

585TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,  
WESTMINSTER, ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5TH, 1917.

E. J. SEWELL, ESQ., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read and signed.

The SECRETARY announced the election of the Rev. W. Dodgson Sykes, M.A., as a Member; and of the Rev. Edward Thomas Lea, M.A., J. O. Kinnaman, Esq., A.M., Ph.D., and Ernest E. Grimwood, Esq., as Associates of the Institute.

The CHAIRMAN called upon the SECRETARY to read a paper on "Islam and Animism," in the absence of the Author:—

*ISLAM AND ANIMISM.* By the Rev. S. M. ZWEMER,  
M.A., D.D.

THAT Islam is a composite faith is clear, not only from its origin, but from its present-day character and its historical development. Its three-fold source was Judaism, Arab Paganism, and Christianity. These heterogeneous elements of Islam were gathered in Arabia at a time when many religions had penetrated the Peninsula, and the Kaaba (or Sacred House) was a Pantheon. Unless one has a knowledge of these elements of the "times of ignorance," Islam is a problem. Knowing, however, these heathen, Christian, and Jewish factors, Islam is seen to be a natural and comprehensible development. Its heathen, Christian, and Jewish elements remain, to this day, perfectly recognizable, in spite of thirteen centuries of explanation by the Moslem commentators. Rabbi Geiger, in his celebrated essay, first pointed out how much Islam owes to Judaism;\* and in his book, *The Original Sources of the Qur'an*, the Rev. W. St. Clair Tisdall, D.D., devotes a chapter to the influences of ancient Arabian beliefs and practices on Islam. There is no doubt that at the very outset Mohammed introduced

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\* *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthum aufgenommen*, von Abraham Geiger, Bonn, 1833.

Pagan and animistic elements into the new faith. Abu'l Fida' calls attention to a number of religious observances which were thus perpetuated under the new system.

It is not our purpose in this paper to speak of the pre-Islamic beliefs of the Arabs in general, but to show that there are many animistic ideas in the Moslem creed and ritual to-day, which can best be understood by a comparison with similar beliefs in the Pagan world. By animism we understand "that stage in human development in which man believes in the parity of all existences so far as their possession of sentient life is concerned." Men in that stage may hold that a stone, a tree, a mountain, a stream, a wild animal, a heavenly body, a wind, indeed any object within the realm of real or fancied experience, possesses just such a "soul" as he conceives himself to have, and that it is animated by desires and moved by emotions parallel to those he perceives in himself.\*

The subject is large, and we can only give in outline *some* of the beliefs and practices, with the hope that further investigation may be made on the lines indicated.

In the very use of the Moslem creed we have a superstitious use of the names of God against demons and Jinn. Their belief in angels with all its ramifications, and especially their eschatology, shows the same animistic basis. Their belief in how the spirit leaves the body; the benefit of speedy burial; the questioning by the two angels of the tomb; the visiting of the graves and the presentation of offerings of food and drink on the graves:—all this is mixed up with Pagan practice, and can be traced to its source in the collections of Tradition.

The Koran itself has the power of a fetish in popular Islam. Not only is the book eternal in its origin and used for mystic purposes, but only those who are pure ritually may touch it. Certain chapters are of special value against evil spirits. The two chapters, *i.e.*, of the "Elephant," and the one entitled "Have we not Expanded?" are almost universally used for the early prayer as a safeguard against pain. At funerals they always read the chapter "Y.S."; and when in fear of Jinn and spirits, the chapter of the Jinn. One has only to read this last chapter with the commentaries on it to see how large a place this doctrine occupies in popular Islam. The cure for headache is said to be the 13th verse of the chapter called "al-Ana'am," or the Cattle, which reads: "His is whatsoever dwells in the night

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\* Cf. Article on "Comparative Religion," in *Schaff-Herzog Encyc.*, vol. iii, p. 194.

or in the day: He both hears and knows." Against robbers at night a verse of the chapter called "Repentance" is read, etc.

It has been shown by A. J. Wensinck,\* that animism and a belief in demons lie behind the Islamic prayer-ritual. In the preparation for the daily prayer—especially in the process of ablution—the object of the Moslem seems to be to free himself from everything that has connection with supernatural powers, or demons as opposed to the worship of the one true God. Wensinck tells us that these beliefs have nothing to do with bodily purity as such, but are intended to free the worshipper from the presence or the influence of evil spirits.† Goldziher had already shown in one of his essays that according to Semitic conception water drives away demons. There are many traditions which find a relationship between sleep and Jinn. During sleep the soul, according to animistic belief, leaves the body. Therefore, one must waken those who sleep quite gently, lest the soul be prevented from returning. Not only during sleep but during illness demons are present, and in Egypt it is considered unfortunate for anyone who is ceremonially unclean to approach a patient suffering from ophthalmia.

The Moslem, when he prays, is required, according to tradition, to cover his head, especially the back part of the skull. This, according to Wensinck, is also due to animistic belief; for evil spirits enter the body by this. Goldziher has shown that the name given to this part of the body (*al-qafa*) has a close relationship to the kind of poetry called *Qafiya*, which originally meant a poem-to-wound-the-skull, in other words, an imprecatory poem. It is therefore for the dread of evil powers which might enter the mind that the head must be covered during prayer. (The references are given both to the Moslem tradition and to the

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\* *Der Islam*, Band IV, "Animisma und Dämonenglaube."

† It is this demonic pollution which must be removed. I quote two traditions from *Muslim*, vol. i, pp. 112-3. "Said the Prophet: 'If any of you awakens up from sleep then let him blow his nose three times. For the devil spends the night in a man's nostrils.'" And again: "Said Omar ibn el-Khattab (May God have mercy on him), 'A certain man performed ablution, but left a dry spot on his foot.' When the Prophet of God saw it, he said: 'Go back and wash better; then he returned and came back to prayer. Said the Prophet of God: 'If a Moslem servant of God performs the ablution when he washes his face, every sin which his face has committed is taken away by it with the water or with the last drop of the water. And when he washes his hands, the sins of his hands are taken away with the water or with the last drop of the water. And when he washes his feet, all the sins which his feet have committed are taken away with the water or with the last drop of the water until he becomes pure from sin altogether.'"

Talmud, on which they are based.) Again, it is noteworthy that places which are ritually unclean are considered the habitation of demons, such as baths, etc. According to tradition a Moslem cannot perform his prayer without a *Sutra* or some object placed between himself and the *Kibla*, in order, as tradition says, "that nothing may harm him by passing in between." This custom is doubtless due to belief in spirits. The call of the *Muezzin*, according to al-Bukhari drives away the demons and Satan.\*

Among the Arabs before the time of Mohammed, and among Moslems to-day, especially during prayer, sneezing is an ominous sign, and should be accompanied by a pious ejaculation. This also is clearly animistic. Among the tribes of Malaysia the general belief is that when one sneezes the soul leaves the body.† At the close of the prayer, as is well known, the worshipper salutes the two angels on his right and left shoulders. Not only the preparations for prayer and prayer itself, but the *times* of prayer have a distinct connection with animistic belief. The noon-day prayer is never held at high noon, but a short time after the sun reaches the meridian.‡ Wensinck points out that this is due to the belief that the sun-god is really a demon and must not be worshipped by the monotheist. According to al-Bukhari, the Prophet postponed the noon-day prayer until after high noon, for "the greatest heat of the day belongs to the heat of hell." Nor is it permitted to pray shortly after sunrise, for "the sun rises between the horns of the devil."

In spite of the assertion of God's Unity, there are many other things connected with Moslem prayer which show Pagan magic, e.g., the power through certain words and gestures to influence the Almighty. These practices were prevalent before Islam. Goldziher mentions the custom of incantation (*Manāshada*), similar to that practised by the heathen *Kahins*, by certain leaders in the early days of Islam; it was said "if so-and-so would adjure anything upon God, he would doubtless obtain it." He refers especially to magical elements in the prayer for rain.§ Among the Turkish Moslems there is a superstition regarding the value of "rain-stones," called *Yada Tashi*, or in Persian, *Sangi Yada*. This superstition dates from before their conversion

\* *Kitab al-Adhān*, section iv.

† See Kruijt, *Animisme*.

‡ This is indicated in modern Moslem almanacs by minutes and seconds.

§ See al-Bukhari, who gives magical formulæ to be used on such an occasion. Certain of the Companions of the Prophet were celebrated as "rain-makers," e.g., Abbas, his uncle, and others.

to Islam, but still persists and has spread to Morocco. In Tlemcen the Moslems in time of drought gather 70,000 pebbles, which are put in 70 sacks during the night; they repeat the Koran prayers over every one of these pebbles, after which the bags are emptied into the *wady* with the hope of rain.\*

Although the practice of casting out demons by the performance called the *Zar* is not in accordance with orthodox Islam, and has met with protest on the part of Moslems, it is still prevalent in North Africa, Arabia, and Turkey.† According to Snoucke Hurgronje all nationalities in Mecca practise the *Zar*. Even if they give it another name in their own country, they very soon adopt the word *Zar*, although the national differences continue. The *Zar* is an evil spirit which can only be cast out by ceremonies that are Pagan in their character and consist of animal sacrifices, the drinking of blood, etc. The *Zar* spirits in Egypt are divided into several classes. In Cairo there are the Lower Egypt, the Upper Egyptian, the Sudanese, and the Bedouin-Arab *Zars*; some writers refer also to Abyssinian, and even Indian spirits. Another subdivision is that of sex; there are male and female spirits, and child spirits, belonging to the high, middle, or lower classes. In Cairo, according to one report by Kahle, the animal is killed by the sheikha above the head of the *Zar* bride, who must open her mouth and drink the warm blood, the remainder running down her white garments. The theory is that it is not *she* who drinks, but the spirit in her. In Luxor one drop of the blood is placed on the forehead, the cheeks, the chin, the palms of the hands, and on the soles of the feet. Probably the blood has to be drunk also. The claws and feathers of the fowl are laid aside carefully as a special gift to the spirit.‡

Conjuring spirits, or exorcising demons apart from the *Zar*, is also common by the use of certain prayer formulas. These formulas compel God to do what is requested, and indicate a belief in the fetish power of the words themselves. It is especially the use of the names of God and the great name of God that produce these results. There are many different lists of the names. Kastallani points out no fewer than twenty-three variants. In later days, under the influence of the *Sufis*, the

\* See quotation in the "Goldziher Festschrift," from the *Journal des Debats*, 1903, "Au Maroc."

† D. B. Macdonald, *Aspects of Islam*, p. 4; Paul Kahle, "Zar-Beschwörungen in Egypten," in *Der Islam*, Band III, Heft 1, 2, Strassburg, 1912.

‡ For an account of these ceremonies as practised to-day all over Egypt, see *The Moslem World*, vol. iii, pp. 275-282.

number of God's names increased to 1001! One of the most popular books of common prayer, by Abdallah Mohammed Gazali (died 870 A.H.), illustrates this magical use of God's names, and often uses such expressions as "I beseech Thee by Thy hidden and most Holy Name which no creature understands, etc." There are many books on the magical use of the names of God, especially one called *Dā'wa al-juljūliyah* (i.e., *jalla jallalahu*).

These names of God are used *not only for lawful prayer*, but for strength and power to execute unlawful acts. This shows that they have a magical rather than a holy character.\*

In addition to magical formulas there is the use of the hand, especially the forefinger (*sabāba*); this is called the finger for cursing. Goldziher gives many illustrations of how the forefinger was used in magical ways long before its present use in testifying to God's unity. A controversy arose in Islam very early about the raising of the hands in prayer.† Who can doubt that this indicates also a magical use of the hands? A hand is still used as an amulet against the evil eye. It is made of silver or gold in jewelry, or made of tin in natural size, and is then suspended over the door of a house. The top of a Moslem banner is generally of this shape. Moslems call it the "Hand of Fatima." The superstition of the hand is very common, especially in lower Egypt, and seems to be borrowed from the Jews. The following points are to be noted: It is unlucky to count five on the fingers. All Egyptians of the lower classes, when they count, say: "One, two, three, four, *in the eye of your enemy*." Children, when at play, show their displeasure with each other by touching the little fingers of their two hands together, which signifies separation, enmity, hatred. The same sign is used by grown-up people, in discussion. In addition to all this, they use the hand for the gesture of cursing, by raising both hands slightly with fingers extended and making a downward motion to call down the curses of God upon those toward whom the fingers are pointed. This is called *Takhmis*.

Mr Eugene Lefebure‡ writes: "There never was a country where the representation of the human hand has not

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\* A vast literature on the use of God's names and the magic of numbers has grown up, called *Kūtūb al-Rūhaniyat*, on geomancy, ornithomancy, dreams, etc.

† It is regarding the position of the hands that the four sects have special teaching, and can be distinguished.

‡ *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie d'Alger et de l'Afrique du Nord*, 1907, No. 4.

served as an amulet. In Egypt as in Ireland, with the Hebrews as with the Etruscans, they attribute to this figure a mysterious power. In the middle parts of France they have the hand made of coral, and the Arabs in Africa and Asia believe that the fingers of an open hand, like the horn, have the power of turning away the evil eye. This belief they have inherited from the Chaldeans and the Phœnicians, which belief they share with the Jews. Whether it be the figure of a hand, or the hand or fingers taken from a corpse, he who possesses a talisman of this kind is sure of escaping bad influences. In Palestine this goes by the name of *Kef Miryam*; in Algeria, the Moslems in our French colonies very appropriately named these talismans *La Main de Fatima*; and from this source another superstition has been developed:—the mystic virtues of the number five, because of the five fingers of the hand"\* [or its sinister power].

In the prayer called the *Qūnūt*, which takes place after the morning prayer (*Salāt*), the hands are raised in magical fashion. Goldziher believes that the original signification of this was a curse or imprecation on the enemy; such was the ancient custom of the Arabs. The Prophet cursed his enemies in this way; so did also the early Caliphs. In Lane's Dictionary (art. on *Qūnūt*) we find the prayer given as follows: "O God, verily we beg of Thee aid, and we beg of Thee forgiveness. And we believe in Thee, and we rely on Thee, and we laud Thee well, and we will not be unthankful to Thee for Thy favour, and we cast off and forsake him who disobeys Thee: O God, Thee we worship, and to Thee we perform the divinely-appointed act of prayer, and prostrate ourselves; and we are quick in working for Thee and in serving Thee: we hope for Thy mercy, and we dread Thy punishment: *verily* (or may) *Thy punishment overtake the unbelievers.*" It is said of the Prophet that he stood during a whole month, after the prayer of daybreak, cursing the tribes of Riāl and Dhekwan. We read in *Al-Muwatta* (Vol. i, p. 216) that at the time of the *Qūnūt* they used to curse their enemies, the unbelievers, in the month of *Ramadhan*. Later on, this custom was modified or explained away.

Not only in formal prayer (*Salāt*), but also in the *Du'a* (petition), there are magical practices, especially in the prayer for eclipse, by the raising of the hands. We are told in al-Bukhari that on one occasion the Prophet, while praying for rain, "raised his hands so high that one could see the white skin of

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\* M. Lefebure, in his short work, *La Main de Fatima*, has gathered all that is known on the subject.

his arm-pits!" In the case of *Du'a*, therefore, the *Kibla* is said to be heaven itself, and not Mecca.

Another gesture used in *Du'a* is the stroking of the face or of the body with the hands. This custom is borrowed from the Prophet, and has also magical effect. At the time of his death the Prophet put his hands in water and washed his face with them, repeating the Creed. The use of water to drive away demons is a well-known Semitic practice.\*

We now pass on to Moslem ideas of the soul.

The conception of the soul and the belief in a double among Moslems closely resembles the idea of the Malays and other Animists. "The Malay conception of the human soul," we read, "is that of a species of thumbling—a thin, unsubstantial human image, or mannikin, which is temporarily absent from the body in sleep, trance, disease, and permanently absent after death. This mannikin, which is usually invisible, but is supposed to be about as big as the thumb, corresponds exactly in shape, proportion, and even complexion, to its embodiment or casing—*i.e.*, the body in which it has its residence. It is of a vapoury, shadowy, or filmy essence, though not so impalpable but that it may cause displacement on entering a physical object. . . . The soul appears to men (both waking and sleeping) as a phantom separate from the body, of which it bears the likeness, manifests physical power, and walks, sits, and sleeps."† What this idea has become in Islam, we shall see in a moment.

That the shadow is a *second soul*, or is a semblance of the soul, is also an animistic idea. The same thing appears in Islam, for the shadow of a dog defiles the one who prays as much as the dog himself.‡ The Javanese believe that black chickens and black cats do not cast a shadow because they come from the underworld. When one reads of this, one cannot help comparing with it the Moslem belief in the *Qarina*.

Among all the superstitions in Islam there is none more curious in its origin and character than the belief in the *Qarin*

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\* Goldziher, in the *Nöldeke Festschrift*, I, 316, "Zauberelemente im Islamischen Gebet." Many miracles, due to the healing stroke or touch of the Prophet's hand, are recorded in lives of Mohammed, *e.g.*, *Sirat al-Halabi* (margin), vol. iii, p. 231.

† *Malay Magic*, by W. W. Skeat, London, 1900.

‡ I have not found this stated in the Traditions, but it is a well-known belief in Egypt and in Arabia. Mohammed himself *had no shadow* because he was created of Divine light. *Sirat al-Halabi*, vol. iii, p. 239.



or *Qarina*.\* It probably goes back to the ancient religion of Egypt, or to the animistic beliefs common in Arabia as well as in Egypt, at the time of Mohammed. By *Qarin* or *Qarina* the Moslem understands the double of the individual, his companion, his mate, his familiar demon. In the case of males a female mate, and in the case of females a male. This double is generally understood to be a devil (*Shaitān* or *Jinn*) born at the time of the individual's birth, and his constant companion throughout life. The *Qarina* is, therefore, of the progeny of Satan.† Al-Tabari, in his great commentary (Vol. xxvi, p. 104), says the *Qarin* or *Qarina* is each man's *Shaitān* (devil), who was appointed to have charge of him in the world. He then proves his statement by a series of traditions: "His *Qarin* is his devil (*Shaitān*)"; or, according to another authority there quoted: "His *Qarina* is his *Jinn*."

The general teaching is that all human beings, non-Moslems as well as Moslems, have their familiar spirit, who is in every case jealous, malignant, and the cause of physical and moral ill, save in so far as his influence is warded off by magic or religion. It is just here that the belief exercises a dominating place in popular Islam. It is against this spirit of jealousy, this other self, that children wear beads, amulets, talismans, etc. It is this other self that, through jealousy, hatred, and envy, prevents love between husband and wife, and is responsible for many injuries and disappointments.

As an example of the usual animistic practices connected with saint-worship and at the graves of the saints, I may mention what takes place at the village of Sennouris in the Fayoum, at the grave of Mohammed Marādni, a famous *wali*.‡ His tomb is next to the village mosque, and I was allowed to visit it. The doorway is studded with nails driven in by votaries, together with votive offerings of hair, nail parings, and teeth, as well as shreds of clothing. On the tomb there was a collection of amulets, placed there as offerings by those who sought the intercession of the saint. Near the grave is a

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\* The Koran passages are the following :—Chapter of the Cave, v. 48 (see especially the Commentary of Fahr er-Razi, margin, vol. 6, p. 75); Chapter Kaf, vv. 20–30; Chapter of Women, vv. 41–42; Chapter of the Ranged, vv. 47–54; Chapter "Detailed," v. 24; Chapter of Gilding, vv. 35–37.

† For a fuller statement of Moslem teaching regarding the *Qarin*, the reader is referred to my article in the *Moslem World*, vol. vi, No. 4.

‡ Plural, *awliyā* = saint, intercessor, redeemer, surety. The Hebrew word *goel* is translated *wali* in the Arabic Bible.

large stone urn, probably a remnant of Grecian civilization. It is badly battered, and rests on the incline of an old and dirty well. This stone urn, they firmly believe, was carried by the saint on his little finger and put here in the Fayoum. Moslem women come on Fridays to bathe in the urn as a cure for all diseases.

One of the charms which I was allowed to take with me consisted of a double calico bag in which was a bit of paper sewn up with the following inscription :—

“In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate, this charm affords an exemption, in the name of God and His Apostle, from Um Mildam (the queen of all the evil *Jinn*), she who devours flesh and drinks blood and crushes bones. O Um Mildam, if you are a Jewess, I forswear you by Moses, the mouthpiece of God (upon Him be peace!); if thou art a Christian, I forswear thee by Jesus Christ (upon Him be peace!); and if thou art a true believer, I forswear thee by Mohammed the Prophet (upon him be prayers and peace!). If thou art none of these, I will have nothing to do with thee, for God is a good protector and defender through His Apostle.”

There are hundreds of similar saints and tombs in Egypt. Tree-worship, which is so common in nearly every Moslem land, is also undoubtedly connected with the old practices of Arabian idolatry, or was borrowed from other pagan lands. According to Doughty, the traveller, whose observations are confirmed by all those who know the Arabs, the Bedouins look upon certain trees and shrubs as *menhals*, or abodes of angels and demons. To injure such trees or shrubs, to lop their branches, is held dangerous. Misfortune overtakes him who has the foolhardiness to perpetrate such an outrage.

Stone-worship is not uncommon in Islam. Stones were used as fetishes in Arabia before Islam, and one may well compare the reverence paid to the Black Stone at Mecca with the worship of aerolites in the Indian Archipelago—as Professor Wilken shows in his chapter on the subject.\*

It is well known that there are other sacred stones in the Hejaz, and not only here but in many lands of the Near East. In Arabia and Egypt I have known of such objects being covered with oil by devotees and forming the centre of weird rites by the women folk at night. In the use of animals (totems) as amulets to guard the house or the place of business,

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\* Dr. G. A. Wilken, *Het Animisme* (1884-5).

we also have a heathen custom that prevails throughout all Moslem Egypt. The crocodile is especially common, just as it is in the Indian Archipelago,\* though other animals are also used. I have just received a specimen from Damanhour. It consists of a stuffed mongoose with an Egyptian cobra twisted around its body, and is put on houses or shops to prevent the effects of the evil eye and to ward off robbers. It also preserves children from envy and jealousy. This sort of object generally hangs above the door. The common name for it is *Hami al-Beit* or *Hafiz al-Beit*. Yet the people who dwell there say, "There is no God but Allah!"

Many animistic customs are in vogue among Moslems in connection with the marriage ceremonies. The reader is referred to a complete treatise on the subject by Edward Westermarck (*Marriage Ceremonies in Morocco*, Macmillan, London, 1914). One has only to compare such practices with those of pagan tribes to see how much of animism lies behind them. There could be no clearer proof that animism persists in Islam than a comparison of the practices current in the older Moslem lands, such as Arabia and Egypt, with those of the Indian Archipelago. In one of the standard works on the subject† we note, for example, the following practices, which find their parallel in present-day Islam: Hair offerings, because hair is the seat of soul-stuff‡ the offering of nail-parings to saints or on the tombs of notables. Moslems in Egypt also carefully bury their nail-parings because they are in a sense sacred. We may compare with this a tradition given by Mohammed:§ "His Excellency the Prophet said: 'Whosoever cuts his nails and trims his moustachios on Saturdays and Thursdays will be free from pains of the teeth and eyes.'"

The rosary is used for three distinct purposes. It is used in prayer and *Zikr*, for counting pious ejaculations or petitions; it is used for divining; and, lastly, for healing. The first-named practice is called *Istikharah*. It is related of one of the wives of Mohammed that she said: "The Prophet taught us *Istikharah* (i.e., to know what is best), just as he taught us verses from the Book, and if any of you want anything, let him perform ablution and pray two *rak'iat*s, and read the verse:

\* Kruijt, *Het Animisme*, p. 215.

† *Het Animisme in den Indischen Archipel*, by Alb. C. Kruijt (Leyden).

‡ *The Moslem World*, vol. vi, p. 121, quoted in article by Rev. W. A. Rice.

§ Mohammed's hair has become famous as a fetish, and has power to heal, *Sirat al-Halabi*, vol. iii, p. 238.

‘There is no other god,’ etc.” To use the rosary in this way the following things must be observed: The rosary is grasped within the palms of both hands, and is then rubbed together; then the *Fatiha* is solemnly repeated, *after which the user breathes upon the rosary with his breath in order to put the effect of the chapter into the beads.* Then he seizes a particular bead and counts toward the “pointer” bead, using the words *God, Mohammed, Abu Jahal.* When the count terminates with the name of *God*, it means that his request is favourably received; if it terminates with *Abu Jahal* it is bad; and if with *Mohammed* the reply is doubtful. Others considered it more correct to use these three words: Adam, Eve, the devil. When these words are used, the Adam bead signifies approval, the devil bead disapproval, and the Eve bead uncertainty, because woman’s judgment is fickle. This use of the rosary is almost universal among the common people. The rosary is also used for the cure of the sick. In this case it depends on the material from which the beads are manufactured. Those made of ordinary wood or of mother-o’-pearl are not valuable, but a rosary made of jet (*Yusr*) or *Kuk* (a particular kind of wood from Mecca) is valuable.

Of magic in general, as practised to-day by Moslems, we cannot speak at length. I may mention, however, the use of magic bowls or cups, which goes back to great antiquity. Generally speaking, the cups are of two kinds. One is called *Taset al-khadda* (from the Arabic root *khadhā*, which means “to shake your cup”).\* It is also called *Taset al-Turba*. This kind is used for healing, and to drive away the ills of the body. A specimen carefully kept by old families may be seen in the Arab Museum, made by an engraver called Ibrahim, in A.D. 1561. According to a Coptic writer, the owners of such goblets often lend them to others who need them. The right manner to use the goblet is to fill it with water in the early morning, place some ordinary keys in it, and leave them until the following day, when the patient drinks the water. This operation is repeated three, seven, or forty consecutive nights until the patient gets rid of the evil effects of his fright. It would not be strange if the oxide of iron acted on the patients! The Moslem goblets in use to-day generally contain Koran inscriptions, and the keys spoken of are suspended by wires from the inner cup, which rests in the centre of the *Tāseh*. This is

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\* See *Lane’s Dictionary*. Others say it comes from a root signifying to terrorize, to make fall into a fit; *i.e.*, the cup of terror.

fastened to the cup by a screw, allowing the inner cup to revolve, so that the keys reach every portion of the outer goblet.

In conclusion, we are not so much concerned with the fact of animism in Islam as we are with the failure of Islam to meet animistic practices and overcome them. Gottfried Simon has shown conclusively that Islam cannot uproot pagan practices or remove the terror of spirits and demon-worship in Sumatra and Java among Moslems. In the conflict with animism, Islam has not been triumphant.\* Christianity, as Harnack has shown, did win in its conflict with demon-worship in the first struggle, and is winning to-day.†

Animism in Islam offers points of contact and contrast that may well be used by the missionary. Christianity's message and power must be applied to the degrading superstitions of Islam, and especially to these utterly pagan practices. The fear of spirits can be met by the love of the Holy Spirit; the terror of death by the repose and confidence of the Christian; true exorcism is not found in the *Zar*, but in prayer; so-called demonic possession can often be cured by medical skill, and superstition of every kind rooted out by education; Jesus Christ is the Lord of the Unseen World, particularly the world of demons and of angels. Christ points out the true ladder of Jacob and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.—He is the sole channel of communication with the other world. With Him as our living, loving Saviour and Friend we have no fear of "the arrow that flieth by day nor of the pestilence that walketh in darkness."

#### DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN welcomed an account of Islam from so high an authority as Dr. Zwemer. Resident as he was in a Moslem country, and constantly engaged in discussion and intercourse with Moslems, he had given a most excellent and valuable idea of what modern

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\* *The Progress and Arrest of Islam in Sumatra*, London, 1912.

† Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, vol. i, book ii, chapter iii.

Islam was. And it was well to realize the difference between theoretical Islam and actual, practical, modern Islam. It had often been said that the usual plan of controversialists, in comparing two faiths or two sets of doctrines, was to take one at its ideal best and the other at its practical worst and compare the two in that way: Too often that was done in comparisons drawn between Christianity and Islam. Islam was taken at its theoretical best, *i.e.*, the best pronouncements of those who were authorities in their faith, and then Christianity was taken at its practical worst—everything that could be raked in from the most unchristian practices on the part of nominal Christians—and was regarded as representative of Christianity. Therefore it was well to know from such an authority as Dr. Zwemer what extraordinarily superstitious, ignorant, and malignant doctrines and practices formed part of the beliefs of Moslems.

Dr. Zwemer declared the object of his paper to be to show that

“there are many animistic ideas in the Moslem creed and ritual to-day, which can best be understood by a comparison with similar beliefs in the Pagan world.”

That, no doubt, was a very valuable purpose, but he (the speaker) very much wished they had had the author of the essay present, because there were several points in the paper which seemed to go rather wide of that description. He described animistic belief as

“that stage in human development in which man believes in the parity of all existences so far as their possession of sentient life is concerned.”

He (the speaker) thought it must have struck everyone that there were a great many instances given of superstitious beliefs among Moslems which had very little connection with any such definition as that. He would have liked Dr. Zwemer to explain how he connected those things. He said they were “doubtless” of animistic origin, whereas considerable doubt arose on this point in his mind. Again, he wished they could have had an intelligent Mohammedan present to criticize such a presentation of Islam. He would have found, he thought, a great many openings for maintaining that in Christian countries there were beliefs which virtually correspond with some of those referred to, more particularly in countries like Portugal and South America. We would be rather

disinclined to accept those beliefs as representing Christianity simply because they were held by people who are nominally Christian. Although Dr. Zwemer set out that certain beliefs were "part of the Moslem creed and ritual," he (the speaker) thought that such a statement could only be justly made if the beliefs in question were part of the acknowledged creed and ritual of Islam. However, he thought the end of the paper—the last paragraph but one—really set out what was its proper conclusion and contention:—

"We are not so much concerned with the fact of animism in Islam as we are with the failure of Islam to meet animistic practices and overcome them."

That did appear to stand out from the paper—that Moslems contrived to hold these superstitious opinions along with the pure doctrines of the religion of Islam:—

"Islam cannot uproot pagan practices or remove the terror of spirits and demon-worship in Sumatra and Java among Moslems. In the conflict with animism, Islam has not been triumphant. Christianity, as Harnack has shown, did win in its conflict with demon-worship in the first struggle, and is winning to-day."

With these remarks the Chairman declared the subject open for discussion.

Mr. COLLETT expressed deep indebtedness to Dr. Zwemer for a very instructive paper. He thought he had given the true key to the situation at the very opening, when he said that Islam was derived from Judaism, Christianity, and Paganism. He (the speaker) ventured to suggest that it might have been even more correct to say from *corrupt* Judaism, *corrupt* Christianity, and Paganism. There, he thought, we got the real secret of the false and corrupt teachings of Islam.

There was a very instructive remark on page 91 :

"In Luxor one drop of the blood is placed on the forehead, the cheeks, the chin, the palms of the hand, and on the soles of the feet."

At once his (the speaker's) mind went to Lev. xiv, where we have an account of the Divine instructions for the cleansing of the leper, and he could not help seeing there the true source from which that

formality of Islam sprang. Other similar instances might be mentioned, one of them appearing on page 95. According to the teaching of Islam, every individual was accompanied by an evil spirit! Surely that was a corrupted and perverted version of the beautiful truth, revealed in the Scriptures, that all true children of God are accompanied by angelic messengers—ministering spirits sent forth to “minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Heb. i, 14); while of little children, the Lord spoke of “their angels” (Matt. xviii, 10).

The CHAIRMAN pointed out, for the guidance of speakers, that the subject was Islam and Animism, not a comparison between Animism and Christianity.

Mr. JOSEPH GRAHAM, alluding to the Chairman’s mention of certain aspects of purity and truth in Islam, said he was reminded of Gibbon’s remark concerning the Mohammedan summary of faith: “There is one God, and Mohammed is His prophet,” namely, that the familiar statement contained the greatest truth and the deepest lie. Further recalling his reading of Gibbon, the speaker said that Mohammed was, on the one hand, struck with the degeneracy of the Jews from a religious point of view, and on the other hand, disgusted with the way in which Christianity had been wrapt up in forms and ceremonies and superstitions—very much akin to what had been described in connection with Islam.

They might venture, perhaps, to give Mohammed credit for honesty, and a desire to put forward truth in place of the error which he observed; but inasmuch as he was not speaking from the inspired Word, he was thrown upon resources which must inevitably lead to error—his great error being to proclaim himself as the prophet of God. He recognized the “claims” of Jesus Christ, and Moses, and others; but he was careful to establish his own claim above them all. The inevitable result was a system which needed to be bolstered up from any source available.

He thought the special interest of the paper was that it was a statement by one who was in touch with modern Islam. The intention of the paper apparently was to show that, as the inevitable consequence of the position which Mohammed took up, there was a gathering from all sources without a true guide such as we had in the Holy Scriptures, and that gathering must necessarily be affected



by the practices and doctrines of the people among whom the religion was promulgated.

Mr. C. E. BUCKLAND said that, in reading *The Moslem World*, a quarterly conducted by Dr. Zwemer, he had noticed frequent mention of the spread of Islam among the wild tribes of Africa. Apparently these tribes turned more readily to Islam than to Christianity; and Dr. Zwemer's paper seemed to supply a very possible explanation of the fact. The animistic and superstitious beliefs and practices in Islam were just the kind of things that would commend themselves to tribes who knew no better. Therefore, he would have liked to hear more about them. If animism and Islam were related, then missionaries to Moslems were supplied with a clue which they might well take up in dealing with African tribes.

Mr. M. L. ROUSE, B.A., B.L., adverting to the remarks of the previous speaker, said that the Africans had tree-worship—sacred trees to which they devoted unfortunate children. A child would be found sitting under a tree and no one was allowed to feed him, and there he had to die because offered as a sacrifice to the spirit of that tree. Sacred trees also prevailed in China, under which people addressed evil spirits. He thought with the last speaker that the reason Mohammedanism gained ground was partly because it tolerated such superstitions, and partly because it was a religion which did not impose on men the task, so repugnant to human pride, of overcoming evil with good; which did not bid men be gentle and forbearing, but bade them attack their enemies and propagate religion by the sword, as Mohammed did at the outset.

Mohammed was nephew of the guardian of the Kaaba at Mecca—a stone about nine inches long, which was fabled to have been once a ruby, but to have become black through weeping over the sins of the world! Thus a kind of soul was given to this stone, and that idea of course still prevailed. It was still a scene of worship. Mohammed as a young man had to set up the Kaaba again when the sacred house in which it was kept fell out of repair. He learnt all the rites which were practised, and went through them; and therefore it was only natural that, while setting up a worship of one God, he should retain many such rites. Nor, conversely, was his monotheism a wholly new thing at Mecca; for while we read that

he demolished 360 idols that stood round the sacred house, he found this idolatry heaped over an earlier worship of the one true God ; seeing that the Kaaba was fabled to have been set up by Abraham to commemorate an interview of the Almighty One with Adam on the spot. Mount Arafat, which was near, was supposed by the Arabs to be the site of Eden.

When Mohammed began to revolt from the follies and cruelties of idolatry, he was brought under various religious influences from without. A Nestorian monk named Boheira talked much with him upon the superiority of Christianity to heathenism ; and he was then brought into contact with a famous Jewish Rabbi, Abdollah ibn Salaam, who held repeated interviews with him, and to a certain extent instructed him in the Jewish religion. When Mohammed decided that he was an apostle and must propagate his meagre Deism, he thought the Jews would accept it ; and when they refused, and even treated his overtures with contempt, he was spurred to vengeance and made war upon them, cruelly persecuting them, or driving them out of the castles and towns in Arabia which they then possessed.

Thus Mohammedanism was mainly a form of Judaism ; but when Mohammed found that he was not accepted as a kind of fresh Moses, he made his religion differ more and more from the Jewish. Hence, probably, he became less eager to drive out existing superstitions ; and accordingly many of these became part and parcel of Mohammedanism.

Rev. A. GRAHAM-BARTON thought it was well to know that Mohammedanism, in its teachings, had not only largely taken in forms of false Judaism and Christianity, but also embodied within it a large part of genuine Judaism and Christianity. Moreover, it is well to note that, but for the existence of Judaism and Christianity, there would have been no Mohammed and no Mohammedanism. It was part of those two great faiths, with a large addition of Pagan systems which were in existence in the world at the time of its appearance. Animism, which had been brutalized into a materialistic form, had played its part in the world of religion. While he was convinced that Christianity was undoubtedly first and foremost, yet there were a great many places and times in the world's history where and when Christianity had no chance of

playing any part, and we had to recognize that Mohammedanism, with all its defects, had had to play its part, and God may have recognized its work.

Mr. MAURICE GREGORY described Dr. Zwemer as one of the greatest experts in mission work amongst the Moslems all over the world ; and therefore the lecture would serve as an introduction to questions of deep significance. We were all familiar with *The Arabian Nights*, a book full of spirits and magic. Even the "bowdlerized" edition, as we have it, gives some kind of idea of the world in which nineteen-twentieths of the Mohammedans of 1917 live.

Mr. E. WALTER MAUNDER, F.R.A.S., commented upon one sentence on p. 88. Dr. Zwemer quoted the following definition :—

"By animism we understand that stage in human development in which man believes in the parity of all existences so far as their possession of sentient life is concerned."

"One stage in human development." Was animism a stage in the way up or in the way down ? There was one great writer who had dealt with this question, St. Paul, who said that animism was on the way down. When men "knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful ; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise they became fools." If we go through the whole list of animistic beliefs, and look at them carefully, we shall see evidence of degradation. There was some vitality about animism. Quite so. Take a dead body, and before long life would be found in it. What sort of life ? Maggots and worms. So, when a religious belief was allowed to die, sooner or later corrupt things would fasten upon it.

We need not go to Egypt or countries of the East to find animism. It could be found here in London among men who had lost faith in Christianity. Only two or three days ago an advertisement was sent to the Victoria Institute of a book—an expensive book—advocating belief in a certain form of animism. And this in England in the twentieth century ! Not very long ago he gave a lecture, a little way out of London, at a literary institute connected with a large and flourishing church. When he was leaving, one of the members, a scientific man, told him that he was taking up seriously the study of the occult, which was simply degraded

animism of past centuries. Thus we find animism in a gross form growing up in a so-called Christian country in the twentieth century, called the century of light, reason, and science. He sympathized with the feeling that so many had expressed that it was a great loss that they had not had Dr. Zwemer present on the occasion.

Miss HUSSEY expressed an opinion that animism and a belief in Jinns were not later additions to Islam, but had the authority of the Koran itself, notably in the stories about King Solomon.

Lieut.-Col. ALVES, in proposing a vote of thanks to the writer of the paper, said that animism seemed to be a corrupted form of something that had a real existence and warranty from Scripture, which, however, did not teach that form of animism which was set forth in the paper. In illustration we have our Lord's words: "I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out" (Luke xix, 40); also the earthquakes and signs from heaven accompanying certain great events. But for these the word "animism," which connotes conscious existence, is scarcely right. Regarding incantations and divinations, these have been strictly forbidden to both Israelites and Christians; but Scripture has not said that they are not realities of a démoniacal kind. Indeed, the terrible judgments denounced against their practisers hint that they are far more serious than mere impostures.

The CHAIRMAN supported the vote of thanks to the writer of the paper. The discussion had, he said, shown that those present were deeply interested in the subject.

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