succeeded, after repeated attempts, to capture Mecca and Medina. A remarkable change now took place. The ulemas of the sacred cities, where the Prophet was born, where the Word of God was revealed and where Muslim piety had upheld, against threats of death, the teaching and example of the Prophet, were constrained to acknowledge their own *takfeer*, a confession that they had hitherto followed the path of infidelity! History repeated itself even to its details. The iconoclastic zeal of the Wahnábis destroyed the mausoleums and cupolas erected over the graves, and removed the heavy embroidered silk carpets of the Ka'ba. In Medina rapacious hands were not stayed by reverence for the tomb of the Prophet himself, which was robbed of its treasures hoarded up through centuries. The ulemas cowed by the *takfeer* flung at their heads were powerless against this vandalism. The Wahnábis continued to rob the pilgrims for years, and then finally brought about the suspension of *Hadj* (the pilgrimage to Mecca) altogether.

Encouraged by their unthwarted success, hordes of Arabs pressed northward into Syria and Mesopotamia. The Ottomans were powerless against Sa'ud, and were forced to entrust the pacification of Arabia to the Pasha of Egypt, the mighty Muhammad Ali. It was not an easy task. Desert warfare has proved difficult for even the best organized armies, and without great strategical foresight has never led to tangible results. It is this peculiarity of the desert which has proved so embarrassing to modern armies, and not any inherent mystery, that has pre-

served some doctrines so successfully for years. The campaign of the Egyptians resulted in serious reverses until they had recourse to more glittering weapons than the sword. Money was set rolling amidst the Bedouins who, as in the time of the Prophet, had greater faith in gold than in sacred doctrines. The capital of Abdullah Sa'ud at Dariyya was stormed in 1818, and the Emir and some leaders of the Wahnábis were taken prisoner and sent to Constantinople where they were executed.

This was a hard blow to Wahnábism. The family of Sa'ud first retired to Riyád, then to Kuwait on the Persian Gulf, as they could not withstand the rivalry of their old foes, the Ibn Rasheed of Mount Shammár. The jealousy between the European Powers with their antagonistic policies now began to be felt in the waterless deserts where family squabbles and tribal feuds had been so long the only motives of a weary-some history. Still, just as the Abessynian march on Mecca in the memorable year of the elephant in the 6th century marked the final explosion of the tension between the Sassanian and the Byzantine empires, so in the beginning of the 20th century the mainspring of events in Arabia was set in Central Europe.

The extension of the political influence of Germany over Turkey, which found its economic expression in the building of the Baghdad railway stretching out its feelers of imperialism towards the Persian Gulf, created a new situation. The British Government looked for allies in Arabia against the Turko-Germanic alliance. In the 6th century the situation had been exactly similar. The Byzantines stationed the Ghassánides in Syria as buffers against the Lakhmides of Hira who were the feudatories of the Sassanians. These two Arab dynasties remained in continual conflict, and won and lost battles according as the fortune of warfare waxed or waned. They were the outposts of imperial interests located thousands of miles away from head-quarters. Similarly, fights have again been going on since 1900 between the Rasheedis and the Sa'udis. In the beginning the Rasheedis had gained the advantage. But later on Sa'ud invented a most efficient stratagem. He established several camps at important spots where he assembled his Bedouins and drilled them in the rigid doctrine and discipline of Wahnábism,

and also taught them the art of agriculture. He formed a brotherhood of reliable and trustworthy elements to serve as a nucleus for fresh organizations. The Turks weakened by their defeat in the Balkan war were obliged to maintain a passive attitude in Arabia. Long before the *marcia su Roma* the Wahhábí *fascio* was created. They had their national pride, their rigid national creed devoid of all influences of foreign origin, and a national-religious *esprit de corps* which acknowledged implicit obedience to one idea and to one master. They even had their own distinct uniform—a counterpart to the black-shirts of Mussolini—a white garment and a white turban.

The brotherhood of Wahhábís, known as the Ukhuwwat, was a military organization ready to strike at any moment. Characteristically enough, like the first communities of Islam in the 6th century, the Ukhuwwat does not recognise tribal organization. It is an organization of Arabs, irrespective of tribal adherence, guided by the pristine ideals of Islam.

The shrewdness of Sa'ud realized its coveted fruits. In 1921 he defeated his old rival Ibn Rasheed, and massacred his family. In 1924 he victoriously entered Taif and Mecca from where Hussain Ibn Ali the great shérif and caliph had fled. The kingdom of Hadjáz ceased to exist. A new sultanate, that of Sa'ud, an independent Arabic state, stepped again on to the stage of history. Its intransigency in matters religious and national and its attitude towards foreign politics has found many adherents abroad. In India the *Salafiya* (conservatives) or *Ahl ul-Hadith* (traditionists) are more or less inspired by Wahhábite tendencies.

The reactionary conservatism of the Wahhábís has suffered the same check at the outset of its political career as all reactionary movements do: they cannot stay the wheel of time which gradually wears off the rough crudities of doctrinal harshness. After the first fury of iconoclasm had spent itself the Wahhábís developed a more moderate attitude towards the sanctuaries. The tombs were still demolished and some of the *mezárs* of saints were declared apocryphal, but the treasures of the mausoleum of the Prophet were spared. As Sultan Abdul

Aziz ibn Sa'ud happens to be a great coffee-drinker the interdiction of this beverage has lost its force.

Wahhábism is a militant state. It cannot remain satisfied with its achievements. In order to live up to the status which it enjoys in the Muslim world it must enlarge its economic boundaries. It must and will mitigate most of its doctrinal rigidities in order to gain adherents outside Arabia. A momentous step was taken towards this end by the king Sa'ud himself in his address to the Indian ulemas who appeared before him in 1925. In very moderate language he expressed his conciliatory attitude towards Sunnis. A platform was found on which conservative orthodox Muslims and Wahhábism may co-operate. The possibility and feasibility of such a co-operation was most keenly felt among Indian Muslims. Wahhábism represents to them a check to the spread of European influence and penetration. It represents, moreover, an Islamic state entirely independent of foreign sovereignty. In this matter even Muslim modernists look with sympathy at the strengthening of Wahhábism, and hope to find in it a basis for the reformation of Islam.

The reign of Sultan Abdul Aziz Sa'ud has again united Arabia under a single ruler. By the settlements of the *Ikhwán* (brotherhoods) he has succeeded in making the Bedouin elements take to agricultural pursuits, an achievement which is likely to start a new epoch in the economic history of Arabia. With the progress of the new economic era Wahhábism will continue to smooth down its doctrinal harshness which is a projection of the peculiar geographic configuration of Arabia, the desert land being the only country where it could flourish. The economic conquest and subjugation of the desert, the work of cultivating a soil hitherto barren, will open the country to the forces of civilization and will foster a friendlier attitude towards international co-operation. Only deserts can remain isolated, and only deserts can shelter a society separated by its ancestral and pristine exclusiveness from the rest of mankind.



## II

## TURKEY.

From the barren deserts of Arabia which brought forth the rigid tenets of Wahhábism we may turn our eyes towards Turkey. The same forces which were at work in Arabia contributed to the mighty change in the empire of the Ottomans. The growth of nationalism in Turkey has proceeded along entirely different lines from the exclusive trend of Arabia. While the new-born nationalism in Arabia has crystallized in a reactionary movement, and gone back to a primitive interpretation of the Holy Word, the Turks opened their doors wide to the influence of Europe. The reasons are apparent. According to anthropo-geographers Turkey extends over a territory which is a connecting link between Asia and Europe. All the empires which centred around the Sea of Marmara shared in this dual nature. There never existed any strict boundary line of culture between South-East Europe and Anatolia. The Greeks had colonized the Asiatic shores very early, and Asiatic influences had permeated the culture of Greece from the remotest times. The innumerable small islands in the Aegean archipelago, a broken up and submerged continent, still seem to act as a bridge between Asia and Europe in the South.

Besides the powerful influence of geographical situation we must take into consideration the character of the Turks as it developed through numberless centuries. The Turks were also a nomadic people like the Arabs of the peninsula, but while the latter never could unite to form a state, the Turks were *par excellence* the state-builders of history. While the Arabs adhered to their strict tribal organization which suppressed all traces of individual initiative, the Turks have always shown a sturdy individualism which produced great personalities and organizers who gathered enterprising spirits around them, and ever and anon built great empires out of the most heterogeneous elements. The fiction of a common blood-ancestry, which was jealously preserved and maintained in spite of contradicting facts, formed the basis of Arab society. The ideal of

the Turkish race on the other hand was the supremacy of the state-organization based on the acceptance of a common rule irrespective of racial heterogeneity.

This difference in the character of the two races is clearly reflected in their cultural history. The life of Arabs in the peninsula which had but one outlet towards the North, permitted only a very restricted absorption of foreign influences. Its main elements were Semitic. The Turks roamed over a much wider territory. They were the carriers of cultural influences across an immense continent, from one end of Asia to the other. They were good assimilators and absorbed readily whatever they found suitable for their own purpose. In their role of state-builders they naturally looked at the practical side of things. Abstract speculation for speculation's sake was not the thing they cherished or cared for. They have not had leisure for this. They were pre-eminently an active people, and activity *ab ovo* prevented every kind of dogmatism. Instead of vague speculations practical methods took hold of their mind and helped them towards a sound eclectic positivism. While the Arabs were born formalists and the Persians born idealists, the Turks were born organizers and administrators. These peculiarities of their character find expression in the structure of the three respective languages: the mathematical rigidity of Arabic, the volatile richness and beauty of Persian, and the lucidity of Turkish.

The natural gifts of a people to a great extent determine the trend of its future history. The Turks were never fanatical, their natural disposition which made them the leaders of so many races and the representatives of so many cultures *a priori* prevented such an one-sided attitude. The Turks became Shamanites, Christians, Buddhists and Muslims in turn, and in the case of each religion for the time being they were staunch adherents and obeyed all the injunctions faithfully, but none of these creeds appear to have become part and parcel of their inner nature. In all religions they discovered and emphasized that special quality which was in harmonious accord with their innate racial character. They knew how to obey and how to command. They inherited a sense of dis-

cipline which in the sphere of thought readily lent itself to the methodical acceptance of doctrines. As Shamanites they served in the conquering hordes of Attila, of Bayan, the Avar, and carried the banner of victory from the wall of China to Central Europe under Djingiz Khán. As Muslims they took up the sign of the Crescent and posted it on the church of Hagia Sophia and of the Holy Virgin at Buda. They occupied a larger territory than any other army, covered a wider area than any other culture, but they never interfered forcibly with the social or religious life of the subjugated races. They were tolerant to such an extent that they adopted the art, customs and language of their subjects, and utilized everything that was useful and shed much of their own which became antiquated. This liberal spirit finally proved detrimental to their own interest for in spite of a unique military organization, the subjected peoples never became absorbed by them and never ceased to continue their individual life. The Turks have ruled over many countries and governed their peoples but never amalgamated them. In Russia when after centuries of Tatar rule, the Russians threw off their yoke, only scanty vestiges of Turkish influence remained in the Russian character; in South-Eastern Europe, only a few minarets bear witness to the glorious history of Islam in those parts which were also abundantly fertilized with Turkish blood. Even in Muslim countries, in Arabia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Persia and India sumptuous buildings are the only tangible evidence of a magnificent past in which Turkish lords wielded the sceptre of command.

Intrepid and merciless on the battlefield, they were humble in the abode of the learned. They adopted the religion of the Arabic Prophet, and learnt to master the niceties of the Persian language and imbibed its spirit to such an extent that they lost their own language in the process. Their artistic and expressive language gave way to an elegant, sonorous but artificial literary idiom, which pleased the ear of the pedant and the dilettante, but was incomprehensible to the common people. The Turk was an aristocrat, proud of rank and social status, and nothing was dearer to him than refinement in the mode of

living and in language. This aristocratic spirit was essentially the spirit of the soldier, of the knight, whose highest ambition was to serve his lord, and to assume all the outward distinctions characteristic of lords. In his fidelity, in his *esprit de corps* he never hesitated to subordinate his own personality to the cause or to the head of his community.

“Rule and govern ” was the watchword of the Turks, and this spirit created a dynastic atmosphere so paramount that it obscured the interest of the people. The Islamic religion which the Turks adopted in its Persianized form was a great incentive to lead them onward on the road of glory. Where Turks had conquered before out of the mere lust of conquest, now they could do so in the fulfilment of a noble inspiration. The conquests of the Turkish race received a moral sanction : the propagation of the faith and conversion of pagan unbelievers. As obedient servants of an idea or duty imposed on them they executed this task so unselfishly, with such a disregard of their own interests that while the *dār-ul-Islām* was being extended by them across India and Central Europe they lost their own individuality and nationality.

The monotheistic idea of Islam regarding Godhead agreed very well with an undisputed unitary form of government in worldly affairs. Moreover, Islam did not recognize any differences between nationalities ; the word *ummat* meant the indivisible commonalty of all Muslims belonging to different branches (*shu‘ūb*) of language, race, or colour. The Turks had a similar conception regarding the empire, in which under Turkish government many non-Turkish elements could be conglomerated. The notion of a Caliph in Islam as executor of the Holy Law could easily be translated into that of Sultan, the head of the army and of government. Henceforth the Turkish people became a branch of Islamic *ummat* and the conquered Christian peoples were the “flock” (*ra‘ya*) under the protection of the Sultan, but the Turkish people themselves lost their consciousness of Turkish nationality. They ceased to consider themselves superior in any way as the ruling caste of Turks ; as Muslims they were equal to all their co-religionists. The fact that their ebullient valour and restless activity were exploited to

further Islamic ideas prevented the growth of Turkish nationalism.

The dynasty of the Ottomans which had grown out of the primitive conditions of a village community into the aspirations of all Turkish knights errant: the aspirations to conquer, to govern, and to rule, was driven into the fold of Islam by the geographic and ethnic situation of Anatolia. The Kay-khan Turks who were called Ottomans after their brave leader, Sultan Osmán, were thrust into Anatolia by the wave of Tatars in the middle of the 13th century, and were converted to Islam at that time through the example of their Seldjukian kinsmen. Knight Ertogrul, the founder of the house of Osman was probably one of the first converts. Islam gave them the moral support to extend their power over the Byzantine Greeks, to consolidate the territory over which they had sway, and to transplant their seat to the Balkans, and established a powerful state in Europe long before they had a strong foothold in Anatolia. The dynasty of Osman strengthened its prestige by adopting Islam which connected it with time-honoured traditions, and secured to it an opening which the superstitious belief in Shamanism would have denied. Soon after the death of their first Muslim Sultan (Osman died in 1326) the name of the Ottomans as the new warrior-representatives of Islam became awe-inspiring in Europe. There had been frightful onslaughts of Turkish hordes on Europe before the advent of the Ottomans. The pagan Petsenegs, the Cumanians and the Tartars intruded as far as the basin of the Danube, but after their success on the battlefield they settled down peacefully, were converted to Christianity, and became racially submerged in the surrounding population. The Ottoman Turks, however, through their adoption of Islam gained a cultural frame which preserved them as a distinct racial and political entity sharply marked out from others.

The state-system of the Ottoman was a combination of their Central-Asiatic Turkish spirit and that of Islam. The dynasty made its position secure by creating a distinct class of followers who were the slaves of the ruler. Most members of this class were of foreign blood and extraction; taken prisoners as children

they had been converted to Islam and trained to serve their lord. These Christian children forgot their parents, and denied their nationality; and were completely cut off from any other allegiance than subservience to the Sultan. It was with such orphans that the irresistible army of Yanissaries was formed. It was these renegades who controlled the government (*asháb-i-kalem*) and the army (*asháb-i-seyf*).

They ruled over the people who were called "Turks," a word which gradually came to mean: *boers*, and they directed the campaigns against the world of unbelievers. The *bailos* of Venice vividly describe the twofold character of the Ottoman state-system. The religious functions and the administration of justice were kept in the hands of pure-blooded Turks, while the executive power and the control over the administrative institutions belonged to Muslimized Christians. Although religion was exploited in the interest of dynastic autocracy, still it was not Islamic theology that was the ruling principle in the Ottoman state but the unquestionable authority of the Sultan. The democracy of the Caliphate, as conceived in the golden age of Islam when the Caliph was elected by a shake of the hand (*bay'at*) and accepted by public opinion, was very different from the rule of the Sultan who was over-lord and master of his slaves, his ministers and his army. Anybody from the common people could be elevated to the highest rank or dismissed from an important post at the whimsical pleasure of the Sultan. Even the appellation of the subjects of the Sultan was: "slave" (*kul*).

This autocratic organization of state power rendered its "slaves" immune to disintegrating influences, by the focussing of human interest in personal ambitions. No other social organization was tolerated besides that of Islam, which, owing to the religious loyalty to the defender of the faith which it enjoined prevented the growth of nationalistic ideas. There was no Turkish nation, only a Muslim *ummat* and the state of the Ottoman dynasty (*devlet-i-osmaniye*). The loyalty of the Turks to their rulers was proverbial. The steppe knew nothing more potent than a personality, and all steppe-inhabiting peoples were welded into a nation not on the principle of ethnic homogeneity but by the cohesive force of the compelling personality of a single

leader. The organization of the Ottoman state had at its centre the personal influence of the ruler. When the king was an active, warlike and just ruler like Bayezid the Thunderbolt, Mehemed II, Selim I, or Suleyman the Magnificent, the Ottoman state-power and the countries over which it ruled were mighty and prosperous; the system functioned at its best. But when the ruler was a puppet in the hands of his harem or his ministers the whole empire suffered; this was the great drawback of the system. Since the middle of the 17th century, a degenerate spirit permeated the seraglio and infected the machinery of administration with corruption. The armies of the Ottomans remained no longer undefeated, because the commissariate was controlled by corrupted pashas who were more interested in profiteering, and the army was officered by commanders who were more concerned with their personal loot and the safety of their harems than with the efficient conduct of a campaign. The Sultans discontinued the ancient custom of going to battle themselves, and idling away their life among the women of the harem, entrusted the army to the care of pashas who began to indulge more and more in booty-seeking raids than in regular warfare. Women, leisure, and bragging became the chief objectives of life of the Ottoman leaders. The common people remained uncorrupted for a long time. The reverses on the battle-field humiliated them, but a still lingering confidence in the valour of Turkish armies helped to stay the collapse of the Empire. "The Muslim army cannot be beaten, but it requires a commander and not a bandit at its head"—was the opinion of the common people. But conditions were growing more and more unfavourable for the emergence of such a leader.

After the relief of Vienna by Prince Sobieski and the total discomfiture of the Ottoman army (1683), the mighty edifice of the Turkish Empire began to crumble down with unchecked rapidity. The old machinery of administration did not work any more. The system of government broke down altogether and no new system was established in its place. The Christian armies of the Habsburgs advanced from point to point, and regained most of their lost provinces. People in Europe began to say: "Islam has lost its power, and has proved inferior to

Christianity, and the time has come for the Cross to take revenge upon the Crescent." The causes and events which led to the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire had however no connection whatever with Islam or Christianity. As we have already indicated the real factors were to be sought for in the social conditions and in the men concerned, and not in their religions. For example, the liberation of Hungary from the Ottoman yoke was welcome to the Hungarians only so long as the Catholic Habsburgs did not start persecuting the Protestants with so much zeal and religious intolerance that the "liberated Christian brethren" fled to the countries of Islam where the Sultans granted them hospitable refuge.

A deep slumber seemed to envelope Turkey for nearly a century. Province after province was lost, but nothing happened. Gradually a new problem arose. Old national feelings revived in the liberated provinces. The 18th century saw the birth of nationalism, and the word "patriot" was coined by Frenchmen in a strictly nationalistic sense. The *ra'yas* of the Ottoman empire awoke to national consciousness, and they began to clamour for rights. Foreign Powers secretly or openly sympathised with the movement, for they all hoped to gain something in the chaos likely to be created in Turkey. The social and economic struggles of the *ra'yas*, accompanied by political intrigues, were further reinforced by cultural motives as well. The spread of learning and new movements in literature gave a great impetus to the growth of self-consciousness among subject races. Everybody was on the move: Greeks, Serbians, Wallachians; only the Turks seemed to have remained passive spectators of this mighty onrush of nationalism. The Turkish Government clung helplessly to old-world methods of intimidation, and naively pinned its faith to providence. It could not understand the drift of recent events in European history which tended to the development of national states with parliamentary representation in supercession of absolute monarchies. The French Revolution was a great call to arms followed by a series of revolutionary outbreaks in Germany, Poland and Hungary, which suppressed on the battlefields and in prisons lived in the memory of the European peoples. The United States entered



the arena with its republican government, and Spanish imperialism was eliminated from South America with a passionate hatred. These might have served as warnings to Turkish statesmen. But history is taught to school-boys only as a gentle pastime and treated as it were a telephone-directory with long lists of names and numbers rather than a philosophic study.

The situation became precarious. Sins of centuries could not be atoned for in decades. Moreover, nobody was even prepared to own his sins. A confession of guilt would have led to a complete overthrow of the hereditary principle of government. A different course was adopted : to introduce reforms piecemeal under the pressure of the ambitious foreign powers. At last the Crimean war broke out. The European powers were at cross purposes. Their mutual antagonism saved Turkey for the time being, but the extravagances of the Sultan and the relapse into a blind belief in *kismet* sealed its fate for the future.

For Turkey the Crimean war was a memorable event. It was the last European war which had its romance; it was an expedition full of enthusiasm and expectations, and in spite of big reverses it did not shatter the power of any of the combating parties. It may be regarded as the war of liberalism, and the victory of the ideals of the revolutionary movements of 1848 over conservatism and absolutism. In this war autocratic Turkey stood on the side of liberal progressivism against absolutistic Russian autocracy. This novel position of Turkey necessarily led to a more sympathetic attitude towards the liberal tendencies of political life in Europe.

We can trace the beginning of Turkish rejuvenation to the liberalising Western influences, the door for which was first opened by the Crimean war. Turks fought side by side with the French and the English; they began to understand one another, and while the French soldiers admired the unsurpassed bravery of the Turkish army, Turkish officers appreciated the marvellous progress of the military technique of Europe.

Overwhelmed with an unquestioning admiration of everything European, the Turks started imitating blindly. It was the French whom they idolised above every other nation. Turkish students were sent to France, and French teachers were invited

to take charge of Turkish schools. Works of French literature were translated into the Turkish language, and European literary forms introduced into Turkish literature. From Europe, too, Turkey had her first lesson in patriotism, the greatest motive power in modern history, and discovering its value as a national asset, soon made a cult of it. Up till now the Turks had been contented to be simply Muslims, blood-drops in the *ummat-i-Muhammadiya*, without distinctive national traits, or a separate national consciousness. Outside the Holy Cities there was not an inch of earth which they had a right to revere. A Turk was born to die on the battle-field, a "martyr on the way to God." Contact with Europe changed all this, and bred a new outlook among the Turks. They saw the superiority of the European nations, as evidenced by their wealth and their culture, and sorrowfully compared it with their own misery and backwardness. Nationalism, the watchword of Europe, cast its magic influence on the mind of those honest and romantic Turks who came into touch with it. And slowly Turkey turned her eyes from the East towards the West. Sultan Abdul Medjid began to build sumptuous palaces in European style, which showed little influence of Asiatic traditions, and at a very heavy cost managed to Europeanize to a great extent the outward aspect of his capital.

The greatest and deepest change was however effected in the realm of spiritual life. The Turkish mode of thinking was a Persianized form borrowed from the Islamic East; the literary standards were those of Persia. All the poets and writers of Turkey were more or less blind imitators of Persian models. Even the Turkish language itself gradually lost its individuality; it had absorbed so many Persian and Arabic words that in order to understand it properly a deeper knowledge of these two languages was necessary than that of Turkish itself. Although the language of the common people developed along natural lines, the literary idiom grew into a high-flowing, sonorous and artificial means of expression, flexible and impressive but very often driven to extremes of incomprehensibility, and was used more like a musical instrument than a vehicle of thought. There were two social classes in the Ottoman empire; the subject

people and the ruling caste, and parallel with these two classes two distinct languages grew up as well.

Slowly all this was changed; a new school of writers sprang up, inspired directly or indirectly by European ideals. Persian literature lacks the harmonious structure of a well-proportioned work of art. It is full of the neat conceits and subtle fancies of many European poets of the middle ages. The Persian school delights in the soft tones and small details, which may be enjoyed apart from the whole of which they form parts, like pearls and precious stones taken out of a necklace. Each couplet of a *kasida*, each metaphor of a *ghazel* has a beauty of its own but has no reference to a whole. The Oriental enjoys the play of colour on the leaves of a single tree, the European looks at a landscape as a whole in which forests and fields are but specks of light and shade in the variegated pattern. In science too the Persian habit is to observe minutely and describe accurately things as they are, while the European mind is eager to discover the significance of things in relation to one another. We may say that the observation of the Persian is static, as it remains stationary around the one point in question, while the observation of the European is dynamic because it passes beyond the immediate object to its connexions. European literature is more concerned with conveying thoughts, and giving expression to sentiments; it does not care for piling up polished words for the sake of the polish alone.

The aesthetic ideals of European literature however caught the imagination of such Ottoman writers as Shinási, Sezáyí, Námik Kemál, Ekrem, etc., who broke with the models of the Persian School, and began to write in the European style. They were also greatly impressed by the patriotic tendencies of European literature, and strove to combine aesthetic pleasure with a social aim: to serve the people. They were interested not in literature pure and simple, not in Goethe's *Lust zum fabulieren*, but in literature as a means for serving patriotic ends, for the elevation of the people from its spiritual and social bondage. The spirit was entirely different from that underlying the composing of the Arabic *kasida*, which as its name implies, also had an aim, namely the winning of

a reward from a generous patron of rhymes. Patriotism was an altogether new concept in Ottoman lands. It was unknown before Námik Kemál found a word for it : *watan*, which in this sense had never been used before. The definition of *watan* as fatherland, the country where the Turkish tongue was spoken, where Turkish peasants sowed their fields, the country for which precious Turkish blood had been shed, slowly took root in the hearts of the Ottoman. But the issues did not become clear in a day. The decline of the power of the Ottoman was still confounded with the decline of Islam in general, and the interest of the Ottomans was continued to be identified with the interest of Islam as a whole. The heroic achievements of the Turkish armies under the command of their Sultans were eulogized as fulfilments of the sacred duties of Islam, and in the exhortations tendered to the Turkish people, the mighty figures of Islamic history, the conquest of the Saracens, the thrilling stories of the Moors were extolled to serve as models for imitation in the struggle for a better future for the overtaxed, decimated and exploited Turkish people. The counterposition of Islam *vs.* Christianity in the works of Námik Kemál was a natural reaction to the attitude which Russia, as the patron of Oriental Christianity, very often illegitimately assumed in favour of the national aspirations of the Balkanic peoples. Turkish nationalism was supposed to have its origin in the blood of martyrs shed for the sake of Islam and for the dynasty. This blood claimed recognition, this blood clamoured for its rights!

The political party of young Turks grew out of the same movement. It professed strict adherence to the dynasty and to the Islamic religion. The name : "Young Turks" was not of Turkish origin. No educated person would have tolerated being called a "Turk," whether old or young. The proper name for the ruling class was "osmanly," but as most of the partisans of representative government were soon obliged to take refuge in France, and as they gradually became known in France, the appellation of *jeune Turc* came to mean the liberal-minded youth who wished to replace the autocratic form of government by a parliamentary system. The leader of the group was Ahmed Midhat, a shrewd but straightforward politi-

cian, who would not have shrunk from violence if necessity demanded.

A clash of interest between the seraglio and the people ended with the suppression of the representatives of the latter. The dream of an Ottoman parliamentary government was shattered by the new Sultan Abdul Hamid. A regime of nervous rope-dancing began in the effort to satisfy the demands of rival intriguing European Powers, in the constant attempt to play off one Power against another, to preserve intact the appearance of an imperial authority, and to keep order in the provinces of the empire. The wires of this grand puppet-theatre were concentrated in the hands of the Sultan himself, a historic figure worth close psychological study. A combination of an inexorable despot and a cowardly intriguer, a shrewd observer of human weakness and a clever artist to play with it, an able organizer of an Argus-eyed police-system and at the same time a victim to fears of his own creations, he foresaw that parliamentary reforms would inevitably remove authority from his hands. He based his policy on a balance of nationalities as a secure foundation for his own rule and dynasty. Frightened by the dethronement of his predecessors, he imprisoned his brothers and nephews, and lived aloof from the people in the modest palace of Yildiz Kyöshk outside the town and fortified by a lofty wall. Fond of worldly treasures, he amassed an immense fortune of movable and immovable properties and yet denied himself all luxuries except the pleasures of a harem, and did not indulge in any human vanities. His own usual dress was a simple and almost shabby frock-coat; on the day of Selamlik (Friday)-prayer, among the gorgeous robes of his cringing pashas he appeared almost like an ascetic in the unpretentious clothes of an *efendi*. He interdicted all technical inventions like the electric light, telephone, and motor-cars, and proscribed all foreign political and scientific literature from entering his country. But he himself maintained an extensive translation office of his own in which any European book he took a fancy to was translated into Turkish within a few days and read to him by his secretaries. The collection of this private manuscript library, compiled by some dozen com-

petent translators and writers, numbers several thousands of volumes, and has now been incorporated in the University Library of Constantinople. In sleepless nights when no light was allowed to burn in Constantinople from the fear of secret signals to revolutionaries, the window of the Sultan's bedroom was ablaze, behind which the padishah sat up on his simple couch and listened to the blood-curdling stories of the French revolution read out to him from behind a screen.

The Young Turks, who wrote the history of his régime and studied his private life after his fall, failed to do justice to Abdul Hamid the politician. It is true that he neglected to strengthen the Turkish elements of his empire at the cost of the *ra'yas*, but he fostered far-reaching imperialistic plans. He was not only the Sultan of the Turkish nation, but the Caliph of the faithful, and his eyes were fixed on a policy which had been the guiding motive of his dynasty for centuries: the advancement of Islam. In opposition to the intrigues of the European Powers he thought of rallying those forces which seemed best able to counteract the effect of European aggression. In opposition to Pan-Slavism which seemed to him to be the most threatening ogre of his empire, he initiated a new movement of "Pan-Islamism." Pan-Slavism was the watchword of Russian imperialism; it completely neglected the welfare of the Russian people who groaned under ignorance, poverty and oppression at home, and yet were forced to make great sacrifices abroad for the liberation of their racial brethren in the Balkans. During the Russo-Turkish war of 1877 the Russian soldiers gained the alarming experience that most of the "oppressed Bulgarian Christians" lived in better conditions and in comparatively easier circumstances than they themselves. But Imperial Russia wanted an exit to the seas, and this economic necessity led to a policy of expansion which was deliberately based on the delusion that racial affinity must needs create common interest. Very few of the Russian politicians were capable of discerning the insurmountable cultural and social differences and the clash of economic interests which separated the different peoples speaking a Slavic language. In these peculiar circumstances, Abdul Hamid looked for a counter-movement to the

growing menace of Pan-Slavism in Pan-Islamism which in its possibilities was not at all a *quantité négligeable*. (The German Emperor William II had prided himself on being the friend of 300 millions of Muslims.) But the actual strategy of the counter-stroke was fatally marred by a most unsystematic handling of the situation by the Sultan. After the crucial battle of Mukden in Manchuria when the defeated Russian armies fled before the victorious but equally exhausted Japanese, and revolutionary movements in Petersburg compelled the intimidated Russian autocracy to conclude peace, Japan with a keen outlook for the future was anxious to secure allies among the discontented Muslim subjects of the Tsar. An unofficial movement was started to undermine the foundations of the Russian empire. The cry: the East for the Eastern peoples, was raised for uniting the Muslim Tartars, the Indians, the Persians, and the Turks against their common enemy, the Russian imperialists. The idea of a Pan-Asiatic organization under the leadership of the Mikado was slowly emerging as a political factor of importance in the struggle against Russian supremacy. An Inter-Islamic Congress at Tokio was being planned and discussed, and Ottoman public opinion eagerly looked forward to this new movement. Turkish newspapers which laboured under a strict censorship in political matters, were allowed to expatiate upon the subject, and the idea matured to the extent of selecting a delegate to be sent to Tokio as the representative of the Caliph. Mahmud Es'ad, Professor of Law at the University of Constantinople, was un-animously accepted as the fittest person for this honourable task. Then weeks and months passed away in inaction and the whole movement ebbed away. Was it merely a dream of Abdul Hamid or of his private *mullah* the dervish Abul'l-Khudá, that suggested such a step as a counter-movement against the menace from the North? At an opportune hour when Russia lay helpless, it at least succeeded in demonstrating that Asia may yet get organized. The Pan-Islamism of Abdul Hamid however amounted to nothing more than a gesture. No international organization was created to strengthen the coherence of the Islamic peoples, or to consolidate the

leadership of the Ottomans. The growth of Arab and Kurd nationalism hampered the development of a sound Pan-Islamic policy, and the backwardness of Turkey itself increased the dangers of separatist tendencies. The country had few railways, few roads, most of which were bad, and was so hopelessly handicapped by the ignorance in which its population was enveloped that progress was extremely difficult. No books were tolerated except harmless theological works, nobody was allowed to travel from one province to the other without a stringent passport. The name of the Sultan could not be uttered, and when it appeared in newspapers it was preceded by two lines of honorific titles; passive oppression stifled every kind of economic activity, and at the same time goaded the people to extreme opposition and despair. And this was the worst effect of the regime of Abdul Hamid.

The suppression of all liberal movements drove the opposition underground and fomented revolutionary activities. The Sultan was deposed, and a premature constitution was established at a most unpropitious time without the nation having been prepared to handle it. Turkey had no allies, and at the dawn of Turkish freedom, the country was torn asunder by its warring nationalities. The Young Turks, full of enthusiasm and a sincere patriotism, were ill-versed in the teaching of history, and fondly hoped to secure the co-operation of their own nationalities as well as that of the European Powers for the building up of a modern Turkey. They ignored the views of the German historian Treitschke, that the application of a certain amount of force is necessary for building up or holding together the power of the state. It was not indeed necessary to go to the German historians for this lesson, for Islamic history was full of relevant examples. But the Young Turks, who had struggled against force for years, could not morally reconcile themselves to using it when they attained to power. Apart from their liberal principles of government, the country was divided by creeds, languages, races and cultures which generated forces of disruption. The shock of reality soon awakened the Young Turks from their sentimental dreams.

At the introduction of parliamentary government enemies



arose in and outside the country. The parliament which had appeared to the Young Turks in exile to be a panacea for all evils proved a feeble substitute for government in reality. It was as its name implied a place where "much was talked," and gave rise to fine specimens of Turkish eloquence, but it lacked administrative power. Nationalist members strove to obtain a complete control over the authority of the state, and began to interfere with the army. From outside, the Great Powers concentrated on their policy of pacific penetration into Turkey. In the Balkan war the antagonism between France which wished for a victory of the Allies on one hand, and Germany and Austria which were more interested in a Turkish success on the other, became evident. The defeat of the Young Turkish armies in Thracia was vaguely felt as a defeat of German supremacy. The interest of heavy industries found expression in unofficial war-reports. French newspapers loudly proclaimed the superiority of Creuzot guns over those of the Krupp-make. Turkish politicians were divided in their opinion which course to take. The Young Turks unswervingly adhered to the German tutelage; most of their officers had studied at German military schools and had been deeply impressed by the invincibility of the German fighting machine. The conservative-liberals on the other hand inclined more to the French as they were disciples of an older school who had been inspired by French influence since the Crimean war; they understood better the method of shrewd and cunning diplomacy and appreciated the masterly suppleness of the French diplomatic spirit. The Great War found Turkey hesitating and unprepared. The final decision was mainly due to the personal predilections of the Germanophile war minister Enver Pasha, aided by the flight of two German battleships to the harbour of Constantinople. The pressure of the Austrian and German ambassadors, punctuated by the naval guns, and the sympathies of the Germanophile Turkish ministers decided the issue. In spite of the protest of the Allies and the anxiety of the pacifists the battleships were clandestinely purchased and turned into Turkish cruisers. This provocation dragged Turkey into the whirlpool of the war.

In the half a century which has elapsed since the works of the young Turkish writers first appeared, Turkish literature has traversed a long road. The sonorous phrases even of Námik Kemál, Ziya Pasha or Abdul Hakk Hámid appeared cumbrous and gave way to the purer language of the people. Turkish nationalism liberated itself from the bondage of the past. The Arabic tongue no longer occupied a sacrosanct position; conglomerations of foreign words without any meaning became obsolete. The Turkish language again became a means to express thoughts and not to conceal them. The older literature grew more and more alien in spirit to the Turks and were enjoyed less and less. Fuzúli, Nedim and Báki were often referred to by modern writers but were scarcely read; like the venerable old arm-chair in the corner, uncomfortable to sit in, the older writers were shoved into the background. The changing times created new ideas and new forms. Instead of the *ghazel* with its monotonous theme, European poetry with its great variety warmed itself into the hearts of the people. Redjayizáde Ekrem was a pioneer of European poetic forms, and at the same time a master of the tenderest tones in the Turkish style. Dramatic literature produced a genius of extraordinary ability: Abdul Hakk Hámid who in his book-dramas soars to the level of immortality. French literary movements readily influenced the Turkish poets, and the impressionistic school soon found imitators in Tefvik Fikret and in that most ingenious writer Djenáb Shiháb Eddin. Prose literature found a new vehicle in the Turkish novel (called the "national" novel (*milli*) because it deals with social problems), and a number of writers contributed to create the typical Turkish novel of the present day: a symbolistic, romantic and melancholy story. Humoristic literature also developed rapidly as being most congenial to the Turkish spirit. All these literary productions reflect the slow but sure awakening of the Turkish spirit from its slumber of centuries. Every new literary work was a step forward in the liberation of the language from its foreign shackles, and also marked from day to day the advance of the Turkish people in their struggle to get free from both Asiatic and European despotism. Poets began to sing the

songs of their own hearts, in the language of the people; novelists to describe in a popular form the lives of men of the people, and Turkish politicians began, at long last, to act in the interest of the people. Time-honoured words and expressions from the classics, familiar and cherished as they were to older ears and tastes, were rudely brushed aside to give place to the words of the peasant of Anatolia. A new Turkish literature was created for the Turks, in the language of the Turks. Time-honoured institutions surviving from the glorious past were replaced by activities serving the interests of the living present. A radical change took place in the sphere of practical politics as well as in that of thought.

The road was long and full of big sacrifices. Turks had conquered the world in the service of an abstract religious idea, Turks had bled to death in the service of an absolutistic government. Bitterly disappointed with both, the Turks exclaimed: "We are Turks and nothing else!" The honorific appellation of "Osmanly" was dropped. It meant the thralldom to an inefficient and unnational dynasty. During the war the *fetwa* for *djihád* was responded to by nobody. One part of the Muslim world openly fought against the Turks. Where was the Turk to look for hope, which ideal could help him on, after the failure of both Islam and the Dynasty? The spiritual development of the last few decades which ushered in the era of nationalism readily answered: Trust yourself, your race, your own culture.

This idea of nationalism was vigorously propagated. A Turkish lady-writer, Khálide Edíb, perhaps inferior as a novelist to her more talented contemporaries and yet more successful as a popular writer, portrayed in her novel: *Yeni Turan*, the struggle and the final victory of the new Turkish nationalism over Ottomanism. The novel exercised a magic effect, it became a most efficient means of propaganda. Its hero, the intrepid leader of Turanism, found numberless admirers and imitators. An indefatigable organizer, himself a remarkable poet, Hamdullah Subhi laid the foundation of a patriotic literary society the "Turkish Hearth" (*Türk Odjaghy*). A review was started with the title *Türk Derneyi*

(Turkish Magazine). The new group was not ashamed to be called "Turk," and purposely put the hitherto unused word "*dernek*" on the title-page of its review. The popular poet Mehemed Emin's verses, written in the purest Turkish, formed the nucleus of the review. Young writers eagerly rallied around it, and very soon the Turkish Hearth developed its own literary and social circle. Delicate questions of history and philosophy began to be openly discussed. Ibrahim Hilmi published a book under the title "Europeanization" (*Avropalilashmak*) in which he boldly criticized the backward and uncivilized habits of the Turks. The idea of nationalism was strongly fomented by influences from abroad. Léon Cahun's works of history (*Introduction à l'histoire de l'Asie Centrale*) in which he unearthed the past glory of the Turks justly appealed to their national pride. Instead of seeking for ideals in the glorious past of Islam, they began to derive strength from the history of the Turanians. These vague ideas soon found permanent form in the hands of an able poet and writer. The very name of Ziya Gök Alp was a symbol of anti-Islamic nationalism, for only the first part of it was Muslim and the last purely Turkish. He, like most of the young Turkish nationalists, avowed the French school of sociology, the rationalism of Auguste Comte and Durkheim. His poems were more aimed at the masses, but his theory was contained in a serious work: *Türkchülük Esasları* (The Principles of Turkish Nationalism) in which he points at the common racial and cultural ties of the Central Asiatic and Ottoman Turks, and lays down the foundations of Turkish politics in a pan-Turkish nationalism which is destined to build up a new Turkish people. In his book he kept aloof from the wild speculations of some Turanists who dreamt of an empire of Turanians of several hundreds of millions, comprising all the peoples who more or less speak Ural-Altian languages. His Turanism was restricted to a practical political programme. He advocated the puristic tendencies of modern Turkish writers, but discouraged the forcible introduction of obsolete Turkish words into literature in the place of firmly rooted Arabic expressions. As a vehicle of instruction he emphasized the need for using the Turkish language instead

of the Arabic, and he insisted upon having the Korán translated into Turkish and for the sounding of the *ezán* in the Turkish language. He advocated equal civil rights for women, and pressed for a legal code framed by men of the present suited to the needs of the present. His fluent style and his impressive arguments found ready response among the youth of the country, and a number of books were written under the influence of his teachings.

The Turanist movement was however not received without opposition. The more conservative elements, brought up in the older atmosphere of religious ideas, scented sacrilege and blasphemy in its teachings. Equally patriotic, they were not convinced by the ideas of the national radicalism. They clung to the traditions of a Turkish culture which had been inspired by Islam, and cherished the older forms in literature and the habits and customs of the Turkey of yesterday. The political and economic results achieved by the modernists were not encouraging. After the deposition of the Sultan, Turkey was plunged in war and the cost of living rose alarmingly. The whole country was transformed into a desolate region where deserters from the army freely roamed, beggars died in the streets, profiteers revelled in champagne-carousals, while the people was slaughtered on battlefields. The older school distrusted those theoretical experimentalists who had their "heads crammed with French books and unripe ideas". Round the book of a former grand-Vizier, Sáid Halím Pasha, on the "Islamization" (*Islamlashmak*) these conservative elements were grouped. They had a printing press and a circle: *Sebil-ür-Reshád* (the way of righteousness), which published a series of books dealing with religious and social questions in the old-fashioned way. They also professed the need for religious reforms, but they held that these reforms must come from the religion of Islam and its principles. They definitely opposed the conception of legislation advocated by the nationalists namely that the *kánúns* or codes formulated by Ottoman Sultans had equal validity with the *Shari'at*, and combated the idea of deposing the Holy Law from its eternal pedestal and establishing laws framed by the human mind. The circle of the *Sebil-ür-Reshád* was of

opinion that a liberal utilization of the *Idjtihád* would furnish innumerable laws suited to the needs of the times.

This literary battle went on, either of the parties adducing now and then a valid argument, and often many a feeble one. The last word was rudely spoken. The starved and exhausted Turkish armies abandoned their post. A fearful collapse followed. Constantinople, for the first time after its capture by the Turks, was invaded by foreign armies and the *ra'yas* displayed an insolent attitude under the shadow of French and English bayonets. Turkey was humiliated beyond measure, and the strategic object of the Allies was realized. But the agreement to hand over Constantinople to Russia was not fulfilled. Russia, collapsing under the blows of the German army, had fallen a victim to Bolshevism. A shameful peace-treaty was forced upon Turkey which was calculated to paralyse its economic and political future.

The Turks have produced a number of great military leaders and organizers. At this critical time, there again rise a man out of the ranks. Trained to bravery on the battlefield, endowed with a perspicacious and practical mind, and an iron-will, he turned the table of fate. Mustafa Kemál Pasha had distinguished himself at the Dardanelles, and in spite of hampering intrigues had won the friendship and esteem of the most capable of Turkish generals and statesmen. At a time when everybody despaired of the fate of defeated and humiliated Turkey, he gathered the ragged and hunger-stricken fugitives of the Ottoman army and succeeded in creating out of them a national fighting machine fully worthy of its predecessors. His victory over the Greeks created a new situation. Among all the countries of the Central Powers, Turkey alone succeeded in having its peace-treaty revised, at the point of the bayonet. A striking sequel to the dreams of the Young Turks who had started a new regime without a workable state-power and army behind it.

The victory of Mustafa Kemál was a Turkish victory, in spite of Ottoman Sultans and Caliphs. The fall of the dynasty and the abolition of the Turkish Caliphate was but a natural consequence of the course of events. Wahy Eddin Mehemed

VI, who had followed his brother on the throne in 1918, took over the government in the most critical time of Turkish history. He was well-known to the Turks as an intriguer like his brother Abdul Hamid. He was rash enough to brand the patriotic measures taken by Mustafa Kemal in Anatolia as insubordination and rebellion. He was inclined towards a policy of obedience to the Allies in order to make his throne secure in the expected period of peace to follow. This attitude was as unwise as it was unpatriotic. Mustafa Kemal, a strategist of the first order, recognised the natural debility of the *Entente* after the conclusion of peace, when no imminent danger threatened the fruits of victory nearer home. The political bonds that held together the Allies relaxed as soon as the strategic aims were achieved. The peoples of the *Entente* were weary of war, the European governments were frightened by the spectre of Bolshevism and the widespread discontentment at home. The victorious and the defeated were equally shaken to the foundations by the after-effects of the Great War. An agricultural country like Turkey situated in the midst of the steppes of Anatolia was the only one which could wage war with impunity. With a limitless territory for retreat, with no towns of industrial importance to lose, it could start a campaign of guerilla warfare so devastating in its effect on a pursuing army. It was the vainglorious Greeks who with their extravagant dreams of restoring the Cross on the Hagia Sophia, and regaining the empire of Alexander the Great, took upon themselves the task of extirpating the Turks from Anatolia. They fell into a trap, and their recklessly advancing army was annihilated. Their greed and consequent discomfiture for ever ended Greek influence in Anatolia. The victory of Mustafa Kemal saved Turkey. The peace-treaty was torn asunder and a new one was concluded. A National Assembly was convoked which vested all prerogatives of government in itself. Mehemed VI ceased to be the ruler of Turkey by this act. He was put under the tutelage of the National Assembly. At the same time he was declared to continue to remain the Caliph of the faithful. When Mehemed VI took refuge in an English man-of-war on the 17th November 1922, the Assembly declared him deposed

and elected his cousin Abdul Medjid as Caliph. Next year (October 30, 1923) the Assembly finally proclaimed a republic, and on the 3rd March, 1924, suspended the Caliphate altogether. All members of the Ottoman dynasty were asked to leave the country within a year. Hussayn Ibn Ali, King of Hidjáz and Great Sherif of Mecca, proclaimed himself Caliph a few days later. Since the fall of Mecca, the Caliphate has remained vacant.

The step taken by the Turkish National Assembly of Angora created a general consternation in the world of Islam. Was the Turkish Assembly authorized to depose a Caliph, the supposed spiritual and temporal head of universal Islam? Was the Turkish Caliph really the temporal or spiritual head of Islam? What was the Caliphate? These and similar questions arose and agitated the mind of the peoples concerned.

In India a movement was started in the interest of the Caliphate, and a committee asked for explanations from Angora. It received the following answer: "The dream of Muslims that the Caliphate will unite in its bosom all believers was never realized. Instead, it was an object of dissensions, and led to anarchy and wars among the Muslims. The real interest of the parties is henceforth to form distinct national governments, and the real spiritual tie between the believers shall be the conviction that they all are brethren (*innama'l-múminúna ikhwat*)."

This answer was in perfect harmony with the national radicalism of the Turks, who on their onward march were not checked by a sentimental clinging to the traditions of the past. Their statement that the Caliphate was an object of dissension, a cause of anarchy and war was a historical fact. The consternation caused by the suspension of the Caliphate was mainly due to the fact that the meaning and role of this institution was ignored or misunderstood. In Europe it was generally believed that the Caliphate was an institution analogous to Popery, a kind of spiritual tribunal of all Muslims irrespective of their state-allegiance. The Ottomans cleverly exploited the belief in order to keep up a semblance of authority over all Muslims. If it were so, the Turkish Assembly of Angora had no right to depose and to elect the Caliphs, just as the Young Turks had



had no right to depose Abdul Aziz and elect Murad V, depose Murad and elect Abdul Hamid in his stead as the Caliph. But the real fact of the matter is quite different.

Muhammad the Prophet was the leader in wordly and spiritual matters of his community of Muslims. Such a leadership was unknown in Arabia before him. It was he who created the community of Islam, he was the soul and core of all its teachings and institutions. He died prematurely, and he was unable to leave definite instructions regarding the succession to the leadership of the community. In reality the vacancy could not be filled adequately by any body else, but it was necessary that somebody should at least assume the nominal status of a leader and thus continue to maintain unbroken the religious ties of Islam. The community sought guidance along the right path, for it was beset with uncertainties and doubts. In general esteem Abu Bakr, the oldest friend in arms of the Prophet, appeared to be the worthiest of all to undertake this task. He was an intrepid stalwart old man endowed with military skill and well-versed in the revelations and the precepts of the Prophet. He was the proper person to assume the leadership vacated by the Prophet, and he was named the successor: *Khalifa*. He became the leader of a community which soon grew into a fighting army and developed into a state. The task which the "followers" had to perform became gradually more and more different from that of the Prophet. The first four Caliphs tried to maintain the traditions of the community just as they were during the life of the Prophet, and later on, this particular period was idealized and became the model on which Islamic theory strove to build up its institutions. But theory and practice never coincided in reality, for the theory was based on an idealization of events which had no foundation in historic reality. History developed in its own way. In Syria, *Mo'awiya* founded a state an Arabic kingdom, and cared little for the idealized conceptions of a Caliphate which never had real existence save in the books of the learned. The Ommayyad kings hardly ever fulfilled the ideal of a Caliph, the wordly and spiritual leader, defender, and executor of the holy law. After the rise to power of the Abbassides, the community of Islam was split into a number

of states, each with a distinct ruler of its own. The worldly power so essential to leader (*imám*) of the community was gone, together with the unity of the community. A fiction was substituted for the reality. Although the Abbassides were regarded as Caliphs, as the overlords of Muslim Sultanates, the Sultans were in reality much more powerful, and controlled a much larger army. The Sultans requested the Abbasside Caliphs to invest them with authority, and on their request being granted, the Caliphate changed its character, and became an acknowledged tribunal of legitimacy. As the Sultans grew in power, they began to have differences with the Caliphs, and did not hesitate to attack the territory of the Caliphs, and finally in the 12th century the Caliph's authority became restricted to a small state with practically no worldly power at all. They degenerated into a mere symbol of a traditional idea. They were no longer Caliphs in the sense of the golden age of Islam, and the Sultans tolerated them only as the titular heads of the religion of Islam who however had no right to interfere in the worldly affairs of government and administration. The Sultans took over the worldly duties of the Caliphate, they organized their state, they ruled over it and they administered the holy law. In practice they executed all the functions of a Caliph, and the Muslim state-law interpreted their real power as a kind of Caliphate ordained by God, based on obscure Koranic verses like 38 : 26. "*inna dja'alnák khalifat fi l-ardh fahkum bayna'nнас,*" etc. Finally the Sultans deliberately assumed the title "Caliph" in consideration of their worldly power which was essential to the *imámate*, but they were not "successors of the Prophet" (*khalifatu'n-nabi*) but were "Caliphs of God" (*khalifat Ullah*).

After the extinction of the Abbasside Caliphate by the Mongols (1258), some of the Abbassides took refuge in the court of the Egyptian Mamlúks and continued the appearance of legitimacy of the Caliphate in their own persons. The Sultans of Cairo took over the task of safeguarding the roads to the holy cities, which gradually came to be recognized as one of the regular duties of the Caliph. This idea of course was of a much later date, for Islam was *eo ipso* cradled in these towns,

and it was only after the passing away of all authority from these places that they came to be recognized as the only spots which could claim rights of sanctity in Islam. The Sultans of the Mamlúks seized the Caliphate by the investiture of the fugitive Abbassides, and by virtue of the protection they accorded to the holy cities. Outside Egypt any powerful Muslim king could assume the title of Caliph on the strength of the assertion that God had granted him success (*waffakahú*) and thereby made him an executor of the holy law on earth.

The Sultans of the Ottomans attained to the title of Caliph exactly in the same way. After their success on the battle-fields of Europe they became the most powerful *Sunnite* rulers. Selim I conducted a campaign against the Mamlúk Sultan Kansuh, and on the field of *Dábik* the Abbasside Caliph Mutawakkil who accompanied the Sultan fell a prisoner to the Ottomans (1516). The Ottoman Sultan was so little influenced by reverence for the Caliph that he carried him away as a prisoner to Constantinople. Actual power and success was the thing which mattered, and the authority of the Caliphate was so insignificant in comparison that nobody grudged the prisoner this pretentious title. The Caliph was a prisoner, a noble prisoner indeed, in memory of what had been an object of veneration in the past, but no importance was attached to the office. After the death of Selim (1521), Mutawakkil returned to Egypt and died there in 1543 in perfect oblivion. There is a legend which makes Mutawakkil confer the title on Selim. In the ancient theory of Islam it was essential for a Caliph to be a Koreyshite, an *eo ipso* postulate, as the successor of the Prophet could not possibly belong to any other tribe in those times. The Caliphs created by the right of the sword never fulfilled this requirement. But the changes in the political situation made it essential to revise the ideas current in a previous age. It became clear that temporal power was the chief characteristic of the Caliphs, and it implied the guardianship of the two holy cities and the pilgrimage there. As Selim became the protector of the holy cities after the fall of the Mamlúks, he took up the title of *Khádim-ul-Haramayn*

(servant of the two Holies) which was an expression of his paramount supremacy in the Muslim world.

Much later the Ottoman Sultans began to call themselves Caliphs as they became in reality the executors of the holy law on a vast territory ruled over by them by the grace of God; but they never seemed to attach any political importance to it. As long as they were in actual power and overlords of a considerable portion of *dār-ul-Islām*, theoretical consideration did not move them. The situation became different when the Ottoman power began to decline and vast provinces inhabited by Muslims were lost and passed under Christian rule. On account of this change the importance of the title, neglected and disregarded for a long time, was suddenly revived. It is noteworthy that the misunderstanding of the title, and the utilization of this misunderstanding was due not to a Muslim but to an orthodox Christian, the Armenian historian Muradgea d'Ohsson. The new conception of the Caliphate is first met with in the peace-treaty of Küchük Kaynardje which was concluded between Russia and Turkey in 1774. According to this peace-treaty the Sultan had to acknowledge the independence of the Khans of the Crimea. The loss of territory and of sovereignty was a greivous one. The Turks with their inborn diplomatic skill managed to profit by the uncertainty in the meaning of the Caliphate. They emphasized the theory that Muslims cannot acknowledge a foreign ruler as they all must be subjects of "the Caliph." In course of negotiations the Turks succeeded in securing the overlordship of the Ottoman Sultan as Caliph over the religious ordinances of the Crimean Muslims. In this peace-treaty the Caliph appears definitely as the religious head of all Muslims, irrespective of their political allegiance. This conception of the Caliphate was not Islamic in spirit. It owes its origin to a Christian who was probably influenced by the idea of Popery, and it was used effectively by the Ottomans in order to preserve at least partially their influence over those peoples who were at one time under their temporal overlordship. The Ottomans took care to keep this misunderstanding alive among the European diplomats, and pressed this point in all subsequent peace-treaties. The Ottoman Sultan naturally came

to be recognized as the spiritual head of Islam, and his name was included in the Friday-prayer (*khutba*) although this act was an explicit expression of political sovereignty. Abdul Hamid founded his pan-Islamic propaganda on the fiction of an all comprising spiritual Caliphate.

The idea of a spiritual Caliphate took such a strong hold on the mind of the Turks also that, although contrary to Islamic doctrines, the National Assembly of Angora deposed the Sultan Mehemed and at the same time recognized him as Caliph. In their mind the Caliphate had become a symbol of the spiritual unity of Islam, and by tolerating a Caliph they wanted to retain the allegiance of the Muslims outside Turkey. The spiritual Caliphate was of short duration. The Assembly busied itself with the task of formulating the functions of the Caliph, but at this point it became evident that no member of the dynasty of Osman was capable of discharging the duties of the Caliph. They were neither jurisconsults nor theologians; the office of a kind of Popery conferred on them was not at all congenial. The natural consequence of the abolition of the Sultanate was the abolition of the fiction of the Caliphate as well.

The Muslim world felt as if it had lost something by the abolition of the Caliphate, something though for which it had never cared much before. There was no discontent when previous Sultan-Caliphs had been deposed, and the Muslim world was not stirred even when the title was transferred from Mehemed VI to Abdul Medjid II. But in 1924 the Indian Muslims were eager to convoke an inter-Islamic Conference. They dreamt of establishing a kind of holy synod the president of which would be considered as Caliph. But there was no agreement regarding the constitution of this synod. Would the members be elected for life or from year to year? Neither could the functions and the scope of authority of this body be settled with unanimity. Should it restrict its activities to matters purely religious or should it assume a dictatorial authority controlling the governments from a moral and religious point of view?

An Egyptian judge Ali Abdar Rázik has put in his book on the "Fundamentals of Government" (*Al Islám wa usúl ul-*

*hukm*) a new theory regarding the ecclesiastical state of Islam. According to him, Islam has never claimed a worldly government; this was left to the free consideration of the believers. The Korán does not mention the Caliphate, consequently it cannot form part of the Islamic dogma. The idea of Caliphate was created by the legal handbooks compiled centuries after the death of the Prophet. The religious leadership need not necessarily involve political sovereignty. The mission of the Prophet was exclusively religious, and never aimed at the foundation of a temporal government. Islam is but a spiritual revelation, a moral doctrine and a belief with no connexion with any external authority which takes upon itself the task of executing its dicta. It is noteworthy that all the above theses were accepted and passed by the Ulemas of the University of al-Azhar. It was the Rector of this University who convoked a congress for the discussion and settlement of the question of the Caliphate. There was no agreement even as regards the venue of the congress. It was a sad spectacle; but a striking proof of the rupture in the world of Islam. Some objected to Cairo because Egypt was not an independent country, and proposed Afghanistan or Turkey as a more suitable place of meeting. Ibn Sa'ud issued an invitation to Mecca. There was no accord on the very important question of whom to invite and to admit. There were some prominent Shiites, Zaidites who had taken part in the Caliphate movement. Could they be admitted to the congress, and be thereby given a legitimate status in the orthodox community? This would mean a breach in the historical traditions of Islam, to preserve which the congress was being convoked. Should the Muslims of Turkey, and of Russia, who in their republican tendencies had broken with orthodox Islam be invited and admitted? Such questions clearly showed that the abolition of the Caliphate was merely an outward recognition of conditions which had existed for centuries. The Muslim world which on account of its dogmatic rigour was torn into factions, and could not unite even for the purpose of a temporary inter-Islamic conference, how could it submit itself to the authority of a single body in practice?

The proposed congress assembled at last in 1926, in Cairo, accompanied by the greatest indifference of the Muslim world. The delegates who gathered together were sent by private associations, not by the unanimous consent of the different countries. The congress discussed barren questions regarding the title of the Caliphate and its requirements, and finally declared that Islam had ceased to be a compact social or political body, and had become separated into national units. Consequently these separated Muslim nations could not be brought under the rule of a single Caliph : in any case, such an attempt would be premature, and the congress contented itself by merely creating a central office for arranging inter-Islamic congresses to be held annually. In 1926 a congress was also held in Mecca, which similarly decided to meet annually at the time of the pilgrimage. It is to be hoped that these congresses, if conducted with moderation and a really deep religious spirit and inspired by the historic sentiments, will bring together the extreme elements on a common platform, and will gradually strengthen the spiritual and cultural unity of the Muslim peoples belonging to different races, countries and political units.

Thus ended however the discussions regarding the Caliphate. The National Assembly of Angora intrepidly proceeded to newer reforms and framed new laws with a complete disregard of the Korán, Hadith or Idjma. Legislation became a purely human affair ; a complete separation of the church and the state was effected. The *wakf* endowments were sequestered by the state, the dervish fraternities dissolved.

The government, however, adopted a vigorous colonizing policy aimed at strengthening the Turkish elements in the state. In accordance with the peace-treaty of Lausanne, the Greeks and Armenians were permitted to leave the country whenever they liked, and the consequent gap in the population had to be filled with new immigrants more valuable to the nation than the turbulent *ra'yas* were. Millions of Turks live outside the boundary of Turkey in constant danger of denationalization. These precious elements, the *muhádjirs*, are systematically helped to settle and are quickly absorbed. Some half a million persons are said to be colonized in Anatolia every year. The

government wants to make up for the loss of population and wealth in the years of war and devastation. It may be emphasized that of all the new reforms this scheme of colonization is most conducive to the progress and rejuvenation of the country. Turkey in spite of its heavy losses in territory has retained the core of its possessions : Anatolia. A territory large enough to feed a prosperous population of thirty millions has but nine million inhabitants, poor and ignorant. Villages are scattered over a vast territory impassable in winter for want of suitable means of communication. The Ottoman armies had continually drained away the population from the villages, and no care had been taken to make good the loss. There is a Turkish saying that Turkey was destroyed by the pashas and the goats. The pashas squeezed the population and cut the forests, while the goats gnawed off the roots. The devastation of the country is indeed alarming. The new government has an immense task to perform, but it has faced its problems courageously. The future of Turkey depends not so much on its new literature, European culture, and fashion and dress but on its economic welfare and military power. A sound economic policy, and a patriotism rising to ascetic self-denial for the purpose of building up a wealthy, healthy and wise nation are the only means of atonement for the deplorable neglect of the past.

The government edicted a series of new codes. It accepted the best codes from all nations : the penal code of Italy, the civil code from Switzerland and the commercial code from Germany. They were all translated into Turkish, put before the assembly and after short discussions unanimously carried. As a consequence of these European codes many aspects of social and economic life imperceptibly under-went a deep change. Wine-drinking is no longer interdicted, polygamy lost its legal sanction, commercial restrictions of shariat-times are no longer valid, and many new customs were created by the acceptance of the codes. For example, in future, women and children will have to bear the name of the husband and the father respectively. It was inevitable that the new legislation would change the outward appearance of life in Turkey. Harem-life and the veil disappeared, women go about freely in society, participate



in social activities, dress in the European fashion and share all the amenities of life with their husbands.

It cannot be denied that the change was a little sudden, and the war-time hardships and privations found relaxation in a somewhat easy-going conception of life in large towns. Much of the superficial frivolities of European life were accepted at their face value as European culture. The lightest forms of pleasure-seeking, and the insipid outgrowths of superficiality were greedily accepted. European dancing in its modern hysterics found ready acceptance and was looked upon as a praiseworthy mark of progress. Fortunately such conceptions are confined to a very small minority, and it is to be hoped that after the novelty has worn away it will soon subside.

A more striking change was effected in religious life. Before the war the streets of Constantinople were teeming with white-turbaned *softas* (students of the shariat) and *hodjas* (teachers, priests). With their many-coloured cloaks they contributed largely to the picturesqueness of the town. Most of them enjoyed a modest living on the numerous *wakfs*, and being exempted from military service, spent their lives in studying Arabic, medieval jurisprudence and scholastic theology. The most capable hands were taken away from agriculture by their diversion to the mosques where they led an unproductive life. While farms could not be worked for lack of labour, the *imarets* (students' hostels) were filled with stalwart peasant-boys cramming Arabic. With the sequestration of *wakfs* this wastage of productive material ceased. A fatal blow had already been administered to the *wakf* system during the war, when an edict suspended the exemption of such students from military service. It had become evident that most of them took refuge in religious studies in order to avoid military duties.

Mosques have again become purely places of worship and their personnel was restricted within the necessary limits. It must be confessed that the Turks do not appear to be very fond of going to mosques, as most of them are half empty. They pretend that the European dress hampers religious ablution and the posture of prayer on the ground. An innovation is to be introduced: pews and music, most horrifying to

the pious! Such innovations appear to be equally futile in the eyes of the sober-minded Europeans as well as to orthodox Muslims who consider them unnecessary. No Christian has ever left a mosque without being deeply touched by the noble simplicity of Muslim worship. An atmosphere of inspiration pervades the lofty cupola adorned with the sublime names of the Prophet and the four Caliphs, under which, facing Mecca, man, infinitely small compared with the powers of nature, humbly worships his Creator.

It has been already pointed out that the new nationalistic spirit of Turkish literature adopted European forms in supersession of Arabic. The traditions connecting Turkish literature with Asiatic models were so much disregarded that even the legitimacy of the Arabic script was questioned. It is true that the Arabic script is not a perfect medium for reproducing Turkish words. It is perhaps more difficult to learn than the Latin script, but the amazingly large number of illiterate persons in Turkey was not due to this fact, but to a backward system of school-administration. It is also true that Arabic written characters, if not executed carefully are hardly legible. But in spite of all these drawbacks the Arabic script has served as a common link for all the Muslim peoples. The argument that it hampers foreigners in learning Turkish does not seem to be very cogent, as the difficulty is not at all insurmountable, and there are many European languages using Latin characters and possessing a rich literature which are equally neglected. An acceptable and fairly established Arabic orthography of Turkish served all practical purposes. The abolition of Arabic script means the petrifying of all the literary treasures created during six centuries. When Hamdullah Subhy Bey, former Minister of Education, assured me that as soon as he recovered from his nervous breakdown, he would introduce and make obligatory the Latin script, it had struck me like a threat of cultural suicide, and I did not take it seriously. It appeared to me to proceed from the habit of blind imitation of everything European, rather than from a conviction of the superior value of the Latin script. Nevertheless it has been carried into

effect, and the Latin script has now taken the place of the Arabic.

In the new Turkish alphabet each sound is represented by a single letter, sometimes with diacritical hooks. In this respect the alphabet is very systematic and correct, but when it comes to its application, the same uncertainties prevail in the spelling of words as in the superceded Arabic script. The rules of spelling established by a Special Committee are not of great help, and may result in great disorder in spelling. Phonetic writing was adopted as the basic principle in the new spelling, but this principle was carried out sometimes to extremes, and was sometimes ignored altogether. I have seen some pedantic orientalist trying to transliterate Turkish words like : *oldighi* which were pronounced : *oldú*. Turkish phoneticians made the selfsame blunder in writing *bildigi* and *oldugu*, and *öglen* with the same "g", under the influence of the Arabic script. It is very doubtful whether *Mitat* for *Midhat*, *teretüt* for *tereddüd*, etc., is phonetically correct; it is scarcely suitable from a pedagogical point of view, since the declension rechanges the "t" into "d." Istambol has changed in the new spelling under the influence of French "Stamboul" into *Istambul*. Innumerable instances of the slipshod way in which the new system has been applied may be adduced, but the main point does not lie here. The important question is whether the new alphabet will prove congenial to the Turkish mind. The Arabic script was the bearer of a literature which suited the tastes of those who read it, and that there always was an adequate number of readers is proved by the abundance of Turkish men of letters. The new literature of Turkey since the Crimean war also brought forth some very remarkable works, with good promise of a bright future. The spirit animating these works was closely connected with the words expressing it, whether originally Arabic or Persian, since they were completely Turkicized. These words cannot be used in the new script as they are hardly recognizable. With the loss of their original garb the spirit and the flavour also seem to have disappeared. Arabic script was the bridge which admitted and also absorbed innumerable Arabic and Persian words into the Turkish

language. I am apprehensive that the Latin script may similarly serve as a bridge for the introduction of French words which will imperceptibly slip in and deform the character of the Turkish language. The treasures of Turkish literature of the past will be shut off from the reading public of the future, and there will be no continuity of ideas, and no coherence of ideals. Scripts have sometimes proved stronger barriers than hills and rivers. The Cyrillic Servians and the Latin-lettered Croatians are two distinct nations speaking the one and the same language; not even political union could fuse them together and induce them to give up their separate scripts.

Turkey appears to have burnt all the bridges which connected her with her history, and she looks only to the future. New men of letters must arise with a new inspiration of their own to create a new literature with new words and permeated by a new spirit. Whether the genius of Turkey is capable of achieving this task time alone can show.

## III

## PERSIA.

The Persians take a unique position among the peoples professing Islam. Numberless centuries before the revelation of the Koranic religion Persia had a remarkable culture and a highly developed civilization. In ancient times it was the cradle of thoughts and aspirations which illumined mankind with deep religious ideas radiating to Iranian and non-Iranian peoples. It was the centre of a mighty political organization which brought forth imperial influences reaching even to the far-off Balkans and stirring up the evolution of Greece. The arts and crafts of administration and of military organization were first developed to a paramount superiority by Persians in their defensive actions against their Northern foes, the ever-roaming restless hordes of the Central Asiatic plains, the Turanians. Their strategy and state-craft became a model to the Turks who adopted and further developed Persian achievements on the field of warfare.

Speculative and fanciful, but endowed with an uncommonly rich intellect, the history of Persian culture is one of the most splendid spectacles in the evolution of civilization. Every external influence which has enriched their mental store in the course of their history, became blended with their character, which augmented, embellished and variegated, has still in its innermost recesses retained an irradicable fascination for the spiritual, the fantastic, the extravagant, and the artistic. Islam, with its matter of fact theology, grew through contact with the Persian intellect into a vivid transcendentalism which reared a metaphysics, the exuberant foliage of which threatened to crush its very roots and foundations. Islamic doctrine even in its most sober aspects gained an allegoric meaning in the eyes of Persians with whom everything was so highly spiritualized that contact with reality was often lost. Islam suffered more heresies at the hands of Persians than of all other races professing the religion of the Prophet. The dogmatism of Semitic Islam blossomed into metaphysical speculations in which lie

embedded the memories of Persian mental history. We therefore find that the same old theme crops up again and again in a new garment and under a new name and is always hailed with boundless enthusiasm.

In modern times a movement which has rapidly gained ground not only in the East but also in Europe and America and which has become a religion supposedly professed by millions has its roots in Persia. A new religion has arisen, a religion of humanity, a universal creed for the whole of mankind which in its present form is not only a factor of social and perhaps of political importance in Persia, but to judge by its literature written in English, seems to have been enthusiastically accepted by many Americans. The religion of Bahá'ism is a characteristic example of the Persian spirit. It is a remarkable phenomenon that in countries which show such a deep contrast in cultural matters as America and Persia, this religion has made such an amazing progress. This alone would justify our interest in its study.

It is known that after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, the Muslim community soon split asunder into hostile parties which in the course of time developed into distinct theological sects: the Sunnis and the Shiites, the latter being the partisans of Ali. According to the Shiite view Muhammad appointed Ali to succeed him as the spiritual head of Islam but his rights were usurped by the first three Caliphs (Abu Bakar, Omar, and Othman). The Shiites of course do not approve of and do not believe in the legality of the election of a Caliph, as this office, or as they call it, the Imámate, is inherent in Ali and his descendants. It was conferred by God first upon the Prophet, then upon Ali by the Prophet and afterwards on Ali's descendants. It has, therefore, nothing to do with popular choice or approval. The Caliph of the Sunnis is an outward, visible, defender of the faith; the Imám of the Shiites is the divinely ordained successor of the Prophet, endowed with all perfections and spiritual gifts, whom all the faithful must obey, whose decision is absolute and final, whose wisdom is superhuman, and whose words are authoritative. The Imámities are descendants of Ali's son Husayn who according to popular

belief had married the daughter of the Persian-Sassanian king, Yazdigird III, and who died a martyr's death at Kerbela (A.D. 680). This explains the affection in which the Imáms are held in Persia, since they are regarded as the direct descendants not only of the Prophet but also of the royal house of Sassan. The Imámities are divided into the Ismáílis or adherents of the seven Imáms, and the Ithna Ashariya or adherents of the twelve Imáms. We are mostly concerned with the latter here.

The twelfth Imám left no male issue, but as the world cannot do without an Imám, the Shiites of the sect of the twelve Imáms—the state religion of Persia since the 16th century—believed that the last Imám never died but only retired from mortal ken and resides in a fabulous town called Jabulka among his faithful disciples from where he will issue forth in the fullness of time to do justice among mankind. He will appear as the Imám Mahdi, the God-directed, whose messianic advent every Shiite is eagerly expecting. It is held that since the disappearance of the Imám two main periods have passed: (a) the minor occultation (*ghaibat-i-sughra*) A.H. 260-329 (A. D. 873-942) during which four intermediaries communicated his instructions who were called the *Báb*, or gate, as they permitted entrance to the will of the Imám; (b) the major occultation (*ghaibat-i-kubra*) during which no intercourse, not even indirect, was possible with the Imám. At the end of the 19th century Sheikh Ahmed al-Ahsai revived the idea that amongst the Shiites there must always be one perfect man capable of serving as a channel of grace between the absent Imám and his church. Thus such personages as were convinced of their superhuman faculty and Godly inspiration may consider themselves as intermediaries, as gates so to say, to the knowledge of the absent Imám. In the 19th century a certain Ash-Shalmaghani ibn Abi Azakir had suffered death under the Caliph Ar-Rádhí for assuming this same title of *Báb* and for teaching heretical doctrines which included among others the tenet of transmigration of souls. Sheikh Ahmed and his successor, Seyyid Kazim of Rasht, did not however make use of the title *Báb*, but their conception of the 'perfect Shiite' was identical with the idea connoted by this title.

The tenets of the Sheikhi school may be summarized as follows: Sheikh Ahmed believed that the body of man was composed of parts derived from each of the nine heavens and the four elements; that the grosser elemental part perished irrevocably at death and that only the more subtle celestial portion would appear at the resurrection. He named the subtle body: *jism huwarkilya* (which seems to be derived from a Greek word, perhaps Hercules?) and believed it to be similar in substance to the forms in the world of similitudes. He denied that the Prophet's material body had, on the occasion of his night journey to heaven, moved from the spot where it lay in a trance. He believed himself to be under the special guidance of the Imáms. He regarded the Imáms as creative forces and based his thesis on dialectics. For God is spoken of in the Koran (23.14.) "the best of Creators"; consequently He cannot be the sole creator. He went so far in his ultra-Shiite tendencies that he interpreted the words of the first chapter of the Koran: *iiyáka na'budu* (Thee do we worship) as referring to Ali.

After the death of Sheikh Ahmed, Hajji Seyyid Kazim of Rasht was unanimously recognized as the leader of his school. Kazim did not nominate a successor. According to Bábi historians he had hinted that the transitional state of things under which he and his master Sheikh Ahmed had assumed the guidance of the faithful was drawing to a close, and that a brighter light was about to shine forth from the horizon of the spiritual world. From whatever quarter the sun of truth shall arise it will irradiate all horizons and render the mirrors of believers' hearts capable of receiving the effulgence of the lights of wisdom. The Sheikhis were anxiously expecting the appearance of some one who should assume the leadership of their party. One of them, Mulla Husayn of Bushrawayh proceeded to Shiráz, and on his arrival there paid a visit to Mirza Ali Muhammad, with whom he had become acquainted at Kerbela and who was also a staunch adherent of the school.<sup>1</sup> Mirza Ali Muhammad learning of the death of Kázim, announced his divine mission, and adduced in support of his claims, the commentary on the Sura of Joseph.

<sup>1</sup> I have closely followed the histories of Bábism and Bahá'ism translated, edited and ably expounded by the late Prof. Browne.



Mulla Husayn of Bushrawayh was soon convinced of the truth of the young man's assertion and heralded the advent of the new leader, who assumed the title of 'Báb'. Mulla Husayn of Bushrawayh became the gate of the gate and the first letter or the first to believe. The rapidity with which the movement spread was wonderful. Representatives of all classes hastened to tender their allegiance to the young Seer of Shiráz, but it was from the old Sheikhi party that the most eminent supporters of the new faith were recruited. The followers of the Báb were called Bábis. A number of the Sheikhis however refused to recognize him and adhered to another representative of the doctrine, Hajji Muhammad Karim Khán; and a fierce quarrel ensued between the two parties. The orthodox Sheikhis proved to be the foremost and most implacable enemies of the Bábis and their relentless persecutors. There was very little difference between the preachings of Mirza Ali Muhammad called the 'Báb,' and those of Hajji Muhammad Karim, since each claimed to be neither more nor less than the intermediary between the absent Imám and his followers, exactly in the same way as were the four original gates who had served as channels of communication between the Twelfth Imám and his followers during the period of the minor occultation.

It was in 1844 that the new light arose on the horizon of the Shiites, but it was bitterly challenged by the followers of other 'lights' who claimed an equally valid heavenly inspiration, although their success among mankind still continued to be determined by mundane factors. The historical importance of any idea is not determined by its intrinsic merits, or its alleged divine origin, but often depends on the skill with which it is adapted by its expounders to suit local conditions. The history of Bábism, a new religion arising out of the soil of Persian Shiism, with its appeal to the imaginative, the heroic perseverance of its martyrs, the unscrupulous machinations by which each faction assailed its antagonists, and the final adaptation of the doctrine to the tastes and predilections of modern minds, corroborates this old maxim of history.

The Báb was only 27 years of age at the time of his manifestation. The sensation created by his advent frightened the

ulemas, and they induced the Government to arrest him and after a trial to condemn him to imprisonment. This action on the part of the Persian Government added to his fame, and gave impetus to the proselytizing efforts of his followers. The clash with the intolerant followers of orthodoxy soon provoked reprisals which led to bloody conflicts. Mulla Husayn of Bushrawayh and Hajji Muhammad Ali took shelter in an old fortress in Mazenderán which had to be taken by storm after a siege of 7 months; revolts and risings of the followers of the Báb occurred at Zanzan, Yazd and Niriz which were put down with great cruelty on the part of Government. The spread of the new creed was amazing. In the course of 6 years the whole of Persia was filled with Bábis, a clear proof that the idea appealed to the imaginative Persians. The revolutionary attitude of the Bábis gained many adherents among the peasants who were dissatisfied with the economic situation in Persia, and the Government was compelled to try to crush the movement at its root. The lenient treatment accorded to the Báb up till then was abandoned and he was sentenced to death on the charge of high treason and was executed at Tabriz in 1850. This was followed by a vigorous persecution of his followers. Finally in 1852, when an attempt at the life of the Shah was perpetuated by some of the Bábis, the whole sect was violently suppressed. The beautiful poetess Kurrat ul Ayn and many others, innocent of all complicity in the conspiracy, were tormented and cruelly murdered. Some of the initiates fled to Baghdad, and a branch of Bábis arose from this small group of exiles. They modified the doctrine and developed it into a form more acceptable to those who had no sympathy for the exuberant fancies of the Persian mind. Among these fugitives there was a lad, called Mirza Yahya who was such an enthusiastic believer in the Báb's manifestation that he had travelled across the whole of Persia with his half-brother Mirza Husayn Ali to see the Báb. The Báb heard of Mirza Yahya's zeal and devotion, and declared that in him was fulfilled the prophecy long current in Shiite tradition in the form of a conversation between Ali and Kumayl 'regarding the coming of a light shining from the dawn of eternity.' The Báb conferred

on Mirza Yahya the title of Subh-i-Ezel (the dawn of eternity),<sup>2</sup> gave him his own ring and authorized him to develop the philosophy of Bábism as he thought fit, and appointed him as his own successor.

On the Báb's death Subh-i-Ezel was unanimously recognised as the spiritual head of the sect. But his half-brother who had received the name of Baháullah, the Splendour of God, came into greater prominence owing to the retiring habits and also on account of the extreme youth of the leader himself. Other claimants to the leadership also arose but did not gain any following. The two brothers lived in peace and harmony at Baghdad, where the Turkish Government had permitted them to reside and where they had many followers. Here the original doctrine underwent many changes. Baháullah conducted a secret but successful propaganda in Persia. He matured his ideas for the future, and gradually remodelled the tenets for which the martyrs in Persia had sacrificed their lives. The circumstances in Baghdad gave him a wider horizon and this compelled him to take a broader view. He retired for two years to the hills of Kurdistan to meditate upon his ideas. Subh-i-Ezel still adhered to the orthodox tenets of Bábism but his peace-loving nature prevented an open hostility with Baháullah.

As time ripens the blossom into luscious fruit there occurs a profound change in the outward appearance, although the organic continuity is not destroyed. Similarly a religious idea becomes changed in the course of time by the influence of leaders who have an active grasp of the realities of the situation. Bábism has been altered profoundly by the gradual assimilation of new conceptions, some of which were entirely foreign to the original doctrine. According to Bábí views, the essence of God, the primal divine Unity, is unknowable and entirely transcends human comprehension. We can know nothing about it, we see only its manifestation in the succession of prophets. There is no fundamental divergence or conflict between the prophets, all of whom represent the same Universal Reason. Their

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<sup>2</sup> The language of the Báb himself and the terminology of transcendental lore used by his followers reflect the exuberant flight of fancy which often glorified beautiful words without much meaning. The followers were given fantastic names full of esoteric allusions.

teachings differ only in outward form according to the particular needs of the time. The Báb is also considered to be one of these manifestations (the Ismáili sect has seven incarnations of the Deity, called Nátik, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Christ, Muhammad and Ismáil), and the party of Subh-i-Ezel continued to revere him as such, while the followers of Baháullah looked upon Baháullah as this manifestation. It is incumbent on the prophets to use the language appropriate to his audience. It will be different for little children, or for young men or for men of mature age. The prophet's words must not therefore be taken too literally, but must be explained with reference to the actual circumstances in which they are uttered. This is the justification of an allegorical interpretation which is so dear to the Shiite mind. The Ismáili sect was equally prone to explain away the literal meaning of revealed scriptures; when the Korán says, that Jesus had no father, the interpretation is that he received instructions from no trustworthy teacher: when it says that he raised the dead, it signifies that he brought knowledge to dead understanding. The Bábis handled this allegorical interpretation (ta'wil) in a masterly way. They denied the physical existence of Paradise or Hell; as the rough Arabs could not understand ethical values Muhammad spoke to them of Good and Evil in symbolic form. When, in course of time, one particular form of expression in the teachings of a prophet becomes obsolete, a new manifestation appears and modifies the teaching in a suitable way to advance the eternal progress of the world. The Bábi doctrine is most definite on this point. It recognises and emphasizes changes in human affairs, and wishes to mould every thought in accordance with the progress of the world. There can be no final revelation and no last prophet, an idea which was very sympathetic to the philosophy of evolution, and which in its narrowest sense had also been avowed by Mirza Ghulám Ahmad. According to the Bábi doctrine the prophets, as manifestations of the Universal Reason, were forerunners of progress and were always in advance of mankind. This is why every prophet had been and must be rejected by his own people. So did also the Báb fare, when one thousand years after the disappearance of the Twelfth Imám (A. H. 260; the Báb's mani-

festation took place in 1260 A. H.), he was persecuted and put to death. In order to prevent mankind from falling into the same error he emphasized that even his manifestation was not the last and that others would again come in future ages to bring new revelations suited to new circumstances and altered conditions.

The theory of evolution seems to be embodied in a theology which believed in a succession of prophethood all manifesting the one and the same Universal Intelligence but under diverse conditions and aspects. This view, which is apt to make Bábism a sympathetic doctrine even to modern rationalists, was not, however, the source of inspiration for the innumerable martyrs who died for Bábism. What attracted them to the new creed even at the cost of their lives was the mystic doctrine of Bábism which was full of transcendental correspondences and equivalents between names based on numerical values of letters, and of the theory of divine manifestation.

Almost all the constituent elements of Bábism had their source in the mediæval heresies of Persian origin. The nation instinctively cherished and clung to these mystic doctrines in which it found a peculiar charm.

Muhammad very soon discarded the title of the Báb and assumed that of the Point (*Nuqta*). There is a spurious tradition according to which Ali is supposed to have said that all that was in the Korán was contained implicitly in the opening chapter, and all that was in this chapter was contained in the first line (*Bismillah*), and finally in turn in the initial *B* of the *Bismillah* and this in turn in the point which stands under the Arabic *B*, and Ali is also supposed to have said "I am the point which stands under the *B*."

Mirza Muhammad was henceforth called the Primal Point, or His Holiness the First Point : the manifestation of the Primal Will. The Bábis believed that the primal will is incarnated in the intermediaries between man and God. In one sense it is identical with God, for a tradition says that whosoever visited Husayn in his tomb was as one who hath visited God on His Throne. So likewise the Báb said "Oh Ali, none hath known

God save I and thee ; and none hath known me save God and thee, and none hath known thee save God and I.”

Bábi mentality may be appreciated by the following extracts from the *Nuqtatu'l-Káf*, one of the earliest and most authentic histories : ‘as the same mirror may at different times reflect different objects, so the same individual may successively become the returns (or recurrences) of different prototypes.’ When Mirza Muhammad, speaking more freely, as his followers became more receptive of divine mysteries, declared himself to be the Point, Mullah Husayn ceased to be only the Gate of Gate and became the actual Gate ; and when he was killed, his brother Mirza Muhammad Hasan in turn received the title. But this is not all. Mirza Ali Muhammad was first of all, Báb, or Gate, then Zikr or Reminder, than Nuqta or Point. For a while Mullah Muhammad Ali of Barfurush became the Point, and Mirza Ali Muhammad relapsed into being his Báb and during this time wrote nothing. “Sometimes it happens,” so runs the *Nuqtatu'l-Káf*, “that the Point becomes quiescent in effulgence and that this effulgence becomes manifested in the Gate, just as the apostle of God did not wield the sword but his wrath was made manifested in the form of Ali. But after the death of God’s apostle, Ali became the Point and Heaven of Will, and Hasan became the Gate and the Earth of Devotion, while Husayn and Salmán and the rest were the Letters of the Living. So likewise in speaking of the Islamic cycle of prophethood, so long as Muhammad was alive, Ali declared himself to be only a servant amongst his servants, but that, so soon as the Prophetic Mirror (by which is meant the sovereign form of Muhammad) was shattered to pieces, in less time than a twinkling of an eye, it (the Sun of Truth) arose in the mirror of Saintship (saintship represents the esoteric aspect of religion) so that Ali thus became the Mirror or ‘Manifestation’ of the Primal Will and the Proof of God upon earth was able to say : ‘I am Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad.’ All theophanies are identical in essence and differ only in circumstance, just as the sun which shines to-day is the same as that which shone yesterday or that which will shine to-morrow. These lights of the firmament of Prophethood and Saintships, like the celestial luminaries,

have a rising and a setting, a manifestation and an occultation."

It is obvious that all these notions can be explained only by means of allegorical comparisons with the phenomena of nature with which they really have nothing in common. A figurative expression takes here the place of rational thinking in terms of concepts corresponding to realities.

As to the eschatology of Bábism, it denies bodily resurrection but the spirit of the deceased may continue to take an interest in his earthly affairs, and some passages in Bábí writings also refer to the transmigration of souls, while the return to the life of his world is conceived in a symbolic sense as a reflection upon a mirror. However vague the Bábí doctrine may be on certain points it is essentially dogmatic and every utterance of the manifestation of the period must be accepted without demur. The *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (the "Most Holy Book") of Bahá'ullah begins with "The first thing which God has presented unto His servants is knowledge of the Day, spring of His Revelation and the Dawning-place of His Command, which is the Station of His Spirit in the world of Creation and Command. Whosoever attaineth unto this hath attained unto all good, and whosoever is debarred therefrom is of the people of error, even though he produce all kinds of good deeds." The Báb and his immediate followers were not inclined to tolerance. According to the 'Bayán,' no unbelievers were to be suffered to dwell in the five principal provinces of Persia, and everywhere they were, as far as possible, to be subjected to restrictions, and kept in a position of inferiority. The Bábis are strongly antagonistic to Súfis on account of their individualism and 'inner light,' and to the orthodox Musulmans because they did not acknowledge in the Manifestations the fulfilment of Islam.

A most characteristic feature of Bábism is the belief in the intrinsic value of the letters of the Alphabet. The algebraic correspondences have puzzled men since the time of Pythagoras. In Muslim history it was the Hurúfis who first attached magic power to numbers and tried to derive secret meanings out of the numerical value of the letters of the Alphabet. Their system was eagerly taken up and elaborated by the Turkish Bektáshi writers. The Ismáiliya sect believed in the number seven. The

Deity had seven incarnations, between each of the seven incarnations there arose seven Imáms, each Imám was at the head of a heptad; seven operations were required in the making of a convert and so on. The algebraic correspondences, developed by the Bábis, are amazing. The theological system is practically built upon algebraic correspondence. The formula *Bismillah irrahmán, irrahim* (in the name of God the merciful, the compassionate) comprises 19 letters in Arabic script which are the 'Manifestation' of the Point under the B, just as the whole Korán is the further Manifestation on a plane of greater plurality of the Bismillah. The number 19 became a kind of a sacred number, a fundamental basis of the Bábi doctrine by which the truth of its tenets could be algebraically proved.

The Arabic word for one is *Wáhid*, and the numerical value of the letters composing the word give the sum ( $6+1+8+4$ ) of 19. This unity of 19 in turn manifests itself as  $19 \times 19 = 361$ , which is the number of "all things" (*Kullu Shay*); the letters are numerically equivalent ( $20+30+300+10$ ) = 360 to which by adding "the one which underlies all plurality" we get 361, the number of all things, which again is the square of 19. The number 19 was made the basis of all divisions of time, money, etc. The Bábi's idea of a coinage having 19 as its basis has however been abandoned along with many other impracticable ordinances. Thus the Bábi year comprised 19 solar months of 19 days each, to which intercalary days are added between the 18th and 19th months. The last month is consecrated to fasting. The unity is also manifested in the divine attribute *Hayy*, the Living, which equals  $8+10=18$ , and with the one which underlies all plurality makes 19. The Báb together with his 18 disciples constituted the letters of the Living (19). The choice of Mirza Yahya by the Báb as his successor was probably determined by the fact that the numerical value of the name Yahya was 36, a multiple of 18 on which account he was also called *Wáhid* which is numerically equivalent to 28, the number of letters constituting the Arabic alphabet. The town Adrianople, where the Bábis were exiled, was called by them the land of mystery because the syllables in the name of the town had



the same numerical value (260) which corresponds to the year in which the twelfth Imám disappeared.

This doctrine is full of metaphysical transcendentalism, and even such reforms as savour of utility, such as the amelioration of the position of women or the prohibition of chastisement of children are entirely based on mystical considerations. For example, the Báb taught that the future manifestation of God shall first appear as a child, it would therefore constitute a grave sin for any one to treat the august infant harshly, and hence it was necessary that the chastisement of children should cease. The play on words formed another important element in the philosophy of Bábism.

The conflict between Mirza Muhammad the Báb and Hajji Muhammad Karim Khán regarding the status of the Intermediary to the hidden Imám clearly shows, however, the reaction of external factors on the growth of a revealed religion. It was not the intrinsic value of the rival doctrines which decided the issue, but the influence exerted by the respective leaders on their contemporaries. The growth of a doctrine and its ultimate success is determined by the simplest human factors, anthropological and social. The fact that the social factors were of greater importance than the transcendental and metaphysical nature of the doctrines was clearly recognized by the new leader Baháullah, who by his carefully conducted propaganda succeeded in attaining a supremacy over the more dogmatic and single-minded Subh-i-Ezel.

A new period in the history of the movement set in with the rise of Baháullah. The little party of emigrants at Baghbad were too near the Persian frontier, and the Persian Government requested the Porte for their transfer to Adrianople in 1864. Here Baháullah publicly announced that it was he in whom God had become manifest in accordance with the prediction of the Báb. He strictly adhered to the doctrines of Bábism, and although there is some evidence to show that he had at one time considered himself to be merely the successor of the Báb, he now assumed a new role: he was the promised one, the real manifestation of God, to whom the Báb was only a forerunner

and herald. This announcement, like the previous announcement of a similar nature, was not accepted and recognized un-animously. Some, even among those who originally belonged to the circle of the Báb, vehemently opposed the new manifestation of God. A fierce and disgraceful quarrel attended with violence broke out between the rival parties, until finally the Turkish Government had to intervene in the fight between the two brothers. The hostile factions were segregated and exiled separately. Subh-i-Ezel, who had been nominated by the Primal point as his successor, was transferred to Famagusta in the island of Cyprus, while Baháullah was sent to Akka. To each of the factions four adherents of the opposite group were attached, so that the Turkish Government could be kept informed regarding the activities of both the parties. The followers of Baháullah put to death all the four Ezelis attached to their party. The hostility between the two Bábi factions continued with pen and dagger alike. The sect of the Ezelis which had adhered to the original doctrine in its rigid and narrow form, gradually declined in influence while the followers of Baháullah gained in strength. Baháullah succeeded in getting recognized by a large number of people as the manifestation of God, and he gradually put the Báb in the background as compared with his own heavenly splendour. The name of the sect was changed from that of Bábism to Baháism. The doctrines of the Báb were regarded only as preparatory and provisional, while Baháullah was authorized to give them a final shape and sanction. And Baháullah made full use of his authority. The Bábi religion was firmly rooted in Persian Shiitism and it had no chance of making proselytes outside the Shiite world. Baháullah discarded all restricting metaphysical peculiarities. He also modified the attitude of uncompromising hostility to the orthodox Musulmans, and to the Shah of Persia which had animated the Bábis, and adopted a conciliatory and even sympathetic attitude towards all likely converts. He developed the ethical side of the teaching, and in his letters to potentates he used a gentle and patient tone. He had a clear grasp of the aspirations of the human mind in the 20th century, and included in his teachings a very wide scheme of social

reform in a most sympathetic way, but with the simplistic views of a dreamer. Anti-alcoholism, unemployment help, women's suffrage, reform of criminology, socialism, local autonomy in political administration, universal language, international union, and general peace, all figured in his programme.

Nor was Baháullah devoid of the power of clairvoyance. In the year 1869 he wrote to Napoleon III rebuking him for his lust of war and for the contempt with which he had treated a former letter from him. The epistle contains the following stern warning: 'Thy doings will throw thy kingdom into confusion; sovereignty shall pass from thy hands to requite thee for thy deeds, and thus thou shalt find thyself in grievous loss. Convulsions shall seize all peoples in yonder land, unless thou dost arise in this cause and in this straight path follow the spirit. Hath thy pomp made thee vainglorious? By my life, it shall not endure, nay, it shall pass away, unless thou dost cling unto this strong cord. We behold abasement hastening upon thy heels and thou art yet of them that are heedless'. It is characteristic that an English Baháí writer believes firmly that the debacle of France in 1870 would have been averted if Napoleon had adopted the noble cause and the straight path of the Baháí.

Baháullah was by no means led by Germanophile motives 'in beholding abasement hastening upon the heels' of Napoleon. In the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* which was begun in Adrianople and finished in Akka, he sent a similar stern admonition to the Emperor of Germany:—

'O King of Berlin . . . Recollect the one who was greater than thee in station (Napoleon III), and whose position was higher than thine. Where is he? and where are his possessions? Be admonished and be not of those who sleep. He cast the tablet of God behind him when we informed him of what had befallen us from the hosts of oppression and thus disgrace beset him from all sides until he returned to the dust in great loss. O King, think deeply concerning him as well as about those like unto thee who conquered cities and ruled over servants of God—and God brought them down from palaces to graves. Be warned and be of those who are mindful'.

'O Banks of the River Rhine, we have seen you drenched in gore because the swords of retribution were drawn against you. You shall have another turn. And we hear the lamentation of Berlin, although it be to-day in manifest glory.'

The English writer alluded to above says: "during the period of German success in the Great War of 1914-18, and especially during the last German offensive in the spring of 1918, this well-known prophecy was extensively quoted by the opponents of the Bahá'í movement in Persia in order to discredit Bahá'ullah; but when the forward sweep of the victorious Germans was suddenly transformed into a crushing and overwhelming disaster, the efforts of these enemies of the Bahá'í cause recoiled on themselves, and the notoriety which they had given to the prophecy became a powerful means of enhancing the reputation of Bahá'ullah."

A message of consolation is addressed to Persia in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*:—

'O land of Ta (Teheran) be not sorrowful from any cause. God hath made thee the dawning place of the joy of the world. If He will, He will bless thy throne with one who will rule with justice and gather together the sheep of God which have been scattered by the wolves. Verily he will treat the people of Bahá'í with joy and gladness. So, he is of the essence of the people in the sight of God.'

'Rejoice, for God hath made thee a Horizon of light, because in thee was born the Dawning Place of the Manifestation. Soon affairs will be changed in thee and a republic of men shall rule over thee. Verily the countenance of Grace will not cease to behold thee with the eyes of love. Soon peace will overtake thee after commotion. Thus it hath been decreed in the Book of Wonders.'

Turkey, which had given shelter to Bahá'ullah and his followers, did not fare better at his hands than France and Germany. There are several passages in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* which predict the downfall of the Ottomans, but evidently his wrath was directed against this kingdom, 'than which a handful of dust is greater before God,' because it did not take up his cause in a way which would have satisfied him. 'Thou didst

unite with the Ruler of Persia for doing me harm,' so he wrote to Ali Pasha, 'although I had come to you from the Dawning Place of the Almighty, the Great, with a cause which refreshed the eyes of the favoured ones of God. Didst thou think that thou couldst put out the fire which God hath enkindled in the Universe? Its blaze and flame will be increased. Soon it will encompass the world and its inhabitants. Soon the land of martyrs (Adrianople) will be changed and will pass out of the hands of the King' and commotion shall appear in the districts and affairs will be in confusion because of what hath happened to those captives' (Baháullah and his companions).

The Turks cared little for the threats of Baháullah. The Shiite element in his doctrine did not appeal to them, and his cosmopolitan teachings found deaf ears among the awakening nationalists. The Government had an eye on him, and when his quarrel with Subh-i-Ezel led to violence, it prevented further blood-shed by separating the rival factions, and Baháullah never attained any political power in Turkey.

His exhortations sound overbearing and egoistic if we dare doubt his infallible prophethood and venture to judge them as those of a normal mortal. He addressed Americans in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* some fifty years ago in the following words: 'O Rulers of America, Presidents and Governors of the Republic therein, hear the call from the Dawning Place on High. There is no God but me, the speaker and the Omniscient: Bind up the broken limb with the hands of justice, and break the sound limb of the oppressor with the rod of the Command of your Lord, the Ruler, the Wise.'

In the writings of Baháullah we notice a clearness of style which is in striking contrast to the rugged and unintelligible character of Bábi literature. Through him God addresses His creatures, proclaiming His love for them, teaching them His attributes, making His will known, announcing His laws for their guidance and pleading for their love, allegiance and service. In his writings the form of expression frequently changes. Sometimes it is evident that the man himself is speaking, then

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\* This prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, for Adrianople is still in the hands of the Turks.

without a break the writing continues as if God Himself were speaking in the first person.

His mission was to bring about unity of all mankind in and through God. He said :

‘Of the Tree of Knowledge the all-glorious fruit is this exalted word : of one tree are all ye the fruits and of one bough the leaves. Let no man glory in this that he loves his country, but let him rather glory in this that he loves his kind.’

It was this ethical and humanitarian spirit, rather than the dry metaphysical doctrines of Baháísm which gained new followers all over the world, while those who were allured by the glamour of mysticism still found ample scope in it. In Akka, where Baháullah lived as an exile, people flocked to see him, and by this intercourse with the world his doctrines broadened. He dropped most of the minor restriction imposed by the Báb, which were dictated in many cases by his personal tastes and feelings. Such were the prohibition of smoking and the eating of onions, the regulations as to clothing, forms of salutation, the use of rings, perfumes, the names by which children might be named and so on. The laws of Baháullah, with the exception of the law of inheritance, are much simpler in character and are such as may be enforced in practice. For example, smoking is not now unusual among the followers of Baháullah, while the Ezelis still maintain the prohibition as strictly as ever.\*

In the nineties, a Syrian Christian converted to Baháísm, Ibráhim George Khair-ullah, settled in the United States, and started active propoganda in America on behalf of the new revelation. He delivered a large number of lectures on Baháísm and published a number of books which were favourably received. The monotonous factory life of over-industrialized America harbours a naive sentimentalism which finds pleasure and enthusiasm in all humanitarian ideas, and it was not surprising that Baháísm developed a vigorous branch-

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\*While acting as an interpreter to Abdul Bahá during his tour in Hungary, I remember that I once offered him cigarettes, and he carefully selected one and smoked it with apparent enjoyment.

movement in America, marked by the production of a copious but shallow literature.

Baháullah died in 1892. He nominated as his successor his eldest son Abbas, also called Abdul Bahá, servant of Bahá. Baháullah had conferred on his son, in accordance with the usual practice in his community, the sonorous title 'Ghusn-i-Azam,' the most mighty branch ; the younger son Mirza Muhammad Ali was called 'Ghusn-i-Akbar,' the most great branch. Abdul Bahá's life was accompanied by thrilling romance. He was born at Teheran before midnight on the 23rd May, 1844 (5 Djumádha'tula, 1260) in the very same hour in which the Báb declared his mission.

He was eight years of age when his father was thrown into prison. On one occasion he saw his father moving along the prison yard heavily shackled, his neck bowed under the weight of a heavy steel collar, his body bent by iron chains. This awful sight created a lasting impression on the mind of the boy. At Baghdad, long before the manifestation of God became clear to Baháullah, the son suddenly felt a conviction that it was his father in whom the divine spirit shall shine forth. Sixty years later he dictated to his secretary his impressions of that period in the following words :

"I am the servant of the Blessed Perfection Baháullah. In Baghdad I was a child. Then and there He announced to me the Words and I believed in Him. As soon as He proclaimed to me the word, I threw myself at His holy feet and implored and supplicated Him to accept my blood as a sacrifice in His pathway. What greater glory can I conceive than to see this neck chained for His sake, these feet fettered for His love, this body mutilated or thrown to the depths of the sea for His cause. If in reality we are His sincere lovers, if in reality I am His sincere servant, than I must sacrifice my life, nay all, at his Blessed Threshold."

From this time his friends began to call him : the mystery of God ; a title by which he was known during the residence in Baghdad. Several wonderful stories are related about the innate sagacity with which while yet a boy he solved the most intricate metaphysical problems. A curious story is current about the

circumstances of his marriage. For a long time he showed no inclination for marriage, and no one understood the reason for this. Afterwards it became known that there was a girl who was destined to become his wife, one whose birth came about through the blessing which the Báb had given to her parents in Ispahan. They had no children although the wife was longing for a child. On hearing this the Báb gave the husband an apple and told him to share it with his wife. After they had eaten of that apple, it soon became apparent that their long cherished hopes of parenthood were about to be fulfilled, and in due course a daughter was born to them. This daughter was the elected wife of Abdul Bahá. In the constant odour of sanctity and miracles, Abdul Bahá was brought up as the future leader of the community.

In the face of the clear testament of Baháullah little room was left for dissension, and yet a conflict over the same old principles soon broke out among the followers. The question was again whether Baháism was a final revelation in which the possibility of new innovations ceased with the passing of the Manifestation of God, or whether Abdul Bahá was entitled to further inspirations of his own. In the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* Baháullah himself had explicitly stated that 'whosoever lays claim to any authority to promulgate fresh revelations before the completion of a millenium is assuredly a liar and an imposter'. Abdul Bahá's brothers and some of the leading Baháís therefore strenuously resisted the claim of Abdul Bahá to promulgate new doctrines or fresh ordinances, on the ground that a millenium of occultation must pass before a new exposition of the divine will would be necessary. Thus the Bahái religion split into two hostile parties fighting in Persia as well as in America and other countries of the world. Ibráhim Khair-ullah espoused the cause of the conservative party, and consequently Abdul Bahá was also obliged to send missionaries to America to counteract Khair-ullah's propaganda. The strife between the different Bábi factions, the heads of all of which claim direct divine inspiration, is a disfiguring flaw in the history of the movement, and is an insoluble contradiction in its basic principles. Assuming the Báb to have been divinely inspired (and this



assumption must be made not only by every Bábi but by every Baháí) it is difficult to suppose that he should have chosen for his successor a person who was destined to be the chief opponent of the Báb himself.

The rise of Abdul Bahá to supremacy was decided by forces which were not in the least divine, but most human. The reason for the success of Baháism and its expansion during the life time of Abdul Bahá must be sought in the peculiar appeal of its teachings to certain moods generated by the stress of the industrial civilization of the West. The mind tired by the drab monotony of factory life sought solace in the mystic doctrines of Baháism. It found a peculiar charm in mysterious phrases: "there is a mystic unity between Baháullah and Abdul Bahá. He is myself." Baháullah spoke in the same way of the Báb: 'Had the Primal Point been some one else besides Me, as ye claim, and reached the event of My appearance, verily, he would never have left Me, but rather we would have had mutual delights with each other in My days.'

A summary of Abdul Bahá's creed is given in his Tablets: 'My name is Abdul Bahá (Servant of Bahá), my qualification is Abdul Bahá, my reality is Abdul Bahá, my praise is Abdul Bahá. Thralldom to the Blessed Perfection is my glorious and refulgent diadem and servitude to all the human race is my perpetual religion. Through the bounty and favour of the Blessed Perfection, Abdul Bahá is the Ensign of the Most Sacred Peace, which is waving from the supreme Apex; and through the gift of the Greatest Name, he is the Lamp of Universal Salvation, which is shining with the love of God. The Herald of Kingdom is he so that he may awaken the people of the East and West. The voice of Friendship, Uprightness, Truth and Reconciliation is he, so as to cause quickening throughout all regions. No name, no title, no mention, no commendation hath he, nor will ever have, except Abdul Bahá, the friends of God must assist and help Abdul Bahá in the adoration of the True One; in servitude to the human race; in the well being of the human world and in divine love and kindness.'

'O ye friends of God: Abdul Bahá is the manifestation of Thralldom, and not the Christ. The servant of the human realm

is he, and not a Chief. Non-existent is he, and not Existent. Pure nothingness is he and not the Eternal Lord. No one must believe that Abdul Bahá is the second Christ, nay rather, he must believe that he is the manifestation of servitude, the manifestation of the unity of the human world, the Herald of the true One with spiritual power throughout all regions, the Commentator of the Book according to the divine fact and the Ransom to each one of the believers of God in this transitory world.'

As the teachings of the Baháullah represented a great advance from the metaphysical and ultra-Shiite doctrines of Bábism, the teachings of Abdul Bahá represented a still greater step forward in the ethical and practical development of the movement. He included all the noble aspirations of the age, all the humanitarian and social ideas floating in the air. All nations of the world should become of one faith and all men as brothers; the bonds of affection and unity between sons of men should be strengthened; the conflict between different religions should cease, and differences of race be annulled. This noble aim could be achieved only by a fundamental change of heart among the peoples of the world, and education must be organized for this purpose. According to Abdul Bahá all religions and sciences have a common purpose and a common aim.

In spite of such teachings we find that Baháism was troubled by bitter internecine quarrels from beginning to end. We must conclude that all these humanitarian ideals were still dreams and were far from being realized in practice. The interpretation of history given by Baháís is equally fantastic. They believe that the 20th century begins an unprecedented new era in history, dissimilar in geography, and in technical and economical conditions to all previous eras, and fundamentally suited to the need of Baháí teachings. The technical inventions, and the knowledge of foreign languages especially appear to fill Baháís with an optimistic hope for the cessation of bloody conflicts between men. The synthetic aim of the movement can be appreciated from the definite instructions left by Baháullah for the creation of temple of worship, which he called *Mashrik-ul-adhkár*. 'The dawning place of God's Praise.' The temple should be a nine-sided building surrounded by a dome, and as beautiful as

possible in design and workmanship. It should stand in a large garden, surrounded by a number of accessory buildings devoted to educational, charitable and social purposes so that the worship of God in the temple may always be closely associated with reverent delight in the beauties of nature and practical work. Such temples are being built in Ishkábád, Bombay and Wilmette on lake Michigan near Chicago.

Abdul Bahá lived at Akka, under the strict supervision of the Turkish Government. He was visited from all parts of the world by ardent followers or curious sightseers. After the Turkish revolution he was declared free and in 1911 he undertook tours in Europe and America, delivering lectures, answering questions and expounding the doctrines of his religion of unity. The reception accorded to him must have deeply impressed him, and probably created an impression in his mind that his religion will soon be universal on earth. The universality of his teaching naturally attracted a large number of pacifists, suffragettes, esperantists, theosophists, prohibitionists, socialists and the ultra-liberals, while the mysterious effect, which oriental dress, beauty of personal appearance and the unfamiliar music of oriental language never fail to produce on Western minds, drew others out of pure curiosity. He succeeded in establishing new centres of Baháism in Germany, France and elsewhere, while in America he gained a final ascendancy over the followers of his brother.

In Persia the persecution of Bábis and Baháis has gradually ceased. There are a few Bábis belonging to the old school, who call themselves *Kullu Shayis*, and do not care about the quarrel between Ezelis and Baháis, and a large but indeterminable number of Baháis proper. Lord Curzon in his book on "Persia and the Persian Question," published in 1892, wrote: "the lowest estimates place the number of Bábis in Persia at half of a million. I am disposed to think from conversations with persons well qualified to judge that the total is nearer one million. They are to be found in every walk of life from the ministers and nobles of the Court to the scavenger or the groom, not the least arena of their activity being the Musalman priesthood itself. If Bábism continues to grow at its present rate of progress, a time

may conceivably come when it will oust Mohammadanism from the field in Persia. This, I think, it would be unlikely to do, did it appear upon the ground under the flag of a hostile faith. But since its recruits are won from the best soldiers of the garrison whom it is attacking, there is greater reason to believe that it may ultimately prevail." This prediction however was not fulfilled; the movement after a phenomenal rise again subsided within normal limits.

Abdul Bahá survived the Great War, and saw a good deal of his life-work come to fruition. The Baháís set a good example of material work in transforming the barren Akka (Akhrab-ulbilád) into a little garden. They organized extensive agricultural operations near Tiberias during the war, and secured a great supply of wheat by which a famine was averted. Since the British occupation of Syria, Abdul Bahá became the centre of a large circle listening to his illuminating talks, and hundreds of visitors from the East and West flocked to his house. The British Government was so profoundly impressed by his noble character and his great work in the interest of peace and prosperity of the people that they conferred on him a knighthood of the British Empire. When he departed from the earthly life in 1921 the British High Commissioner officially took part in his funeral.

He died without male issue. His grand-son Shauk-i-Rabbani, a student of Oxford, was proclaimed as his successor, but he was unable to gather round him a group of followers. It is not unlikely that the Baháí movement will ebb out in platitudes of universalism. A typical example of recent writings is furnished by the book on 'the New Humanity' by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, the Secretary of Abdul Bahá, in which the idea of universality is indiscriminately applied to such concepts as universal peace, universal patriotism, universal language, universal opinion, universal dawn (?), universal age,<sup>1</sup> universal newspaper, universal femininity,<sup>2</sup> universal painting and

<sup>1</sup> P. 181. "This is the age of women, for this very reason if for no other, it is a universal age."

<sup>2</sup> P. 230. "In her hands is the jar of atar (scent) of the rose of understanding. An artist whispered into my ear; "I would rather spend one hour with her than seventy years with a saint."

literature, universal aviation and broadcasting, universal penance and so on. It is a work not devoid of charm but without the slightest basis of science or a positive back-ground of history.

The after-effects of the Great War in Persia are however not very conducive towards the growth of mysticism. In the West there was a decided reaction against materialism, in the East there was a movement towards positivism, a process which has its psychological as well as social reasons. Bahá'ism is not likely to continue to exercise its old magic influence on the Persian mind, which is now more inclined to be captivated by the forward march of industrialism. Romance will pass away with the growth of factories, and the colour of life will dissolve into the gray haze of outward uniformity. Nothing is more cruel than realities, for even if they give contact with truth, they fail to bring happiness, the illusion of pious hearts.

Water when analysed consists of two elements without taste and flavour, still it quenches the thirst and is the substance of life. Likewise every religion can be analysed into elements of myth, legends and popular lore; still it quenches the thirst of man for guidance and truth and sustains him in his stumbling progress through errors and deficiencies in his slow approach to the harmony pervading the universe.

