

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

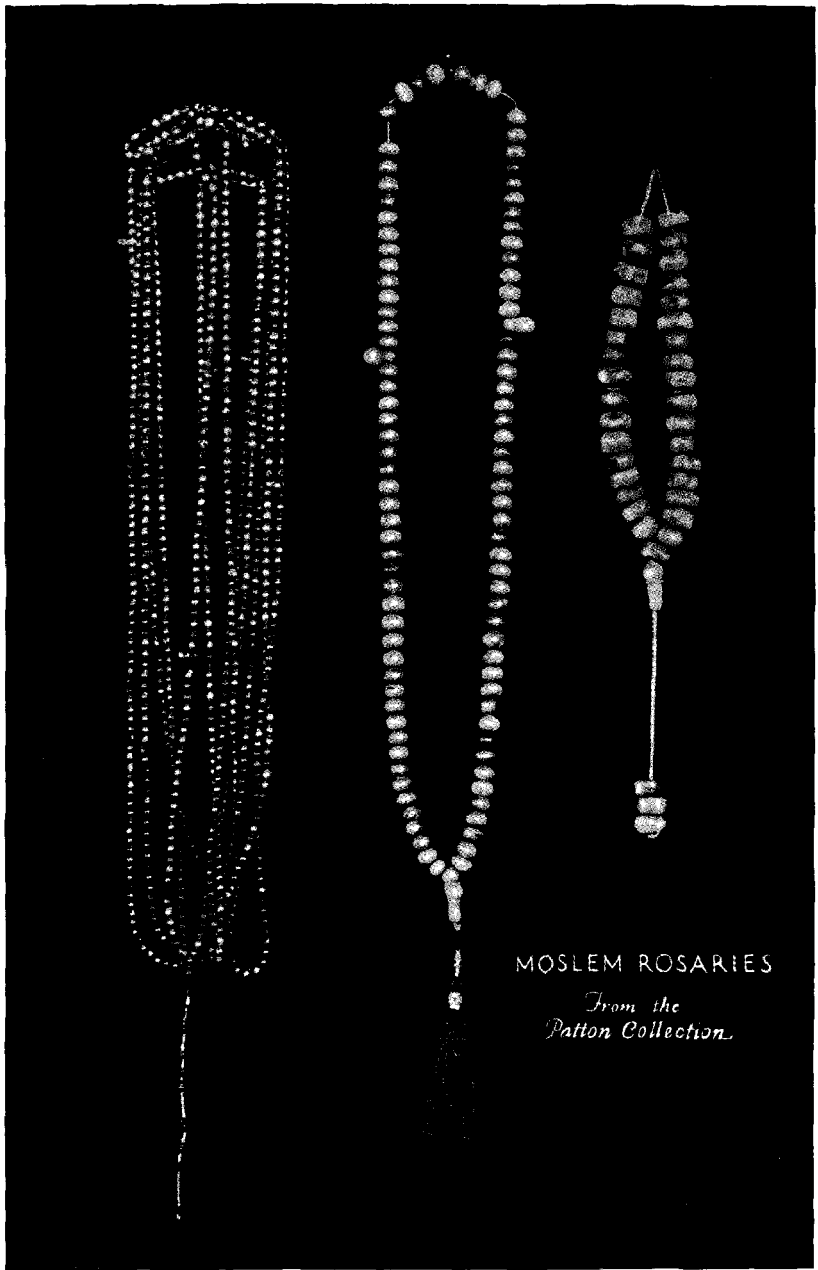
A COLLECTION OF PAPERS DEALING WITH
THE SUPERSTITIONS AND BELIEFS OF THE
COMMON PEOPLE

Many have written regarding the rising tide of modernism in Moslem lands. This volume deals with the undertow, the reactionary current, continually dragging down the cultured pioneers to the level of pagan superstition.

The student of Islam will never understand the common people unless he knows the reasons for their curious beliefs and practices. We need accurate knowledge to have sympathy and avoid showing contempt for those caught in the undertow of superstition.

Dr. Zwemer has a world-wide reputation for his knowledge of the subject, acquired by equally thorough study of books and field-work.

SAMUEL M. ZWEMER, D.D., LL.D.



MOSLEM ROSARIES

*From the
Patton Collection.*

MOSLEM ROSARIES.

Some have thirty beads, some ninety-nine, and the one to the left, called *Alfiyah*, has one thousand.

Frontispiece

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

*A Collection of Papers dealing with
the Superstitions and Beliefs of
the Common People*

BY

SAMUEL M. ZWEMER, D.D., LL.D.

*Professor of History of Religion and Christian
Missions (Emeritus), Princeton Theological
Seminary*

LONDON

THE SHELDON PRESS

NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, W.C. 2

NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1939

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	vii
I. THE ROSARY IN ISLAM	5
II. THE PALLADIUM OF ISLAM	17
III. THE SWORD OF MOHAMMED AND 'ALI.	25
IV. THE CLOCK, THE CALENDAR AND THE KORAN	40
V. THE FAMILIAR SPIRIT OR QARINA	53
VI. HAIR, FINGER-NAILS AND THE HAND	69
VII. TRANSLATIONS OF THE KORAN	80
VIII. THE "ILLITERATE" PROPHET	100
IX. THE SO-CALLED "HADITH QUDSI"	121
X. THE WORSHIP OF ADAM BY ANGELS	135

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

MOSLEM ROSARIES	<i>Frontispiece</i>
FRIDAY PRAYERS AT THE KA'ABA	<i>facing page 17</i>
NATIVE DRAWING OF THE QUADRANGULAR COURT AT MECCA	,, 24
THE SWORD OF 'ALI FROM A CHINESE AMULET	,, 26

INTRODUCTION

THERE are, it is true, many startling signs of the dawning of a new period in Islam. Reforms, social, intellectual and moral, are now the order of the day. Nationalism has supplanted the Caliphate. The Moslem Press everywhere is broadcasting new ideas and ideals. Compulsory education is advocated for communities where ninety-five per cent. of the masses are still illiterate. The hands of the clock are being moved forward violently at Angora, but are pushed back with equal vigour in other centres of the world of Islam.

Many have written regarding the rising tide of modernism in Moslem lands. This volume deals with the undertow. The sea has its ebb and flow of resistless tides; its constant currents and its sudden storms; its trade winds which are the mariner's trust, and its tempests which are his terror. The effect of all these is seen on the surface. Along the shores, especially after a rising tide or a heavy gale, there is also the undertow, the reactionary current. The tide is visible and trustworthy, the undertow invisible and treacherous.

The same has been true in the long history of Islam and its relation to Christianity. At first there seemed to be a glorious rising tide of monotheistic faith in Islam, and of a devotion to God—often sublime in its conception of Deity and of duty. This has been followed by the undertow of reactionary Arabian paganism. That was true even in the case of the Prophet Mohammed himself when he consecrated the Ka'aba-stone and then, for a moment, lapsed to pay honour to Lat and 'Uzza, of which he said: "They are two high-soaring cranes and verily their intercession may be hoped for" (Surah 53: 19). Some Koran chapters that rise, like "the verse of the Throne" (Surah 2: 256 ff.) and "the verse of

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

Light," almost to the heights of Job and Isaiah, are followed by puerile passages full of animistic superstitions such as Solomon's jinn, Alexander's bellows-blowers, or Jewesses blowing on knots (Surah 113).

We note the same undertow in the history of Moslem theology and jurisprudence, as Dr. Duncan B. Macdonald has shown in his interesting study of the subject. There have been puritanic revivals and popular reactions, periods of enlightenment and culture, when Islam held aloft the torch of civilization; these have been followed by dark centuries of ignorance and superstition. Al-Ghazali's call to repentance was forgotten for centuries while the mullahs pored over the pages of Al-Buni's encyclopædia of magic and the world of Islam became illiterate to an extent hardly credible.

Unless we take account of all this action and reaction our conclusions will be at fault. There is a rising tide, but there is also an undertow. For example, a Chicago newspaper reported some time ago that the daughter of one of the rulers among the Moros in Sulu came to the University of Illinois, received her education, left a full-fledged American girl-graduate, in dress, demeanour and ideas—only to be dragged down on her return home by the undertow, and to become the fourth wife in a prince's harem. Such cases are not exceptional; they occur even in Cairo and Calcutta.

The student of Islam will never understand the common people unless he knows the reasons for their curious beliefs and practices. We need accurate knowledge to have sympathy and avoid showing contempt for those caught in the undertow of superstition; nor must we denounce what to them may have real sacramental value. After all, superstition is a sign of extra-faith or extra-ordinary faith (*aberglaube; bijgeloof*).

The religion of the common people of today from Tangier to Teheran is still based on hundreds of weird beliefs, many of which have indeed lost their original significance, but all of which still bind and oppress mind and heart with constant

INTRODUCTION

fear of the unseen. Witchcraft, sorcery, spells and charms are the background of native Moslem psychology to an extent that is realized only by those who have penetrated most deeply into the life of the people. I have seen a student in Lahore, preparing for an examination in Psychology, take the dust from a Moslem saint's tomb as a specific for passing a high grade!

Not only does superstition prevail among the vast majority of the Moslems—with literature on magic, the universal sale of amulets, charms, talismans, magic-squares and the practice of geomancy—but in the very source-books of Islam, the Koran and the Traditions, these practices nearly always find their origin or their justification. It is rather astonishing, therefore, that in the two-volume monumental work of Edward Westermarck on *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, so few references are given to the Koran text or to the Traditions of Bukhari and Muslim. Nearly all of the superstitious practices which he catalogues so carefully and explains so interestingly can be traced to early Arabia and to the practice of Mohammed and his companions. Their doctrine of God includes the magical use of His names and attributes. The belief in revelation has degenerated into a bibliomancy and a bibliolatriy more crass than that ever found in any other book-religion. In Iran one can purchase bilingual editions of the Koran in which every page has printed at the top its "good," "bad" or "doubtful" value for telling fortunes.

In no monotheistic faith are magic and sorcery so firmly established as in Islam. This is one of the chief reasons for the spread of Islam in Central Africa and among the Malays of the Dutch Archipelago. The Koran tells of Harut and Marut, the two angels of Babylon who teach men how to bind or break the marriage vow. Moslem commentators tell how a Jew named Lobeid, with the assistance of his daughters, bewitched Mohammed by tying eleven knots in a cord which they then hid in a well. The Prophet falling ill in consequence, chapter cxiii and that following it, were revealed; and

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

the angel Gabriel acquainted him with the use he was to make of them, and told him where the cord was hidden. Then Ali fetched the cord, and the Prophet repeated over it these two chapters; at every verse a knot was loosed until, on finishing the last words, he was entirely freed from the charm.

One may still see women of the better class in Cairo eagerly awaiting the verdict of an unkempt sand-diviner from Morocco who is tracing their fortune, or misfortune, by clever geomancy at a street corner. Here again we see the results of this heavy undertow of superstition. The husbands of these women formerly hung blue beads on the necks of their donkeys to ward off the evil eye; now they hang them on the radiator-tops of their motor-cars for the same purpose. Facts are stubborn things, and Christian missionaries must face facts.

The papers which compose this slender volume all deal directly or indirectly with Popular Islam, not the Reformed Islam of the intellectual group. The Rosary, for example, borrowed from Buddhism, was at first used for devotion, but afterwards its use developed into magic. The Black Stone at Mecca has become almost a Stone of Stumbling to the Modernists, but is still the Palladium of the common people. In Woking they tell us that Islam was never propagated by the use of the sword, but the Swords of Mohammed and 'Ali are still sacred in north-west China and north-west Africa. The same is true of the other chapters which deal with superstitions regarding this life and the life to come. The Koran itself is used as a book of magic, and while the Modernists express wonder that an "illiterate" Prophet should produce such a volume, it is a greater wonder that, since Mohammed could doubtless read and write, so large a percentage of the common people are themselves illiterate in the twentieth century.

At the suggestion of friends who desire in permanent form material that was written chiefly for *The Moslem World Quarterly* during the past twenty-five years, it is here brought

INTRODUCTION

together. The chapters have been arranged, and some revised, until together they form a somewhat incongruous, and yet many-sided, monograph on the background of Popular Islam.

We thank the publishers, Messrs. F. H. Revell and Company, New York, and Messrs. Seeley, Service and Company, London, for their permission to use two chapters (originally articles in *The Moslem World*) from books that are now out of print.

SAMUEL M. ZWEMER.

LONDON, June 22, 1938.

I

THE ROSARY IN ISLAM

THE most conspicuous outward manifestation of the spiritual life of Moslems is their daily prayer-ritual. Only those can penetrate to the core of this religion and its fervent theism who are familiar with the prayer-life of devout Moslems and have studied their litanies. These are not all contained in the Koran, although its shorter chapters are used in stated prayer. It is in the literature of the mystics and in the popular prayer-manuals called *ahzāb wa awrād* that we learn what Moslems understand by "prayer without ceasing." Abu'l-Fadhī (A.D. 1595) wrote:

"O Lord, whose secrets are forever veiled,
And whose perfection knows not a beginning!
End and beginning both are lost in Thee ;
No trace of them is found in Thy eternal realm.
My words are lame, my tongue, a stony tract ;
Slow wings my foot, and wide is the expanse.
Confused are my thoughts, but this is Thy best praise.
In ecstasy alone I see Thee face to face."

To reach that ecstasy is the goal of the mystic; to multiply and facilitate the meditations that lead to it, he uses a rosary

The proper name for the rosary in Islam is *subha*. It is derived from *sabbaha*, to give praise; that is, to declare God free from every imperfection or impurity or from anything derogatory to His glory. The word was first used for the performance of supererogatory prayer and then, in post-classical literature, applied to the rosary used for this purpose.¹ The simplest and perhaps earliest form of the rosary in Islam was a string having ninety-nine shells or

¹ Lane's *Arabic Lexicon*.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

beads with a marker after each thirty-three, with which, by counting them, one performs the act termed *al-tasbīh*, i.e. the repetition of the praises of God. This generally consists in saying *subhān Allāh* thirty-three times, *al-hamdu-lillāhi* thirty-three times, and *Allāhu-akbar* thirty-three times. This is done by many persons, as a supererogatory act, after the ordinary daily prayers (Surah 30: 16).

The rosary is used by all classes of Mohammedans and in all lands today, with the exception of the Wahhabis in Arabia.¹ In fact, so general is its use that in popular tradition and in art the Prophet of Arabia is represented as possessing and using a rosary for his daily prayers. Among the relics of Mohammed two rosaries are mentioned and portrayed.

There is evidence, however, that its use was an innovation introduced centuries after Mohammed, by Sufi circles and among the lower classes. Opposition against the use of the rosary made itself heard as late as the fifteenth century A.D., when the great theologian, Suyuti, composed an apology for it.² Abu 'Abdullah Mohammed al-'Abdari, the learned author of *Al-Mudkhal*, who died 737 A.H., mentions the rosary as one of the strange new practices in Islam which should not be countenanced.³ "Among the innovations (*bid 'a*)," he says, "the rosary is to be noted. A special box is made where it is kept; a salary is fixed for some one to guard and keep it, and for those who use it for *dhikr*. . . . A special Sheikh is appointed for it, with the title of *Sheikh al-Subha*. These innovations are quite modern. It is the duty of the *imam* of the mosque to suppress such customs, as it is in his power to do so." According to Goldziher, the rosary was not generally adopted until

¹ The Wahhabi movement started in Arabia under Mohammed Abd ul-Wahhab, born in Nejd in 1691. It was an attempt to distinguish between essential Islam and its later additions. The sect abominates the use of tobacco, jewels, silk, gold and the rosary.

² Goldziher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam*, 1st ed., p. 165.

³ *Al-Mudkhal*, vol. ii. p. 83. Cf. Brockelmann's *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 83.

THE ROSARY IN ISLAM

after the third century of the Hegira. He cites the following facts to prove it:

“When the Abbasid Khalif, Al-Hādi (169-170 of the Hegira), forbade his mother Chejzuran, who tried to exercise her influence in political affairs, to take part in the affairs of state, he said: ‘It is not a woman’s business to meddle with the affairs of state; you should occupy your time with your prayers *and your subha*.’ From this it seems certain that in that century the use of the *subha* as an instrument of devotion was common only among the inferior classes and had no place among the learned. When a rosary was found in the possession of a certain pious saint, Abu-l-Qasim al-Junaid, who died in 297 of the Hegira, they attacked him for using it, although he belonged to the best society. ‘I cannot give up,’ said he, ‘a thing that serves to bring me nearer to God.’ This tradition furnishes us with rare facts, since it shows us on the one hand, that in the social sphere the use of the rosary was common even among the higher classes; and on the other hand, that the strict disciples of Mohammed looked on this foreign innovation, which was patronized by saints and pious men, with displeasure. To them it was *bid‘a*, that is, an innovation without foundation in the old Islamic *sunna*, and was consequently bound to stir a distrust among the orthodox.”

Even later on, when the use of the rosary had for long ceased to provoke discontent among orthodox Moslems, the controversialists, whose principle was to attack all “innovations,” still distrusted any exaggerations in this practice. But like a great many things that were not tolerated at the beginning under religious forms, the rosary introduced itself from private religious life to the very heart of the mosques.

A. J. Wensinck states that the rosary is mentioned as early as the year A.D. 800, and seems to agree with Goldziher that its use came from India to western Asia; yet both of these Orientalists quote traditions mentioning the earlier use of small stones, date-kernels, etc., in counting the eulogies of the Moslem prayer-ritual.¹

Goldziher quotes from the *Sunan* of al-Dārimi a tradition

¹ *Encyclopædia of Islam*.

which indicates this evolution of the rosary, unless, indeed, as many believe, the rosary was borrowed from Hindu or Buddhist pilgrims or converts.

“Al-Hākam b. al-Mubārak relates on the authority of ‘Amr b. Yahya, who had heard it from his father, and who in his turn had heard from *his* father: we were sitting before the door of ‘Abdallah b. Mas‘ud, before the morning prayer, for we were in the habit of going to the mosque in his company. One day we encountered Abu Musa al-Ash‘ari . . . and very soon Abu ‘Abd al-Rahmān came in his turn. Then Abu Musa said: ‘In former times, O ‘Abd al-Rahmān, I saw in the mosque things that I did not approve of; but now, thank God, I see nothing but good.’ ‘What do you mean by that?’ said the other. ‘If you live long enough,’ answered Abu Musa, ‘you will know. I have seen in the mosque, people who sat round in circles (*kauman hilāqan*) awaiting the moment of *salāt*. Each group was presided over by a man, and they held in their hands small stones. The president said to them: “Repeat one hundred *takbīr*!” and for one hundred times they recited the formula of the *takbīr*. Then he used to tell them: “Repeat one hundred *tahlīl*!” And they recited the formula of *tahlīl* for one hundred times. Then he told them also: “Repeat one hundred times the *tasbīh*!” And the persons who were in the group equally went through this exhortation also.’ Then Abu ‘Abd al-Rahmān asked: ‘What didst thou say when thou sawest these things?’ ‘Nothing,’ answered Abu Musa, ‘because I first wanted to find out your view and your orders.’ ‘Did you not tell them that it would have been more profitable for them to have kept account of their sins and did you not tell them that their good actions would not have been in vain?’ So we together repaired to the mosque, and we soon came across one of these groups. He stopped before them and said: ‘What do you here?’ ‘We have here,’ they answered, ‘small stones which help us to count the *takbīr*, the *tahlīl* and the *tasbīh*, which we recite.’ But he answered them in these terms: ‘Sooner count your sins, and nothing will be lost of your good works. Woe to thee, O community of Mohammed! with what haste you are going toward damnation! Here are also in great numbers, companions of your Prophet; look at these garments which are not covered with dust, these vessels that are not yet broken; verily by him who holds my soul in his hands, your religion cannot lead you better than the contemporaries of Mohammed; will you not at least shut the door of wrong?’ ‘By Allah, O Abu ‘Abd al-Rahmān,’ they cried, ‘we mean but to do right!’ and he

THE ROSARY IN ISLAM

answered them: 'There are many who pretend to do right, but who cannot get at it, it is to them that the word of the Prophet applies: "There are of those who read the Koran, but deny its teaching, and I swear it by God, I doubt whether the majority of these people are not among yourselves." ' "

Other traditions show us the Prophet protesting regarding some faithful women against their using these small stones when reciting the litanies just mentioned, and recommending the use of the fingers when counting their prayers. "Let them count their prayers on their fingers (*ya'qidna b'il anāmil*); for an account will be taken of them."

All these insinuations found in traditions invented for the purpose denote a disapprobation of the use of the rosary, at the moment of its appearance. The use of small stones in the litanies was, it seems, an original form of the *subha*, very much like the later use of the rosary. It is said of Abu Huraira that he recited the *tasbīh* in his house by the aid of small stones which he kept in a purse (*yusabbih biha*). Let us also mention the severe words of 'Abdallah, son of the Caliph 'Omar, which he addressed to a person who rattled his stones in his hands during prayer (*yuharrik al-hasa biyadihi*), "Do not do that, for that is prompted by the devil."

Were not the litanies ever counted in this way before the rosary was introduced? One cannot be sure. Anyway, it seems very probable that the traditions against this custom date from the time when the rosary was introduced into Islam. The Tibetan Buddhists, long before the Christian era, used strings of beads, generally one hundred and eight in number and made of jewels, sandal-wood, mussel-shells and the like, according to the status of their owners. Whether Islam adopted the rosary from India during the Moslem conquest is uncertain, but not improbable.

According to P. Edgar Schafer, the use of the rosary came from India, but it was through Christian channels that Islam adopted it. "When Islam crossed the borders of Arabia and entered the world of Hellenic-Christian culture with

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

its dogmatic and scholastic ideas, it met the use of the rosary and adopted it, together with many other Christian practices." (He refers to Becker's "Islam und Christentum" in *Der Islam*, January 1913.) This would mean that Islam borrowed the rosary from the Oriental Church. During the Crusades the rosary found its way to the West, to the Roman Catholic Church.

Specific dates for the original use of the rosary in India are out of the question, but, as Cornelius H. Patton remarks: "It must have been at some very remote period that the circlet of jewels was introduced as a means of promoting meditation and registering meritorious religious acts." And he goes on to say: "From India we may trace the spread of the rosary to the Buddhists of Ceylon, Burma and Siam, known as the Hinayana or the Southern School, and especially to Tibet, where in Lamaism the faith of Gautama reached its lowest level, and whence the rosary, along with other customs, spread to Mongolia, China, Korea and Japan."

Whether the use of the rosary in Islam was borrowed or arose spontaneously, there is no doubt that it soon took a strong hold on the common people, from Morocco to China, and was used not only for earnest devotion, but later on led to foolish superstitions and magical practices.

I. There are a number of traditions, rightly or wrongly attributed to Mohammed, regarding the blessing of "remembering God," i.e. His names and attributes. A man said, "O Prophet of God, really the rules of Islam are many—tell me a thing by which I may lay hold of rewards." The Prophet said, "Let your tongue be always moist in the remembrance of God." Another tradition reads: "Verily, there are ninety-nine names of God: whosoever counts them up shall enter into Paradise."¹ All these traditions are given in the standard collections in the section called *Dhikr*.

¹ Hughes' *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 709.

THE ROSARY IN ISLAM

This religious ceremony or act of devotion called *dhikr* (vulgar, *ziker*) is practised by all the various religious orders or brotherhoods in Islam. The *dhikr* is either recited aloud (*jali*) or with a low voice or mentally (*khafi*). The former is more common. The worshipper either recites the ninety-nine attributes of God or certain expressions from the Koran, such as: God is great, Praise be to God, Majesty belongs to God, etc. In every case the rosary is used to keep tally of the seemingly endless repetition. There are a number of devotional manuals, of a high spiritual order, that deal with this remembrancing of God's names. Al Ghazali entitled one of his best-known books *Al-Maqṣad-al-asna sharh asma Allah al husna*, which might be translated "the chief end of man is to understand and imitate God's attributes." I know of nothing in the devotional literature of Islam that contains loftier teaching on the character of God and the duty of godliness. Sir Edwin Arnold collected some of these comments from various other oriental sources in his poems called *Pearls of the Faith*, or *Islam's Rosary*. The threefold division of the rosary corresponds to the usual threefold division of the ninety-nine names, i.e. those referring to God's power, His wisdom, and His mercy.

In the development of the Sufi ritual among the various orders we soon find extremists. The ordinary rosary did not suffice for their multiplied ejaculations and prayers. So they invented a rosary of one thousand beads, called *alfiya*. This is widely used in Egypt and the Sudan in connexion with funerals of eminent saints. The ritual is described as follows:

"The Ceremony of the Rosary is a ceremony practised among Mohammedans on special occasions, called in the Arabic *Subhah*, and usually performed on the night succeeding a burial. The soul is then supposed to remain in the body, after which it departs to Hades, there to await its final destiny.

"At night, *fikihs*, sometimes as many as fifty, assemble, and one brings a rosary of one thousand beads, each as large as a pigeon's egg. They begin with the sixty-seventh chapter of the

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

Koran, then say three times, 'God is one,' then recite the last chapter but one and the first, and then say three times, 'O God, favour the most excellent and most happy of Thy creatures, our Lord Mohammed, and his family and companions and preserve them.' To this they add, 'All who commemorate Thee are the mindful, and those who omit commemorating Thee are the negligent.' They next repeat three thousand times, 'There is no god but God,' one holding the rosary and counting each repetition. After each thousand, they sometimes rest and take coffee, then one hundred times '(I extol) the perfection of God with His praise.' Then the same number of times 'I beg forgiveness of God, the great,' after which fifty times, 'The perfection of the Lord, the Eternal,' then 'The perfection of the Lord, the Lord of Might,' etc. Two or three then recite three or four more verses. This done, one asks his companions, 'Have ye transferred (the merit of) what ye have recited to the soul of the deceased?' They reply, 'We have,' and add, 'Peace be on the apostle.' This concludes the ceremony, which in the houses of the rich is repeated on the second and third night."¹

According to the teaching of 'Abd al-Qādir Al-Jīlānī, the founder of the Qādiri Order, some of the names of God have special colours:

"There are seven names of Allah which the brethren pronounce when performing the *Zikr*,—

"1. *Lā illāha ill' Allāh*. (There is no god but Allah.) Its light is blue, and it must be recited 100,000 times, and has its own peculiar prayer.

"2. Allah, called the *Ism-i-ʿġalīl*, or beauteous name. Its light is yellow; it must be recited 78,586 times, and has its peculiar prayer. He says that after reciting it that number of times, he himself saw its light.

"3. *Ism-i-Hū*. (The name He.) Its light is red, and its number 44,630, and it has its peculiar prayer.

"4. *Ism-i-Hayy*. (Name of the Eternal.) Its light is white, and its number 20,092.

"5. *Wāhid*. (The one God.) Its light is green, and its number 93,420.

¹ McClintock and Strong, *Encyclopædia of Religion*.

THE ROSARY IN ISLAM

“6. *‘Azīz*. (The dear or precious God.) Its light is black, and its number 74,644.

“7. *Wadūd*. (The loving God.) It has no light, and its number is 30,202.”¹

The totals of such repetition (in this case 441,574 different ejaculations) surely require a rosary of a thousand beads to keep tally. Those who are curious regarding this endless ritual may find further particulars in the standard work on the various darvish orders by Octave Depont and Xavier Coppolani.²

Nor must we hastily conclude that there is no value in this “vain repetition.” As in the case of the famous formula of M. Coué, or the auto-suggestion by the hypnotist, the psychology of the *dhikr* demands, but also often defies, explanation.

II. Connected with its devotional use in the *dhikr*, the rosary is also used in the form of prayer called *istikhāra*. This is the technical name given to the practice of divination or the securing of divine guidance in perplexity regarding any enterprise, a journey, sickness, etc. It was practised from the earliest times by the casting of lots: at first, perhaps, by use of the Koran itself (bibliomancy) and later by use of the rosary. In Mecca the choice of a baby’s name is often by *istikhāra* (Snouck Hurgronje’s *Mekka*, vol. ii. p. 139), although such practices are forbidden by orthodox Islam.

In Egypt and all the Near East the easiest way to divine God’s will is by the use of the rosary. It is related of one of the wives of Mohammed that she said: “The Prophet taught us *istikhāra*, i.e. to know what is best, just as he taught us verses from the Book, and if any of you wants anything let him perform ablution and pray two *rak‘as* and read the verse: ‘There is no other God, etc.’” To use the rosary in this way the following things must be observed: The rosary must be grasped within the palms of both hands,

¹ John P. Brown, *The Dervishes* (London, 1927), p. 106.

² *Les Confréries Musulmanes*, pp. 323, 360, 449, 524, 536, *passim*.

which are then rubbed together; then the *Fātiha* is solemnly repeated, after which the user breathes upon the rosary with his breath in order to put the magic-power of the sacred chapter into the beads. Then he seizes a particular bead and counts toward the "pointer" bead, using the words, God, Mohammed, Abu Jahl; when the count terminates with the name of God it means that his request is favourably received; if it terminates with Abu Jahl it is bad, and if with Mohammed the reply is doubtful. Others consider 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.¹ For the origin and degeneration of *istikhāra* (which began as a prayer and ended in a grovelling superstition), see the article by Goldziher in the *Encyclopædia of Islam*.

III. This brings us to a third use of the rosary, which can only be described as animistic superstition. When we remember the high idealism with which Edwin Arnold has clothed the ninety-nine names of Allah in his book on the Moslem rosary, entitled *Pearls of the Faith*, we enter a word of protest against the use of such glorious names for magic and sorcery.

In Java the rosary is used as follows, for healing the sick, or (in black magic) for inducing sickness: With the rosary in the hand, one reads any chapter from the Koran up to the fifteenth verse (this verse always contains a word of talismanic power), and while this verse is being read the rosary is counted and the result follows.

In Egypt the rosary is widely 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-of-pearl are not valuable, but a rosary made of jet (*yusr*) or *kuk* (a particular kind of wood from Mecca) is valuable. In Egypt, both among Copts and Moslems, the

¹ S. M. Zwemer, *The Influence of Animism on Islam*, pp. 32, 33.

THE ROSARY IN ISLAM

rosary is used for the cure of "retention of urine" in children. It is put on the infant's neck, or is laid on the roof in the starlight to catch the dew, then it is washed and the water given to the child to drink.

In Turkey there are rosaries made of gall-stones or other intestinal stones of sheep and cattle. These are supposed to have great medicinal value. In the Patton collection there is a specimen which was used as a sovereign remedy against gall-stones!

"In India," writes Mr. K. I. Khan of Poona, "the rosary is used to protect against the evil eye and other dangers. Sometimes it is washed in water and the water given as medicine to the sick to drink."

Edward Westermarck, in his book on *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, tells of the *baraka*, holiness or blessed virtue, that resides in sacred places, trees, persons, garments and other objects, but especially in the rosary. *Baraka* is a quality that not only exists but can be transmitted by touch, rubbing, effusion, etc. It is induced in the person, place or object by some special devotion or prayer or miracle of grace, and then abides as a sign of God's favour. Westermarck has filled three chapters with evidence of the wide prevalence of this idea of *baraka*, its manifold manifestations, and its extreme sensitiveness; i.e. it is easily lost by contact with the impure and the unholy.¹ Now it is self-evident, by the laws of *baraka*, that constant prayer brings *baraka* into the rosary of a devout Moslem.² A person may swear not only by the Koran or by a volume of sacred tradition, such as Bukhari, but by the rosary which he holds in his hand, saying: "I speak truth by these hundred witnesses." If he swears by another person's rosary he says: "By those hundred witnesses." The expression stands for the hundred beads.³ The rosary of a saint may even be used, when

¹ *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, vol. i. chapters 1-3.

² Blackman, "The Rosary in Magic and Religion," in *Folklore*, vol. xxix. (London, 1918) p. 270.

³ Westermarck, *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, vol. i. p. 494.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

grasped, to offer asylum for a culprit or to confirm a covenant. If a person has taken refuge at a shrine, his sheikh or governor may induce him to leave it by sending him his rosary as 'ahd (covenant-promise); he is then safe from persecution for some time at least. And when a boy keeps away from school for fear of punishment, the teacher will send him his rosary as a pledge of impunity.¹ So the rosary in Morocco and elsewhere came to represent the personality of its possessor, like a seal or ring. Widows wear the rosaries of their husbands;² or the rosary is buried with the dead, together with the paper called *masa'ila*, which contains the answers the corpse gives the examining angels, *Munkir* and *Nakir*.³

The use of rosaries as amulets or as the carriers of amulets is quite common. By the laws of magic, they have all the virtue (*baraka*) of the names of Allah.⁴ We may conclude this part of the subject by quoting Skeat's words: "There are, therefore, for a Moslem three alternatives, it would seem: viz., charms, for occasions where moral pressure can be brought to bear; divination, to assist in detecting dangers which in the ordinary course must come but can be avoided; and, finally, Islam (resignation), when he has to meet the inevitable, whether it be regarded as the course of Fate or the eternal purpose of God."⁵

IV. The form and material of the rosary vary. In a remarkable collection of rosaries made by Dr. Cornelius H. Patton, of the American Board, Boston, and now in our Museum, Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J., there are forty specimens of Moslem rosaries. The most common form is that having ninety-nine beads, separated into three divisions of thirty-three beads, each with a longer bead or pointer. There is, however, another variety less commonly

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. i. pp. 559, 564.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 523.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 537.

⁴ Ed. Douté, *Magie et Religion* (Algiers, 1908), *passim*.

⁵ W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic* (London, 1900), p. 580.

THE ROSARY IN ISLAM

used with two hundred and one pellets or beads to correspond to the two hundred and one names given to Mohammed the Prophet.¹ Then we have the shorter rosary of thirty-three beads, and the longer ones of five hundred or one thousand beads. The two ends of the string, made of gold thread, cotton or silk, in nearly every case are passed through two small ornamental beads, and then through a fusiform tube of the same size and material as the rosary beads, terminating in a knot or tassel, black, red, or green in colour. The material used consists of date-stones or other hard seeds, shells, jet, olive wood, Indian balsam, ivory, mother-of-pearl, horn, bone, agate, chalcedony, amber (very seldom metal) or precious stones.² The intrinsic value is not as important as the religious value; the latter depends rather on the place of origin or manufacture. Rosaries from Mecca, Medina, Kerbela, Najaf and other shrines are greatly prized. The same is true when the rosary has been used by a saint or *weli*. *Tasbīh* or "Conversation Beads" are used by the Turks, Egyptians and by some Greeks and Armenians as a means of occupying the hands while conversing or walking, like the "swagger stick" of the soldier. While not in use, they are carried in the pocket. They consist of thirty-three beads, one-third the number used in the Mohammedan rosary. These are often made of amber. A specimen in the Patton collection (No. 47) is of real amber, but rough hewn, cut out probably by the hands of Anatolian camel-drivers. "It contains only thirty-three beads. This does not mean that it is not a Moslem rosary, for you see many rosaries in the hands of Turkish Moslems containing only thirty-three beads. In order to complete the circuit of the ninety-nine names, they count it over three times."

One of the rarest specimens in the Patton collection is an

¹ For a list of these names see Zwerner's *The Moslem Christ*, pp. 157-159.

² Immanuel M. Casanowicz, *The Collection of Rosaries in the National Museum, Washington, D.C.*

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

alfiyah from Constantinople (No. 56). It is a Naqshabandi darvish *tasbih* of very small beads of olive wood, nine hundred and ninety-nine in number, divided into nine sections of one hundred each, and one of ninety-nine, by means of elongated beads. There is the usual parent-bead (or minaret), to which is attached a counter string of ten beads. The unique features are this counter and the smallness of the beads. This rosary is so delicate that it can be slipped into a vest pocket, and by means of the counter-string the user can keep tally of ten thousand petitions. Another specimen from Turkey has two small discs, setting off the first ten and the last ten beads, for the purpose of registering the completion of the rounds of the rosary, by the loose rings on the divisional beads and the terminal bead.

There is a tradition regarding the pointer, or minaret bead (also called *imam*), in the rosary. It is supposed to represent the *great* name of Allah, which is not known to ordinary mortals. Solomon knew it, and could therefore bid the *jinn* do his bidding. Some say that the hundredth bead is called the *camel*, and the story is that only the camel knows the hundredth name of God, and he refuses to tell; whence comes his look of scornful superiority!

V. For those who desire to speak of Christ, there is no easier and more effective point of contact with Moslems than their prayer-life and the rosary. A tract written many years ago, entitled "Do You Pray?" passed through seven editions. Two other tracts for Moslems, that attract and do not repel, deal with the ninety-nine names of God and ninety-nine titles of Jesus Christ.¹ Although worship in Islam is often mechanical and formal, the first step is to lead them to see the higher realm of prayer as communion with God. A special study of the language of prayer and the prayer-life of the common people is now being made by a group of missionaries in Cairo.

¹ Raymond Lull wrote a book on the subject for Moslems entitled *Liber de centum nominibus Dei*.

THE ROSARY IN ISLAM

Miss C. E. Padwick writes: "Several excellent books on Christian prayer have been published in Arabic, to the great benefit of the Christian Church in Arabic lands. May such books continue and multiply! But when put into the hands of Moslems (unless those educated in Christian schools) these books have proved to be nearly unintelligible. Not only are the fundamental thoughts of Moslem readers about God and about prayer very different from those of the Christian writers, but through the centuries the Church has developed her own Arabic Christian vocabulary, and even when she uses the same word as the Moslem, she may read into it a Christian meaning of which he knows nothing. The first and most obvious example of this is the very word '*salāt*,' which for the Moslem means the prescribed prayers of the five hours, and for the Christian is full of many rich and delicate meanings.

"As evangelists and as producers of literature, we clearly need to come closer to the thoughts of our Moslem brothers on this subject of prayer. We are planning to study together the actual words and phrases used today by Arabic-speaking Moslems in prayer and about prayer, with the occasions and ways in which they are used, and the fullest information we can come by of their meaning to those who use them."

Such an investigation will lead to sympathetic approach, and has promise of fruitful results. I once met a Moslem, belonging to one of the Sufi orders, who lived in poverty. As I entered his room he was earnestly counting his ninety-nine rosary-beads, each one representing one of the beautiful names of Allah. When we spoke together of these attributes and their significance to the seeker after God, and how Al-Ghazali and other mystics taught that we were to meditate on God's character in order to imitate His mercy, compassion and kindness, he turned to me and said: "After all, one does not need a rosary to count the ninety-nine names; they are graven on our hands." Then he spread

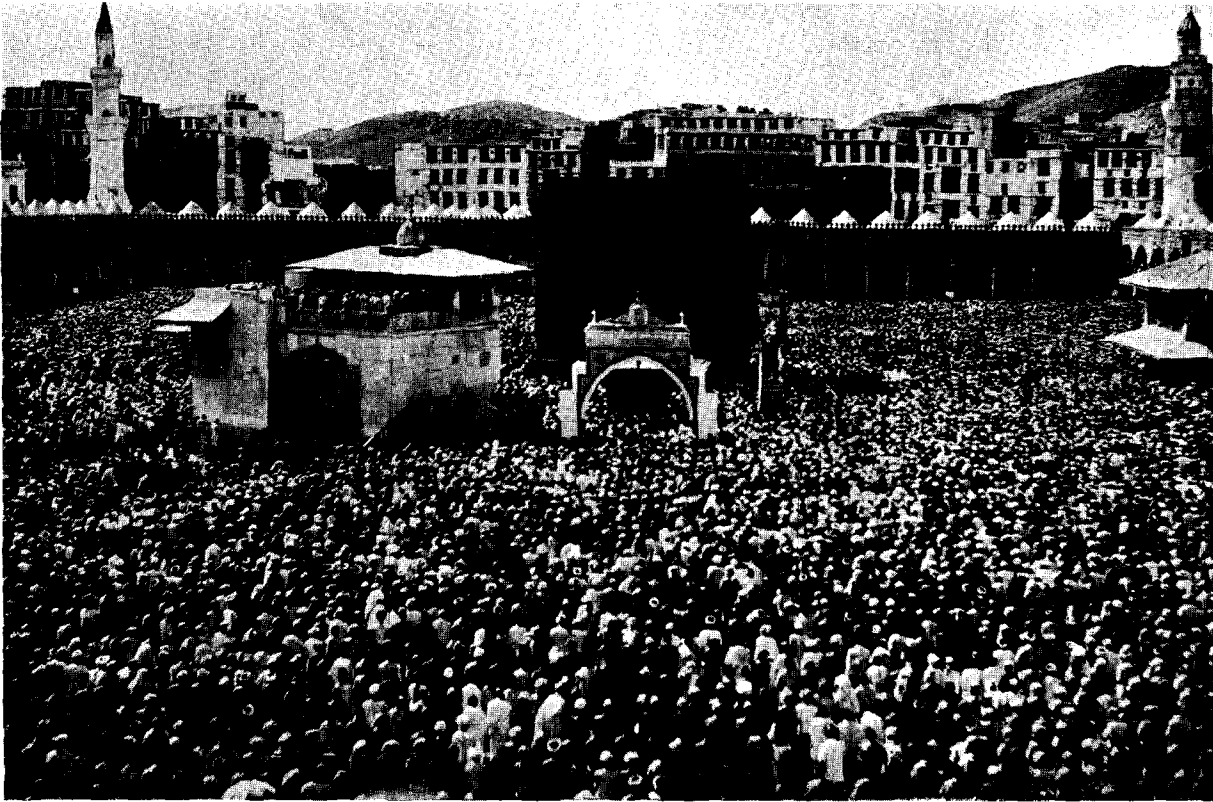
STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

his palms and pointed to the Arabic numerals IV (eighty-one) and VI (eighteen)—the deep marks in every left and every right hand—the two making a total of ninety-nine. “And,” said he, “that is why we spread our hands open in supplication, reminding Allah of all His merciful attributes, as we plead His grace.”

Then I told him of the scars of Jesus, and how He bore our sins on the tree. “I will not forget thee . . . behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.”

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. x. pp. 852-853.
Encyclopædia of Islam, Article on “Subha.”
Hughes' Dictionary of Islam.
Zöckler in Herzog-Hauck, *Realencyclopädie*, 3rd ed., vol. 17, pp. 144-150.
Cornelius H. Patton, *The Rosary* (New York, 1927).
Immanuel M. Casanowicz, *Catalogue of Exhibit of Rosaries in the National Museum at Washington, D.C.*
Goldziher, “Le Rosaire dans l’Islam” in *Revue de l’Histoire des Religions*, vol. xxi. pp. 295 sqq.
Goldziher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam*, p. 165.
Depont and Coppolani, *Les Confréries Religieuses Musulmanes* (Algiers, 1897).
Th. Esser, “Zur Geschichte d. Rozenkranzes ersten Spuren und Betrachtungen,” *Die Katholik*, 1897, pp. 346-360, 409-422, 515-528.
H. Thurston, “History of the Rosary in All Countries,” *Journal of Soc. of Arts*, vol. 50, pp. 261-276.
Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, “Everyman’s Library” ed., pp. 81, 443, 531.
P. Edgar Schafer, “The Rosary in Islam,” *Moslem World*, vol. iii. pp. 246-249.
L. Petit, *Les Confréries Musulmanes* (Paris, 1899).
Zwemer, *The Influence of Animism on Islam* (New York, 1926) pp. 27-35.
Al-Abdari, *Al-Mudkhal*, vol. ii. pp. 83 sqq.
Sunan al-Dārīmi (Cawnpore), ed. 1293, p. 38.
Al-Tirmidhi (Bulaq), ed. 1292, vol. ii. pp. 248, 262, 275, 278.



FRIDAY PRAYERS AT THE KA'ABA, FACING THE PALLADIUM.
Taken from Bab-ul-Nabi.

Facing p. 17

II

THE PALLADIUM OF ISLAM

It is the irony of history that the fragment of a flying meteor landing in the deserts of West Arabia should become the holy relic of a religion which has for its creed the unity of God, and has been iconoclastic throughout its long history.

The palladium of the world of Islam is the Ka'aba, in the centre of the Mosque court at Mecca. To this sacred shrine pilgrims have journeyed for thirteen hundred years. Toward this shrine every Moslem, praying, directs his gaze. Toward the meridian of the Ka'aba all faces of the dead are turned when they are laid to rest in the grave. But the Ka'aba contains no object of worship, save the famous Black Stone, embedded in the walls, about five feet above the ground, and now worn smooth by the touch and the kisses of thousands of pilgrims.

Before the Hegira, Mohammed made Jerusalem the direction of prayer, but when he was established at Medina, his change of attitude toward Arabian paganism was shown first by the *qibla* edict (Surah 2: 136-145). In this way the old heathen cult became a part of Islam and henceforth the eyes of all the faithful were turned toward Mecca.

The Black Stone is at the eastern corner of the Ka'aba, and the pilgrims in the days of Arabian paganism, when they made their circuit, began at this point as they do today. The entrance to the Ka'aba is not in the middle wall, but close to the Black Stone. Between the Black Stone and the door of the Ka'aba is the so-called *Multazam*, or sacred place of refuge where pilgrims press themselves against the wall, cling to the curtain and take their oaths and vows.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

The Black Stone is often called *the* corner-stone (*al rukn*) as though there were no other corner to the Ka'aba.

The pre-Islamic sacredness of the Ka'aba did not consist in the idols found there. The Black Stone was the actual sanctuary. The Ka'aba was only an extension of this stone and partook of its sanctity. It was therefore not a temple for idols, but itself an idol, an exaggerated holy stone.¹

All the accumulation of superstition of Arab paganism which had gathered in and around the Ka'aba was destroyed by Mohammed the Prophet, when he completed the conquest of Mecca, established his cult and made it include the pilgrimage to the old Arabian sanctuary. The interior of the Ka'aba was cleansed and its pantheon of idols destroyed, *with the exception of the Black Stone*. Not only were there images but pictures in the heathen shrine. When they began to wash off the pictures of the Prophets with *zem-zem* water, Mohammed is said to have placed his hands on the pictures of Jesus and Mary, saying, "Wash out all except what is below my hands."² If this tradition is reliable, it throws considerable light on the attitude of Mohammed toward Christianity at this time. Cleansed of its idols, reinstated as "The Navel of the Earth," the centre of God's favour and grace to humanity, pilgrimage to Mecca and the Ka'aba became the fifth pillar in the Moslem temple of truth.

The importance of the Black Stone is evident from Moslem tradition. The table-talk of the Companions of the Prophet tells what place it occupied in early Islam. Mohammed and 'Omar wept before the Black Stone, therefore pilgrims are to embrace and kiss it ; forgiveness of sins is guaranteed to all who even touch it ; during the circum-

¹ Wellhausen, *Reste Arabischen Heidentums*, pp. 74-78 ; while Hubert Grimme states that the Black Stone was a crude image of the head of Hobal, which was built into the eastern corner of the Ka'aba wall. He gives as his authority the geographer *Maqdisi (Mohammad)*, p. 45 ; München, Germany, 1904).

² Wensinck in *Encyclopædia of Islam*, Article on "The Ka'aba," p. 587.

THE PALLADIUM OF ISLAM

ambulation of the Ka'aba, pilgrims are to point to it with a staff if they cannot touch it with their lips. It is specially laid down in orthodox tradition that Mohammed did not embrace or kiss any other corner of the Ka'aba. The Black Stone descended from paradise pure white and will bear witness on the day of Resurrection to those who kissed it. Mohammed offered his prayers regularly between the Black Stone and the Yemen corner of the Ka'aba.¹ (The references are given in detail by Wensinck, and are to all the standard collections.) Later tradition added still greater honour to this symbol.

According to Azraki, as quoted by de Goeje, the Black Stone is "the right hand of God upon earth, stretched out to his worshippers, even as a man gives his hand to his brother." He who could not render homage to the apostle of God during his life has only to pass his hand over this Stone and he will thus render homage to God and His apostle. On the day of Resurrection the Black Stone will have two eyes to see, and a tongue to speak and give testimony on behalf of those who have kissed it in the sincerity of their hearts.²

According to Moslem writers the Ka'aba was first constructed in heaven, where a model of it still remains, called Beit-al-Ma'mur. Adam erected the earthly Ka'aba, selecting the stones from five sacred mountains, and ten thousand angels were appointed to guard the structure. But, as we shall see and as Burckhardt remarks, they appear to have been most remiss in their duty. After the deluge Abraham reconstructed it, assisted by his son Ishmael. He looked for a suitable corner-stone and the Angel Gabriel directed him to Jebel Qubais, where he found the Black Stone (*Mishkat*, book xi. chap. iv). The earliest reference to this palladium in literature is, perhaps, the statement of Maximus

¹ Wensinck, *A Handbook of Early Mohammedan Tradition*, pp. 220-221.

² De Goeje, *Mémoire sur les Carmathes du Bahrain et les Fatimides* (Leyden, 1886), p. 102.

Tyrius, who wrote in the second century: "The Arabians pay homage to I know not what god, which they represent by a quadrangular stone."

Tradition says that the Black Stone was originally white, and there are many fables giving the reason for its present colour. The true explanation is found in Azraki (de Goeje, p. 101): "la couleur noire est une suite des nombreux incendies du temple, particulièrement de celui qui eut lieu du temps d'Abdallah ibn Zobair en 64 A.H., et qui eut encore pour le monument sacré d'autres effets funestes." This reference to the burning of the Ka'aba brings us to the chequered history of the Black Stone in the annals of Islam.

Abu Tahir, the head of the fanatic Carmathian sect, built his own shrine at Lahsa in eastern Arabia, in 316 A.H., and set out to pillage Mecca in January 317 (A.D. 930). His army of fanatics entered the city at the time of the pilgrimage, butchered many of the inhabitants, mocked their solemn worship, defiled the Ka'aba, and, after a reign of terror, carried away the spoil, including the Black Stone. He celebrated his victory in a famous poem mocking the very Lord of the Ka'aba.¹

The Black Stone was kept by the Carmathians for a period of nearly twenty-two years and was then restored on payment of a large ransom (de Goeje, p. 146). Some say that the Stone was again broken at this time and was restored to its place piecemeal, being held together by a silver band, but this tradition is contradicted by Azraki, who gives details showing how the Ka'aba took fire in the days of Abdallah Zobair and the Black Stone was broken into three fragments which Ibn Zobair joined with a silver band.

In 413 A.H. the mad Sultan of Egypt, El Hâkim, sent an emissary to Mecca with instructions to destroy the Stone. His object is supposed to have been the diversion of the

¹ The Arabic text is given by Ibrahim Rafa'at Pasha in his *Mira'at al Haramain* (Cairo, 1925). This is the best recent description of Mecca and beautifully illustrated.

THE PALLADIUM OF ISLAM

Pilgrimage to Cairo. The emissary, armed with a bar of iron, entered the Haram in the guise of a darvish. Striking the stone with his iron bar, he cried, "How long will you worship this stone? Till when will you continue to worship this stone and Muhammad?" He managed to chip three small pieces from the Stone before he was seized by the outraged *hájjis*, and torn to pieces.¹

"The Stone today," says Rutter, "exhibits a broken-up appearance. In several places the heads of silver nails are visible on its surface, and it is completely surrounded by a ring of brown cement which holds it rigidly in the silver mounting. The latter is extremely massive, and is oval in outline. Its vertical diameter is nearly two feet, and its horizontal diameter two and a half feet. The outward face of the Stone is worn down to such an extent, or is set so deeply in the metal mountings, that when he kisses it the pilgrim's face is completely hidden in the orifice."² Ibrahim Rafa'at Pasha confirms what we have stated above, adding the interesting fact that the Caliph Harun Rashid renewed the silver band which holds together the fragments of the Black Stone in 189 A.H. This would prove that the Stone was already broken long before the Carmathians took Mecca.

The famous tradition related of 'Omar, the second Caliph, in regard to the Black Stone is as follows: "Verily I saw 'Omar (may God be gracious to him) when he kissed the Black Stone, saying: 'Truly I know that thou art only a stone, unable to profit or hurt anyone, and if I had not seen the apostle of God (upon him be prayers and peace) kiss thee, I would not have kissed thee myself.'" 'Omar's hesitation must have found response in the hearts of many stern unitarians all down the centuries. Is it not taught in Moslem theology, that *shirk-ul-'ibadat* is one of the forms of polytheism? The association of anything or anyone with

¹ Rutter, *The Holy Cities of Arabia*, p. 222.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 221-222. The pictures given as frontispiece are from Burckhardt and from Ibrahim Rafa'at Pasha.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

Allah is unpardonable, and this association (*shirk*) includes, according to the Wahhabi teaching, "the perambulation of the shrines of the saints, bowing down, standing with arms folded, praying at a shrine, kissing any part of a shrine, or rubbing the mouth against any part of a shrine. All this is associating some irrelevant thing or person in worship due to God alone." Yet, in spite of this doctrine, the Black Stone retained and retains its place of honour. Who injures it touches the apple of the eye of Islam, even under Wahhabi rule.

A Hejaz newspaper dated July 11th, 1932, gives an account of one 'Abd es-Sattar ibn 'Abd el-Ghaffar el-Afghani, arrested because he had broken and stolen a fragment of the Black Stone in the sanctuary at Mecca. He also took a piece of the cover of the Ka'aba and two fragments of silver from the stairway leading to the well of Zemzem. Prosecuted by an assembly presided over by the chief judge (*ra'is al-qudāt*), he was questioned by two Afghani interpreters, confessed his guilt, and was condemned to death. The sentence was carried out on the 8th of July. Later news from Mecca is that the stolen fragment of the Black Stone was returned with great solemnity to its place on the 31st of August. Ibn Saud, representing the dignitaries of Mecca, offered a prayer at the *Maqam Ibrahim*. He then entered the sanctuary and replaced the fragment of the Black Stone with perfumed cement and amber. All the chief officials of Mecca were present, and a special prayer was offered in the Ka'aba itself at the close of the solemn ceremony.¹

This incident is typical of the fact that the attitude of Islam toward its palladium has not changed. There is no god but Allah, yet the centre for his worship and favour is the Ka'aba with its Black Stone.

We have had discussion whether Islam may be called a Christian heresy. Some have raised the question whether

¹ "*Oriente Moderno*," *Rivista Mensile* (Roma, Sept. 1932), pp. 457-458.

THE PALLADIUM OF ISLAM

it is not more truly a Jewish heresy. Again it seems to be an open question, whether in a true sense Islam may not be classed with pagan cults, as long as its central shrine is the Black Stone at Mecca.

“There have been few incidents more disastrous in their consequences to the human race,” says Major Osborne, “than this decree of Muhammad, changing the *qibla* from Jerusalem to Mecca. Had he remained true to this earlier and better faith, the Arabs would have entered the religious community of the nations as peacemakers, not as enemies and destroyers. . . . By the change of the *qibla*, Islam was placed in direct antagonism to Judaism and Christianity. It became a rival faith, possessing an independent centre of existence. . . . The keystone of that creed is a black pebble in a heathen temple. All the ordinances of his faith, all the history of it, are so grouped round and connected with this stone, that were the odour of sanctity dispelled which surrounds it, the whole religion would inevitably perish. The farther and the faster men progress elsewhere, the more hopeless becomes the position of the Moslem. He can only hate the knowledge which would gently lead him to the light. Chained to a black stone in a barren wilderness, the heart and reason of the Mohammedan world would seem to have taken the similitude of the objects they reverence; and the refreshing dews and genial sunshines which fertilize all else, seek in vain for anything to quicken there.”¹

Dr. C. Snouck Hurgronje closes his monograph *Het Mekkaansche Feest*² with these words: “Should it ever happen (although it is very doubtful) that Sprenger’s hope will be fulfilled and the Moslem community give rise to a Tübingen school of criticism, then surely the feast at Mecca will first of all be cancelled as of the list of things which do not belong to the essence of Islam.”

The change of the *qibla* as recorded in Moslem tradition

¹ *Islam under the Arabs*, p. 58.

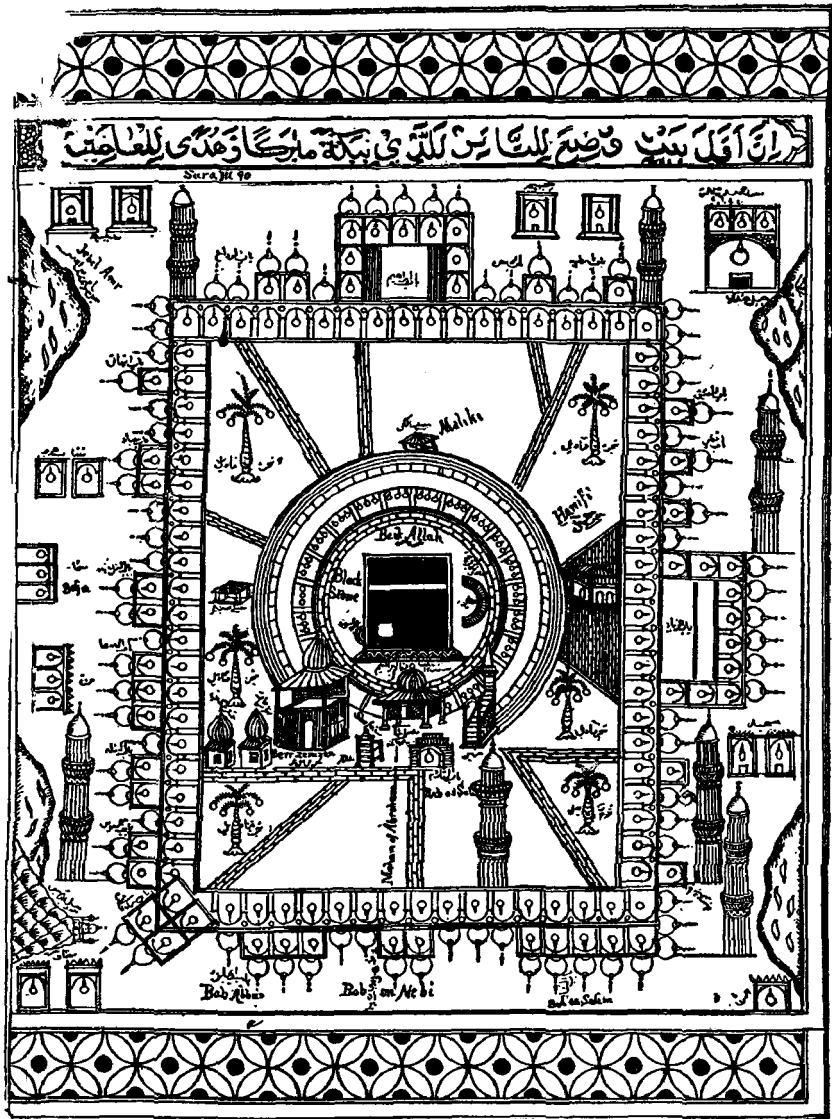
² *Verspreide Geschriften* (Leipzig), vol. i. p. 124.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

is one of the major tragedies in the life of the Prophet. It took place about sixteen months after the Hegira. Disappointed at the slight success of his preaching among the Jews at Yathrib, Mohammed turned more and more to the old Arabian tradition, and the Ka'aba at Mecca was brought into prominence. The Koran text (2 : 136) says: "the fools among the people will say, what has induced them to abandon their former *qibla*?" Then follows the passage establishing the new *qibla*. According to one tradition, the revelation quoted was communicated during Mohammed's morning prayer in the Mosque at Quba, near Medina. The whole matter of the change in the direction of prayer and the introduction of the old pagan Hajj as one of the pillars of Islam, is however an obscure chapter in Moslem history. Tabari states that scornful remarks made by the Jews regarding Mohammed's dependence on their religion was one of the causes of his revolt. Wensinck says: "here we have a glimmering of the real truth of the matter, namely the connection with Mohammed's new politico-religious attitude."¹

So we ask our Moslem friends to remember the story of the little Mosque near Medina, still in use today, with its two *qiblas*, one toward Jerusalem, the other toward Mecca, and we invite them to return to the old *qibla* and face the facts of history that found their centre in Jerusalem—the supernatural manifestation of the one true God in revelation, incarnation, atonement, and resurrection. When the Samaritan woman raised the question, *Where* ought men to worship? Christ's answer was: "Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

¹ *Encyclopædia of Islam*, Article on "Kibla."



NATIVE DRAWING OF THE QUADRANGULAR COURT AT MECCA.

Showing the various sacred places. Below the Ka'aba is the famous "Station of Abraham," and below that is the well Zemzem. Around the enclosure are the twenty gates.

III

THE SWORD OF MOHAMMED AND 'ALI

"Islam alone of all the great religions of the human race was born sword in hand. Islam has always relied on the sword, and for thirteen hundred years the mullah who reads the Friday prayers in the mosque wears a sword, even if only made of wood, as a symbol of his creed."

Sir Valentine Chirol in *Foreign Affairs*, vol. i. No. 3.

In the concluding chapter of Sir William Muir's *Life of Mahomet* he speaks of "the sword as the inevitable penalty for the denial of Islam" and continues: "The sword of Mahomet and the Coran are the most fatal enemies of civilization, liberty, and truth, which the world has yet known."¹ That is a very strong and a very sweeping statement. What did he mean by the sword of Mohammed? Where did Mohammed get it, and how did he use it? It was Thomas Carlyle who first asked that question: "Much has been said of Mahomet's propagating his Religion by the Sword. It is no doubt far nobler what we have to boast of the Christian Religion, that it propagated itself peaceably in the way of preaching and conviction. . . . The sword indeed. But where will you get your sword! Every new opinion, at its starting, is precisely in a *minority of one*. . . . You must first get your sword."²

However Mohammed may have got his sword, Islam has certainly made much of it and woven legends around the battlefield of Badr, where, as far as we know, the Prophet first used it to shed the blood of unbelievers in his mission.

It is a long and interesting story, and less known than other details of his life; also one which has left a permanent

¹ Vol. iv. p. 322.

² *Heroes and Hero Worship*, p. 56. Carlyle modified his ideal portrait of the Arabian Prophet in his lecture on the "Hero as Poet," pp. 103-104.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

influence on his followers. When Khalid won his victory over the recalcitrant tribe of Bni Jazma, who dwelt a day's march south of Mecca, and butchered most of his prisoners, he got for himself the title "The Sword of God" from the lips of Mohammed, although he did not altogether approve of the act.¹ Among the ancient Arabs the sword was always a type of personality. Thus Zaid ibn 'Ali boasts:

"The wielded sword-blade knows my hand,
The spear obeys my lusty arm;"

while 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, the greatest hero of Islam, has some famous verses attributed to him, which are everywhere in Arabia quoted to indicate his renowned prowess in battle:

"Our flowers are the sword and dagger,
Narcissus and myrtle are nought;
Our drink is the blood of our foemen,
Our goblet his skull when we've fought."²

To those who have lived with the Bedouin of the desert and know their daily life, it is not surprising to hear them quote the proverb, "The history of the sword is the history of humanity," and again, "If there were no sword there would be no law of Mohammed." The latest traveller in Yemen, Ameen Rihani, writes: "I am not exaggerating when I say that a permanent state of war, with short intervals of peace, is the prevailing condition in Al-Yaman. It was an open field always for one *Saif-ul-Islam* (Sword of Islam) or other during Turkish régime."³ Arabic dictionaries boast that the language has a thousand words for sword, and Arabian dynasties from the first century of Islam to the present day have risen and fallen only by the sword.

¹ Muir's *Life of Mahomet*, vol. iv. pp. 135, 193.

² *As-Saif wa'l kharjar rihāmuna,*
'Uffun ala'l narjis wa'l ās
Sharābuna dam a'adāuna,
Wa jumjumat ras al kas.

³ *Arabian Peak and Desert*, p. 109.

仙劍說明書

有逆徒蘇橫揚者率軍七十
 欲襲我底那穆聖奉真主明
 命以三千士卒做正當之

防衛酣戰之
 間大賢爾里
 之寶劍忽斷

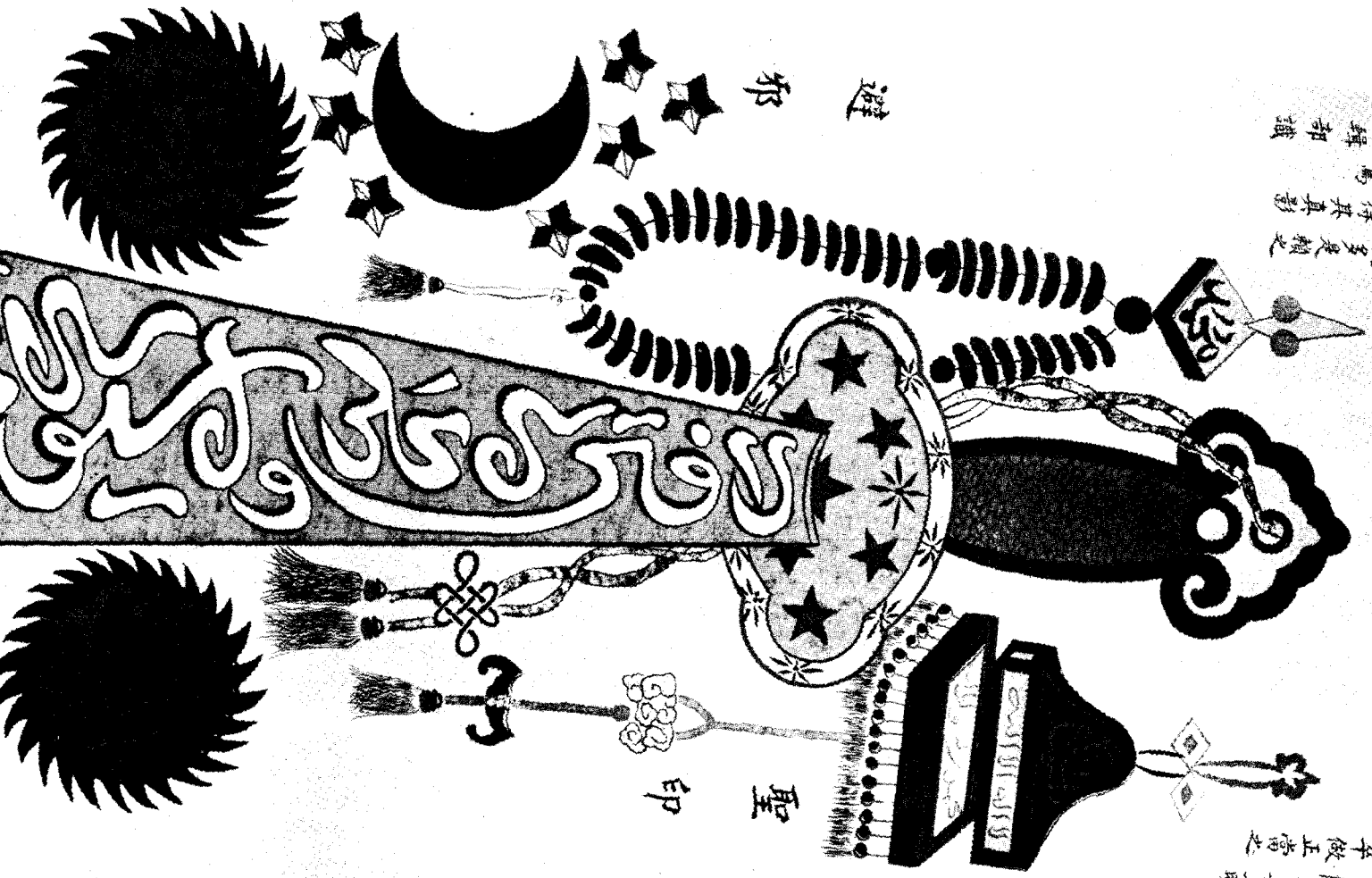
真美乃命天
 使作下來依
 擲取仙劍碎

立非鳴動於
 天堂或以錦
 匣降與至聖

轉付爾里大
 賢乃藉是劍
 卒抹逆首蓋

大敗之厥後
 伐叛逆滅強

幾隕除正道之障礙多是賴之
 今本社由盜刺始得其真影
 約工精印以廣播焉
 本社編輯部識



避邪

聖印

THE SWORD OF 'ALI, FROM A CHINESE AMULET.
 The large characters are in Arabic, and read : "There is no hero like 'Ali, and no sword like the Dhu-l-Faqār."

北平牛街清真書報社出版
 社印部精製

仙劍說明書

有遠從歐陽將軍言
欲兼泰威那得聖表否真則

命以三千士卒飲上常壯

防堵船戰之

間大賢爾聖

之實則也斯

真善乃命天

凌階下果依

漸取仙何干

立非變動於

天靈或以歸

匪降與聖靈

轉付爾聖大

賢乃精是引

斗象並青直

大城之與從

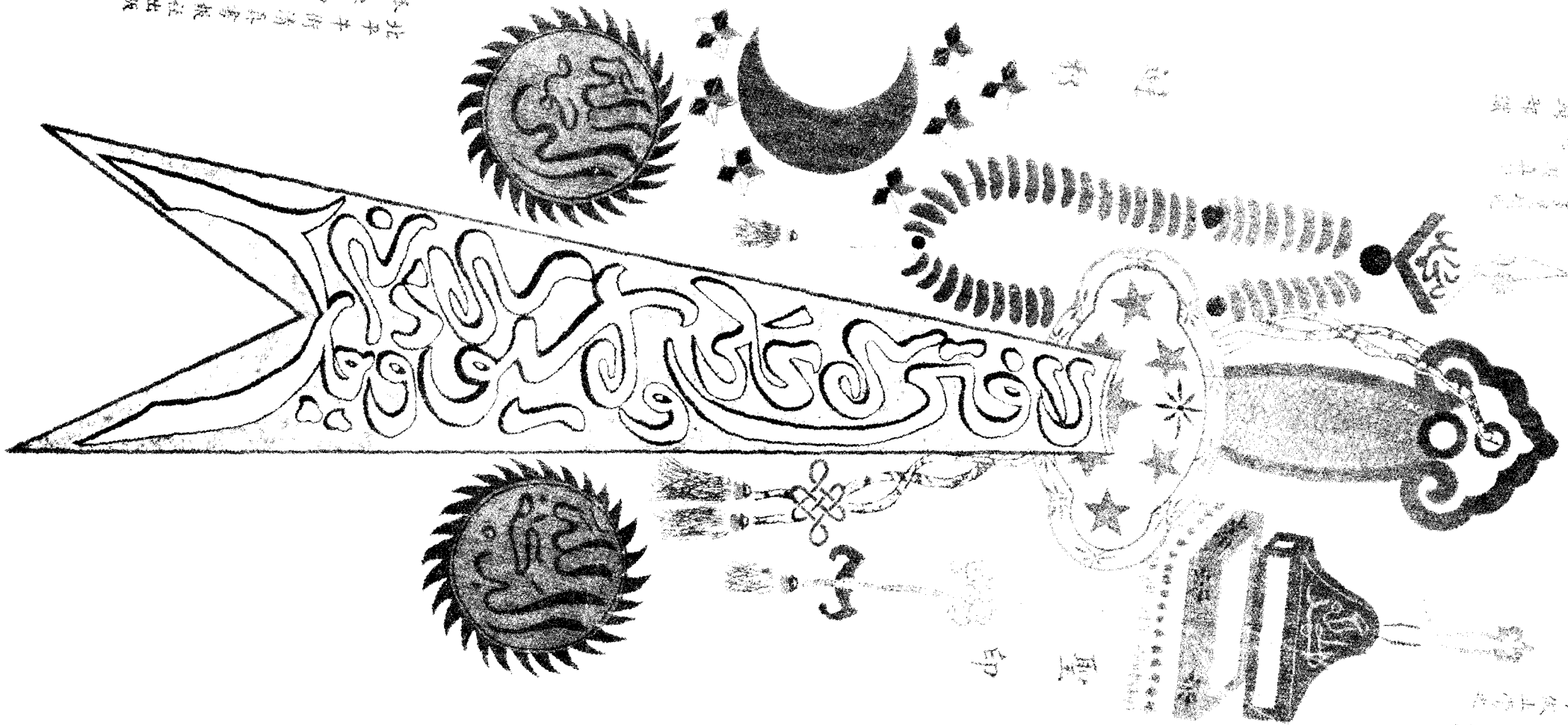
我城逐戰機

於受亦正一釋使者其也

至天江的靈則何其真也

對工待以以也得也

本社編製 智識



聖印

THE SWORD OF ALL FROM A CHINESE SACRED.
The sword is made in the Ancient and read as "There is no hero like" and the sword has the "Duch" and

北平平街清春書報社出版
發行所 印刷 作製

THE SWORD OF MOHAMMED AND 'ALI

It is at the battle of Badr that we first meet Mohammed with a sword. According to the Arab chronicles this was one of the decisive battles of history. What part the Prophet himself took is not clear. Some traditions represent him as moving along the ranks with a drawn sword, but this is not likely.¹ He probably contented himself with inciting his followers by the promise of divine assistance and the prospect of paradise; for he had no sword, as far as we know, until he received one which became famous as part of the booty at the end of the battle of Badr. Without going into detail, we quote an account of the distribution of that booty from Muir (p. 113):

“In accordance with these commands, the booty was gathered together on the field, and placed under a special officer. The next day it was divided, near Safra, in equal allotments, among the whole army, after the royal fifth had been set apart. All shared alike, excepting that the horsemen received each two extra portions for their horses. To the lot of every man fell a camel, with its gear; or two unaccoutred camels; or a leathern couch, or some such equivalent. Mahomet obtained the famous camel of Abu Jahl, and a sword known by the name of Dzul Ficar. The sword was selected by him beyond his share, according to a custom which allowed him, in virtue of the prophetic dignity, to choose from the booty, before division, whatever thing pleased him most.” (Cf. Saḥīḥ of Muslim, ed. Constantinople, 1329, Part IV, p. 146.)

This famous sword is, in some traditions, said to have been given to Mohammed by the archangel Gabriel, and bequeathed by him to his son-in-law 'Ali, who cleft with it the skull of Marhab, the giant Jew warrior of Khaibar fort.² Its peculiar shape seems to be traditional, and pictures of the sword are found in every part of the Moslem world from Morocco to China. It appears upon the arms of the Zaidite princes of Yemen, and there is a representation of it on a Turkish standard, some twenty

¹ Margoliouth's *Mohammed*, pp. 259, 269.

² Richard Burton, *The Book of the Sword* (London, 1884), p. 141.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

feet long, taken by Don Juan of Austria from the Turks at Lepanto.¹

Our frontispiece is a reproduction of a Chinese picture of this sword of Mohammed, printed in Peking.² Toward the left there is an account in Chinese, which may be summarized as follows:

“There was a rebellious person named Abu Sufyan who led an army of seven thousand men. He desired the imperial robe of Medina which was received by Mohammed from Allah. In accordance with the will of Allah three thousand infantry stood true and protected Mohammed in a bloody fight. The most worthy ‘Ali was sent to lead the believers, but his valuable sword suddenly broke, but Allah in a decree sent the angel Gabriel to fetch a magical two-edged sword, *Dhu’l-Faqār*, from heaven, which was abundantly ornate. This he handed down to the Prophet, who in turn gave it to ‘Ali, the most worthy. Thus with this sword he was able to aid the infantry to destroy the enemy, and moreover, to defeat them completely. Hereafter he was able to cut down and exterminate any violent revolt, and to open the road for truth through all hidden and uncertain country.”

The two Chinese characters on the side of the sword read: “to avoid uncanny influences,” which would seem to indicate the use of this picture of the sword as an amulet. On the blade of peculiar shape are the familiar words “*La fata mithl ‘Ali, wa la saif mithl Dhu’l-Faqār*,” that is, “There is no hero like ‘Ali, and there is no sword like the *Dhu’l-Faqār*.” To the left of the sword in the picture is the Prophet’s rosary, and to the right his seal of office. The two solar discs contain the Arabic mottoes: “To God belongs mercy,” and “To God belongs blessing.” The crescent and the seven stars are symbolic. The brief words in Chinese are the name of the printer.

In Persian art there is no more familiar figure than ‘Ali

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

² The translation of the Chinese is by Rev. Claude L. Pickens. It indicates that the Chinese-Moslems probably use it as an amulet. Islamic Magic gives this sword a place, as does Jewish Magic the sword of Moses (R. C. Thompson, *Semitic Magic*, p. xviii). I have seen pictures of it on walls of houses and mosques in Egypt, Persia and India.

THE SWORD OF MOHAMMED AND 'ALI

with the famous sword, *Dhu'l-Faqār*. A reproduction of it, taken from a Persian mirror-case, is given in the *Encyclopædia of Islam* (vol. i. p. 961). From the accompanying article by E. Mittwoch we learn that, according to tradition, the sword previously belonged to an infidel named Munabbih b. al-Hajjaj. The name of the sword is connected with the expression *Saif Mufaqqar*, "sword with the notch." It is mentioned in several *hadiths*, which have been collected, for example by Ibn Saad, ii. 2 (near the end of that section) among the *Shama'il* in the section *fi Suyuf al-Nabi*. According to one of these traditions the sword bore an inscription referring to the blood-money, which ended with the words "*la yuqtal muslim bikāfir*" ("No Muslim shall be slain for an unbeliever").

According to tradition and Moslem art, the sword was not only two-edged, but had a forked or swallow-tailed blade. This particular form of sword, according to Burton, may have been derived from the Greeks and the Latins, or from the double-pointed chisels still common in Egypt today. I have seen examples of such forked daggers in Yemen; and there are instances of them on the monuments of Assyria. Illustrations may also be found of similar forms in Indian daggers.¹ This would seem to give the true derivation of the word *Dhu'l-Faqār*, which Burton rendered "the Lord of Cleaving," though it might perhaps be rendered "the Cloven Blade." Lane in his *Lexicon* says (p. 2426), "It was thus named because there were in it small, beautiful hollows, meaning small scallops in the edge, such as some modern swords have, for the more easy cleaving of coats-of-mail." But the same root-word is used for the vertebrae of the back, and it would seem that the sword received this name not only from its shape, but from its power of execution. A man whose back is broken is called *mafqūr*.

¹ Richard Burton, *The Book of the Sword*, p. 41. Cf. Schwarzlose, *Die Waffen der Alte Arabieren*.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

According to many traditions, this sword became one of Mohammed's most precious possessions, and is mentioned among the things which he bequeathed at his death. The relics of Mohammed form a special subject of legend in the collections of traditions.¹ None among the companions of Mohammed would seem to be more entitled to inherit his sword than 'Ali. He was both a cousin and a son-in-law of the Prophet, and became the fourth orthodox Caliph. Some say he was the first male convert to Islam, and the Prophet promised him paradise as a special portion. He received sixteen wounds at Ohod, and carried the banner on the day of victory at Khaibar. He smashed idols, destroyed images and levelled graves in Medina.² He is pictured as the great warrior of early Islam, and is said to have punished infidels by death through fire.³ From the earliest time legends gathered around him, as hero-warrior and saint. In the battle of Siffin he is said to have killed five hundred and twenty-three men in one day with his sword. Afterwards, extraordinary feats were told of him: how he had severed heads from bodies and hewn bodies in two with his sabre, *Dhu'l-Faqār*.⁴

Because 'Ali was the second proud possessor of this magic weapon, we are not surprised that Shi'ah tradition magnifies the sword of Mohammed. In *Hyat-ul-Kuloob*, a famous account of Mohammed's life and character, translated from the Persian by the Reverend James L. Merrick (Boston, 1850), there are the following embellishments (pp. 88, 253, 255). We retain the peculiar spelling:

"Authentic traditions declare that Mohammed had three caps, one of which was white. One of them having ear-pieces he was accustomed to wear in battle. He had a slender staff, on

¹ Cf. on the booty of Badr, *Kitab-al-Maghazi* of Waqidi (Wellhausen), p. 83; on what those received who took part, Bukhari (Krehl), 64 : 12; and on Mohammed's legacy at his death, the references in Wensinck, *Handbook of Early Mohammedan Tradition*, p. 162. Also *Sahih* Bukhari with the Commentary of Qastalani, vol. v. p. 200, near the bottom.

² Musnad, vol. i. pp. 87, 110, 128, 138.

³ Bukhari, 88 : 2.

⁴ Article on "'Ali," *Encyclopædia of Islam*, p. 284.

THE SWORD OF MOHAMMED AND 'ALI

which he leaned while addressing the people. He had likewise a walking-stick called *Memshook*, a tent named *Akan*, and a cup denominated *Matbah*, and a vessel entitled *Rayy*. He had two horses, one called *Merbaz*, and the other *Sekeb*; and two mules, *Duldul* and *Shahba*, and two she-camels, *Ghasba* and *Jedan*. He possessed four swords, *Zoolfakar*, *Aun*, *Mejzim* and *Rasoom*. He owned an ass called *Yafoor*. His turban was named *Sahab*, and his coat of mail *Zat-ul-Fazool*. His banner was entitled *Akab*, and his pack-camel *Deebaj*. He had a flag called *Maloom*, and a helmet named *Asad*. At his death he gave all these articles and animals to Aly, and also took off his ring and put it on Aly's finger. The commander of the faithful says that in the scabbard of one of the swords he found a writing that contained much wisdom, of which were these three sentences: Adhere to those that forsake you; Speak the truth though to your disadvantage; Do good to every one that does ill by you."

"At the battle of Ohod, Ibn-Kimyah assaulted Mohammed, and aiming a blow at his shoulder, shouted that he had killed him. The Prophet's glance now fell on a cowardly fellow of the *Muhajerees*, who was running away with his shield hung on his back. 'Throw down your shield and go to hell!' cried Mohammed. The fellow actually dropped his shield, which was taken by Neseebah and borne in defence of the Prophet, who declared her reward for the day greater than that of Abubekr, Omar and Osman. Aly fought till his sword was broken, and then the Prophet gave him his own sword, *Zoolfakar*, by which he sent every wretch that ventured to attack the Prophet to the lowest hell. Mohammed retired to Mount Ohod, which protected him in the rear and prevented his being surrounded by his enemies. Aly received ninety wounds, all in front, in defending the Prophet, and often charged and routed the idolaters that advanced to the attack. The Musulmans heard a voice from heaven, saying, There is no sword but *Zoolfakar*, and no hero but Aly."

But in the same book there is a discrepancy, for again we read:

"Aly, according to some traditions, received forty wounds at the battle of Ohod. The Prophet took water in his mouth and ejected it on the wounds, which were so completely healed that not a trace of them remained. When Aly's sword was broken in the battle, Mohammed took a dry branch of a date-tree, which became *Zoolfakar*, and gave it to Aly."

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

It is in the famous miracle-play of Hasan and Husain, as collected from oral tradition by Colonel Sir Lewis Pelly, that we have the legend of *Dhu'l-Faqār* fully developed. In this drama and tragedy of the plains of Kerbela, annually re-enacted in every city of Persia, 'Ali is the central figure, the hero and redeemer of his people. In the fourth scene he offers to sacrifice his life for a fellow-creature. The scene opens with "the holy family" of five (Mohammed, 'Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husain), seated in dire want, kept from starvation by heavenly nymphs who bring down trays of fresh dates.¹ "Then in anguish of mind 'Ali goes out for a ride on his mule, partly with the view of seeking employment, and partly with the idea of driving care from his mind. On his way he meets with a young man anxious to slay him, and thereby obtain as wife a certain lady, whose father desired the head of 'Ali as a dowry for his daughter. 'Sever my head from my body, thou foolish young man, and return to thy country rejoicing,' was the ready rejoinder of the Bayard of Islam, who made no scruple to sacrifice his own life in order to benefit a fellow-creature. The eyes of the youth, however, were suddenly enlightened, and he begged forgiveness." Such is a summary of the plot. There follow the passages that deal with the famous sabre of Mohammed:

"*The King (to the Youth)*:—There is no refusal to what thou sayest, but I have a request too. I demand a good dowry for her. If thou canst get me the head of 'Ali, the chief of the true believers, as a dowry for thy cousin, thou mayest have her for a wife.

"*The Youth in Love*:—O uncle! I have heard many say that 'Ali has a sword which in fact is a dragon. Its name is *Zu'l-faqar*; it has two points in reference to life and death. It is not an easy thing in the world to cut 'Ali's head, nor can it be performed by human agency.

"*The King*:—There is no other way of attaining her.

". . . *The Youth (seeing the Zu'l-faqar)*:—What precious and beautiful weapon is that? I think good luck attends me on

¹ *The Miracle Play of Hasan and Husain*, vol. i. p. 51.

THE SWORD OF MOHAMMED AND 'ALI

this my journey. What have this horse and scymetar to do with a slave? Royal weapons are fit for royal persons only. O young Arab, whose are this horse and sword which cannot be equalled in all the world? . . .

“. . . *Gabriel*:—Thou prince of the two worlds, thou protector of the faithful, thou leader of men and jinns, O chief of believers! it is engraved on the seal of the universe, ‘There is no youth but ‘Ali, and no sword but *Zu’l-faqar*.’ . . .

“. . . *Michael*:—The breasts of jinns and angels are ravished with joy and delight. God and His Prophet are witness of the truth of what I say. The Creator of the world has declared that there is none like ‘Ali, no youth but ‘Ali, no sword but *Zu’l-faqar*. . . .

“. . . ‘*Ali (putting down the Youth)*:—Thou unbelieving wretch, ignorant of God and his religion, bare thy neck quickly to the edge of the dagger. If thou become a Musulman thou shalt obtain quarter; if not, thou shalt at once receive a blow from my soul-destroying sword.”

And then the hero-warrior relents at the cry of the lovelorn youth and offers to die in his stead, while Gabriel exclaims: “O holy ones! ‘Ali is offering his head for the sake of the people of the Prophet’s family.”¹

So much for the Sword of Mohammed and ‘Ali in the Shi‘ah tradition.

Entirely apart from these sanguinary legends we have the fact that from the very earliest times the preacher in the mosque was accustomed to hold a sword in his hand while addressing the people. In the commentary on Al-Ghazali’s Book of Worship by Al Murtada,² it is stated that the preacher in the mosque occupies his hands with the hilt of a sword or a staff when he delivers the two addresses. Both the sword and the staff are mentioned, we are told, because the sword indicates that the city was taken forcibly by the sword, as, e.g., Damascus. “So if you turn back from Islam it is still in the hands of the Moslems to fight against you with it until you return to Islam.” In every city that was taken peaceably, e.g. Cairo

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 65, 67, 68.

² Al-Murtada on the *Ihya*, vol. iii. p. 220.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

and its districts, the wooden staff is used. "But the learned differ, and say that half of Cairo was taken forcibly and half peaceably, and so the present practice is to adopt a sword of wood so as to combine both statements."¹

As it is not generally known that this custom of carrying a sword or a staff into the pulpit of the mosque every Friday is universal, we give the account in full from Lane's careful observations in Egypt.² He says, that as soon as the call to prayer is finished, the congregation stands and then

"a servant of the mosque, called a '*Murakkee*,' opens the folding-doors at the foot of the pulpit-stairs, takes from behind them a straight, wooden sword, and, standing a little to the right of the door-way, with his right side towards the *qibleh*, holds this sword in his right hand, resting the point on the ground. In this position he says, 'Verily God and his angels bless the Prophet. O ye who believe, bless him, and greet him with a salutation.' Then, one or more persons, called '*Muballighs*,' stationed on the *dikkaeh*, chant the following, or similar words: 'O God, bless and save and beatify the most noble of the Arabs and 'Agam (or foreigners), the Imam of Mekkeh and El-Medeeneh and the Temple, to whom the spider shewed favour, and wove its web in the cave; and whom the *dabb* saluted; and before whom the moon was cloven in twain; our Lord Mohammed, and his Family and Companions.' The *Murakkee* then recites the *adán* (which the *Mueddins* have already chanted); after every few words he pauses, and the *Muballighs*, on the *dikkaeh*, repeat the same words in a sonorous chant. Before the *adán* is finished, the *Khateeb*, or *Imam*, comes to the foot of the pulpit, takes the wooden sword from the *Murakkee*'s hand, ascends the pulpit, and sits on the top step or platform. The pulpit of a large mosque, on this day, is decorated with two flags, with the profession of the faith, or the names of God and Mohammed, worked upon them: these are fixed at the top of the stairs, slanting forward. The *Murakkee* and *Muballighs* having finished the *adán*, . . . the *Khateeb* rises, and, holding the wooden sword in the manner as the *Murakkee* did, delivers an exhortation, called *khutbet el-wa'az*."

¹ Cf. E. E. Calverley, *Worship in Islam* (Madras, 1925), p. 148. In the *Futuh-al-Buldan* of Baladhuri we read that Mohammed said: "All cities or districts were conquered by force, but Al Medina was conquered by the Koran" (Hitti's translation, p. 21).

² Lane's *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, pp. 86, 87.

THE SWORD OF MOHAMMED AND 'ALI

The German Orientalist, C. H. Becker, in his monograph on the pulpit in early Islam, gives further information regarding the significance of the customs described by Lane.¹ "Der Prediger betritt die Kanzel mit einem Stab oder Schwert oder Lanze oder Bogen in der rechten Hand." (The preacher ascends the pulpit with a staff or sword or lance or bow in his right hand.) In his historic investigation of the origin of this custom he concludes that the earliest *mimbar* (pulpit) was really a *bema* or judgment-seat for the Prophet when acting as judge and dispensing justice. He began the custom about 7 A.H. The sword or staff and the pulpit always go together as symbols of authority. They are called *al-'udāni*, i.e. the two pieces of wood, and explained as being originally *mimbar an-nabi wa-'asahu*, i.e. the Prophet's pulpit and staff. Becker rightly concludes, therefore: "The staff or stick is considered by primitive races as an expression of superiority over against those who do not possess one. He who has a stick as weapon can strike, can punish. Thus the staff became the symbol of power in God's hand or in that of His three representatives (prophet, priest or king). . . . Later on the staff became the sword."

Whether it be sword or spear, the public service on Friday is not complete unless some weapon be in the hand of the *khatib* when he delivers the sermon in the pulpit. This custom, as we have seen, is universal and goes back to the example of Mohammed himself in the earliest mosque-pulpit of Medina. Later on the early Caliphs often established their right by the act of ascending the *mimbar* and wielding the staff or sword.²

The pulpit and the sword go together in the history

¹ *Die Kanzel im Kultus des alten Islam* ("Islam Studien," Leipzig, 1924), pp. 451, 456, 457, 469. Cf. Ghazali, *Ihya*, I, p. 130; Juynboll, *Handleiding t. Moh. Wet.*, pp. 80-81.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 459, 461, 462. If the use of the sword in the pulpit were among the innovations it would have been mentioned as such in *Kitab al-Mudkhal*, which deals with all later developments of the Islamic cult.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

of Islam. The preaching of Islam and the power of its warlike propaganda were welded together by its founder. In the words of Charles M. Doughty (than whom no European better understood the soul of Islam): "The sword is the key of their imagined paradise. The unwarlike but frenetic Arabians, inflamed with the new greediness of both worlds, ran down like wolves to devour the civil borderlands. . . . The Mohammedan chain-of-credulities is an elation of the soul, breathing God's favour only to the *Moslem*; and shrewdness out of her cankered bowels to all the world besides. The Arabian religion of the sword must be tempered by the sword: and were the daughter of Mecca and Medina led captive, the *Moslem* should become as Jews."¹

We turn to the Koran. The word sword (*saif*) does not occur in the book; yet there are many references to *jihad* or holy war, and there is one of these references which is generally known as "The Verse of the Sword" (*Ayatu's-Saif*).² This celebrated verse occurs in one of the latest Surahs, that entitled Repentance (9 : 5), and reads as follows:

"And when the sacred months are past, kill those who join other gods with God, wherever ye shall find them; and seize them, besiege them, and lay in wait for them with every kind of ambush; but if they repent and observe the prayers, and pay the obligatory alms, then let them go their way, for God is gracious and merciful."

In his book on the *Historical Development of the Quran*, Canon E. Sell says:

"It has been said that this famous verse, known as the *Ayatu's-Saif*, or 'verse of the sword,' abrogates the restriction which did not allow the Muslims to commence a war and which is recorded in the verse:—

¹ *Arabia Deserta*, vol. ii. p. 379.

² For the teaching of the Koran regarding *Jihad*, or the holy war, see Dr. H. T. Obbink's *De Heilige Oorlog* (Leyden, 1901); the articles by W. R. W. Gardner, "Jihad" (*Moslem World*, vol. ii. p. 347), and S. V. R. Trowbridge, "Mohammed's View of Religious War" (*Moslem World*, vol. iii. p. 290); especially article on "Djihad" in *Encyclopædia of Islam*.

THE SWORD OF MOHAMMED AND 'ALI

'Fight for the cause of God against those who fight against you: but commit not the injustice of attacking them first.' Suratu'l-Baqara (ii) 186.¹

"It even does more, for it also abrogates² the kindly words of an earlier Meccan revelation:—

'Dispute not unless in kindly sort with the people of the Book.' Suratu'l-Ankabut (xxix) 45. . . ."

So important did the "Verse of the Sword" become in Islamic dogma that this verse abrogated not one or two, but a whole list of passages in the Koran, all of which teach a measure of leniency and good-will toward unbelievers. Indeed, there is not a single verse of greater importance in the whole Koran as regards its power of abrogation (nullification) of earlier teaching.

The passages are given by the Reverend Anwar-ul-Haqq, as follows:³ 2 : 133; 2 : 188; 2 : 214; 2 : 257 ("Let there be no compulsion in religion"); 3 : 19 ("Thy duty is only preaching"); 4 : 66; 4 : 82; 4 : 92, 93; 4 : 86 and 90; 5 : 2; 5 : 99; 6 : 66; 6 : 91; 6 : 104; 6 : 106, 107, 108, 112, 136, 138; 6 : 159, 160; 7 : 179, 198 ("Make the best of things and withdraw from the ignorant"); 8 : 73; 9 : 7; 10 : 99 ("What, wilt thou compel men to become believers"); 10 : 102, 108; 10 : 42, 47; 11 : 15 ("Thou art only a warner"); 13 : 40; 15 : 3; 15 : 85, 89, 94; 16 : 84; 16 : 126, 128; 17 : 56; 17 : 110; 19 : 40; 19 : 76, 87; 20 : 130, 135; 22 : 48, 55, 67; 23 : 56, 98; 24 : 53; 25 : 64; 27 : 94; 28 : 55; 29 : 49; 30 : 60; and fifty other passages all carefully marked as abrogated by the "Verse of the Sword"! *That is, a total of over one*

¹ This order which restricted fighting to defensive warfare is, according to Husaini and Baidhawi, abrogated by the *Ayat'u's-Saif*.

² Baidhawi, vol. ii. p. 98.

³ *Abrogation in the Koran*, Lucknow, 1925. His excellent monograph is based on the Koran commentary of Jalalain, and the standard work of Abu'l Qasim Hibatallah b. Salama of Bagdad (died 1019)—*Al-Nasikh wa'l Mansukh*. This book is one of the standard authorities and discusses 201 verses of the Koran that are abrogated on the basis of 95 different commentaries (Brockelmann, vol. i. p. 192). On the doctrine of abrogation see the commentaries on Surah 2 : 105 or As-Siyuti's *Itqan*, vol. ii. pp. 20-27.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

hundred and ten injunctions or teachings are abrogated by the command to use the sword—the sword of Allah and of Mohammed.

At the beginning of his career Mohammed propagated the religion of Islam by teaching, by preaching, and by argument. In the earlier Surahs he said he was only a warner. But when he came to power he also felt conscious of a new authority and sanctioned the use of the sword. We are not surprised, therefore, that in the same short chapter that contains “the Sword Verse” he uses the astonishing phrase, “God and His Apostle,” no fewer than sixteen times. The evolution of this doctrine of the sword is accurately traced by a Mohammedan writer (Ibn ‘Abidin, vol. iii. p. 237, quoted by F. A. Klein, *The Religion of Islam*, p. 174) as follows:

“Know thou that the command of fighting was revealed by degrees, for the Prophet was at first commanded to deliver his message, then to discuss and dispute and endeavour to convince the unbelievers by arguments; then the believers were permitted to fight; then they were commanded to fight, at first at any time, except the sacred months, then absolutely, without any exception.”

The Rev. C. C. Adams, Ph.D., in his thesis on *The Modern Reform Movement in Egypt*, gives the summary of an article that appeared in *Al-Urwah al-Wuthqah* from the *Tarikh* of Muhammad ‘Abduh (vol. ii. pp. 250 *seq.*) as present-day teaching:

“It is a duty incumbent upon all Moslems to aid in maintaining the authority of Islam and Islamic rule over all lands that have once been Moslem; and they are not permitted under any circumstances to be peaceable and conciliatory towards any who contend the mastery with them, until they obtain complete authority without sharing it with any one else.”

And so it remains to this day, at least in theory. Holy war is “a duty in general on all male, free, adult Moslems, sane in mind and body and having means enough to reach the Moslem army. . . . So it must continue to be done

THE SWORD OF MOHAMMED AND 'ALI

until the whole world is under the rule of Islam . . . Islam must be completely made over before the doctrine of Jihad can be eliminated.”¹

It would be interesting to compare the teaching of the New Testament with the Koran verse quoted; but we refrain.

“For not with swords loud clashing,
Nor roll of stirring drums ;
With deeds of love and mercy,
The heavenly Kingdom comes.”

¹ D. B. Macdonald, Article on “Djihad” in *Encyclopædia of Islam*.

IV

THE CLOCK, THE CALENDAR AND THE KORAN

THE religion which Mohammed founded bears everywhere the imprint of his life and character. He was not only the Prophet but the prophecy of Islam. This is true not only as regards matters of faith and ritual, but also of many things which at first sight would seem to have no connexion with either.

The connexion of the three words in the title may seem merely fortuitous or alliterative to the reader: to the Moslem their connexion is perfectly evident, because the clock and the calendar are set back and regulated by the book of the Prophet. The Moslem calendar with its twelve lunar months and its two great feast days is fixed according to the laws of the Koran and orthodox tradition, based upon the practice of Mohammed himself. The fast month of *Ramadhan*, for example, is so called from the Arabic root which means *to burn*, and before the days of Islam this month, in accordance with its name, always fell in the heat of summer. Because of the change in the calendar, and because Mohammed abolished the intercalary months, the fast occurs eleven days earlier each year and travels all round the seasons. Although the ancient Arabian year was composed of twelve lunar months, the Arabs about the year 412 introduced a system of intercalation whereby one month additional was inserted every three years. Mohammed abolished this scientific practice, and we read in the Koran (Surah 9 : 36, 37): "Verily, the number of months with God is twelve months in God's Book, on the day when

THE CLOCK, THE CALENDAR AND THE KORAN

He created the heavens and the earth; of these are four that are sacred; that is the subsisting religion.”

By this one verse of the Koran, which is unchanged and irrevocable, the whole Moslem world is religiously bound fast to the lunar calendar. Baidhawi and other Moslem commentators try to explain these verses in such a way as to hide the fact that the Arabs in the “Time of Ignorance” were far more scientific in their calendar than were Mohammed himself or the Arabs who followed his leading. In the Commentary of Mohammed Hussein Nisaburi, printed in the margin of the thirty-volume Commentary by Al Tabari, we find, however, the true explanation. After giving the usual explanations, which do not explain, he says: “There is, however, another explanation of this verse. The meaning of *nasi* is the adding of a month to certain years so that the lunar year will be equivalent to the solar; for the lunar year of twelve months consists of 354 days and a fifth or sixth of a day, as we know from the science of astronomy and the observations of astronomers. But the solar year, which is equivalent to the return of the sun from any fixed point in the firmament to the same position, consists of 365 days and nearly a fourth day. Therefore the lunar year is less than the solar year by ten days, twenty-one and one-fifth hours, nearly, and by reason of this difference the lunar months change from season to season; so that, for example, the month of pilgrimage will sometimes occur in winter, sometimes in summer, or in the spring or autumn. In the ‘Time of Ignorance’ they were not pleased when the pilgrimage occurred in an unsuitable time for their merchandise. Therefore they arranged for a leap year with an additional month, so that the *hajj* should always occur in the autumn; so they increased the nineteen lunar years by seven lunar months, so that it became nineteen solar years, and in the following year they added a month. Then, again, in the fifth year; then in the seventh, the tenth, the thirteenth, the sixteenth, the eighteenth year, etc.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

They learned this method from the Jews and the Christians who also follow it on account of their feasts. And the extra month was called *Nasi*." Nisaburi goes on to give a tradition according to which Mohammed himself abrogated this practice when he made his last pilgrimage to Mecca and established the ritual of the *hajj*.

The origin of the lunar calendar is, therefore, based not only on the Koran text but on tradition. The inconvenience of this reckoning, however, is being increasingly felt, and more and more the solar year and the dates of the Greek calendar are being used by Moslems. We may read, for example, on the title pages of all the leading Cairo and Constantinople dailies, even those published by Moslems, Wednesday, the 28th of Safar, 1331, and on the opposite side of the page, February 5th, 1913. To convert a Moslem date into one of our own era is not altogether a simple matter. "To express the Mohammedan date," says Dr. Forbes, "in years and decimals of a year, multiply by .970,225; to the product add 621.54, and the sum will be the precise period of the Christian era." According to Murray, "If it is desired to find the year of the Hegira, which comes in a given year of the Christian era, it is sufficient to subtract 621 from the year given and to multiply the remainder by 1.0307"; while, according to Hughes' *Dictionary of Islam*, if one desires to find the precise Christian date corresponding to any given year of Islam, the following rule obtains: "From the given number of Musalman years deduct three per cent., and to the remainder add the number 621.54; the sum is the period of the Christian era at which the given current Musalman year ends. This simple rule is founded on the fact that one hundred lunar years are very nearly equal to ninety-seven solar years, there being only eight days of excess in the former period; hence to the result found, as just stated, it will be requisite to add eight days as a correction for every century."

A writer in the Egypt Nationalist organ, Al Sha'b, who

THE CLOCK, THE CALENDAR AND THE KORAN

signs himself Al Zarkawy, proposed to modify the lunar year in a thoroughly Mohammedan fashion and call it the Hegira solar year. He professed to know from Moslem tradition that the date on which the Prophet emigrated from Mecca to Medina was Friday, the twelfth of Rabi'a I., corresponding to September 22nd, A.D. 622. It was seventeen years after that date, according to this writer, in the Caliphate of 'Omar, that the year in which Mohammed went to Medina was taken as the beginning of the Mohammedan era; the first Muharram of the year 622 being Thursday, July 15th. The writer proposed that, as the lunar calendar is inexact for business purposes and the Koran requires it for religious purposes, the Moslem world should introduce a Hegira solar date, so that periodical events will not change from year to year, although the feasts, etc., which are based on the appearance of the moon, will be fixed as heretofore by the lunar calendar. He also found a strange and providential coincidence in the fact that the day on which the Hegira date began, namely, September 22nd, 622, was the first day of autumn when day and night are twelve hours each! This date should, therefore, be taken for the beginning of the era and of the calendar. The writer proposed that the names of the months should be those of the signs of the zodiac, the Ram, the Bull, the Twins, the Lion, etc. The number of days in the first six months will be thirty each, and in the second six months thirty-one. The sixth month, however, of the second series, namely the last month in the year, will have twenty-nine days for three years, and thirty days every fourth year. Al Zarkawy seriously submitted this proposition to the public, whose criticisms he invited, and with faith in his own proposition dated the article the 23rd of the month of Capricorn, 1291 of the Hegira Solar Year, which corresponds to the 5th of the month of Safir of the Hegira lunar year 1330. But his proposal found no acceptance.

To make confusion worse confounded as regards the

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

Moslem calendar, we must remember also that the date of the Mohammedan months at present, in nearly every part of the Moslem world, is fixed not by the almanac or calendar prepared beforehand, but depends upon the actual observation of the new moon by competent witnesses. This is especially true of the new moon which appears at the beginning and end of the month of fasting. According to Moslem tradition, based upon the practice of the Prophet, it is necessary for these witnesses to appear before the *kadhi*, or local judge. The result is, with the uncertainty of weather, and frequently the unreliability of the witnesses, that towns in Arabia only a few miles apart will begin and end the month on a different day. In Turkey and in Egypt, as well as in India, Moslems are beginning to follow the printed calendar, but among the orthodox the practice is considered decidedly doubtful. One of the leading papers in Alexandria recently contained a notice by the head of the Moslem religious fraternity calling for men of keen vision and faithful character who would be on the look-out for the appearance of the new moon, so that the observation of the fact and the feast days of Islam might be accurately fixed and not be dependent upon hearsay!

Before the advent of Mohammed the Arabs already possessed considerable knowledge of practical astronomy. The Bedouins on their night journeys, having no other guide than the moon and the brightest stars, made observations and crude astronomical deductions. It was not, however, till the second century of the Hegira that the scientific study of astronomy began under the influence of India. Moslem astronomers accepted all the fundamental features of the Ptolemaic system of the universe, together with its errors. In the fourth century A.H. the possibility of the earth's revolution was discussed, but in the following centuries and among orthodox Mohammedans today, its immobility is generally accepted. Only Western education, as in Egypt, Turkey, and Persia, has changed opinion. In

THE CLOCK, THE CALENDAR AND THE KORAN

Al Azhar the astronomy taught was until recently Ptolemaic. C. A. Nallino says the Arabs outstripped their predecessors, the Greeks, "in mathematical astronomy, in the number and quality of their instruments and the technique of their observations." It is, therefore, the more remarkable that the solar calendar was not adopted long since in Moslem lands. The last great Moslem astronomer was Ulug Beg of Samarkand (A.D. 1449). "With him the scientific study of astronomy ceased throughout the Islamic world; henceforth we only meet with authors of elementary manuals, compilers of almanacs, etc. The real astronomer has disappeared, and in his place we find only the *muwakkkit* of the mosques."

The present names of the Moslem months are different from those in use before Mohammed's time. The first month of the year is called *Muharram*, and is so called because both under the pagan Arabs and in the time Mohammed it was held unlawful to go to war in this month. The first ten days of it are observed in commemoration of the martyrdom of Al Hussein, and the tenth day is the fast of 'Ashur'a. *Safar* (yellow) was so named because it occurred at a time when the leaves bore a yellow tint. It is the most unlucky month in the year, for in it Adam was turned out of paradise and Mohammed was taken ill. *Rabi'a-al-Awal* and *Rabi'ath-Thani* signify the first and second spring months and used to occur at the beginning of the year in springtime. *Jamad-al-Awal* and *Jamad-ath-Thani*, the fifth and sixth months, were, according to Caussin de Perceval, so named because the earth then became hard and dry (*jamad*) through scarcity of rain. The seventh month *Rajab* signifies *honoured*. It was a sacred month during the "Time of Ignorance" when war was not permitted. *Sha'ban* is called the Prophet's month. The old significance of the name means *to separate*, for in this month, we are told, the Arab tribes separated in search of water. On the 15th day of this month occurs the celebrated "Night of Recording,"

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

upon which God is said to register all the actions of mankind which they are to perform during the coming year. Mohammed enjoined his followers to keep awake throughout the whole of this night, and repeat one hundred prayers. This ninth month is called *Shawwal*, because of some obscure reference to camels' tails and Bedouin life. The name signifies *a tail*. On the first of this month occurs the Moslem feast of the "Breaking of the Fast," called '*Id-ul-Fitr*. The last two months in the year are called *Dhu-al-Ka'da* and *Dhu-al-Hajj*. The former signifies the month of resting or truce, in which the ancient Arabs were always engaged in peaceful operations; the latter, the month of the pilgrimage. During this month the pilgrims visit Mecca. A visit at any other time does not in any way have the merits of a pilgrimage. On the tenth day of the month is the great Moslem feast of sacrifice, '*Id-ul-Azha*.

One can see from this summary that at least three of the months in the calendar are closely linked to religious practice and Moslem tradition, and that while Islam stands, this part of the calendar cannot be changed. Dr. C. Snouck Hurgronje has recently shown that the lunar calendar even controls in some measure the number of pilgrims from Malaysia to Mecca. According to Moslem belief, the *Hajj al Akbar*, or Greater Hajj, which has special religious merit, only occurs when the great day of the pilgrimage (the 19th), or *Dhu al Hajj*, falls on Friday, which is also the Moslem day of public worship. This superstition in regard to lucky days, and the desire to be present at Arafat on a Friday, obtains great credence among the Malays, but as the date of the month depends on actual observation at Mecca, there can be no certainty.

Prince Leone Caetani has shown in his recent work, *Annali dell' Islam*, that the exact date of Mohammed's flight from Mecca to Medina is quite uncertain. According to most authorities it took place on June 20th, A.D. 622. According to this calculation, the Caliph 'Omar made the

THE CLOCK, THE CALENDAR AND THE KORAN

first of Muharram correspond with Thursday, July 15th, A.D. 622. Caetani devotes some twenty pages to a discussion of this difficult subject, and gives comparative tables for every day in the Moslem calendar from the year 1 A.H. to correspond with our own. (Vol. i. pp. 344-361.)

A leaf from a Moslem calendar published in Cairo shows the practical difficulties of the situation in this capital city. On either side of the word for Tuesday, the third day of the week, this calendar gives the year of the Hegira and that of "The Birth." Then follow in large letters the ordinary Moslem and Christian date, the 21st of *Rabi'a-uth-Thani* and April. Below is the record of an event, namely, a victory of the Egyptian Army in the Sudan, on the corresponding date of the year 1306. On either side of this chronological note occur other dates, viz.: the 27th of *Barmuda*, 1628 (Coptic), and the 27th of *Maart*, 1328 (Ottoman financial year), the 27th of *Adar*, 2223 (Greek) and the 22nd of *Nisan*, 5672 (Hebrew). Underneath we have given, both in Arabic and in European time, the five periods of prayer, and the rising and setting of the sun and moon. In addition to the periods of prayer are added the actual time of sunrise and of high noon, for the Moslem noon, when the muezzin calls for prayer, differs from high noon by two minutes. On this particular day, according to Moslem time, the former is at five hours thirty-nine minutes, and the latter at five hours thirty-seven minutes. On each leaf of the calendar a short quotation from the traditions is given. Here it reads: "It is a part of righteousness to befriend the friend of your father."

Turning from the Moslem calendar to the Moslem clock, we find here also that the mediaeval legislation of the Prophet and the power of tradition are supreme. Before clocks and watches were invented, Moslems divided the day and the night according to the prayer-ritual, and this division still prevails among the common people everywhere. The periods of prayer are five, as is well known.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

Daybreak, just after high noon, between high noon and sunset, sunset, and finally when the night closes in. These prayer-periods are known respectively as *Fijr*, *Zuhr*, 'Asr, *Maghrib*, and 'Asha'. Although the general duty of prayer is enjoined in the Koran, there is not a single passage where five periods of prayer are mentioned (cf. Surah 30 : 17; 11 : 116; 20 : 130; 17 : 80). The first passage is the most definite, and reads: "Celebrated be the praises of God when you are in the evening and when you are in the morning, for to Him belongs praise in the heavens and the earth; and at the evening, and when you are at noon." The commentators are agreed that five prayers a day are not mentioned. The stated periods, as well as all the ritual of prayer, are therefore based upon tradition. They were possibly borrowed from the practice of the Oriental Church, as is the case of so much else in the public prayer ritual of Islam.¹ Basil of Cappadocia, according to Dr. Hughes, speaks of five hours as suitable for prayer, namely, the morning, the third hour, the sixth, the ninth, and the evening. Mohammed, however, changed the times of prayer to suit the Arabian climate, his family arrangements (see the traditions), and the life of the Bedouin tribes, to the great inconvenience of Moslems under other skies and in the bustle and turmoil of modern city life.

Clocks and watches are found nearly everywhere today in the Moslem world. In Egypt, India, Algeria and Malaysia, most Moslems use Western time because of the influence of European governments. In Persia, Turkey, Arabia, Morocco, Afghanistan, and the rest of the Moslem world generally, clocks and watches are still regulated every day at sunset, which must be twelve o'clock exactly by Moslem time every day in the year. One can imagine how not only ordinary clocks but costly timepieces are abused by being

¹ R. Strothmann, on the contrary, believes the periods were borrowed from Zoroastrianism. Cf. his *Kultus der Zaiditen*, p. 19. He bases his conclusions on Goldziher's investigation: *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 1901, p. 15.

THE CLOCK, THE CALENDAR AND THE KORAN

set back or forward every day at sunset; but as long as the muezzin's cry rings from the minarets, the time of the day for the orthodox believer will be regulated by his call, observatories to the contrary notwithstanding.

Popularly speaking, the chief use of a clock or a watch, in any case, is to know the exact time for prayer, and just as an ordinary pocket compass is known by the name of "Mecca pointer" (*Qibla*), all over western and central Asia, because it has been found useful to indicate the direction of Mecca to the travelling pilgrim, so the hands on the clock are real prayer-pointers. At the beginning of *Ramadhan*, for example, there is often a brisk and increasing trade in timepieces of every description, in order that the hours of fasting and the hours of feasting may be promptly known. High noon, according to Mohammedan reckoning, may be anywhere from forty minutes past four to fifty minutes past six in this latitude (30 degrees north); but an interesting rule to remember is this, that the time of noon, according to Mohammedan watches and clocks on any particular day, subtracted from twelve, gives the apparent time of sunset according to Western reckoning.

This connexion and confusion of the clock, the calendar and the Koran bring about the result that the only time-reckoning on which Christians, Moslems and Jews agree in the Orient, is that of the days of the week. These are numbered and called by their numbers, save Friday and Saturday, which are known as the "day of assembling" and the "day of the Sabbath." Among the days of the week Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday are esteemed auspicious and lucky, while the other days are considered unlucky. According to tradition (*Mishkat* 24 : 1) God created the earth on Saturday, the hills on Sunday, the trees on Monday, all unpleasant things on Tuesday, the light on Wednesday, the beasts on Thursday, and Adam, who was the last of creation, was created about the time of afternoon prayers on Friday.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

Friday is the day specially appointed for public worship throughout the whole Moslem world. According to tradition delivered by Mohammed, "It is the day on which the sun rises; the day on which Adam was taken into paradise and taken out of it; the day on which he repented and on which he died. It will also be the day of Resurrection." Although this day is sacred for special prayer among Moslems, it is neither in the traditions nor in the Koran considered a day of incumbent rest. Only in recent years, and with the rise of pan-Islamism, have Mohammedans begun to observe the day more vigorously and attempted to make it a substitute for the Christian Sabbath in its character and in their demands as regards government regulations and privileges, as at the recent Egyptian Moslem Congress.¹ The revival of Islam on these and other lines will doubtless end in attempts to revise the calendar and the division of the hours. But for the present, next to that of banking and the taking of interest (both forbidden in the Koran), there is no more urgent, practical question than that of the Clock, the Calendar and the Koran.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Artin Pacha and Ventre Pacha, *Hémérologie simplifiée pour la conversion des dates musulmanes et chrétiennes*, p. 49. (1896.)
- C. Bernoin, *Concordance des ères hégirienne et grégorienne pour les XII, XIII et XIV siècles de l'hégire commençant le 26 octobre, 1688, et finissant le 8 nov., 1981*. (1885.)
- L. Caetani, principe de Teano. *Chronographia islamica ossia riassunto cronologico della storia di tutti i popoli musulmani dall'anno 1 all'anno 922 della Higraph, corredato della bibliografia di tutte le principali fonti stampate e manoscritte, première période*. (Geuthner, Paris, 1912.)
- A. Caussin de Perceval, *Sur le calendrier arabe avant l'islamisme*. (1843.)

¹ Cf. Kyriakos Mikhail, *Copts and Moslems under British Control*, pp. 28-31 and p. 70.

THE CLOCK, THE CALENDAR AND THE KORAN

- Chaillet, *Concordance des calendriers grégorien et musulman*. (1857.)
Ghazi Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha, *La réforme du calendrier*, trad. du Turc par O. N. F. (1893.)
F. Wuestenfeld, *Vergleichungs-Tabellen der Muhammedanischen und christlichen Zeitrechnung nach dem ersten Tage jedes Muhammedanischen Jahres, und Fortsetzung von E. Mahler*. (1887.)
E. Mahler, *Fortsetzung der Wuestenfeldschen Vergleichungs-Tabellen der Muhammedanischen und christlichen Zeitrechnung*. (1887.)

THE FAMILIAR SPIRIT OR QARINA

AMONG all the superstitions in Islam there is none more curious in its origin and character than the belief in the *Qarin* 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, *shaitan* 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.

There are many passages in the Koran in which this doctrine is plainly taught, and by reading the commentaries on these texts a world of superstition, grovelling, coarse, and, to the last degree, incredible, is opened to the reader. The Koran passages read as follows:¹ (Chapter of the Cave, verse 48) "And when we said to the angels, 'Adore Adam,' they adored him, save only Iblis, who was of the *jinn*, who revolted from the bidding of his Lord. 'What! will ye then take him and his seed as patrons, rather than me, when they are foes of yours? bad for the wrong-doers is the exchange!'" The reference here is to the words, "Satan and his seed." (See especially the Commentary of Fahr al Razi, margin, vol. 6, p. 75.)

In speaking of the resurrection when the trumpet is blown and the day of judgment comes, we read: (Chapter

¹ Palmer's translation is used throughout.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

Qaf, verses 20-30) "And every soul shall come—with it a driver and a witness! 'Thou wert heedless of this, and we withdrew thy veil from thee, and today is thine eyesight keen!' And his mate (*qarina*) shall say, 'This is what is ready for me (to attest).' 'Throw into hell every stubborn misbeliever!—who forbids good, a transgressor, a doubter! who sets other gods with God—and throw him, ye twain, into fierce torment!' His mate shall say, 'Our Lord! I seduced him not, but he was in a remote error.' He shall say, 'Wrangle not before me; for I sent the threat to you before. The sentence is not changed with me, nor am I unjust to my servants.' On the day we will say to hell, 'Art thou full?' and it will say, 'Are there any more?'"

And again we read: (Chapter of Women, verses 41, 42) "And those who expend their wealth in alms for appearance sake before men, and who believe not in God nor in the last day;—but whosoever has Satan for his mate, an evil mate has he."

Again: (Chapter of the Ranged, verses 47-54) ". . . and with them damsels, restraining their looks, large-eyed; as though they were a sheltered egg; and some shall come forward to ask others; and a speaker amongst them shall say, 'Verily, I had a mate (*qarina*), who used to say, "Art thou verily of those who credit? What! when we are dead, and have become earth and bones, shall we be surely judged?"' He will say, 'Are ye looking down?' and he shall look down and see him in the midst of hell. He shall say, 'By God, thou didst nearly ruin me!'"

(Chapter Detailed, verse 24) "We will allot to them mates, for they have made seemly to them what was before them and what was behind them; and due against them was the sentence on the nations who passed away before them; both of *jinn*s and of mankind; verily, they were the losers!"

(Chapter of Gilding, verses 35-37) "And whosoever turns from the remainder of the Merciful One, we will

THE FAMILIAR SPIRIT OR QARINA

chain to him a devil, who shall be his mate; and, verily, these shall turn them from the path while they reckon that they are guided; until when he comes to us he shall say, 'O, would that between me and thee there were the distance of the two orients, for an evil mate (art thou)!' But it shall not avail you on that day, since ye were unjust; verily, in the torment shall ye share!"

To speak of only one of these passages, what Baidhawi says in regard to the Chapter of the Ranged, verse 49, leaves no doubt that the *qarina*, which has been the mate of the believer all through life, is cast into hell on the day of judgment, and that this evil spirit, which is born with every man, is determined to ruin him, but that the favour of God saves the believer, and that one of the special mercies of heaven for the believer is to behold his companion devil for ever in torment.

Before we deal further with the comment as given on these verses and the teaching in Moslem books, we may well consider the possible origin of this belief as found in the *Book of the Dead* of ancient Egypt. "In addition to the Natural-body and Spirit-body," writes E. A. Wallis Budge (*Book of the Dead*, vol. i. p. 73), "man also had an abstract individuality or personality endowed with all his characteristic attributes. This abstract personality had an absolutely independent existence. It could move freely from place to place, separating itself from, or uniting itself to, the body at will, and also enjoying life with the gods in heaven. This was the *ka*, a word which at times conveys the meaning of its Coptic equivalent $\kappa\omega$, and of $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\delta\omega\lambda\omicron\nu$, image, genius, double, character, disposition, and mental attributes. What the *ka* really was has not yet been decided, and Egyptologists have not yet come to an agreement in their views on the subject. Mr. Griffith thinks (*Hieroglyphs*, p. 15) that 'it was from one point of view regarded as the source of muscular movement and power, as opposed to *ba* the will or soul which set it in

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

motion.’” “In September, 1878, M. Maspero explained to the Members of the Congress of Lyons the views which he held concerning this word, and which he had for the past five years been teaching in the *Collège de France*, and said, ‘le “ka” est une sorte de double de la personne humaine d’une matière moins grossière que la matière dont est formé le corps, mais qu’il fallait nourrir et entretenir comme le corps lui-même; ce double vivait dans le tombeau des offrandes qu’on faisait aux fêtes canoniques, et aujourd’hui encore un grand nombre des génies de la tradition populaire égyptienne ne sont que des doubles, devenus démons au moment de la conversion des fellahs au christianisme.’”

Other authorities whom Mr. Budge quotes think that the *ka* was a genius and not a double. Mr. Breasted thinks that the *ka* was the superior genius intended to guide the fortunes of the individual in the hereafter. But Mr. Budge goes on to say: “The relation of the *ka* to the funerary offerings has been ably discussed by Baron Fr. W. v. Bissing (‘Versuch einer neuen Erklärung des Ka’i der alten Aegypter’ in the *Sitzungsberichte der Kgl. Bayer. Akad.*, Munich, 1911), and it seems as if the true solution of the mystery may be found by working on the lines of his idea, which was published in the *Recueil*, 1903, p. 182, and by comparing the views about the ‘double’ held by African peoples throughout the Sudan. The funeral offerings of meat, cakes, ale, wine, unguents, etc., were intended for the *ka*; the scent of the burnt incense was grateful for it. The *ka* dwelt in the man’s statue just as the *ka* of a god inhabited the statue of the god. In the remotest times the tombs had special chambers wherein the *ka* was worshipped and received offerings. The priesthood numbered among its body an order of men who bore the name of ‘priests of the *ka*,’ and who performed services in honour of the *ka* in the ‘*Ka* chapel.” Although not in any sense an Egyptologist, yet I believe further light

THE FAMILIAR SPIRIT OR QARINA

may be thrown on the real significance of *ka* by what popular Islam teaches today.

Whatever may be the significance of *ka* in Egyptology, we are not in doubt as to what Mohammed himself thought of his *ka* or *qarina*. In the most famous volume of all Moslem books on the doctrine of *jinn*, called *Kitab akām ul marjan fi Ahkam el Jan*, by Abdullah-esh-Shabli (769 A.H.), we read in chapter five as follows: "It is related by Muslim and others from 'Ayesha that the Apostle of God left her one night and that she said, 'I was jealous of him.' Then she said, 'Mohammed saw me and came for me and said, 'What's the matter with you, 'Ayesha? Are you jealous?' And I replied, 'Why should one like me not be jealous of one like you?'" Then the Apostle of God said, "Has your devil spirit got hold of you?" Then I said, "O Apostle of God, is there a devil with me?" Said he, "Yes, and with every person." Said I, "And with you also, O Apostle of God?" Said he, "Yes, but my Lord Most Glorious and Powerful has assisted me against him, so that he became a Moslem."'" Another tradition is given in the same chapter on the authority of Ibn Hanbal as follows: "Said the Apostle of God, 'There is not a single one of you but has his *qarina* of the *jinn* and his *qarina* of the Angels.' They said, 'And thou also, O Apostle of God?' 'Yes,' he replied, 'I also, but God has helped her so that she does not command me except in that which is true and good.'" The tradition here given occurs in many forms in the same chapter, so that there can be no doubt of its being well known and, in the Moslem sense, authentic.

Here is another curious form of the same tradition. "Said the Apostle of God, 'I was superior to Adam in two particulars, for my devil (*qarina*), although an unbeliever, became through God's help a Moslem, and my wives were a help to me, but Adam's devil remained an infidel and his wife led him into temptation.'" We also find an evening

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

prayer recorded of Mohammed as follows: "Whenever the Apostle of God went to his bed to sleep at night he said, 'In the name of God I now lay myself down and seek protection from him against the evil influence of my devil (*qarin, shaitan*), and from the burden of my sin and the weight of my iniquity. O God, make me to receive the highest decree.'"

As regards the number of these companion devils and their origin, Tradition is not silent. "It is said that there are males and females among the devils, out of whom they procreate; but as to Iblis, God has created . . . (the significance of this passage, which is not fit for translation, is that Iblis is an hermaphrodite) . . . there come forth out of him every day ten eggs, out of each of which are born seventy male and female devils." (Ibn-Khallikan, quoted in *Hayat al-Hawayan*, Article on "*jinn*."

In another tradition, also found in the standard collections, it is said that Iblis laid thirty eggs—"ten in the west, ten in the east, and ten in the middle of the earth—and that out of every one of those eggs came forth a species of devils, such as al-Gilan, al-'Akarib, al-Katarib, al-Jann, and others bearing diverse names. They are all enemies of men according to the words of God, 'What! will ye then take him and his seed as patrons, rather than we, when they are foes of yours?' with the exception of the believing ones among them."

Al Tabari, in his great commentary, vol. xxvi. p. 104, says the *qarin* or *qarina* is each man's *shaitan* (devil), who was appointed to have charge of him in the world. He then proves his statement by a series of traditions similar to those already quoted: "his *qarin* is his devil (*shaitan*)"; or, according to another authority there quoted, "his *qarina* is his *jinn*."

According to Moslem Tradition, not only Mohammed but even Jesus the Prophet had a *qarin*. As He was sinless, and because, in accordance with the well-known tradition,

THE FAMILIAR SPIRIT OR QARINA

Satan was unable to touch Him at His birth, His *qarina* like that of Mohammed was a good one. "On the authority of Ka'ab the Holy Spirit, Gabriel, strengthened Jesus because He was His *qarin* and his constant companion, and went with Him wherever He went until the day when He was taken up to heaven." (*Qasus al Anbiya*, by Al Tha'alabi.)

Now while in the case of Mohammed and Jesus and perhaps also in the case of other prophets, the *qarin* or *qarina* was or became a good spirit, 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 as 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, produces sterility and barrenness, kills the unborn child, and in the case of children as well as of adults is the cause of untold misery.

The *qarina* is believed often to assume the shape of a cat or dog or other household animal. So common is the belief that the *qarina* dwells in the body of a cat at night-time, that neither Copts nor Moslems would dare to beat or injure a cat after dark.

Many precautions are taken to defend the unborn child against its mate, or perhaps it is rather against the mate of the mother, who is jealous of the future child. Major Tremearne, who studied the subject in North Africa, says (*Ban of the Bori*, p. 97): the *qarin* "does not come until after the child has been actually born, for the sex is not known before that time." And again (p. 131): "All human beings, animals, plants, and big rocks, have a permanent soul (*quruwa*) and a familiar bori of the same sex, and, in

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

addition, young people have a temporary bori of the opposite sex, while all living things have two angels (*mala'ika*) in attendance. Small stones are soulless, and so are those large ones which are deep in the earth, 'for they are evidently dead,' else they would not have been buried. The soul has a shape like that of the body which it inhabits, and it dwells in the heart, but where it comes in and out of the body is not known. It is not the shadow (*ennuwa*), for it cannot be seen, and in fact the *ennuwa* is the shadow both of the body and of the soul. Yet the word *quruwa* is sometimes loosely used for shadow, and there is evidently some connexion, for a wizard can pick the soul out of it. Neither is it the breath, for when a person sleeps his soul wanders about; in fact, it does so even when a person is day-dreaming."

All this, which is descriptive of conditions among the Hausa Moslems of North Africa, closely resembles the belief in Egypt. The *jinn* of the opposite sex, that is the soul-mate, generally dwells underground. It does not like its particular mortal to get married. For, again I quote from Major Tremearne, "It sleeps with the person and has relations during sleep as is known by the dreams." This invisible companion of the opposite sex is generally spoken of in Egypt as "sister" or "brother." His or her abode is in quiet shady places, especially under the threshold of the house. The death of one or more children in the family is often attributed to their mother's mate, and, therefore, the mother and the surviving children wear iron anklets to ward off this danger. Most people believe that the *qarina* dies with the individual; others that it enters the grave with the body. Although generally invisible, there are those who have second sight and can see the *qarina*. It wanders about at night in the shape of a cat.

The following account of the popular belief I took down verbatim from Sheikh Ahmed Muharram of Daghestan and recently from Smyrna. He says that his statement

THE FAMILIAR SPIRIT OR QARINA

represents the belief of all Turkish and Russian Mohammedans. The *quranā* (plural of *qarina*) come into the world from the *A'alam ul Barzakhīya*¹ at the time the child is conceived, before it is born; therefore during the act of coition, Moslems are told by their Prophet to pronounce the word *bismillah*. This will prevent the child from being overcome by its devil and turned into an infidel or rascal. The *qarina* exists with the fetus in the womb. When the child is born the ceremony of pronouncing the creed in its right ear and the call to prayer in the left is to protect the child from its mate. Among the charms used against *quranā* are portions of the Koran written on lead images of fish or on leaden discs. The *quranā* are invisible except to people who are idiots and to the prophets. These often have second vision. The *quranā* do not die with their human mates, but exist in the grave until the day of the Resurrection, when they testify for or against the human being. The reason that young children die is because *Um es Subyan* (the child-witch) is jealous of the mother, and she then uses the *qarina* of the child to put an end to it. "The way I overcome my *qarina*," said Ahmed Muharram, "is by prayer and fasting." It is when a man is overcome with sleep that his *qarina* gets the better of him. "When I omit a prayer through carelessness or forgetfulness it is my *qarina* and not myself. The *qarina* is not a spirit merely but has a spiritual body, and all of them differ in their bodily appearance, although invisible to us. The *qarina* does not increase in size, however, as does the child." The Sheikh seemed to be in doubt in regard to the sex of the *qarina*. At first he would not admit that the sex relation was as indicated, thinking it improper for a man to have a female mate, but after discussion he said he was mistaken. He admitted also that all these popular beliefs were based upon the

¹ The unseen world, Hades, the abode of souls after death and before birth.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

Koran and Tradition, although superstitious practices had crept in among the masses.

A learned Sheikh at Caliub, a Moslem village near Cairo, was also consulted on the subject. At first he tried to explain away the idea of popular Islam by saying that the *qarina* only referred to the evil conscience or a man's evil nature, but after a few questions he became quite garrulous, and gave the following particulars: The expectant mother, in fear of the *qarina*, visits the *sheikha* (learned woman) three months before the birth of the child, and does whatever she indicates as a remedy. These *sheikhas* exercise great influence over the women, and batten on their superstitious beliefs, often impersonating the *qarina* and frightening the ignorant. The Moslem mother often denies the real sex of her babe for seven days after it is born in order to protect its life from the *qarina*. During these seven days she must not strike a cat, or she and the child will both die. Candles are lighted on the seventh day and placed in a jug of water near the head of the child, to guard it against the *qarina*. Before the child is born a special amulet is prepared, consisting of seven grains each of seven different kinds of cereals. These are sewn up in a bag, and when the infant is born it is made to wear it. The mother also has certain verses of the Koran written with musk water or ink on the inside of a white dish. This is then filled with water and the ink washed off and the contents taken as a potion. The Sheikh told me that the two last chapters of the Koran and also *Surat Al Mujadala* were most commonly used for this purpose. One of the most common amulets against the *qarina* or the child-witch is that called the "Seven Covenants of Solomon." ¹

Charms and amulets against the *qarina* abound. Books on the subject are printed by the thousands of copies. Here, for example, are the directions given for writing an

¹ A translation of this appears in my book, *The Disintegration of Islam* (F. H. Revell and Company, 1916).

THE FAMILIAR SPIRIT OR QARINA

amulet in the celebrated book called *Kitab Mujaribat*, by Sheikh Ahmed Al Dirbi (p. 105): “This (twenty-fourth) chapter gives an account of an amulet to be used against *qarina* and against miscarriage. This is the blessed amulet prepared to guard against all bodily and spiritual evils and against harm and sorcery and demons and fear and terror and *jinn* and the *qarina* and familiar spirits and ghosts and fever and all manner of illness and wetting the bed and against the child-witch (*Um es Subyan*) and whirlwinds and devils and poisonous insects and the evil eye and pestilence and plague and to guard the child against weeping while it sleeps—and the mystery of this writing is great for those children who have fits every month or every week or who cannot cease from crying or to the woman who is liable to miscarriage. And it is said that this amulet contains the great and powerful name of God—in short, it is useful for all evils. It must be written the first hour of the first day of the week, and reads as follows: ‘In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate, there is no God but He, the Living, the Eternal, etc. (to the end of the verse on the throne). In the name of God and to God and upon God, and there is no one victorious save God and no one can deliver him who flees from God, for He is the Living, the Self-subsisting, whom slumber seizes not nor sleep, etc. I place in the safe keeping of God him who carries this amulet, the God than whom there is no other, who knows the secret and the open. He is the Merciful, the Compassionate. I protect the bearer by the words of God Most Perfect and by His glorious names from evil that approaches and the eyes that flash and the souls of the wicked and from the evil of the father of wickedness and his descendants and from the evil of those that blow upon knots and from the evil of the envier when he envies, and I put him under the protection of God the Most Holy, King of the Angels and of the Spirits, Lord of the worlds, the Lord of the great throne, *Ihyashur Ihyabur Ihya-Adoni*

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

Sabaoth Al Shaddai; ¹ and I put the bearer under the keeping of God by the light of the face of God which does not change and by His eye which does not sleep nor slumber and His protection which can never be imagined nor escaped and His assistance which needs no help and His independence which has no equal and His eternity without end, His deity which cannot be overcome and His omnipresence which cannot be escaped, and I put him under the protection of the Lord of Gabriel and Michael and Israfil and Izrail and of Mohammed, the seal of the Prophets, and of all the prophets and apostles, and in the name of Him who created the angels and established their footsteps by His majesty to hold up His throne when it was borne on the face of the waters, and by the eight names written upon the throne of God. I also give the bearer the protection of K.H.T.S. and the seven H.W.M.'s and H.M.S.K.'s and by the talisman of M.S. and M.R. and R. and H.W.M. and S. and K. and N. and T.H. and Y.S.² and the learned Koran and by the name of God Most Hidden and His noble book and by Him who is light upon lights, by His name who flashed into the night of darkness and destroyed by His blaze every rebellious devil and made those that feared trust Him; and by the name by which man can walk upon water and make it as dry land; and by the name by which Thou didst call Thyself in the book which came down and which Thou didst not reveal to any but by whose power Thou didst return to Thy throne after the creation; and by the name by which Thou didst raise up the heavens and spread out the earth and createdst paradise and the fire; the name by which Thou didst part the sea for Moses and sent the flood to the people of Noah, the name written on Moses' rod and by which Thou didst raise up Jesus, the name written on the leaves of the olive

¹ This portion shows Jewish origin and gives some of the Hebrew names of God.

² These are mystical letters which occur in the Koran text.

THE FAMILIAR SPIRIT OR QARINA

trees and upon the foreheads of the noble angels. And I put the one who wears this amulet under the protection of Him who existed before all and who will outlast all and who has created all, God, than whom there is no other, the Living, He is the Knowing and the Wise; and I put the bearer under the protection of the name of God by which He placed the seven heavens firmly and the earth upon its mountains and the waters so that they flowed and the fountains so that they burst forth and the rivers so that they watered the earth and the trees brought forth their fruit and the clouds gave rain and night became dark and the day dawned and the moon gave his light and the sun his splendour and the stars went in their course and the winds who carried His messages; and I put the bearer under the protection of the name by which Jesus spoke in the cradle and by which He raised the dead from the grave and by which He opened the eyes of those born blind and cured the lepers, the name by which He made the dumb to speak. And I protect him by the Merciful God and His great name and His perfect words, which neither riches nor the sinner can resist, from the evil which comes down from heaven or the evil that ascends to heaven and from the evil which is found upon the earth or which comes out of the earth, and from the terror of the night and of the day and from the oppression of the night and of the day; and I protect him from all powerful influences of evil and from the cursed devil and from envious men and from the wicked infidel; and I protect him by the Lord of Abraham the friend of God, and Moses the spokesman of God, and Jesus, and Jacob and Isaac and Ishmael and David and Solomon and Job and Yunas and Aaron and Seth and Abel and Enoch and Noah and Elijah and Zechariah and John and Hud and Elisha and Zu Kifl and Daniel and Jeremiah and Shu'aib and Ilyas and Salih and Ezra and Saul and the Prophet-of-the-fish and Lokman and Adam and Eve and Alexander the Great and Mary and

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

Asiah (Pharaoh's wife) and Bilkis and Kharkil and Saf the son of Berachiah and Mohammed the seal of the prophets; and I protect him by God than whom there is no other, who will remain after all things have perished, and by His power and by His might and by His exaltation above all creatures and above all devils male and female, and all manner of *jinn* male and female, and familiar spirits of both sexes, and wizards and witches, and deceivers male and female, and infidels male and female, and enemies male and female, and ghouls and demons, and from the evil eye and the envious, from the evil in things of ear and eye and tongue and hand and foot and heart and conscience, secret or open. And I protect the wearer from everything that goes out and comes in, from every breath that stirs of evil or of movement of man or beasts, whether he be sick or well, awake or sleeping, and from the evil of that which dwells in the earth or in the clouds or in the mountains or the air or the dust or the vapour or the caves or the wells or the mines, and from the devil himself, and from the flying demons and from those who work sorcery and from the evil of the whirlwind caused by the chief of the *jinn*, and from the evil of those who dwell in tombs and in secret places, in pools and in wells and from him who is with the wild beasts or within the wombs, and from him who is an eavesdropper of the secrets of the angels, etc., etc.'” [After this the amulet closes with the words of the Moslem creed written three times, the call to prayer twice and] “May God's blessing and peace be upon the Prophet and upon his companions forever until the day of judgment. Praise be to God the Lord of the worlds.” *All this seems the height of folly to the educated Moslem. Yet it is taken from one of the best selling books on popular magic and medicine, printed in Cairo, third edition, 1328 A.H.; 192 pages, fine print, and sold for sixpence!*

No one can read of these superstitious practices and beliefs, which are inseparable from the Koran and Tradition,

THE FAMILIAR SPIRIT OR QARINA

without realizing that the belief in the *qarina* is a terror by night and by day to pious Moslem mothers and their children. For fear of these familiar spirits and demons they are all their lifetime subject to bondage. A mother never dares to leave her infant child alone in Egypt for fear of the *qarina*. The growing child must not tramp on the ground heavily for fear he may hurt his *qarina*. It is dangerous to cast water on the fire lest it vex the *qarina*. On no account must the child be allowed to go asleep while weeping. Its every whim must be satisfied for fear of its evil mate. It is the firm belief in Egypt that when a mother has a boy her *qarin* (masculine) has also married a *qarina* (feminine), who at that time gives birth to a girl. This demon-child and its mother are jealous of the human mother and her child. To pacify the *qarina* they sacrifice a chicken, which must be absolutely black and sacrificed with the proper ceremonies. It is impossible to see the *qarina* except in one way. Following a Jewish superstition (*Jewish Encyclopædia*, Article on "Demonology") a man may see evil spirits by casting the ashes of the fœtus of a black cat about his eyes, or by sprinkling these ashes around his bed he can trace their footsteps in the morning.

When we remember that only one-third of one per cent. of the women of Egypt are able to read, we can imagine the power that is exercised over them by the lords of this superstition, who sell amulets and prescribe treatment for the expectant mother and her child. Pitiful stories have come to me from those who were eye-witnesses of this swindle which is being carried on in every village of the Delta.

Al-Ghazali himself in his great work, *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, in speaking of the virtue of patience, says: "He who is remiss in remembering the name of God even for the twinkling of an eye, has for that moment no mate but Satan. For God has said, 'And whosoever turns from the reminder (remembrance) of the Merciful One, we will chain to him a devil, who shall be his mate (*qarina*).'"

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

We may perhaps appropriately close this chapter with what one of the learned men relates regarding the victory of the believer over his demon and its powers. It may lead us to a new conception of that petition in the Lord's Prayer which we offer also for our Moslem brothers and sisters: "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the Evil One." "Verily, the devil is to you a foe, so take him as a foe. This is an order for us from Him—may He be praised!—that we may take him as a foe. He was asked, 'How are we to take him as a foe and to be delivered from him?' and he replied, 'Know, that God has created for every believer seven forts—the first fort is of gold and is the knowledge of God; round it is a fort of silver, and it is the faith in Him; round it is a fort of iron and it is the trust in Him; round it is a fort of stones and consists of thankfulness and being pleased with Him; round it is a fort of clay and consists of ordering to do lawful things, prohibiting to do unlawful things, and acting accordingly; round it is a fort of emerald which consists of truthfulness and sincerity toward Him; and round it is a fort of brilliant pearls, which consists of the discipline of the mind (soul). The believer is inside these forts and Iblis outside them barking like a dog, which the former does not mind, because he is well-fortified (defended) inside these forts. It is necessary for the believer never to leave off the discipline of the mind under any circumstances or to be slack with regard to it in any situation he may be in, for whoever leaves off the discipline of the mind or is slack in it, will meet with disappointment (from God), on account of his leaving off the best kind of discipline in the estimation of God, whilst Iblis is constantly busy in deluding him, in desiring for his company, and in approaching him to take from him all these forts, and to cause him to return to a state of disbelief. We seek refuge with God from that state!'"¹

¹ Al-Damiri, *Hayat-ul-Hayawan*, vol. i. p. 470. (English translation by Jayakar).

VI

HAIR, FINGER-NAILS AND THE HAND

It must not surprise us that a great deal of animism and old Arabian superstition persist in Islam. The words of Frazer apply in this connexion:¹ "As in Europe beneath a superficial layer of Christianity a faith in magic and witchcraft, in ghosts and goblins, has always survived and even flourished among the weak and ignorant, so it has been and so it is in the East. Brahminism, Buddhism, Islam may come and go, but the belief in magic and demons remains unshaken through them all, and, if we may judge of the future from the past, is likely to survive the rise and fall of other historical religions." He goes on to say: "With the common herd, who compose the great bulk of every people, the new religion is accepted only in outward show, because it is impressed upon them by their natural leaders whom they cannot choose but follow. They yield a dull assent to it with their lips, but in their hearts they never really abandon their old superstitions; in these they cherish a faith such as they cannot repose in the creed which they nominally profess; and to these, in the trials and emergencies of life, they have recourse as to infallible remedies when the promises of the higher faith have failed them, as indeed such promises are apt to do."

What is here written is evident in many popular customs observed by the common people in Arabia and in Egypt, not to mention other Moslem lands, as we shall show in the following notes on certain superstitions connected with hair-cutting, nail-trimming, and the use of the hand as an amulet, especially in lower Egypt. The field is so vast,

¹ *The Scapegoat*, pp. 89-90.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

and investigations along these lines have been so meagre, however, that our readers must regard this chapter as only a point of departure for further study rather than a complete survey of even so small a section of a world of animistic practice.

Some writers go so far as to say that animism lies at the root of all Moslem theology. Simon states: ¹ "The Moslem is naturally inclined to Animism; his Animism does not run counter to the ideal of his religion. Islam is the classic example of the way in which the non-Christian religions do not succeed in conquering Animism. This weakness in face of the supreme enemy of all religions and moral progress bears a bitter penalty. Among the Animist peoples Islam is more and more entangled in the meshes of Animism. The conqueror is, in reality, the conquered. Islam sees the most precious article of its creed, the belief in God, and the most important of its religious acts, the profession of belief, dragged in the mire of Animistic thought; only in Animistic guise do they gain currency among the common people. Instead of Islam raising the people, it is itself degraded. Islam, far from delivering heathendom from the toils of Animism, is itself deeply involved in them. Animism emerges from its struggle for the soul of a people, modernized it is true, but more powerful than ever, elegantly tricked out and buttressed by theology. Often it is scarcely recognizable in its refined Arabian dress, but it continues as before to sway the people; it has received Divine sanction."

According to animistic beliefs the soul of man rests not only in his heart but pervades special parts of his body, such as the head, the intestines, the blood, placenta, hair, teeth, saliva, sweat, tears, etc. The means by which this soul-stuff is protracted or conveyed to others is through spitting, blowing, blood-wiping, or touch. In all these

¹ Gottfried Simon, *The Progress and Arrest of Islam in Sumatra*, pp. 157-158.

HAIR, FINGER-NAILS AND THE HAND

particulars and under all these subjects we have superstitions in Islam that date back to pagan days but are explained by Moslem Tradition and in some cases by the Koran itself. The personal soul in man has also a direct connexion with his shadow, his dreams, his second self, or demon. In a former chapter we have treated the subject of the *Qarina* or personal demon at some length. The soul may escape through sneezing, yawning, etc. This is the reason for pious ejaculations by Moslems on such occasions. Soul-stuff exists in animals and certain plants, and these are therefore considered sacred. The Moslem doctrine of the soul itself, its pre-existence, its journey after death, the visiting of graves and the whole subject of demonology, is full of animistic elements. It is against the dread of demons and with the object of protecting the soul and strengthening it against sinister influences that we have in Islam magic of every description.

In the disposal of hair-cuttings and nail-trimmings among Moslems today, and their magical use, there is clear evidence of animistic belief. People may be bewitched through the clippings of their hair and parings of their nails. This belief is world-wide.¹ "To preserve the cut hair and nails from injury," says Frazer, "and from the dangerous uses to which they may be put by sorcerers, it is necessary to deposit them in some safe place. In Morocco women often hang their cut hair on a tree that grows on or near the grave of a wonder-working saint; for they think thus to rid themselves of headache or to guard against it. In Germany the clippings of hair used often to be buried under an elder-bush. In Oldenburg cut hair and nails are wrapt in a cloth which is deposited in a hole in an elder-tree days before the new moon; the hole is then plugged up. In the West of Northumberland it is thought that if the first parings of a child's nails are buried under an ash-tree, the child will turn out a fine singer. In Amboyna,

¹ *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 274-275.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

before a child may taste sago-pap for the first time, the father cuts off a lock of the infant's hair, which he buries under a sago-palm. In the Aru Islands, when a child is able to run alone, a female relation shears a lock of its hair and deposits it on a banana-tree. In the island of Rotti it is thought that the first hair which a child gets is not his own, and that, if it is not cut off, it will make him weak and ill. Hence, when the child is about a month old, his hair is polled with ceremony. As each of the friends who are invited to the ceremony enters the house he goes up to the child, snips off a little of his hair and drops it into a coconut shell full of water. Afterwards the father or another relation takes the hair and packs it into a little bag made of leaves, which he fastens to the top of a palm-tree. Then he gives the leaves of the palm a good shaking, climbs down, and goes home without speaking to anyone. Indians of the Yukon territory, Alaska, do not throw away their cut hair and nails, but tie them up in little bundles and place them in the crotches of trees or wherever they are not likely to be disturbed by beasts. For they have a superstition that disease will follow the disturbance of such remains by animals. Often the clipped hair and nails are stowed away in any secret place, not necessarily in a temple or cemetery or at a tree, as in the case already mentioned."

It is remarkable that in Arabia, Egypt and North Africa everywhere this custom of stowing away clippings of hair and nails is still common among Moslems and is referred to traditions of the Prophet.

In North Africa a man will not have his hair shaved in the presence of anyone who owes him a grudge. After his hair has been cut, he will look around, and if there is no enemy about he will mix his cuttings with those of other men and leave them, but if he fears someone there he will collect the cuttings, and take them secretly to some place and bury them. With a baby this is said to be un-

HAIR, FINGER-NAILS AND THE HAND

necessary, as he has no enemies—a surprising statement. Nails are cut with scissors and they are always buried in secret. One can see this superstition also in the account given of a charm, described by Major Tremearne,¹ which consists of certain roots from trees mixed with a small lock of hair from the forehead and the parings of all the nails, hands and feet, *except those of the first fingers*. The fact of this exception clearly shows that we deal again with a superstition that has come from Arabia and animism, as we shall see later.

In Bahrein, East Arabia, they observe a special order in trimming the finger-nails and bury the discarded trimmings in a piece of white cloth saying: “Hatha amana min ‘andina ya Iblis yashud ‘anna al Rahman.”² They bury hair-combings in the same way, expecting to receive them back on the day of Resurrection. Concerning the thumb, they think it has no account with God because it can do no evil.

The belief that cut hair and nails contain soul-stuff and therefore may be wrongly used by enemies leads Moslems to hang their hair on the tombs of saints together with shreds of their garments, nails, teeth, etc. On one of the great ancient gates of Cairo, called *Bab-al-Mutawali*, this also takes place, and one may watch a constant procession of men, women and children having communion with the saint who dwells behind or under this gateway and seeking through personal contact with the doorway by touching, breathing, etc., to carry away the blessing.

In connexion with this superstition Rev. L. E. Högberg of Chinese Turkestan³ tells of the popular belief that “during the last days, Satan will appear on earth riding on a *Merr dedjell* (Satan’s mule). Every hair on the mule’s body is a tuned string or musical instrument. By the music

¹ *The Ban of the Bori*, p. 57.

² “O Satan, this is a safe deposit from us as God is our witness.”

³ *Central Asia*, December 1916.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

furnished in this way all the people on earth are tempted to follow Satan. Great horns grow out on their heads, so that they can never return through their doors. The faithful Mohammedan has, however, a way of salvation. He has carefully collected his cut-off nails, and placed them under the threshold, where they have formed a hedge, blocking the door so as to prevent the household from running after Satan!" Again the hair and nails have special power assigned to them as a protection for the soul against evil!

Many superstitions are connected with the paring of the nails, some of which are doubtless from Judaism, others from paganism. According to the Haggadah ¹ "every pious Jew must purify himself and honour the coming holy day by trimming and cleaning the nails beforehand. The Rabbis are not agreed as to when they should be pared; some prefer Thursday, for if cut on Friday they begin to grow on the Sabbath; others prefer Friday, as it will then appear that it is done in honour of the Sabbath. It has, however, become the practice to cut them on Friday, and certain *poskim* even prohibit the paring of the nails on Thursday." Moslems also have special days for this purpose. The Jews believe that the parings should not be thrown away. The Rabbis declare that he who burns them is a pious man (*hasid*), he who buries them is a righteous one (*zaddik*), and he who throws them away is a wicked one. The reason for this is that if a pregnant woman steps on them the impurity attached to them will cause a premature birth.²

In the order of cutting the nails the Jews have borrowed from the Zoroastrians, while the Mohammedans seem to have borrowed from the Jews. According to Mohammed, the order of procedure is remembered by the word *Khawabis*, which indicates the initials of the names of the five fingers of the hand. First one is to attend to the

¹ *Jewish Encyclopædia*, vol. ix ; Article on "Nail."

² *Jewish Encyclopædia*.

HAIR, FINGER-NAILS AND THE HAND

Khansar (little finger), then the *Wasti* (middle finger), then the *Abham* (thumb), then the *Binsar* (ring finger), and last of all to the *Sababa* (index finger). The *Sababa* means the "finger of cursing"—compare the root *sabba* = to curse. Moslems generally follow this practice without knowing why they do so. The cuttings of finger-nails are never thrown away but are either wrapped in a paper, buried under the door-mat or carefully put into a chink of the wall. Similar superstitions exist among the animistic tribes of the South Seas.

The custom connected with hair-cutting or shaving and the trimming of the nails during the pilgrimage ceremony at Mecca is well known. As soon as the pilgrim assumes the *Ihram* or pilgrim dress, he must abstain from cutting his hair or nails. This command is observed most scrupulously. We read in a celebrated Moslem book of law:¹ "The expiatory fine of three *modd* of foodstuffs is only incurred in full when at least three hairs or three nails have been cut; one *modd* only being due for a single hair or a single nail, and two *modd* for two hairs or two nails. A person who is unable to observe this abstinence should have his whole beard shaved and pay the expiatory fine." When the pilgrimage is terminated and the ceremony completed, the head is shaved, the nails are cut and the following prayer is offered:² "I purpose loosening my *Ihram* according to the Practice of the Prophet, Whom may Allah bless and preserve! O Allah, make unto me every Hair, a Light, a Purity, and a generous Reward! In the name of Allah, and Allah is Almighty!" After this prayer strict Moslems carefully bury their hair and nail-trimmings in sacred soil.

The statements made in books of Moslem law leave no doubt that hair is considered sacred and may not therefore be sold or in any way dishonoured. We read in the *Hedaya*,

¹ Nawawi, *Minhaj al Talibin*, p. 120.

² Burton's *Pilgrimage to Meccah*, vol. ii. p. 205.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

a great commentary on Moslem law: ¹ "The sale of human hair is unlawful, in the same manner as is the *use* of it; because, being a part of the human body, it is necessary to preserve it from the disgrace to which an exposure of it to sale necessarily subjects it. It is moreover recorded, in the *Hadith Sharif*, that 'God denounced a curse upon a *Wasila* and a *Mustawasila*.' (The first of these is a woman whose employment it is to unite the shorn hair of one woman to the head of another, to make her hair appear long; and the second means the woman to whose head such hair is united.) Besides, as it has been allowed to women to increase their locks by means of the wool of a camel, it may thence be inferred that the use of human hair is unlawful."

In many parts of the world, especially in East Arabia, human hair is used by native doctors in medicine as a powerful tonic. It is generally administered by tincture or decoction. In this respect the hair of saints has more value than ordinary hair. I have known of a case where a learned *kadi* sent to the barbers to collect hair in order to prepare such a powerful tonic. Special chapters are found in lives of Mohammed the Prophet on the virtues of his *Fadhalat*, breath, blood, etc., including his hair. We read, for example, in the life of Mohammed by Seyyid Ahmed Zaini Dahlan: ² "When the Prophet had his head shaved and his companions surrounded him they never suffered a single hair to fall to the ground but seized them as good omens or for blessing, and since His excellency only had his hair cut at the times of the pilgrimage this has become *sunna*. So it is related in the *Mawahib* and he who denies it should be severely punished. And Mohammed bin Sairain relates, I said to Obeidah Suleimani, I have a few hairs of the Prophet which I took from Anas, and he replied, If I had a single hair it would be worth more to me than all the world."

¹ Hamilton's *Hedaya* (1791), vol. ii. p. 439.

² Margin of *Sirat al Halabi*, Cairo ed., 1308 A.H., vol. iii. pp. 238-239.

HAIR, FINGER-NAILS AND THE HAND

Because of this belief, hairs of the Prophet's beard, and in some cases of other saints in Islam, are preserved as relics in the mosques throughout the world, e.g. at Delhi, Aintab, Damascus, etc. To give a recent instance, the population of Safed in Palestine, according to a missionary correspondent,¹ was all excitement in the early days of July 1911 because a veritable hair from the beard of the Prophet had been granted them as a gift by the Sultan. A Christian builder was engaged to restore a mosque of the Binat Yacoob, where the famous relic now finds shelter. The mayor of the city took the journey to Acre in order to accompany the relic to its resting-place. The correspondent goes on to relate some of the marvels that were told as to the virtues connected with the hair of the Prophet. Twenty soldiers, fully armed, escorted the relic, which was carried on horseback by a special rider.

We pass on to superstitions connected with the human hand. Mr. Eugène Lefebure writes:² "There never was a country where the representation of the human hand has not 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 Phoenicians, 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 super-

¹ *Der Christliche Orient*, September 1911.

² *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie d'Alger et de l'Afrique du Nord*, 1907, No. 4.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

stition has been developed: the mystic virtues of the number five, because of the five fingers of the hand.”¹ (Or its sinister power.)

“The hand of Fatima,” says Tremearne, “is a great favourite in Tunis, and one sees it above the great majority of doorways; in Tripoli there is hardly one, and this is only to be expected, since the sign is an old Carthaginian one, representing not the hand of Fatima at all, but that of Tanith. It has been thought, however, that the amulet is so curiously similar to the thunderbolt of Adad, worn in the necklet of the Assyrian kings along with emblems for the sun, the moon, and Venus, that it may be a survival of that.”¹

The hand is often painted upon the drum used in the bori (devil) dances in Tunis. It is also held up, fingers outstretched and pointing towards the evil-wisher, and this in Egypt, North Africa and Nigeria has now become a gesture of abuse. In Egypt the outstretched hand pointed at some one is used to invoke a curse. They say, “Yukhammisuna,” or “He throws his five at us,” i.e. he curses. Not only the hand but the forefinger is used for this purpose. It is therefore called, as we have seen, the *Sababa*. 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. It is regarding the position of the hands that the four sects have special teaching and can be distinguished. Who can doubt that this indicates also a magical use of the hands? The hand is widely used as an amulet against the evil eye. It is made of silver or gold in jewellery, or made of tin of natural size, and is then suspended over the door of a house. The top of a Moslem banner is often of this shape. It is also worn on the harness of horses, mules, etc., and on every cart used in Alexandria we see either a brass

¹ Mr. Lefebure in his short work, *La Main de Fatima*, has gathered all that is known on the subject.

HAIR, FINGER-NAILS AND THE HAND

hand or one painted in various colours. 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 finger of their two hands together, which signifies separation, enmity, hatred. The same sign is used by grown-up people also to close a discussion.

The origin of the stretching out of the hand with the palm exposed toward the person was explained by a Sheikh in this way. Tradition says that at one time a woman who saw Mohammed became very much enamoured with his handsome presence, and Mohammed, fearing she would work some power over him, raised his hand (said to be the right one) and stretched it out to one side in front of him with the palm exposed toward the woman, at the same time he repeated Surah 113. When he did this the covetous glance passed between his two fingers and struck a nail that was in a tree near by and broke it in pieces!

Finally, we may add the curious custom, also common in lower Egypt, of dipping the hand in the blood of a sacrifice and leaving its mark upon doors, foundations of buildings, animals, etc., in order to consecrate them or protect them from evil influences. In an earlier article on the *'Aqiqa* we made reference to the prevalence of blood sacrifice in early Islam, and its significance. The practice of dipping the hand in blood and putting marks on the door-post may go back to the story of Israel in Egypt, but the present use of the hand in this way is mixed with all manner of superstitions. Who can unravel the threads in the tangled skein of Moslem beliefs and practices? There is much of Judaism, as Rabbi Geiger has shown; more perhaps, even, of Christian ideas prevalent in Arabia at the time of the Prophet; but most of all, Islam in its popular forms is full of animism and practices which can only be described as pagan in origin and in tendency.

VII

TRANSLATIONS OF THE KORAN

DR. D. S. MARGOLIOUTH recently called attention to a noteworthy fact, namely, that Islam in theory offers no facilities to those outside its pale for the study of its character before they enter. "A man must enrol himself as a member first," he writes, "and then only may he learn what his obligations are. The Koran may not be sold to Unbelievers; soldiers are advised not to take it with them into hostile territory for fear the Unbeliever should get hold of it; and many a copy bears upon it a warning to Unbelievers not to touch. Pious grammarians have refused to teach grammar to Jews or Christians, because the rules were apt to be illustrated by quotations from the sacred volume."

In how high a degree the Arabic language is to Moslems a wholly *sacred* language, not to be lightly regarded nor taught to unbelievers, one may learn from the commentaries on Surah *Yusef*, the first verse: "Those are the signs of the perspicuous Book. Verily we have revealed it, an Arabic Koran. Haply ye may understand." Al Tabari, commenting on this verse, says: "God Most High caused this noted Book to come down an Arabic Koran to the Arabs, for their tongue and speech is Arabic. We, therefore, revealed this Book in their language that they might be wise and fully understand." The Arabic Koran is today the one sacred text-book in all Moslem schools in Turkey, Afghanistan, Java, Sumatra, Russia and China, as well as in those lands where Arabic is the mother tongue.

Yet to three-fourths of the Moslem world Arabic is a dead language; for Islam spread even more rapidly than did the language of the Koran, and in consequence

TRANSLATIONS OF THE KORAN

the Moslem world of today is polyglot. The chief literary languages of the Moslem world next to Arabic are Persian, Turkish, Urdu and Bengali. In all of these, and in other languages, there is a large Moslem religious literature—dogmatic, mystic and controversial. Yet the question whether the Koran itself might be translated into other languages has always been contested by the orthodox party. It is true that Mohammedans have themselves prepared a number of translations, or running commentaries on the sacred text, as interlinear notes, but such copies of the Koran are expensive and rare. An interesting correspondence was carried on in the columns of the *Orient and Occident* some thirty years ago between Sheikh Mohammed Hasanein El Ghamrawy, a student at Oxford, and the editors, in regard to this question. The former laid down the chief reasons why the Koran was not translated into foreign languages by Moslems in the earlier days, and, secondly, what had been the motives that led to its translation into Persian, Urdu and Turkish in later times. He speaks of the translations of the Koran as having been adopted rather as a preventive measure than to propagate the faith. It was intended, he says, “to keep the religion of Islam from losing its hold on countries where Arabic is little known.” Islam has never had its Pentecostal gift of tongues. Before our Lord Jesus Christ gave the Great Commission, the Old Testament had already been translated into Greek.

Since the last Annual Report of the American Bible Society was issued the number of languages into which the Scriptures have been translated has passed the thousand mark. The count as of January 1, 1938, was 1008. Substantially nine-tenths of the people of the world now can hear in their own tongues, wherein they were born, the wonderful works of God, if the books are furnished them and if they are taught to listen or to read. This list includes every language, and even every important dialect, spoken in

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

the Moslem world. The Bible, in contrast to the Koran, has this unique quality, that it can be rendered into all the languages of mankind without losing its majesty, beauty and spiritual power. The secret lies in the subject-matter of the Scriptures.

“The Bible belongs to those elemental things—like the sky and the wind and the sea, like bread and wine, like the kisses of little children and tears shed beside the grave—which can never grow stale or obsolete or out of date, because they are the common heritage of mankind. This Book goes down to the root of our bitterest needs, our darkest sorrows.”¹

The difficulty with the Koran is that it is in a sense untranslatable. To imitate its rhyme and rhythm is impossible. Its beauty is altogether in its style, and, therefore, necessarily artificial. For the sake of the rhyme unnecessary repetitions are frequently made, which interrupt the sense of the passage and sometimes even appear ridiculous in a translation. “The language of the Koran,” says Stanley Lane-Poole, “has the ring of poetry, though no part of it complies with the demands of Arab metre. The sentences are short and full of half-restrained energy, yet with a musical cadence. The thought is often only half expressed; one feels the speaker has essayed a thing beyond words, and has suddenly discovered the impotence of language and broken off with the sentence unfinished. There is the fascination of true poetry about these earliest Surahs; as we read them we understand the enthusiasm of the Prophet’s followers, though we cannot fully realize the beauty and the power, inasmuch as we cannot hear them hurled forth with Mohammed’s fiery eloquence. From first to last the Koran is essentially a book to be heard, not read.” And elsewhere the same author says: “These early speeches of the Koran are short and impassioned. They are pitched too high to be long sustained. We feel

¹ *Report of British and Foreign Bible Society, 1913-1914.*

TRANSLATIONS OF THE KORAN

that we have to do with a poet, as well as a preacher, and that his poetry costs him too much to be spun out. The words are those of a man whose whole heart is in his subject, and they carry with them even now the impression of the burning vehemence with which they were hurled forth.”¹

It is this artificial character of the book which has baffled the skill of translators, and no translation will ever satisfy those who can read the original; for did not Mohammed himself say, “I love the Arabs for three reasons: because I am an Arabian, because the Koran is Arabic, and because the language of the people of Paradise is Arabic too.” A story was recently current among Moslems at Peshawar that George Sale, on his death-bed, declared himself a Mohammedan, and asked forgiveness for having put forward such an incorrect translation of the Koran as he had made, and desired that all copies should be burned! (Perhaps our Indian friends were offended by his statement in the Preface to the Reader: “The Protestants alone are able to attack the Koran with success, and for them I trust Providence has reserved the glory of its overthrow.”)

In attempting to give as complete a list as possible² of the translations of the Koran, we will deal first with those in the languages of Europe—in nearly every case the work of non-Moslems—and then with Oriental versions by Moslems and missionaries.

I. TRANSLATIONS INTO THE LANGUAGES OF EUROPE

The first translation of the Koran was due to the missionary spirit of Petrus Venerabilis, Abbot of Clugny (died A.D. 1157). He proposed the translation of the Koran into Latin, and the task was accomplished by an Englishman, Robert of Retina, and a German, Hermann of Dalmatia.

¹ Cf. *Islam* (1903), p. 16.

² There have been other translations into other languages since this article was written, but it can serve as an introduction.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

Although the work was completed in 1143, it remained hidden for nearly four hundred years, till it was published at Basle in 1543 by Theodore Bibliander. This version was afterwards rendered into Italian, German and Dutch. A second Latin translation of the Koran was made by Father Louis Maracci in 1698 and published at Padua, together with the original text, explanatory notes and refutations. Concerning this translation Sale says: "It is, generally speaking, very exact, but adheres to the Arabic idiom too literally to be easily understood." The notes, he adds, are valuable, but the refutations "unsatisfactory and sometimes impertinent." Later editions of Bibliander's text appeared in 1550 and 1721 (Leipzig). An Arabic-Latin Koran was also published at Leipzig in 1768 by Justus Fredericus Frieriep, and another at Amsterdam in 1646.

Andrew Du Ryer, who had been French Consul in Egypt and had a considerable knowledge of both the Turkish and Arabic languages, first translated the Koran into French. This was printed at Paris in 1647. The version is, however, inaccurate, and contains frequent transpositions, omissions and even additions (Sale). Later and better French translations have followed: by Savary in 1783, and by Kasimirski in 1840, 1841 and 1857. Both of these versions have been frequently reprinted in popular form. Another French version is that by G. Pauthier (Paris, 1852).

As far as I have been able to learn, there is no translation of the Koran into Danish or Norwegian. A Swedish translation, however, was made by C. J. Tornberg in 1874, but it is said to be very inaccurate. J. T. Nordling wrote a prize essay for Upsala University on the Swedish translation in 1876.

A translation of one Surah, *El Mi'raj*, was made into Spanish in the thirteenth century at the request of Alphonso X by his physician, Don Ibrahim, and a French rendering of this translation was made by Bonaventura de

TRANSLATIONS OF THE KORAN

Seve. I have not heard of a complete translation into Spanish, nor have I so far been able to trace a translation of the Koran into Greek, although the Greeks have been in closest touch with their Moslem neighbours for many centuries.

Early Hebrew translations are not unknown. We learn from the *Jewish Encyclopædia* that fragments of these translations are found in a Bodleian MS. (No. 1221); in a bookseller's list a volume in Hebrew is mentioned containing the Torah, the Targum and the Koran. A translation from Latin into Hebrew was made in the seventeenth century by Jacob b. Israel ha Levi, Rabbi of Zante (died 1634). In modern times a translation was made into Hebrew by Hermann Reckendorf and printed at Leipzig in 1857.

The first German translation was made from the Latin. Other translations were made by Schweigger, from the Italian version at Nürnberg in 1616, and by Frederick Megerlin (Frankfurt, 1772). Sale's English version was translated into German by Theo. Arnold, and published at Lemgo (Germany) in 1746. The best-known translations in German, however, are those by Boysen (1773), revised and corrected by G. Wahl in 1828, and a more recent one by Ullmann (1853), which has passed through many editions. But, according to Nöldeke, none of the German translations is equal to those which we have in English.

The first Dutch translation, *De Arabische Alcoran*, was from Schweigger's version, and was printed at Hamburg in 1641. A later one was made by J. H. Glasemaker from Du Ryer's version (and is still more inaccurate), and was published at Leyden in 1658, and in six later editions. The copy I possess is dated 1734, *Zijnde de zevende en laatste druk*. Another translation is that by Dr. Keyzer, Professor of Mohammedan Law at Delft, published at Haarlem in 1860.

A Russian version appeared at St. Petersburg (Petrograd) in 1776.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

An Italian version, *Alcorano di Macometto*, was made by Andr. Arrivabene at Venice in 1547, but is very incorrect, as it is from the Latin version of Robert Retenensis (Bibliander). A more recent version in Italian is a diglot Koran by Aquilio Fracassi, Professor in the Royal Technical School of Milano (1914). The preface gives an account of earlier translations, and is followed by a brief summary of the chapters and an explanation of their titles.

As early as the fifteenth century, Johannes Andreas, a native of Xativa in the kingdom of Valencia, who from a Mohammedan doctor became a Christian priest, translated not only the Koran, but also its glosses and the six books of the Sunna, from Arabic into the Arragonian tongue, at the command of Martin Garcia, Bishop of Barcelona and Inquisitor of Arragon.¹ It is interesting to note this as perhaps the earliest version by a convert; we doubt Sale's statement regarding the Sunna!

Finally we may mention a polyglot edition of the Koran (*Tetrapla*), prepared by the savant Andrea Acolutho of Bernstadt, printed at Berlin in 1701, in folio. This gives the Koran in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Latin. The book is very rare.

Before we speak of the various English versions, mention must yet be made of a version undertaken in Esperanto by Khalid Sheldrake, of which specimens have appeared in the *Islamic Review*.² He states that Islam and Esperanto have a common ideal in view; that each strives for the breaking down of the "unnatural barriers of colour, creed and caste." We give below the translation of the 112th Surah and of the 1st in Esperanto:

“Diru: ke Allaho estas la Sola Dio
La eterna Dio
Li ne havas idojn, nek estas ido
Kaj nenio en la mondo similas al Li.”

¹ Sale's *Koran*, p. vii.

² London, July 1914.

TRANSLATIONS OF THE KORAN

“Pro la nomo de Dio la indulgema and malsevera,
Laudo estu al Dio, la majstro de la mondoj
Plena de kompato, Rego en la tago de la jugo
Al vi servu ni, kaj al vi ni pregu
Konduku nin en la gusta vojo,
En la vojo de tiuj, al kiuj vi afablas
Ne de tiuj kiu koleras kontraŭ via volo
Ne de tiuj kiuj eraras.”

The first English Koran was Alexander Ross's translation of Du Ryer's French version (1648-1688). He was utterly unacquainted with Arabic, and not a thorough French scholar; therefore his translation is faulty in the extreme.

Sale's well-known work first appeared in 1734, has passed through many editions, and is the most widely known of all English versions. He himself wrote: "Though I have freely censured the former translations of the Koran, I would not, therefore, be suspected of a design to make my own pass as free from faults; I am very sensible it is not; and I make no doubt that the few who are able to discern them, and know the difficulty of the undertaking, will give me fair quarter." Whatever faults may have been found in Sale's translation, his Preliminary Discourse will always stand as one of the most valuable contributions to the study of Islam. It has been translated into Arabic with added notes under the title *Makalat fi'l Islam*, and is eagerly read by Moslems themselves. Sale's translation is extremely paraphrastic, but the fact that the additional matter in italics is, in nearly every case, added from the Commentary of El-Baidhawi, makes it the more valuable to the reader. This is the only complete English translation with explanatory footnotes, without which the Koran is scarcely intelligible.

In 1861 a new translation was made by the Rev. J. M. Rodwell. In this the Surahs or chapters are arranged chronologically. Dr. Margoliouth characterizes this rendering as one of the best yet produced. "Not the least among its recommendations is, perhaps, that it is scholarly without

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

being pedantic—that is to say, that it aims at correctness without sacrificing the right effect of the whole to over-insistence on small details.” But this version also has many inaccuracies, especially in the use of tenses and particles.

Edward Henry Palmer’s translation appeared in 1880 in the series, “Sacred Books of the East.” He considers Sale’s translation scholarly, his notes invaluable, but says that the style of the language employed “differs widely from the nervous energy and rugged simplicity of the original.” Although Rodwell’s version approaches nearer to the Arabic, Palmer states that in this also “there is too much assumption of the literary style.” In his own translation he has attempted to render into English the rude, fierce eloquence of the Bedouin Arabs, and has succeeded, I believe, almost to the same degree as Doughty in his *Arabia Deserta*. Where rugged or commonplace expressions occur in the Arabic, they are rendered into similar English; sometimes the literal rendering may even shock the reader as it did those who first heard the message. For example, in the chapter of Abraham, verse 19, Sale and Rodwell have softened down the inelegant text, but Palmer gives it fearlessly:

“Behind such a one is hell, and he shall be given to drink liquid pus! He shall try to swallow it, but cannot gulp it down.”

In addition to these the *Bibliotheca Orientalis* mentions an Arabic Koran lithographed at Serampore in 1833, with an English translation on the margin.

We also have two English translations by Moslems, not to speak of a new translation which has appeared by the editor of the *Islamic Review*. In 1905 the Holy Koran, translated by Dr. Mohammed Abdul Hakim Khan, with short notes, appeared from the press. This was printed in England. In 1911 Ashgar and Company at Allahabad published the Arabic text with English translation, arranged

TRANSLATIONS OF THE KORAN

chronologically, by Mirza Abu'l Fazl. In the admirable abstract of the contents of the Koran, the author introduces his readers to the principles of textual criticism. The chronological order adopted differs from that of Muir, Rodwell and Jalal-ud-Din, although most nearly approaching the last-named. The English translation is vigorous, independent, and although sometimes crude and too literal, will perhaps on this very account prove useful to students of the Arabic text. The following are examples of such literalisms which offend good taste, but give the Arabic original: "For you is a lesson in the cattle; we give you to drink of what is in their bellies"; "We will brand him on the snout"; or, where the angels came to Abraham: "And there came before them his wife with exclamations, and she beat her face and said: 'Old and barren me!'" But this is not a blemish in the translation unless it be a blemish in the original, and the translation of some of the earlier Surahs, such as The Night, The Sun, and The Pen, are wonderfully well done. There are instances, however, where the author has shown his bias by a translation which is inaccurate, and, therefore, misleading. In the translation of two parallel verses, one referring to the death of John the Baptist and the other to that of Jesus Christ (Surah 19 : 15 and 34), the same Arabic verb and tense is in the one case translated by the past and in the other by the future, to uphold the Moslem theory that Jesus Christ did not die on the cross, but will die after His second return: "And peace upon him the day he was born, and the day he *died*, and the day when he shall be raised up alive." "And peace upon me the day I was born, and the day *I shall die*, and the day *I shall be raised up alive*."

To sum up the facts in regard to the English translations, the reader has the choice of no fewer than eight versions of the Mohammedan Bible, four of them by Moslems.

Another and most elaborate attempt at an English translation is that by the "Anjuman-i-Taraqqi Islam" at

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

Qadian, of which specimen pages only were published by the Addison Press, Madras. The Arabic text in beautiful script appears at the top of the quarto page, followed by careful transliteration and a translation. The work is being done apparently by the collaboration of educated Moslems of the Qadiana sect in the Punjab. The commentary in English takes up more than three-fourths of the page, and is thoroughly modern in its attitude; but it is marred by its hopelessly sectarian character. The preface to the work throws much light on the whole question of Koran translation, as viewed by Moslems of the liberal school:

“It goes without saying that an English translation of the Holy Quran with copious explanatory notes and exhaustive comments is one of the crying needs of the time. This is an age of religious research. Everybody is desirous of having first-rate information about the great religions of the world. And the need for such information is greater in the case of Islam than in the case of any other religion. No other religion has been so cruelly misrepresented as that of the Holy Quran. . . . Besides answering the objections of the hostile critics we intend to present to the readers of all creeds and nationalities a true picture of Islam, which alone of all religions can solve the greatest problems of the age by its universality, grandeur, simplicity and practicality.

“It is with these objects in view that we have undertaken this translation of the Holy Quran. And nothing could serve this purpose better than such a reliable translation with necessary comments adapted to convey the true sense of the Holy Book and to remove the misunderstandings under which many of the people are labouring, thanks to the misrepresentations of the Christian writers on Islam. Indeed, there are already a number of English translations, but they are mostly by Christian writers, who besides being insufficiently acquainted with Arabic, could not totally free themselves from religious bias, and many of their notes and preliminary discourses are calculated to mislead the reader rather than enlighten him.”

For the comparison of four of these English translations of the Koran we give below in parallel columns translations of the Chapter of the Forenoon (93), according to the

TRANSLATIONS OF THE KORAN

versions of Sale, Palmer, Rodwell, and that of the Indian Moslem, Abu'l Fazl.

SALE	PALMER	RODWELL	ABU'L FAZL
<p>By the brightness of the morning, and by the night when it groweth dark ! thy Lord hath not forsaken thee, neither doth he hate thee. Verily the life to come shall be better for thee than this present life: and thy Lord shall give thee a reward wherewith thou shalt be well pleased. Did he not find thee an orphan, and hath he not taken care of thee? And did he not find thee wandering in error, and hath he not guided thee into the truth? And did he not find thee needy, and hath he not enriched thee? Wherefore oppress not the orphan; neither repulse the beggar: but declare the goodness of thy Lord.</p>	<p>By the forenoon! And the night when it darkens! Thy Lord has not forsaken thee! nor hated thee; and surely the hereafter is better for thee than the former; and in the end thy Lord will give thee, and thou shalt be well pleased! Did He not find thee an orphan, and give thee shelter? and find thee erring, and guide thee? and find thee poor with a family, and nourish thee? But as for the orphan oppress him not; and as for the beggar drive him not away; and as for the favour of thy Lord, discourse thereof.</p>	<p>By the noon-day brightness! And by the night when it darkeneth! Thy Lord hath not forsaken thee, neither hath he been displeased. And surely the Future shall be better for thee than the Past, and in the end shall thy Lord be bounteous to thee and thou be satisfied. Did he not find thee an orphan and gave thee a home? And found thee erring and guided thee; And found thee needy and enriched thee. As to the orphan, therefore, wrong him not; And as to him that asketh of thee, chide him not away; And as for the favours of thy Lord, tell them abroad.</p>	<p>By the noon-day brightness. And by the night, when it darkens. Thy Lord hath not forsaken thee, neither is he displeased. And surely the Hereafter shall be better for thee than the former; And in the end thy Lord will give to thee, and thou shalt be well-pleased. Did He not find thee an orphan, and give thee a home? And found the (<i>sic</i>) erring, and guided thee? And found thee needy, and enriched thee? Then, as for the orphan, oppress not him; And as for him who asks, chide him not away. And as for the favours of thy Lord, tell it abroad.</p>

There is no doubt that the chief charm of the Koran, from a literary standpoint, is its musical jingle and cadence. This an English translation cannot reproduce. Yet attempts have been made by Richard Burton and others to acquaint English readers with this element of poetry in Mohammed's revelation. The following version of the Surah, already

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

given, appeared in an article in the *Edinburgh Review* for July 1866, and although it may not equal the Arabic, it is, to say the least, more interesting than any of the ordinary prose versions given above:

“I swear by the splendour of light
And by the silence of night
That the Lord shall never forsake thee
Nor in His hatred take thee ;
Truly for thee shall be winning
Better than all beginning.
Soon shall the Lord console thee, grief no longer control thee,
And fear no longer cajole thee.
Thou wert an orphan-boy, yet the Lord found room for
thy head,
When thy feet went astray, were they not to the right path
led?
Did He not find thee poor, yet riches around thee spread?
Then on the orphan-boy, let thy proud foot never tread,
And never turn away the beggar who asks for bread,
But of the Lord’s bounty ever let praise be sung and said.”

II. VERSIONS IN ORIENTAL LANGUAGES ¹

One of the earliest versions of the Koran for the use of Moslems was the translation made into Urdu by the learned Sheikh, Abd-ul-Kadir Ibn-i-Shah Wali Ullah, of Delhi, in 1790. This has appeared in several editions, lithographed, with the Urdu text interlinear with the original.² An Arabic-Persian interlinear in two volumes was printed at Calcutta in 1831; Brunet also mentions a lithographed Persian interlinear translation (Ispahan, n.d.). The latest edition is a polyglot Koran in folio, lithographed in two colours at Delhi by the Farooki Press, 1315 A.H., and entitled *Koran Majid, Terjumat Thalatha*. The introduction is in Urdu, and the interlinear text gives first the Arabic, followed by a Persian translation, an Urdu free

¹ Cf. Jean Gay, *Bibliographie des Ouvrages relatifs à l’Afrique et à l’Arabie* (Paris, 1875); Brunet, *Manuel de Libraire*, Article on “Mahomet”; J. Th. Zenker, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* (Leipzig, 1861).

² An edition in two volumes was printed at Hugly in 1248 (1829).

TRANSLATIONS OF THE KORAN

translation, and an Urdu literal translation. The Persian translation is by Shah Rafi'-ud-Din. In addition to the text a running commentary is given on the margin, both in Urdu and in Persian. In Persian we have other editions of the Koran with explanatory notes on the text, or attempts at literal versions. A scholarly translation of the Koran into Urdu was also made by the late Rev. Dr. Imad-ud-Din, of Amritsar, India. This was the first translation to be published in Roman-Urdu characters, and through the Christian Mission Press at Allahabad it has been widely circulated throughout India.

The Rev. Dr. Ahmad Shah, S.P.G. missionary at Hamirpur, U.P., more recently gave us the Koran in a Hindi translation from the original Arabic. The language is said to be idiomatic, and the paragraphs are arranged according to the thought of the text.

It is not generally known that the Malay version of Baidhawi's Commentary on the Koran contains an inter-linear translation, sentence by sentence, with the Arabic text. Two or three editions of this commentary have been published, and it is sold throughout the Dutch East Indies.

According to Hughes, a translation has also been made into Pushtu, and another writer speaks of one in Gujerati. I have not been able to secure information, however, in regard to these versions.

From the *Terjuman* (quoted in the *Revue du Monde Musulman*, vol. iv. p. 634) we learn that: "Les Musulmans d'Adjari, aux environs de Batoum, et des régions avoisinantes, ne parlent et ne comprennent que la langue grouse [*sic*]. Pour faciliter leur instruction religieuse, le Coran a été traduit récemment dans leur langue; l'auteur de cette traduction se nomme Mir Yanichouyli." One would like to know more accurately concerning this version for so small a population.

Some of these translations, however, especially the earlier

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

ones, are not, correctly speaking, translations of the text; rather they consist of a commentary in the vernacular on the Arabic text, which sometimes is transliterated. A Chinese Commentary on the Koran is an example. In the *Revue du Monde Musulman* (vol. iv. p. 540) a full account of such a commentary is given by M. F. Farjanel and M. L. Bouvat. The work is in octavo, but gives neither date nor author's name. It is entitled *King han Tchou-kiai heueting* ("The Sacred Book explained in Chinese, and clearly divided into Sections").

"The Chinese phonetic rendering, in this part of the book, is indicated after the Arabic text, and the Chinese explanation follows. It is noteworthy that the Arabic text itself is not translated, the Faithful doubtless being supposed to understand it. The notes in Chinese which accompany each Arabic phrase form an annotated explanation of the prayer or of the text, written in colloquial language. All the rest, after the Fatiha, is composed entirely of verses of the Koran, likewise translated into the language of the common people."

To give the reader an idea of what such a translation means, we give below the comment on the words "King of the Day of Judgment," in the first Surah.

Maliki yaumi'd-din. (In Arabic character.)

Ma li kee yao minding. (In Chinese character.)

"This expression has twelve Arabic characters. With the thirty preceding characters, this makes forty-two. On the basis of these forty-two characters Allah has created forty-two kinds of diseases of the human heart. To every man who, during prayer, recites these words with true devotion, Allah will grant the cure of these forty-two moral illnesses."

The word "Amin" (Chinese: *A mi nai*) is thus explained:

"This word has four sacred characters which designate four saints: *Alif* stands for Adam; *Mim* for Mohammed, the apostle of God; *Ya* for *Yahya* (John); and *Num* for

TRANSLATIONS OF THE KORAN

Noah. Those who recite these characters accurately will receive the honours and dignity pertaining to these four saints, on the day of the Resurrection."

A translation of the Koran in Javanese appeared in 1913 from the Semarang-Drukkery en Boekhandel, Batavia. It is issued in parts of about a hundred pages. The print and text are exceptionally good; the footnotes in Javanese are textual and not explanatory. This translation was made by Mr. Ngarpah, who calls himself "Servant of the Sultan of Turkey." He was once a Roman Catholic convert, and then turned back to Islam. The Javanese students at Al Azhar were greatly interested in this translation when I showed it to them. An earlier translation in Javanese character is mentioned by Brill.

In 1908 the Rev. William Goldsack, a missionary of the Australian Baptist Society, undertook the translation of the Koran into Bengali. It was a bold but strategic venture on literary lines, and has doubtless had some effect among intelligent Moslems. The Koran printed in this fashion with Christian comment and the explanation of difficult passages, can well be made a schoolmaster to lead Moslems to Christ. One may hope that this method will find imitation in other mission fields and other languages. Efforts in this direction are sure to meet with opposition, as was the case with the Turkish versions.

In the days of Abdul Hamid a translation of the Koran into Turkish would have been an impossibility, owing to Moslem prejudice, yet during his reign copies of the Arabic Koran with Turkish Commentary in the margin, were freely published. A beautiful edition of such a Koran was printed at the Bokharia Press, Constantinople, 1320 A.H. After the declaration of the Constitution, the translation of the Koran into Turkish was begun simultaneously by different writers. It aroused not a little stir in Moslem circles, and the undertaking was opposed by those of the old school. The earliest translation that appeared was

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

entitled *Terjumat el Koran*, by Ibrahim Hilmi, and was printed at Stamboul some few years ago. Another translation appeared in the Turkish bi-monthly, *Islam Majmu'asi*, edited by Halim Thabit. The translator signed himself *Kh. N.* When I saw it only thirteen parts had appeared. The Director of the Khedivial Library at Cairo, who showed me the magazine, expressed his opinion that the enterprise had been stopped by the Turkish Government, and feared that all copies of the paper so far issued would be confiscated and destroyed. Ahmed Effendi Aghaieff, in the *Jeune Turc*, advocated these translations as a necessary religious reform, a sign of the times, and as the only way to reach the masses with the truths of Islam. He wrote:

“We must begin this (translation) at once, and show the people that it is possible to reach the authentic foundations of our religion. First in rank of these is the Koran. Till now the ordinary Turk read this, committed it to memory, said his prayers and had his communion with God, absolutely without understanding the sense and content of what he read or prayed. Naturally his readings and prayers made no such impression on his heart and soul as we should expect from the reading of a holy book and the recitation of a prayer. Reading and prayer were both mechanical; here was one of the principal causes of the impotence of religion as an educational force, and this obstacle must be removed.

“It is this thought that has led to the translation of the Koran into Turkish; and the remarkable thing, and that which shows how ripe the time is for this enterprise, is that the translation has been begun in quarters utterly at variance with each other in their tendencies. An entirely new religious era is opening in Turkey. We can already foresee that it will be big with beneficent results for the country; and the country is so ready for such work that the protests against the translation have been remarkably feeble and have not even attracted general attention.”

TRANSLATIONS OF THE KORAN

The hope expressed in this editorial, however, was not realized. Neither of these translations has so far been completed, the Sheikh-ul-Islam himself having forbidden all translations of the sacred Arabic text into Turkish. Even an appeal to the Grand Vizier, we are told, met with no response. There is no doubt, however, that after the War those who have begun this translation will complete it. The spirit in which it was undertaken is well indicated by Ibrahim Hilmi's preface, from which we translate two paragraphs as they appeared in the *Aegyptische Nachrichten* (Cairo) in a review of the work:

“To confer a favour upon my countrymen, I have decided to translate the noble contents of the Holy Koran into simple and smooth Turkish. It is true that earlier Turkish Commentaries on the Koran, or Korans with explanatory notes, have appeared, but all these works were published in obscure and classical style, and did not give the meaning of the text clearly, so our Moslem brethren received little benefit from them. In my youth I learned the whole Koran by heart and became a *Hafiz*. Even now I can recite the Koran with the right intonations, but nevertheless I did not understand hardly a single phrase; and this is the case with hundreds of thousands among the Moslems. They have spent their youth in learning the proper recital of the Koran, have even learned it by heart, but of the meaning of the Holy Book they understand nothing. The foundations of our faith are unknown to them.

“Truly the Koran did not descend from heaven merely as a masterpiece of beautiful Arabic eloquence. Non-Arabic speaking nations have rightly expressed the desire to know what the book contains. Everyone cannot learn sufficient Arabic to understand the Koran, nor have they time to wade through twenty volumes of Commentaries. Since I have for a long time laboured in my native country with patriotic zeal for its intellectual and social reformation,

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

I have now the special wish to give a version of the Koran in the language of the people. The translators have done their best to help all the readers, especially the youth at school, to a right understanding of the sacred text, and have, therefore, used simple language. The reader will not misjudge my religious object and my good intention in this work. Even when the Turk reads his Koran in Turkish he will not abandon the use of the original text and the commentaries. May God bless my undertaking and this new translation.”

To sum up the result of recent investigations. The Koran has been translated into twelve European languages, and, not counting the polyglot editions, we have in these languages thirty-four versions (no fewer than eight in the English language alone). In Oriental languages we have been able to learn of some ten versions, and in the case of one or two of these the information seems doubtful. When we remember that this work of translation has, with a few exceptions, been the work of Western scholars, Orientalists and missionaries, the contrast between the Arabic Koran and the Bible, the Book for all nations, is strikingly evident. And from the missionary standpoint we have nothing to fear from modern Koran translations; rather may we not hope that the contrast between the Bible and the Koran will be evident to all readers when they compare them in their vernacular? As long as orthodox Islam, however, retains its grip on the strategic centres of the Moslem world, it may be doubted whether the translations of the Koran made for Moslems by their own leaders will have any wide circulation. At Constantinople and Cairo the leaders still seem bound to discourage any translation of their Sacred Book.¹ We are told that at Lahore a well-known Moslem lawyer was recently speaking to his co-

¹ Cf. *Al Manar*, vol. xvii., Part 2, p. 160 (against a Turkish version); and xvii., Part 10, p. 794 (protesting against a new English version by Kamal-ud-Din, Editor of the *Islamic Review*).

TRANSLATIONS OF THE KORAN

religionists in the Panjab on matters connected with Islam, and protested against this mistaken policy. "The reason why Christians succeed is because wherever they go they have the Bible and say their prayers in their mother-tongue; whereas we have wrapped up our religion in an Arabic dress. We should give the people the Koran and let them say their prayers in their own language." The only answer he received was, "Thou art thyself an unbeliever to say such things."

[NOTE.—This chapter was written during the World War. It has been revised, but the reader will find additional information on more recent Koran translations in *The Moslem World*, vol. xvii. pp. 279-289: A Bibliography of Koran Texts and Translations by Wm. Sage Woolworth. Also an article on recent Turkish Translations in vol. xxviii. no. 3, by John Kingsley Birge.]

VIII

THE "ILLITERATE" PROPHET

COULD MOHAMMED READ AND WRITE?

WHETHER Mohammed could read or write has for centuries been a controverted question. Today most Moslems deny it; some, however, affirm it, but we are especially interested in the denial, because it is generally used to fortify their argument for the miraculous character of the Koran.

In investigating this question anew, we are not unmindful that our sources, viz. Mohammedan traditions, are no longer considered as authoritative as they once were. As Hurgronje says, this illusion has been disturbed by Prince Caetani and Father Lammens. "According to them, even the data which had been pretty generally regarded as objective, rest chiefly upon tendentious fiction. The generations that worked at the biography of the Prophet were too far removed from his time to have true data or notions; and, moreover, it was not their aim to know the past as it was, but to construct a picture of it as it ought to have been, according to their opinion."

But while we may know less by the standards of trustworthy tradition, we know more of the conditions in Arabia and the life at Mecca, thanks to the investigations of Wellhausen, Wüstenfeld, Cheikho, Lammens, Huart and others.

I

The art of reading and writing was fairly common at Mecca at the time of Mohammed's birth. According to later Moslem tradition the science of writing was not

THE "ILLITERATE" PROPHET

known in Mecca until introduced by Harb, the father of Abu Sufian, the great opponent of Mohammed, about A.D. 560! But this is evidently an error, for close intercourse existed long before this between Mecca and Yemen through caravan trade, and in Yemen writing was well known for centuries. In another tradition Abd ul Muttalib is said to have written to Medina for help in his younger days, i.e. about A.D. 520. Both Jews and Christians also dwelt in the vicinity of Mecca for two hundred years before the Hegira, and used some form of writing.

Muir says: "It is evident that writing of some sort was known and practised at Mecca long before A.D. 560. At all events, the frequent notices of written papers leave no room to doubt that Arabic writing was well known, and not uncommonly practised there in Mahomet's early days. I cannot think with Weil, that any great want of writing materials could have been felt, even by the poorer Moslems, in the early days of Islam. Reeds and palm-leaves would never be wanting."

He quotes an account from Katib al Waqidi, showing that Mecca was far in advance of Medina in the art of writing, so that after the battle of Bedr many of the Meccan prisoners were compelled to teach the art of writing to the children of Medina. Each captive was assigned ten boys, and their tuition, when completed, was to be accepted as a full ransom.¹

Hartmann also, in a long note (vol. ii. p. 425 of *Der Islamische Orient*), shows that writing was very common in Yemen and North Arabia, and that there was close intercourse between Mecca and both these provinces as well as with Persia. He says: "There is no doubt that writing on parchment was an ordinary custom for poets, merchants, etc."

There are many traditions which show that writing was not uncommon in Mecca about Mohammed's time, and the

¹ Cf. Muir, vol. i. p. viii and vol. iii. p. 123.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

traditions which ascribe a prejudice on his part against writing appear to have no good foundation. We find mention of Abu 'l-Abbas, the uncle of Mohammed, having left behind him a camel-load of MSS. 'Ali copied out certain precepts of the Prophet, and in order to have them constantly at hand, tied the roll round the handle of his sword.¹ Jaber and Yaser, two sword-makers in Mecca, are mentioned by the commentators as being in the habit of reading the Taurat and the Injil when Mohammed passed them, and he listened to their reading. On the first page of Al-Bukhari's collection of traditions we read that Waraqa bin Naufal, Khadijah's cousin, read the Gospel and copied it in the Hebrew character. Others say Arabic and Hebrew.²

The cursive Arabic script was in use as early as the time of Mutalammis and Tarafa, the second half of the sixth century, A.H.³ The rise of Islam no doubt helped to spread a knowledge of writing, but did not originate it. Louis Cheikho, in his *Arabic Studies on Christian Literature in Arabia before Islam*, devotes a chapter to prove that the art of writing itself was introduced by Christians both in South and North Arabia long before the Hegira.

The two kinds of characters used, namely, the Nabati and the Naskhi, which exist today in rock inscriptions, as well as in documents, owe their origin to Christians. Berger writes: "L'écriture Arabe existait avant Mahomet, elle a été chrétienne avant d'être musulmane."⁴ And Wellhausen affirms the same: "Die Christen haben des Arabischen wohl zuerst als schriftsprache gebraucht. Namentlich die Ibaedier von Hira und Anbar scheinen sich in dieser Beziehung Verdienste erworben zu haben."⁵

We also read in the Aghani⁶ the tradition above quoted

¹ Muir's *The Mohammedan Controversy*, p. 114.

² Cf. Al Asqalani's *Fath-ul-Bari Commentary*, vol. i. p. 19.

³ *Encyclopædia of Islam*, vol. i. p. 383.

⁴ *Histoire de l'Écriture chrétienne en Arabie avant l'Islam*, p. 287.

⁵ *Reste Arabischen Heidentums*, p. 232.

⁶ 3 : 14.

THE "ILLITERATE" PROPHET

that Waraqa bin Naufal wrote portions of the Gospel record in Hebrew letters. Cheikho goes on to show that a great number of Koran words, especially the names and attributes of God, the terms used in regard to the rewards and punishment of the future life, and the religious vocabulary in general (which are usually attributed to Mohammed's genius) all occur in pre-Islamic Christian poetry.¹

Moslem tradition is in this respect unreliable. We are told, for example, that at Mecca at the time of the Prophet only seventeen men were able to write! Their names are preserved for us by al-Baladhuri (see last chapter Arabic edition of the text, Cairo 1901). This statement seems very improbable, not to say impossible. The *Fath-ul-Bari* mentions the names of the amanuenses of the Prophet,² and says they numbered no fewer than forty-two.³ While this may be an exaggeration, it certainly seems to prove that the art of reading and writing was not uncommon. Letters were written by the order of Mohammed to foreign rulers, and we even hear of a correspondence kept up in Hebrew with the Jews. (See Abu Daoud under the heading *Reports from the Ahl-al-kitab.*)

Among the wives of the Prophet we are sure that at least Ayesha and Hafza could read and write. The frequent mention of "writing" and "the book" in the Koran (240 times) is striking in this connexion, especially if the speaker of the words was himself wholly unacquainted with either writing or reading, and did not have an abundance of material. The Meccans, in fact, like the Egyptians in their fondness for writing, used all possible materials. Our information is fairly extensive and is derived from an account of the missionary epistles sent out by the Prophet and of the collection of the Koran. The chief materials

¹ See his book, *Le Christianisme et la Littérature chrétienne en Arabie avant l'Islam*, vol. ii. pp. 158-195.

² Vol. ix. p. 19.

³ Casanova (*Mohammed et la Fin du Monde*, pp. 96, 97) gives their names from five different authorities.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

were leather, palm-leaf, the broad shoulder-blades of the camel (these are still used in Oman, Arabia, in the day schools), potsherds, flat white stones, wooden tablets, parchment and papyrus.¹ Moritz says: "It may be regarded as certain that in a commercial town like Petra the art of writing was in common use at the beginning of the third century."²

In view of the facts given above and the statement that Mohammed himself had so many secretaries, there were doubtless more than seventeen persons in the religious capital, with its large pilgrim traffic, who were literate. Mohammed himself was a most intelligent man, and had acted for a long time as mercantile agent for Khadijah. When we remember what this involves in wholesale caravan traffic with distant Syria, it is not unnatural to suppose that he may have had opportunity to learn to read and to write.³ He might even have learned the art from two of his wives.

II

On what, then, is the general Mohammedan denial of their Prophet's ability to read or write based? On one word, *ummi*, used six times in the Koran, and on one obscure passage where the Angel Gabriel bids him "read" (*iqra'*) and he replies, "I am not a 'reader.'" Let us examine the words used, and see whether their significance by derivation or usage will bear the weight of the interpretation that has become current, or contradicts it.

The word *ummi* occurs six times in the Koran. We copy the passages in order and follow Palmer's translation (and mistranslation):

The chapter of the Heifer (2 : 74): "and some of them are *illiterate folk* that know not the book but only idle tales."

The chapter of Imran's family (3 : 19): "and say to

¹ *Encyclopædia of Islam*, Article on "Arabic."

² *Ibid.*

³ Margoliouth (*Mohammed*, pp. 67-69) shows that he even had a shop at Mecca, and kept accounts.

THE "ILLITERATE" PROPHET

those who have been given the book and unto the *Gentiles*, are ye too resigned?"

The chapter of *Al 'Araf* (7 : 155-158): "who follow the apostle the *illiterate Prophet*; whom they find written down for them in the law and the gospel. . . . Believe thou then in God and His Apostle the *illiterate Prophet* who believes in God and in His words."

The chapter of the Congregation (62 : 2): "He it is who sent unto the *Gentiles* a prophet amongst themselves to recite to them His signs and to purify them and to teach them the book and wisdom, although they were before in obvious error." ¹

The words in italics in these passages are all the translations of one root-word in Arabic, *ummi*. Palmer hesitates to render them all with the word "gentile," although his comment on chapter 3, verse 19, shows his opinion: "Mohammed seems to have borrowed the expression from the Jews; *ummiyyun* having the same significance as the Hebrew *goyim*" (Palmer, vol. i. p. 48).

Lane (*Arabic Lexicon*, vol. i. p. 92), who has collected the views of the Arabic lexicographers, begins by saying: "*ummi* properly means *gentile*—in a secondary sense a heathen; one not having a revealed scripture; or belonging to the nation of the Arabs, who did not write nor read, and therefore metaphorically applied to anyone not knowing the art of writing nor that of reading. Mohammed was termed *ummi*, meaning a gentile, as distinguished from an Israelite; according to most of his followers, meaning illiterate. Some assert that Mohammed became acquainted with writing after he had been unacquainted therewith, referring to the Koran (29 : 47), where it is said, 'Thou didst not read before it from a book, nor didst thou write it with thy right hand.'"

Rodwell also in a note on chapter 7, verse 157, expresses the opinion that the word *ummi* (*illiterate*) is equivalent to

¹ All of these are Medina verses except 7 : 155-158.

the Greek *ethnic* and the Hebrew word *goyim*, and was applied by the Jews to those unacquainted with the Scriptures. He says: "There could be no doubt that Mohammed in spite of his assertions to the contrary, with a view to proving his inspirations, was well acquainted with the Bible histories. He wished to appear ignorant in order to raise the elegance of the Koran into a miracle." Whether this be so or not, the manner in which this expression is thrown into the verse and the whole context raise the conjecture which, as Dr. Wherry points out, becomes almost a certainty that "this appellation came originally from the Jews who used it in expressing their contempt for the Gentile prophet. Mohammed would readily adopt the name under the circumstances."¹

Regarding the meaning of the word *ummi*, Al-Tabari says (vol. iii. p. 142), commenting on the word in Surah *Alu 'Imran*: "the *ummiyyun* are those among the Arabs who have no revelation." We read in the Arabic dictionary *Taj al Aroos* that Mohammed was not altogether illiterate, but that "he could not distinguish between good and bad writing." We are also told that some traditions state that he learned to read and write after he became a Prophet.

In the commentary called *Al-Khazin* (vol. ii. p. 146) the following interpretation of the word *ummi* shows the growth of the legend. "The Prophet could neither read nor write *nor cypher*, and this the authorities are agreed is evidence of the greatest miracle in the case of the Koran."

Fahr er-Razi, however (vol. viii. p. 149), in commenting on chapter 7, p. 2, says: "*ummi* means related to the people of the Arabs, because they are an *ummi* people, who have no book, and do not read a book or write." Ibn Abbas says the meaning is, "those who have no book and no

¹ "In any Arabic dictionary if we take *all* the meanings, and *all* the derived forms from the root word *amma=qasada* we cannot anyhow arrive at 'illiterate.' Not a shade, not a vestige of authority do we find except the Koran Commentators, who naturally had a theory to support."
—A. T. UPSON.

THE "ILLITERATE" PROPHET

prophet sent unto them." He reiterates this explanation on Surah 3 : 19, but in obscure phrases (vol. ii. p. 426).

Al-Tabari is more definite in his comment (vol. xxviii. p. 61) on the same verse: "The people of Mohammed were called *ummiyyun* because no revelation had come to them." This shows very clearly that the word *ummi* does not mean illiterate, but *gentile*. While on Surah 3 : 19, he says (vol. iii. p. 143): "Those to whom the Book (Revelation) came among the Jews and Christians and the *ummiyin*, *who have no book*, the Arab polytheists."

Baidhawi (vol. i. p. 150) interprets: "The *ummi* is he who neither reads nor writes." The commentary called *Al-Khazin* says (vol. ii. p. 147): "The *ummi* is he who is like the Arabs or the people of the Arabs because most of them neither write nor read." Then he goes on to quote a tradition according to which Mohammed said: "We are an *umma* (people) *ummiyya*: we neither write nor cypher."

Fahr er-Razi says: "Concerning the word in question the learned differ in regard to the meaning of it: some of them say that *ummi* is he who does not confess belief in a book nor in an apostle. Others say it is he who does not know how to read and write skilfully. This second significance is more credited because there were *ummi* among the Jews, and they believed in a book and an apostle; and also because Mohammed himself said we are a people *ummi*: we do not write and we do not cypher" (vol. i. p. 309).

The New Islam leaders are also perplexed in regard to this problem. Mohammed Ali, in his translation of *The Holy Koran* (Woking, 1917), commenting on chapter 2, verse 76, says that the word *ummiyyun* is specially applied to the Arabs who were generally unacquainted with reading and writing. He strongly objects to the definition of the word as given by Rodwell and Lane. In a long footnote (No. 950) he protests that the word *ummi* can never mean gentile, and says that Lane's conclusion in his dictionary "is entirely without foundation."

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

In another passage, however, *Suratu 'l-Jumu'ah*, he himself translates the same word as *Meccan*, and his conclusion (p. 362) is that there is ground for believing that Mohammed could write after revelation came to him, although he still had his letters written by scribes. In the preface to the same work there is a long, though very lame, argument to prove that "the Holy Prophet left at his death a complete written Koran with the same arrangement of the verses and the chapters that we now have."

There are indications, we admit, in the Koran that some of its chapters existed in written form at a very early date. For example, Surah 56 : 77, "None shall touch it (the written copy) save the purified." Also the account of the conversation of 'Omar who discovered a written copy of an entire chapter—the twentieth—in the house of Fatima. Why could not Mohammed himself have written it?

III

Orientalists are disagreed on the subject. In discussing the question whether Mohammed used written sources for his "revelations," Otto Pautz gives a list of authorities who have expressed an opinion on the question whether Mohammed could read and write, *pro* and *con* as follows:

Those who affirm it: "M. Turpin, *Histoire de la vie de Mahomet*. 1, p. 285-88. Boulainvilliers, S. 232 Anm. S. F. G. Wahl, *D. Koran*, Einl. S. LXXVIII f. A. Sprenger, *D. Leb. u. d. Lehre des Mohammed*. 11, S. 398-402. G. Weil, *Hist. krit. in d. Koran*. 2 Aufl. S. 39 Anm. 1. H. Hirschfeld, *Judische Elemente im Koran*. Berlin, 1878, S. 22."

Those who deny it he gives as follows: "Marracci, *Ref.* p. 535. M. Prideaux, *La vie de Mahomet*, p. 43. S. Ockley, *The History of the Saracens*, 3rd ed. *The Life of Mahomet*, p. 11. C. F. Gerock, *Vers. e. Darst. d. Christologie des Koran*. S. 9. A. P. Caussin de Perceval a. a. O. i, p. 353. J. M. Arnold, *D. Islam*. S. 230. E. H. Palmer, *The Koran transl.* 1. Introduction, p. XLVII. L. Ullmann, *D. Koran ubers.* S. 129. Anm. 4."¹

¹ *Muhammad's Lehre von der Offenbarung* (Leipzig, 1898), p. 257.

THE "ILLITERATE" PROPHET

Otto Pautz himself leaves the question unsettled; his argument being that once the question of Mohammed's use of written sources is closed, the other is unimportant.

Nöldeke¹ shows that the word *ummi* is everywhere used in the Koran in apposition to *Ahl ul-kitab*, that is the Possessors of the Sacred Scriptures: therefore it cannot signify one who does not read and write; but (as we have seen from the Arabic authorities themselves) one who did not possess or who had no access to former revelations. Nöldeke, although he admits that Mohammed had no access to the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as we understand them, says that the question of Mohammed's illiteracy is confused, because the references given by Moslems on this point are contradictory. The common tradition, he goes on to show, is due not to the fact that men were in search of the truth but rather to the fact that Mohammed's illiteracy was manufactured to establish dogmatic or political opinions. Generally speaking, the Sunnis deny his ability to read and write, while the Shia'hs affirm it.

Sprenger speaks of one Mohammed bin Mohammed bin Nu'man (died 413 A.H.), who wrote a book on the subject establishing the literacy of the Prophet.

The testimony of the Shia'hs is summed up in the celebrated collection called *The Hyat-ul-Kuloob*, translated by the Rev. James L. Merrick (Boston, 1850), under the title *The Life and Religion of Mohammed*. He correctly states in his preface that this is the most popular standard work in Persian:

"In regard to the Prophet's title of *ummi*, traditions are contradictory. Some say he was so styled because he could not read or write. Others maintain that it referred to his *ummet*, or sect, conveying the idea that he was like the illiterate Arabs. Another party insist that the title is taken from *umm* (mother), denoting that the prophet was as simple as a newborn infant. There are traditions which state that the title is derived from *Umm-ul-kora*, an epithet

¹ *Geschichte des Qurans*, p. 10.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

of Mekka, and consequently that *ummi* would signify Mekkaite. There is nothing contrary to the position that the Prophet was never taught to read and write before his assumption of the prophetic office, and to this agrees a verse of the Koran, in which the Most High declares to him, 'Thou couldst not read any book before this; neither couldst thou write it with thy right hand; then had the gainsayers justly doubted of the divine original thereof.'¹ Tradition is likewise contradictory whether he read and wrote after his assumption of the prophetic office, but there can be no doubt of his ability to do this, inasmuch as he knew all things by divine inspiration, and as by the power of God he could perform acts which were impossible to all others. He had his own wise reasons for not reading and writing himself, and generally ordered his attendants to read letters which he received. The Imam Jafer-as-Saduk reckons it a special favour of heaven that he was raised up among a people, who, although they had letters, had no divine books and were therefore called *ummi*.

"It is related that a person inquired of the Imam Mohammed Taky, why the prophet was called *Ummi*. The *imam* demanded what the *Sunnis* said on this subject, and was answered,—The sect insisted he could not write. The *imam* gave them the lie, invoked a curse on them, and demanded how the Prophet could be ignorant when he was sent to instruct others. . . . On the authority of the Imam Saduk, it is related that when Abu Sufian marched for Ohod, Abbas wrote to inform Mohammed of the fact. He received the letter when in the garden of Medina with some of his companions. After reading the communication he ordered the people about him to enter the city, and then disclosed to them the news. The same *imam* also certifies that the Prophet read and wrote."²

¹ Surah, 29 : 47.

² Merrick, *The Life and Religion of Mohammed as contained in the Sheeah Traditions of The Hyat-ul-Kuloob* (Boston, 1850), pp. 86, 87.

THE "ILLITERATE" PROPHET

Many educated Moslems in our day agree with the Shia'hs that it would be unworthy of one who occupied so high a rank as God's Messenger to be ignorant of the very elements of knowledge.

One of the traditions which the Shia'hs advance is the celebrated incident in connexion with the treaty made in the sixth year of the Hegira with the Quraish at a place near Mecca, named Hudaibiya. The account is preserved by Bukhari and Muslim (vol. ii. p. 170). Ibn Hisham has also recorded it at length in his *Siratu 'r-Rasul* (vol. ii. p. 175, ed. Bulaq, 1295 A.H.). The former tells us that 'Ali was chosen as the prophet's amanuensis on this occasion, and that when Mohammed bade him write the words, "A treaty between Mohammed the Prophet of God and Suhail bin 'Amr," the latter objected to the term "Apostle of God," remarking that if the Quraish acknowledged that, there would be no necessity for opposing Mohammed at all. The latter then turned to 'Ali and told him to cut out the words "Apostle of God" and write in their stead the words suggested by Suhail, viz. "Son of Abdullah!" To this 'Ali objected, saying, "By God I will never cut it out." Then, the narrative proceeds: "The apostle of God took the writing and though he did not write well, wrote what he had ordered ('Ali), viz. 'Mohammed son of Abdullah.'" ¹

This account is also found in the commentary by Al-Baghawi on chapter 48, verse 25, and at greater length in Tabari's *Al-Mawahib al-Laduniya*. The question, however, arises, as Nöldeke indicates, whether even this is positive proof that Mohammed could write. The word *kataba* is sometimes used to signify "dictated"; the text also may have been corrupted.

Nöldeke comes to the following conclusions: ² (a) Mohammed desired to be known as one who did not under-

¹ Caetani (*Annali dell' Islam*, vol. i. pp. 716-717) gives the account and the references in full.

² *Geschichte des Qurans*, pp. 12-14.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

stand reading and writing; he therefore employed a number of scribes and always had letters that came to him read out to him. (b) He did not have access to the Bible or other Christian books, least of all to a book entitled *Asatir al-Awalin*. He proves that all the deductions of Sprenger regarding the use of this word in the Koran are at fault. The word is not derived from the Greek *historia*, but is a double plural from the Arabic *satr*—a line of script. (c) This does not exclude the fact that Mohammed used the oral traditions of Jews and Christians as well as the unwritten traditions current among his own people.

The frequency with which Mohammed feels it necessary to resent the charge of the Meccan idolaters that the Koran was a book composed by fraud is certainly indicative that they must have known something of his methods and of his sources. In chapter 25, verse 5, we read: "The unbelievers say, Verily this Koran is a mere fraud of his own devising, and others have helped him with it who had come hither by pillage and lie; and they say these are tales of the ancients that he hath put in writing, and they were dictated to him morning and evening" (Palmer's translation).

Compare also Surah 16 : 105, where the same charge is made. In neither passage does Mohammed answer the charge *by saying that he can neither read nor write*.

Qastalani, according to Sprenger, gives the history of a dispute that took place in Spain in which the philosopher Avenpace held that Mohammed could both read and write; although he was condemned as a heretic for holding this opinion. In one of the disputes that arose on this question, a Koran passage (Surah 29 : 46) was used by the Moslems themselves to show that although Mohammed could not read before revelation came to him, he was able afterwards both to read and to write. Sprenger gives other proofs, which are not so conclusive, although they

THE "ILLITERATE" PROPHET

are cumulative. He quotes traditions according to which Mohammed gave instructions to one of his scribes in words that prove his knowledge, not only of penmanship, but of calligraphy. How else could he have said:

"Put down the ink pot, cut the pen, divide the strokes of the *sîn* and do not lengthen the *mim* so much." He quotes the story in regard to the treaty at Hudaibiya, although the different versions do not agree in detail.

Ibn Abi Shaiba said: "The Prophet knew how to read and write before he died. I have known people who have affirmed this." If this tradition is reliable, it is important, for Ibn Abi Shaiba died 105 A.H. The scene described by many authorities in the older biographies, which took place three days before Mohammed's death on June 4, 632, would leave no doubt in the matter if we could trust Mohammedan tradition.

Shahraṣṭānī gives the words of the Prophet used on this occasion as follows: "Bring the inkstand and a sheet, that I may write something, in order that you will not be misled after me." This tradition comes to us from the lips of an eye-witness and is preserved by different Companions and their followers. There is no version of the tradition in which Mohammed does not express the wish that he himself should use the pen. (See Ibn Sa'ad, p. 149, and vol. ii. p. 398, Sprenger's *Mohammed*, who gives a list of no fewer than nine *Isnads* for the tradition.)

We will now examine the so-called earliest chapter of the Koran (Surah 96), which has suffered from mistranslation owing to a misconception of the story on which it is based. Hirschfeld¹ comments on the legend, after relating it, as follows:

"'During my sojourn on Mount Hira,' said the Prophet, 'the archangel Gabriel appeared to me, seized me, and said: *Iqra'*! (proclaim). I replied, I am no proclaimer (reader).

¹ *New Researches into the Composition and Exegesis of the Koran* (1902), p. 18.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

The angel seized me again and repeated: *Iqra'* . . . I said: I am no proclaimer. Finally he forced me to say: *Iqra' bismi rabbika.*'

"I did not translate the word *Iqra'* in my rendering of the legend, although I translated it in the verse by *proclaim*, my object being to call attention to the early misunderstanding of the word by traditionists and interpreters of the Koran as well as by modern translators and biographers of the Prophet. For the sentence in question is nothing but an Arabic version of the phrase in the Pentateuch (Gen. xii. 8, in connexion with iv. 26), 'He proclaimed the name of the Lord.' "

Strange to say, the authenticity of this tradition has not been questioned, although it is called not a vision, but a dream by Ibn Ishak, Al-Baghawi, Al-Baidhawi, and others.

If Hirschfeld gives the true translation, another argument used to prove that Mohammed was illiterate utterly disappears, for the tradition is evidently an explanation of the Koran text, made later. The name of the angel Gabriel is not mentioned in any Meccan revelation at all, and was at that period apparently unknown to Mohammed. The tradition could therefore not have arisen until many years later.

The uncertainty regarding the text and its significance in the tradition mentioned is clear when we consult the commentaries. For example, the author of *Fath-ul-Bari* (vol. i. p. 18), in his comment on Bukhari's text, states that "the meaning of the words *ma ana biqari* are, 'I am not able to read well or readily.'" He goes on to say that the text itself is uncertain, and that according to one narrator Mohammed did not say "I cannot read," nor "I am not a reader," but "How can I read?", or again, according to another account: "What shall I read?"

All this shows that the matter is uncertain, and God knows best, as the Moslems say.

Even if we admit that the word *iqra'* signifies "to read" a book, it is not at all certain that the reply of the Prophet

THE "ILLITERATE" PROPHET

as given in the tradition signified "I cannot read." Rather, as Sprenger shows (*Life of Mohammed* (Allahabad, 1851), p. 95), it signifies: "I am not reading at present."

Sprenger's arguments, although old, are not yet answered. He believes that Mohammed had access to portions of the genuine, and some of the apocryphal, Scriptures. Al-Tabari tells us that when Mohammed first gave his revelations even his wife Khadijah had read the Scriptures and was acquainted with the history of the Old Testament prophets.

"It is preposterous" (Sprenger concludes) "to suppose that though the Arabs in the north and west of the Peninsula were Christians, and had a great number of monasteries, no translation of the Bible, or at least of a popular work containing the Scriptural History, was then extant in Arabic. When the Musulmans conquered Hira, they found in the citadel young priests, who were Arabs, engaged in multiplying copies of the Bible. I have above asserted that the words of a tradition of 'Aishah which made some persons believe that Waraqa first translated the Scriptures into Arabic, means simply that he knew how to write Arabic, and that he copied in Arabic parts of the Bible. I have since come into the possession of a copy of Al-Zarkashi's commentary on Al-Bukhari. This author confirms the reading which I have chosen by observing on the words '*He used to write Hebrew.*' This is the reading of Al-Bukhari in this passage; but the reading in Muslim is, 'He used to write Arabic'; and this is also the reading of Bukhari in the chapter on Dreams; and this must be received as the correct reading, because both Bukhari and Muslim agree on it." He further observes on the words '*He wrote the Gospel in Hebrew*'—the Qadhi says, this is the reading in this passage; but the correct reading is '*in Arabic*'; and this expression is an idiom. The reading in Muslim is also, '*He wrote the Gospel in Arabic.*'"

According to *Fath-ul-Bari* (vol. i. p. 19) Waraqa bin Naufal not only read and wrote Arabic, but Hebrew as

well. Moreover, Cheikho (p. 153) gives an account of how Zuhra bin Kilab, Mohammed's great-great-grandfather, wrote out the alphabet and taught it to others. Cheikho quotes from Baladhuri, who tells how the Arab merchants even in that day taught each other writing (*al-khatt*). One of Mohammed's scribes, Zaid bin Thabit, learned the Hebrew characters in two weeks and carried on Mohammed's correspondence in it with the Jews (*Baladhuri*, p. 480, Cairo ed., 1901).¹

There are two other important references to Mohammed's writing. In regard to the treaty between Mohammed and the Koreish at Hudaibiya, known as the oath of Ridhwan, Muir (vol. iv. p. 33) gives a long account; although he does not mention the fact that when 'Ali refused to write the words, "*Mohammed the son of Abdullah*," Mohammed himself wrote these words. The following, however, is the tradition according to Waqidi (Muir's footnote): Mohammed wrote at the foot of the treaty, "The same shall be incumbent upon you toward us, as is incumbent upon us toward you."

The tradition in regard to Mohammed's calling for writing materials on his death-bed, is given by Muir as follows:

"About this time, recognizing 'Omar, and some other chief men in the room, he called out, 'Bring hither to me ink and paper, that I may record for you a writing which shall prevent your going astray for ever.' 'Omar said, 'He wandereth in his mind, is not the Koran sufficient for us?' But the women wished that the writing materials should be brought, and a discussion ensued. Thereupon one said, 'What is his condition at this present moment? Come let us see if he speaketh deliriously or not.' So they sent and asked him what his wishes were regarding the writing he had spoken of; but he no longer desired to

¹ His reference is to the Arabic text of *Futuh ul-Buldan*, p. 471. This passage at the close of the book is unfortunately omitted by Dr. Hitti in his translation of the work (Columbia University, N.Y.).

THE "ILLITERATE" PROPHET

indite it. 'Leave me thus alone,' he said, 'for my present state is better than that ye call me to.'

"When the women were about to bring the writing material, 'Omar chided them: 'Quiet,' he said. 'Ye behave as women always do; when your master falleth sick ye burst into tears, and the moment he recovereth a little ye begin embracing him.' Mohammed, jealous even on his death-bed of the good name of his wives, was aroused by these words, and said, 'Verily they are better than ye are.' If this tradition be true, it shows that Mohammed was only partially delirious at the moment."¹

IV

Finally, we must mention a document known as a letter supposed to have been written by Mohammed himself, which, though in a somewhat damaged condition, has been accepted by Moslems in India as authentic, photographed by them and repeatedly published with translations in several languages.

Mr. Belin² describes the manner in which Mr. Barthelémy discovered the letter in a Coptic monastery, and gives the Arabic text. The following is the translation:

"In the name of God the Merciful, the Clement. From Mohammed the servant of God and His apostle, to Al-Makaukus, the chief of the Copts, Salutation to him who follows the right course. But after (this preliminary) I invite thee to accept Islam; make a profession of it, and be safe, God will give thee thy reward twice; but if thou refusest, the sin of the Copts will be upon thee. (Say) O people of the Scriptures, come to the word (of the profession) which will equalize us and you. We adore only Allah, and associate nothing with Him. Let us not take for ourselves lords besides God. If they refuse then say (to them) Bear witness that we are Moslems."

Seal

Of God
Apostle
Mohammed.

¹ Muir's *The Life of Mahomet*, vol. iv. pp. 271-272.

² *Journal of Asiatic Society* (1854), vol. iv. pp. 482.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

There is no doubt that the Prophet sent such a letter to the *Makaukus* or Governor of Alexandria; in all the standard biographies of Mohammed he is always mentioned among the number of the potentates to whom envoys with such letters of invitations to profess Islam were sent. The ancient document is not a papyrus but a parchment, yet in such a state that the precise nature of the characters cannot be ascertained; to judge from the facsimile, they are more like Naskhi than Cufic, so that they may perhaps be considered as a hybrid between the two; nor can any points or other vowel marks be discerned. M. Belin is of the opinion that the document in question was not the production of a forger like the Letters Patent of Mohammed, preserved by the Armenians of Asia Minor (and presented to the Government of the Viceroy of Egypt in order to recover some rights and immunities conceded to them by the Prophet), but that it is undoubtedly genuine.¹

A copy of the letter referred to, together with a reproduction, was also printed at Cairo, 1909, in a little book on the history of Arabic writing, entitled *Dalil ul-kātib*, by Hassan Shahab. In the same book by this professor of the Azhar University (p. 46), we have a list of the women in Mecca who at the time of the Prophet could both read and write; namely, Shifa', the daughter of Abdallah; Adowiya, one of the women who was present at the birth of Mohammed; Um Kulthum, the daughter of Akba; Ayesha, and others. The Prophet, we are told, ordered Shifa' to teach Hafza, one of his wives, reading and writing.

Educated Moslems, therefore, have accepted the evidence and approved of the genuineness of the document.² A facsimile photograph of the letter was published by the sons of Mohammed Ghulam Rasul Surti, bookseller in the

¹ Traugott Mann, however, in his *Der Islam* (1914), p. 14, asserts that it is a forgery, although he gives no proofs.

² In Tripoli, Syria, a different photographic reproduction of this letter was on sale at a book-shop. The bookseller, a Moslem Turk, assured me the letter was a genuine proof of Mohammed's literacy!

THE "ILLITERATE" PROPHET

Bhendi Bazaar, Bombay, several years ago. The photograph in my possession shows in the centre the original letter with the seal; on the right is an account of the discovery together with an Arabic translation of the ancient Cufic script. On the left the same appears in Urdu. The account given reads as follows:

"This is a photograph of the letter which Mohammed the Prophet sent and sealed with his seal, to the Mukaukus of the Copts in Egypt, in the seventh year of the Hegira. In the year 1275 A.H. one of the French Orientalists discovered the original letter among some Coptic documents in the Monastery of Akhmim, Upper Egypt. He took it to the Sultan Abd el-Mejid Khan, who commanded that it should be kept among the relics of the Prophet in Constantinople. This reproduction has been done by photograph from the original which is in the safe-keeping of our present Sultan Abdul Hamid. This photograph was taken in the year 1316."

Apparently among the Moslems of Bombay there is no doubt as to the genuineness of the letter.

There is no reason, therefore, why Mohammedans should emphasize the illiteracy of the Prophet except to bolster up their theory of the Koran as a miracle.

Fahr-al-Razi, for example, says (vol. iv. p. 298): "If Mohammed had been able to read and write well, there would have been a suspicion that he had examined earlier books and copied his revelations from them."

The legend that Mohammed was illiterate grew with the centuries. Al-Ghazali, for example (*Ihya*, vol. ii. p. 250), says: "The prophet was *ummi*; he did not read, cypher, nor write, and was brought up in an ignorant country in the wild desert, in poverty while herding sheep; he was an orphan without father or mother; but God Himself taught him all the virtues of character and all the knowledge of the ancient and the modern world."

In view of the evidence given above, there *might* still be some doubt whether Mohammed could read and write; but the fact remains that Mohammedan Tradition and the

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

later Koran commentators have done their best to utilize the very slender material in proof of his illiteracy in order to build up a structure of miracle.

The fact is that in the later commentaries Mohammed is represented as being *without any acquired intelligence*, a sort of spiritual freak like some of the modern "saints" of Egypt. As Margoliouth remarks,¹ "This sort of logic is found wherever resort is had to oracles; it is a condition of their genuineness and importance that they should not be capable of explanation as the fruit of ordinary speculation. Hence those who deliver oracles are madmen, children, jesters, persons to whose reflections no value could be attached; indeed the tendency to accentuate Mohammed's illiteracy is evidence of the same theory."

¹ *Early Development of Mohammedanism*, p. 70.

IX

THE SO-CALLED "HADITH QUDSI"

PROFESSOR GOLDZIEHER has shown, in his studies of Islam,¹ that Islam from the earliest century regarded Christianity as a religion from which something could be learned, and did not therefore disdain to borrow from it. This is acknowledged by the Mohammedan theologians themselves.² The early traditions of Islam indeed offer a wealth of examples showing how readily and greedily the founders of Islam borrowed from Christian sources. The miracles recorded in the Gospels were transferred to the realms of Islam, and what Jesus did became the act of Mohammed; for example, the miraculous supply of bread and fish, and the healing of the sick. Goldziher also enumerates a number of the didactic statements from the Gospels which are incorporated into the Hadith. The most remarkable example he gives is that of the Lord's Prayer: "It is related by Abu Dardai that the Prophet said: 'If any one suffers or his brother suffers, he should say: "Our Lord God, which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom (here apparently the words "come; Thy will be done," are left out) is in heaven and on earth; as Thy mercy is in Heaven, so show Thy mercy on earth; forgive us our debts and our sins (*haubana wa khatayana*). Thou art the Lord of the good; send down mercy from Thy mercy, and healing from Thy healing on this pain, that it may be healed.' " " " ³

All these, however, belong to what Moslems call *Hadith Nabawi* (Traditions of the Prophet) although they are

¹ *The Hadith and the New Testament*, vol. ii.

² Ibn Hajar, vol. i. p. 372.

³ Abu Daud, vol. i. p. 101, quoted in *The Hadith and the New Testament* (English translation, S.P.C.K., London, 1902), p. 18.

evidently borrowed from other sources. The *Hadith Nabawi* are distinguished in Islam from another species of tradition called *Hadith Qudsi*. This distinction arose from the fact that the former were attributed to Mohammed as the speaker and consisted either of his sayings, or of his doings, or of acts which he permitted. These were severally handed down—so it was believed—from the lips of those who heard the words or were witnesses of the acts in question. But in some cases the form of a tradition showed that it contained the actual word of God, and not the word of the Prophet merely. Such traditions were designated as *Hadith Qudsi* or *Hadith Ilahi* (i.e. holy or Divine Tradition).

Both kinds of *Hadith* were held in great reverence from the earliest days of Islam throughout the whole Mohammedan world. The scruples which existed originally against the dissemination and recording of Mohammed's words in writing were soon overcome. The six standard collections of Mohammedan Tradition, so well known, contained not only the sayings of the Prophet and his *sunna*, i.e. the record of his conduct, but also direct revelations of God to former prophets, and also to Mohammed himself. Even in the smaller collections of traditions, such as the '*Arba'in* of *Al-Nawawi*, *Hadith Qudsi* are found.

The only striking difference is that the *Hadith Qudsi* at first sight do not seem to have so complete a series of narrators (*asnad*) attached as do the other traditions. They were doubtless delivered orally by the teacher to the pupil, and there is no record, as far as we can learn, of the date when they were first collected in the form in which they now appear. In fact, the whole subject of these *Hadith Qudsi* requires further investigation. The *Encyclopædia of Islam* in the learned article on "*Hadith*" by T. W. Juynboll gives very meagre information.¹ Hughes' *Dictionary of Islam* gives nothing. There is scarcely a reference to the

¹ Eight lines only, ending with the statement that the Leyden MS. No. 1526, Cat. IV. 98 gives a list of them.

THE SO-CALLED "HADITH QUDSI"

subject in the standard Moslem writers on tradition, as far as these have come to our notice. In this outline study we have made use, however, of three standard books. One is the only separately printed collection of *Hadith Qudsi*, namely the *Athafat-as-Siniya* by Al-Madani (Hyderabad, 1323); the second, a manuscript by Al-Manawi, which we were fortunately able to purchase in Cairo. Brockelmann says (vol. ii. p. 306) that only two copies of this manuscript exist, viz. Leyden No. 1761 and Cairo I. 258.

Finally we consulted a third volume on *Hadith Qudsi* of which a manuscript copy is found in the Sultanieh Library at Cairo. It is entitled *Mi'at Hadith wa Wahid Qudsiya* by Mohammed Abu 'Ali ibn Mohammed ibn al-'Arabi. He was born 560 A.H. at Mursia, and taught at Seville, afterwards travelling to the Hedjaz, Baghdad and Mosul. He died in Damascus 638 A.H. Al-'Arabi is known as one of the greatest mystics in Islam, and was a most voluminous writer. Brockelmann gives a list of his books to the number of one hundred and fifty.¹

In his introduction Ibn al-'Arabi states that the origin of his collection of *Hadith Qudsi* was as follows: "When I came across the saying of Mohammed the Prophet, 'Who-soever commits to memory for my people forty Traditions from my lips I will cause him to enter the ranks of those for whom I intercede in the day of Judgment,' and also the statement of the Prophet, 'Whosoever commits to memory for my people forty Traditions that are necessary to them I will record his name as a juriscult and learned man,' in obedience to this statement I have taken pains to collect while at Mecca forty Traditions during the months of the year 599 A.H. and I made it a condition that the first forty of my collection should be directly ascribed to God Himself as the speaker; the second forty through Mohammed as the narrator,—some of which are also narrated by his Companions; and I finally completed the

¹ *Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur*, vol. i. p. 441.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

collection, making it up to the number of 101 by adding twenty-one Traditions of a similar character. The whole collection consists therefore of 101 Divine Traditions (*Hadith Ilahi*).” This manuscript is dated 1139 A.H.

Our manuscript of al-Manawi measures six by eight and a half inches, and is on good parchment paper in black ink with red ink headings for each tradition. It consists of sixty-four folios clearly written in the ordinary Egyptian hand. The one who copied the manuscript calls himself Ibrahim Suweif as-Shafa'i. The manuscript is dated 1122 A.H. It consists of two parts, the first part, folios 1 to 38, contains 273 traditions, each of which begins with the words: “*Qal Allah*” (God said). The various traditions beginning with this formula are nevertheless arranged alphabetically according to the particular statements that follow. The second part—folios 38 to 65—consists of ninety-five traditions, some of considerable length, arranged alphabetically, but none of which begins with the usual formula. The printed collection by al-Madani referred to consists of 239 pages and contains 856 numbered *Hadith Qudsi*. Of these, 164 belong to the first part, each of them beginning “*Qal Allah*” (God said). Ninety belong to the second part—pages 30 to 46—and begin with the words “*Yaql Allah*” (God says). The third part, from page 46 to the end, contains 603 traditions, all arranged in alphabetical order.

When we compare the third part with the similar arrangement in al-Manawi, it is evident that although *some* of the traditions in al-Manawi are evidently the same as those in the al-Madani collection, the text is quite uncertain, and there are many verbal variations. This, however, is not important, as we shall see from the definition given of *Hadith Qudsi* by Moslems, and the distinction made between these Divine sayings and the unchangeable words of Allah as found in the Koran. It is not surprising that the title *Hadith Qudsi* seemed attractive enough to be used for

THE SO-CALLED "HADITH QUDSI"

other collections which are *not* authentic. One of them is entitled *Akhbar Qudsiya*, by Abdul Majid 'Ali, Cairo, 1324 A.H. This book contains no actual sayings ascribed to God, but only stories about Mohammed, mostly puerile and of doubtful origin, or recently fabricated. Other similar popular collections exist and have a considerable sale, but they must be carefully distinguished from real *Hadith Qudsi*. The author of the manuscript collection above mentioned, Abd ar-Ra'af Mohammed bin Taj al-'Arifin 'Ali bin Zain al-Abadin Zain ad-Din al-Hadadi al-Manawi, was of the Shafa'i sect, and was born in Cairo 952 A.H. He busied himself from his youth in theological studies. For a short time he was a Qadi, but soon retired to private life, and studied until he was called to teach in the Madrassa as-Sakahiya.

His success and reputation awakened enmity and envy, and he died from poisoning after a long and painful illness in 1031 A.H. (A.D. 1622). Nineteen of his writings are catalogued by Brockelmann (vol. ii. p. 306). The most important is called *Kunuz al-Haqa'iq fi'l-Hadith*, and consists of 10,000 traditions, alphabetically arranged and quoted from no fewer than forty-four other works on tradition. In addition to his work on the *Hadith Qudsi*, he wrote a supplement to it on *Sufic* prayers and traditions, called *al-Matalib*; also many other books, of which a list is found in Brockelmann: they deal with botany, zoology, mineralogy and various other sciences.

For a definition of the term *Qudsi* we turn to the appendix of the work by al-Madani. Referring to the dictionary, *al-Misbah*, he says that the term is derived from the Holy land of Jerusalem, *al-Quds*, quoting also the curious opinion expressed, on the authority of al-Jalabi, that all the traditions called *Hadith Qudsi* were revealed to Mohammed at the time of his ascent (*Mi'raj*) to heaven, and that for this reason they are called *Qudsi*, because he ascended from a "pure place," namely *Bait al-Maqdas* (Jerusalem).

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

This derivation is, however, evidently incorrect, although it is based on another tradition, viz. that Mohammed received all the *Hadith Qudsi* at the time of his ascent to heaven from the Holy City of Jerusalem. For in another place al-Madani refers to the dictionary, *al-Misbah*, and says that the term is applied to the Holy Land of Jerusalem, and that God Himself is called *Qudus* because the word signifies *pure* or *purified*.

He then goes on: "As for Traditions being called holy (*qudsi*), it is because they are related to God as regards the substance and not the form of the narrative. The Noble Koran, on the other hand, came down from God not only in substance but in the very form of its syllables by inspiration to the Prophet Mohammed. Moreover, 'Ali al-Qari, our teacher, said, the *Hadith Qudsi* is that which the Master of all Narrators and the Full Moon of Authorities (i.e. Mohammed) received from God sometimes by inspiration and again by dream or revelation, leaving him free to express it in words as he pleased. It differs from the Koran in this respect, because the latter only descended from the Preserved Tablet by means of the favour of the Angel Gabriel, accurate in every syllable. Moreover, its transmission was undoubtedly entire, unchanged from age to age. The Koran and the *Hadith Qudsi* also differ in many other points, among which the learned have enumerated the following:

"(1) The *Hadith Qudsi* may not be used in the repetition of the ritual prayers.

"(2) The written *Hadith Qudsi* is not forbidden to the touch of him or her who is ceremonially unclean. (The text here gives detail in Moslem phraseology.)

"(3) The *Hadith Qudsi* is not inimitable, in the miraculous sense, as is the Koran. ('Ijaz.)

"(4) He who denies the authority or truth of a holy tradition (*Hadith Qudsi*) is not thereby considered an unbeliever (Kafir) as is the case of one who denies the Koran."

THE SO-CALLED "HADITH QUDSI"

Our author then proceeds to give his authorities for these various distinctions, and adds other information. He quotes al-Karmani in his book on *Fasting* as saying that whatever words have come down to Mohammed without the instrumentality of Gabriel, and without having the inimitable form of the Koran, are termed *Hadith Qudsi*. He says there are also two other terms used: *Ilahi* (divine) or *Rabbani* (lordly).

Al-Taibi says that the Koran consists of the exact words spoken by Gabriel to the Prophet, while the *Hadith Qudsi* consists of information of which the significance was given to Mohammed sometimes by revelation and sometimes by dreams. This information is quoted from the book *al-Fawa'id* by Hafid at-Taftazani.

So much for the significance of the term used. The sources of the *Hadith Qudsi*, as we shall see from the text later, include Old and New Testament fragments, often torn out of their context, stray verses from certain Apocryphal writers, and (what is most remarkable) *abrogated* verses of the Koran, which are preserved only in these collections. In some cases a whole Surah apparently is thus preserved, as the Tradition numbered eighty-two in al-Madani's printed text.¹ This book, both in its form and in its contents, is so like the Koran that in reading it aloud to well-read Moslems they affirmed to me that it was in the Koran, until shown their mistake.

In this connexion we must remember, as remarked by Margoliouth,² that "there was no check on the sources of Moslem Tradition. Everything depended on the memory, recollection and often the imagination of the narrator. Sometimes the ascription of a saying could be put right. Abu Talib points out that one which was ordinarily ascribed

¹ p. 15. It reads in part as follows: "Then we caused them to inherit the Book, those namely whom we chose from our servants . . . and they entered Paradise without giving account . . . verily your Lord is the Forgiver, the Grateful Rewarder, who permitted them to enter the abode of eternity by His graciousness, in which no evil shall touch them nor impure speech harm them."

² *Early Development of Mohammedanism*, p. 90.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

to the Prophet really belonged to the Sufi Saha at-Tustari of the third century. Some of the Prophet's sayings were referred to earlier revelations, and can indeed be identified in the Bible or Apocrypha. The principle of jurisprudence whereby in civil suits the plaintiff must produce evidence, whereas all that can be demanded of the defendant is an oath, is sometimes referred to Omar, at other times to the Prophet, whereas it really comes from the Jewish Mishna."

This looseness of the whole fabric of tradition is abundantly illustrated by many of the *Hadith Qudsi*. We can easily understand how these collections of pious sayings were made, and how all sorts of statements which had no authority, save in the fertile brain of those who uttered them, were finally recorded as Divine traditions. To quote again from Margoliouth: ¹ "One method of dealing with the discrepancies between the Biblical narratives and the Koran was to supply the original Bible which the Jews and Christians had been supposed to corrupt. Copies of such works are occasionally found; they are close imitations in style of the Koran, and therefore take the form of addresses by the Divine Being to the Prophets to whom they are supposed to have been revealed. Apparently Sprenger was misled into supposing that a book of this kind bearing the name of Abraham was the Roll of Abraham to whom some early Surahs of the Koran refer. The Sufi, Abu Talib al-Makki, makes tolerably frequent use of a collection which he calls "The Israelite Traditions," some of which are evidently based on narratives actually found in the Bible. Thus he tells a story of the Temple of Jeroboam, and the adventures of the Prophet who announced its fall, with very fair accuracy: proper names are indeed omitted, and the whole story is a sort of replica of the Mosque of *Dirar* or "nonconformity," which was built by some of the disaffected near the end of the Prophet's career, and of which the Prophet ordered the destruction;

¹ *Early Development of Mohammedanism*, pp. 233-234.

THE SO-CALLED "HADITH QUDSI"

only the prophet who disobeyed the order is shown by a special revelation to have been eaten by the lion not as a punishment, but as an honour. One Khaithamah declared that the Gospel contained a statement about the keys of Korah's treasure-house, which according to the Koran were a load for several persons; the Gospel gave the exact weight."¹

Koelle in his *Mohammed and Mohammedanism Critically Considered* devotes the second part of his book to the close parallel between the Apocryphal accounts of Mohammed's life in later tradition and the Gospel record of our Saviour Jesus Christ.² This is "the mythical Mohammed as he was portrayed by the vivid imagination of his uncritical admirers." "What was known of the lives of previous prophets (or of their sayings) was exaggerated to suit the conception of the chief and seal of all the prophets, such as Mohammed claimed to be, and was most unscrupulously applied to him."³

The system of pious frauds revealed in these collections of *Hadith Qudsi* is not abhorrent to the Moslem mind. According to their teaching, deception is allowable in such cases. On what occasion would it be more justifiable—not to say meritorious—than in furthering the interests of Islam, and adding glory to the character of Mohammed by supplementing his Divine revelation in this way?⁴

We will now let the *Hadith Qudsi* speak for themselves. The collection does not merit entire translation, it will suffice to show from a number of instances the character and sources of some of these Divine sayings, and allow the reader to draw his own conclusions.

The following are examples of some of the more striking *Hadith Qudsi* translated from al-Madani's collection, chosen because this is the only printed collection of *Hadith Qudsi*, and its traditions are all carefully numbered. In one or

¹ Tabari, Comm., xx. pp. 63-68.

² pp. 240-246.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

⁴ Cf. the remarks of Muir in his *Life of Mahomet*, vol. i. pp. lxxiv-lxxix.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

two cases there are repetitions, but I have given some of these in order to show the variations in the text.

“God said: I am in a great difficulty regarding both men and Jinn: I created them, yet they worship others beside Me; I provide them with food, and then they return thanks to others than Myself.” (No. 5.)

“God said: Whosoever has not blessed My judgment, when disaster overtakes him let him seek another Lord than Me.” (No. 6.)

“God said: If anyone lose his two eyes in My service, I will restore them in Paradise.” (No. 14.)

“God said: I have prepared for My servants who are pious, that which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor that which has entered into the heart of any man.” (This tradition is related on the authority of Bukhari and Muslim, who have it from Abu Hurairi!) (No. 17.)

“God said: My mercy overtakes My wrath.” (No. 24.)

“When My servant draws near to Me a handsbreadth, I draw near to him an armslength; if he draws near to Me an armslength, I draw near to him a fathom; if he approaches Me walking, I approach him running.” (No. 28.)

“God said: Pride is My greatness, and majesty My cloak; whosoever deprives Me of either of them, I will make him taste the torture of the fire.” (Repeated 177.) (No. 34.)

“God said: God loves best those who hasten to worship.” (No. 37.)

“God said: If any of My servants suffer evil in body, or children, or property and bears it with patience, I will reward him on the Day of Judgment by making his account easy.” (No. 46.)

“God said: There is no god but God; this is My word and I am He (it). Whosoever, therefore, says this creed enters into My safekeeping and whosoever enters My safekeeping is free from My punishment.” (No. 49.)

“God said: I am the Lord, and have predestined good and evil; woe, therefore, to him at whose hands I have predestined evil, and blessed is he at whose hands I have predestined good.” (No. 50.)

“God said: There are servants of Mine who before men wear sheep’s clothing, but their hearts are more bitter than gall, and their tongues are sweeter than honey. They deceive Me.” (No. 56.)

“God said: Whenever My servant thinks of Me I am present in his thoughts; therefore let him think concerning Me as he pleases.” (No. 58.)

THE SO-CALLED "HADITH QUDSI"

This tradition repeats No. 28 in other words, both reminding us of the Prodigal's return in Luke, 15th Chapter. (No. 61.)

"God said: There are three things which if man observe he will be My friend, and if he neglect them My enemy: Prayer, Fasting and Ritual Purification." (No. 74.)

"God said: Whosoever remembers Me in meditation, I will remember him before multitudes of My angels; whosoever remembers Me in the public assembly, I will remember him before the highest Companionship" (?). (Ar-Rafiq al-'Aali.) (No. 77.)

"God said: My servant who believes in Me is more precious to Me than some of My angels." (No. 80.)

(No. 82 is an imitation, both in form and matter, of a Koran Verse, and might be read without distinguishing the difference; one wonders why it was not collected with the other chapters and verses.)

"God said: Whoever is engaged in praying to Me or asking Me a favour, freely I will give it to him before he asks." (No. 86.)

"God said: Whosoever visits me in Mekka, or at the Mosque of my Apostle in Medina, or at Jerusalem, and dies so doing, will die a martyr." (No. 88.)

"God said: I make a covenant with my servant that if he observes the prayers at the appointed time, I will not punish him, but cause him to enter Paradise without giving account." (No. 93.)

"God said: My servants cannot array themselves in more proper dress than asceticism." (No. 96.)

No. 149 seems to be a recollection from the Psalter and reads:—"David said: when speaking to God; 'O Lord, which of thy servants is most precious to Thee, so that I may love him with Thy love?' God replied to David: 'The most beloved of My servants to Me is he who is pure in heart and intent; who does not do evil to anyone, nor walk after back-biting. The mountains may depart, but he who loves Me will abide, and I will love him.' Then David said: 'O Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee, and love those that love Thee; how shall I show my love to Thee to Thy servants?' He said: 'Remember them in their troubles and in their need, for verily there is no one who assists the oppressed, or walks with him in his affliction, that I will not establish his goodness in the Day when men's footsteps slip.'"

"God said: 'Pride is My cloak and Majesty is My mantle, and whosoever deprives Me of either of them I will cast him into hell.'" (No. 177.)

(No. 354 is remarkable because according to the authority of as-Suyuti in the *Itqan* (vol. ii, p. 25) these very words came down to Mohammed as part of the Koran, but were afterwards

abrogated. The abrogated verses were preserved in the *Hadith Qudsi*) "God said: Verily we have given men health, that they may perform the prayer and give alms. If a son of Adam had a parcel of land, he would wish for twain: had he twain, he would love to have a third added: nothing will satisfy the desires of man and fill his belly except the dust. After that God will be merciful to him to whom he will show mercy." (No. 354.)

So far the selections are from al-Madani.

The following are taken from the collection by al-Manawi. They differ in no important respect from those by al-Madani, but the following examples are noteworthy:

"Said the Apostle of God: It is written in the Torah, O Son of Man, I have created thee and provided for thee, yet dost thou worship other than Myself." (Folio 1, No. 2 of the MSS.)

"Those whom I love most among my worshippers are the ones that hasten to break the fast." (Folio 2, No. 6.)

"God said: If any of my servants purposes to do evil, but does it not, I will consider it to his merit and not to his discredit." (Folio 5, No. 1.)

"God said: There are some of those who profess to believe in Me, but in the same breath deny Me. For example, those who say, 'Rain has come down upon us, and we have received our food by the mercy of God, and His bounty.' These are true believers in Me, and do not believe in the influence of the stars. But whosoever says 'A certain star has brought us rain or good fortune,' he is an unbeliever.'" (Folio 6, No. 1.)

(This gives in almost exact form the text of Isaiah lxiv. 4 and 1 Cor. ii. 9) "God said: I have prepared for my servants who believe in Me that which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, and that which has not occurred to the heart of man." The *asnad* or list of narrators for this *Hadith* is given as follows:—"Ibn Jarir received this from al-Hassan by word of mouth." Other *asnad* are equally scanty. (Folio 6, No. 3.)

"God said: The heavens and the earth would not be able to contain Me, yet I dwell in the heart of the true believer." (Folio 6, No. 7.)

"God said to Mohammed: Verily thy people will not cease asking foolish questions, until they say, Behold God has created the creation, but who created God?" (Folio 7, No. 4.)

"God said: I have made a covenant with My servant that if he observes the stated prayers I will not enter into judgment with him, but cause him to enter the Garden without giving account." (Folio 8, No. 7.)

THE SO-CALLED "HADITH QUDSI"

"God said: I am present when My servant thinks of Me, and wheresoever He remembers Me there I am." (This Tradition is given in various forms on the same page.) (Folio 13, No. 6.)

"Said God: The evil eye is a passing-arrow of Satan. Whosoever abandons belief in it because he fears Me, I will give him faith in the place of it, by which he will praise Me in his heart." (Folio 17, No. 5.)

"God said: As you judge you shall be judged, and with the measure by which you mete it it shall be measured to you again." (The complete *asnad* is given of this Gospel passage, but it is not stated to be from the Injil. Folio 21, No. 2.)

This gives a long tradition in which God says that only their prayers are answered who have fed the hungry, and clothed the naked, and shewn mercy to those in trouble, and visited the stranger. (This is evidently taken from Matthew xxv. 31.) (Folio 22, No. 7.)

"Whosoever remembers Me rather than begs in prayer, I will give him his request before he asks." (Another form of the scripture statement: "Before they call I will answer.") (Folio 26, No. 6.)

"God said: There is no god but God. *This is My word and I am It.* And whosoever pronounces it, I will cause him to enter my safekeeping, and he will suffer no punishment." (Perhaps an echo of John i. 1. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.") (Folio 29, No. 8.)

"God said: O Jesus, I will send after thee a people who when they accept good at My hands will return praise and thanksgiving, and if they receive that which they dislike, they will still be content and patient." (Evidently a prophecy of the glory of Islam over Christianity.) (Folio 36, No. 2.)

"God said: O Moses, thou son of Amram! Show mercy and you will receive mercy." (This is a gospel beatitude torn out of its connection, and preserved as a Divine word to Moses.) (Folio 37, No. 5.)

"God spoke to Jesus the Son of Mary: Instruct thyself by My wisdom, and if you receive benefit, then teach men; and if not, then fear Me." (Folio 45, No. 3.)

"God revealed to Jesus that He would move about from place to place, so that none could recognize Him and do Him harm. Then God swore by His greatness and His glory that He would marry Him to two thousand houris, and give Him a vision in Paradise for four hundred years." (Again a caricature of the Gospel; many such occur in both collections.) (Folio 45, No. 8.)

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

The above selections are typical, and although taken somewhat at random represent the contents of the collection fairly well.

The questions raised in the investigation of this subject are many, both from the standpoint of orthodox Islam and that of the Orientalist and student of Comparative Religion. If these *Hadith Qudsi* are Divine traditions and portions of God's revelation to man, why are they not mentioned in the Koran? If they *are* referred to in the Koran, are they the books that came down to Adam, Seth and other prophets? But these books are supposed to have been lost. How then did these fragments remain? What relation has the *Hadith Qudsi* to the canonical Gospels or to Apocryphal writings? Why did the collectors of Tradition make no distinction between the words of Mohammed, who is, after all, human, and the words which are put into the mouth of God? Why was there never an authentic collection made without variation of the text? What is the relation and the authority of these sayings to the Koran text itself, which is, to the Moslem, the Word of God? What shall we say of the abrogated verse of the Koran, which appears in this collection? Are the other sayings also perhaps portions of the Koran which were abrogated? Or must we conclude, from the standpoint of criticism, that the *Hadith Qudsi* emphasize the utterly untrustworthy character of all these collections as regards both the text (*matn*) and the narrators (*asnad*)?

One is reminded of the *Hadith* preserved by ad-Darimi, and well known (*mashhur*) to all Moslems: "Inna 'l-hadith qadhin 'ala 'l-Koran wa laisa al-Koran qadhin 'alaihi fi ba'adh al-umur." ("Verily, Tradition determines the significance of the Koran and not the Koran Tradition in certain matters.") One of these matters surely is the Moslem conception of inspiration and revelation.

X

THE WORSHIP OF ADAM BY ANGELS

(WITH REFERENCE TO HEBREWS I. 6)

OF the many references to angels and demons in the Koran, none is more difficult to explain than the story of how the devil (*Iblīs*) refused to obey the Divine command to all the angels to worship Adam when he had been newly created. The angelology of Islam is very extensive and has been treated only partially by Western scholars, although it holds such an important place in the belief of popular Islam and has borrowed perhaps more than any other article of their faith from Jewish and Christian sources.

The second of the articles of the creed of orthodox Islam refers to the angels of Allah (*mala'ikatihu*) and includes belief in angels, *jinn* and demons. This article of the faith is based on numerous passages in the Koran, illustrated by countless traditions,¹ and is the cause of endless superstitions in popular Islam.²

“Know thou,” says Kazwini, speaking of the nature of angels, “that the angels are substances (beings), free from the darkness of passion and the turbidity of wrath, never rebelling against the commandments of God, but always doing what they are commanded to do. Their food is the praise of God and their drink the description of His holy and pure being. . . . There is not a span of space in the

¹ Wensinck, *Handbook of Early Muhammedan Tradition*, pp. 22, 59, 60, 210, 211. Cf. Article on *Mala'ika* by D. B. Macdonald in the *Encyclopædia of Islam*, with its bibliography.

² Zwerner, *The Influence of Animism on Islam*, chaps. iii, vi, vii, and ix; Abdallah-al-Shibli's *Kitab akām al mirjān fi ahkām al jān* (769 A.H.).

heavens upon which no angel is to be found prostrating himself in prayer.”¹

Angels are innumerable. They have no distinction of sex, as have the *jinn* (Surahs 43 : 18; 21 : 26; 37 : 159, etc.), and therefore do not propagate their species.

The marginal references add to the difficulty of the interpretation of our New Testament text (cf. Deut. xxxii. 43, Sept. and Psalm xcvi. 7).

I. *The Sources of the Koran Passages.* Are these Jewish or Christian in origin, and how did Mohammed become acquainted with the story?

Rabbi Geiger expresses doubt whether it came through Jewish tradition, on the ground that the command to worship any other being than God would have been inconceivable to an Israelite.² Grünbaum follows Geiger in his more recent study of Islamic sources.³ But, as Charles C. Torrey remarks, the word used in the Koran for worship (*sajada*) does not necessarily indicate *worship of the Divine*, but frequently the prostration before an honourable personage in Oriental fashion. He gives instances of such use of the word in pre-Islamic poetry.⁴ Geiger cites close parallels to the story of the Koran from Jewish tradition, viz. *Sanhedrin* 59b and *Midrash Rabba* 8.

“Rabbi Simon (4th cent.) said: ‘In the hour when the Holy One, blessed be He, came to create the first man, the ministering angels formed themselves into parties and companies. Some said: “Let him be created,” others: “Let him not be created.” To this division Psalm lxxxv. 11 refers: “Kindness and Truth are met together. Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.” Kindness said: “Let him be created, for he is a bestower of loving-kindnesses.” Truth said: “Let him not be created, for he is falsehood.” Justice said: “Let him be created, for he deals justly.” Peace said: “Let him not be created, for he is wholly quarrelsome” ’”

¹ Edition, Wüstenfeld, vol. i. p. 12. Cf. Rabbi Leo Jung, *Fallen Angels in Jewish, Christian, and Mohammedan Literature*, pp. 13-21.

² Geiger, *Was hat Muhammed aus dem Judenthum aufgenommen?* p. 98.

³ *Neue Beiträge zur semitischen Sagenkunde*, pp. 60 ff.

⁴ *The Jewish Foundation of Islam*, p. 71.

THE WORSHIP OF ADAM BY ANGELS

The Jewish story is also found at some length in mediaeval Christian writers. In *Pugio Fidei* it reads as follows:

“R. Joshua ben Nun: ‘When the mind of Adam matured in him, the Holy One, blessed be He, said to the ministering angels, “Worship ye him!” They came (and did so) in accordance with his wishes. And Satan was greater than all the angels of heaven. And he said to God: “Lord of the Universe! Thou hast created us from the splendour of the Shekinah and Thou sayest that we should bow down before him whom Thou hast created from the dust of the ground?” The Holy One, blessed be He, answered: “He who is made from the dust of the earth has wisdom and understanding which thou dost not possess.” And it came to pass, when he would not worship him, nor hearken to the voice of God, that He cast him out of heaven and he became Satan. To him refers Isaiah’s “How art thou fallen, etc.”’”

We must remember, however, that *Pugio Fidei* (The Dagger of Faith), by the monk Raymundus Martinus, was not written until the thirteenth century. But this passage and many others are taken from the great Genesis Rabba of Rabbi Moses ha Darshan, the genuineness of which is established by criticism.¹ He in turn took the story from much older and pre-Islamic Jewish sources. We find it also in Pirke of R. Eliezer XI and elsewhere in the Talmud. The antiquity of the story is established by the fact that the Talmud (Genesis and Numbers Rabba) introduces it.²

We find it again at greater length in the so-called *Life of Adam and Eve*, translated by R. H. Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha* (p. 137: Oxford, 1913):

“And with a heavy sigh, the devil spake: ‘O Adam! all my hostility, envy, and sorrow is for thee, since it is for thee that I have been expelled from my glory, which I possessed in the heavens in the midst of the angels and for thee was I cast out in the earth.’ Adam answered, ‘What dost thou tell me? What have I done to thee or what is my fault against thee? Seeing that thou hast received no harm or injury from us, why dost thou pursue us?’”

¹ Jung, *Fallen Angels*, p. 35. Cf. Epstein in *Magazin für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*, 1888.

² Jung, *Fallen Angels*, p. 49.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

“The devil replied, ‘Adam, what dost thou tell me? It is for thy sake that I have been hurled from that place. When thou wast formed, I was hurled out of the presence of God and banished from the company of angels. When God blew into thee the breath of life and thy face and likeness was made in the image of God, Michael also brought thee and made (us) worship thee in the sight of God; and God the Lord spake: “Here is Adam. I have made him in our image and likeness.”

“‘And Michael went out and called all the angels saying: “Worship the image of God as the Lord hath commanded.”

“‘And Michael himself worshipped first; then he called me and said: “Worship the image of God the Lord.” And I answered, “I have no (need) to worship Adam.” And since Michael kept urging me to worship, I said to him, “Why dost thou urge me? I will not worship an inferior and younger being (than I). I am his senior in the Creation, before he was made was I already made. It is his duty to worship me.”

“‘When the angels, who were under me, heard this, they refused to worship him. And Michael saith, “Worship the image of God, but if thou wilt not worship him, the Lord God will be wroth with thee.” And I said, “If He be wroth with me, I will set my seat above the stars of heaven and will be like the Highest.”

“‘And God the Lord was wroth with me and banished me and my angels from our glory; and on thy account were we expelled from our abodes into this world and hurled on the earth. And straightway we were overcome with grief, since we had been spoiled of so great glory. And we were grieved when we saw thee in such joy and luxury. And with guile I cheated thy wife and caused thee to be expelled through her (doing) from thy joy and luxury, as I have been driven out of my glory.’

“When Adam heard the devil say this, he cried out and wept and spake: ‘O Lord my God, my life is in thy hands. Banish this Adversary far from me, who seeketh to destroy my soul, and give me his glory which he himself hath lost.’ And at that moment, the devil vanished before him. But Adam endured in his penance, standing for forty days (on end) in the water of Jordan.”

The date of this apocryphal book of Adam, which is of uncertain origin, is put by Hort “not earlier than the first century A.D., nor later than the fourth century.” The author, or authors, were Jewish Hellenists. A version of it in Syriac, *The Cave of Treasure*, appeared in the sixth

THE WORSHIP OF ADAM BY ANGELS

century. There were early versions also of this Life of Adam in Arabic, Ethiopic, and Armenian, which indicate the early spread of the story regarding the worship of Adam by the angels.¹ The Syriac version was translated by Bezold into German as *Die Schatzhöhle*, and is plainly Christian and ascetic in character.

Summing up the evidence, therefore, it seems that there are two cycles of legends behind the Koran narrative: the one dealing with the objection to the creation of Adam on the part of some angels, of which the original is found in Jewish sources: the other telling of Satan's refusal to worship Adam, which appears to be extra-Talmudic and Christian.² Mohammed and the later compilers of Moslem tradition confused the two, and it is from looking at the remains of the independent accounts that we are able to reconstruct the whole in its original form.³

George Sale, in his notes to the Koran translation (cf. Surah 2 : 34), says: "This occasion of the Devil's fall has some affinity with an opinion which has been pretty much entertained among Christians, that the angels, being informed of God's intention to create man after His own image, etc., some of them thinking their glory to be eclipsed, thereby envied man's happiness and so revolted."⁴

In *Die Schatzhöhle*, an anonymous work already referred to, which dates from the sixth century, we have the Christian legend of what took place after the creation of Adam:

"When the angels saw his splendid appearance, they were moved by the fairness of his aspect. And God gave him there the dominion over all creatures, and all the wild beasts and the cattle and the birds, and they came before Adam and he gave them names, and they bowed their heads before him and wor-

¹ The various translations, additions, and dates of these versions are discussed at length by Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, pp. 123-131.

² Cf. *Die Schatzhöhle*, chap. v.

³ Jung, *Fallen Angels*, p. 53.

⁴ Sale's Koran, p. 5. He refers, without giving chapter or page, to "Irenaeus, Lact., Greg. Nyssen, etc." I have been unable to trace these references. Jung says they are not justified.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

shipped him, and all their natures worshipped and served him. And the angels and powers heard the voice of God, who said to him, 'O Adam, behold I have made thee king, priest, prophet, lord, head and leader of all creatures and they serve thee and are thine. And I have given thee dominion over all I have created.' And when the angels heard this word, they all bent their knees and worshipped him.

"And when the head of the lower order saw that greatness had been given to Adam, he envied him thenceforth, refused to worship him and said to his powers: 'Worship him not and praise him not with the angels. It befits him to worship me, not me to worship dust, formed out of a grain of dust.' Such things the rebel had uttered and was disobedient and by his own free will became separated from God. And he was felled and he fell, he and his whole band. On the sixth day in the second hour, he fell from heaven, and they were stripped of the robes of their glory, and his name was called Satana, because he had turned away from God, and Sheda, because he had been cast down, and Daiva, because he had lost the robe of his glory. And look, from that same day and until today, he and all his armies are stripped and naked and ugly to look on. And after Satan had been cast from Heaven, Adam was exalted so that he ascended to Paradise."¹

Is Geiger therefore right when he holds² that "the story of God's command that the angels should worship Adam is essentially Christian"? Or shall we agree with Jung that the story in *Pugio Fidei* is itself taken from the Koran, but has in it elements that are not original to the *Midrash* version?³

These queries are difficult to answer. The fact remains that both in early Jewish tradition, in the Christian Apocrypha and in the Koran text, we have legends connected with angels falling prostrate (*sajada*) before Adam. And so we come to the second question: Does the consideration of this Koran legend throw light on Hebrews i. 6?

II. *The Significance of the Passage in Hebrews.* The first chapter of this anonymous epistle and the epistle itself is an argument for the supremacy and finality of the revelation of God in his Son Jesus Christ. The Messiah is shown to

¹ Jung, *op. cit.*, pp. 57, 58.

² *Ibid.*, p. 66.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

THE WORSHIP OF ADAM BY ANGELS

be superior to the angels by seven biblical proofs which indicate his names and prerogatives (verses 5-14). Vincent rightly observes: "The quotations present difficulty in that they appear, in great part, to be used in a sense and with an application different from those which they originally had. All that can be said is that the writer takes these passages as Messianic and applies them accordingly." (*Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. iv. p. 286.)

The third quotation, in the words of Moffatt, "clinches the proof of Christ's unique authority and opens up the sense in which he is superior to the angels." Moffatt's translation reads: "And further, when introducing the Firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all God's angels worship him.'" According to this authority on New Testament Greek, the word *πάλι* is not to be taken with the verb to introduce, but as a rhetorical particle of sequence in, the argument.¹ This interpretation of *πάλι* is also given in the Peshitto, Arabic, French and German versions, and by Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, Grotius, Bengel, Wolf, Cramer, Schulz, Bleek, Ebrard and others.²

To what event does this introduction of the Firstborn into the world, then, refer? Some commentators say it refers to the Incarnation at Bethlehem (Chrysostom, Calvin, Owen, Calov, Bengel). Others refer it to the Resurrection and Exaltation of Christ (Grotius, Wetstein, Rambach, Peirce, Whitby). Bleek and Reuss refer the passage "to a moment preceding the incarnation of Christ in which the Father had, by a solemn act, as it were, conducted forth and presented the Son to the beings created by Him, as the Firstborn, as their Creator and Ruler who was to uphold and guide all things."³

This may be "an entirely singular thought" (Lünemann)

¹ *International Critical Commentary on Hebrews*, p. 10.

² The complete list is given by Lünemann (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 87), who, however, opposes this interpretation and says that *πάλι* must be construed with the verb: "when he *again* brings in."

³ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

in the New Testament, but Moffatt seems inclined to accept this third interpretation and makes reference to the Ascension of Isaiah (xi. 23 f.) where the angels humbly worship Christ as He ascends to the heavens where they live; here the adoration is claimed for Him as he enters the world.¹

The quotation made by the unknown author of the epistle to the Hebrews is not found in the Hebrew text, but is taken from the Septuagint of Deut. xxxii. 43, and has a somewhat parallel reference in Psalm xcvi. 7b ("Worship him, all ye gods"). Moffatt expresses the opinion that the writer of the epistle was "a Jewish Christian who had imbibed the philosophy of Alexandrian Judaism before his conversion."² Like Philo, his view of the world is fundamentally Platonic. The phenomenal is but an imperfect, shadowy transcript of what is real and eternal. The present world of time and sense stands over against the world of reality. There is an archetype to all things mundane. The viewpoint of the writer is Hellenistic. And, as Dr. Macdonald points out, "the very sane, realistic Hebrew mind, when worked upon by the equally sane and realistic Greek mind," produced non-realistic speculations in Philo and other Alexandrine thinkers. "The Palestinian Jews remained free from these extravagances, but the Alexandrian Jews were by necessity driven into allegory."³

We have an example that touches the subject before us in connexion with the pre-existence of the Messiah, and finds frequent expression in Talmudic literature. Dr. Oesterley states:

"This conception is of a two-fold character: in the first place, the Messiah is believed to have existed in Heaven before the world was created; God, it is said, contemplated the Messiah and his works before the Creation of the world, and concealed him under His throne (cf. 1 Peter i. 20). Satan, it is added, asked God what the light was under His throne, and God

¹ Moffatt, *International Critical Commentary*, p. 11.

² *Ibid.*, pp. xxi, xxxi.

³ *The Hebrew Philosophical Genius*, p. 95.

THE WORSHIP OF ADAM BY ANGELS

replied that it was one who would bring him to shame in the future; then, being allowed to see the Messiah, Satan trembled and sank to the ground, crying out: 'Truly this is the Messiah who will deliver me and all heathen kings over to hell' (*Pesiqta rabbati* 36)." (*Religion and Worship of the Synagogue*, p. 233.)

Here we have, as it were, the germ of the Koran legend, although the object worthy of worship from whom Satan shrinks is not Adam, but the Messiah Himself.

III. *A suggested interpretation, that the Second Adam is the Firstborn whom the angels worshipped.* Our thesis was the seven-fold reference in the Koran to the angels worshipping Adam; our antithesis the passage in Hebrews i. 6, where the New Testament writer places the Messiah as the object of angelic worship. Is there a possible synthesis by equating the Second Adam of St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 45) with the Firstborn (*prototokos*) of Col. i. 15, 18, Romans viii. 29, and the passage in Hebrews?

"The first Adam became a living soul, the last Adam a quickening spirit"—these Pauline words have been interpreted in various ways. Baur, Pfeleiderer, Beyschlag, and others see in "the Second Adam, the lord from heaven," the pre-existent Christ whom they identify with Philo's ideal or "heavenly man" of Genesis i. 26. According to this interpretation, Christ was the *Urmensch*, the prototype of humanity existing with God from all eternity.¹

Hugo Gressmann, in his book, *Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie* (Göttingen, 1905), points out that the pre-existence of the Messiah as the original Adam is found in Daniel, in 2 Ezra, and in the book of Enoch. He concludes also that, although the idea of such a pre-existent Adam is not found in the Gospels, Paul comes back to it:

"Paulus scheint auch den Zusammenhang der himmlischen Messiasgestalt, d. h. des Titels Menschensohn, mit dem Urmenschen noch zu kennen, da er I Kor. 15 : 45 nicht einfach

¹ G. G. Findlay on 1 Cor. in *Expositor's Greek Testament*, p. 939. Cf. article on Adam Kadmon in *Encyclopædica Judaica*, vol. i. p. 783.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

beide parallelisiert und gegenüberstellt: 'es ward der erste Mensch Adam zu lebendiger Seele, der letzte Adam zu lebendig machendem Geist,' sondern sogar polemisierend hinzufügt: Nicht das 'Geistliche kommt zuerst, sondern erst das Seelische, und hernach das Geistliche. Der erste Mensch ist von der Erde und irdisch, der zweite Mensch ist vom Himmel.' Es muss also noch zu seiner Zeit Leute gegeben haben, nach deren Theorie der erste Mensch ein himmlisches Wesen war." (p. 365.)

Philo's idea of two Adams is also found in Jewish literature. The Rabbinical title *ha-Adam ha-ācharon* is given to the Messiah (*Neve Shalom* IX. g.).¹ Indeed, we find this belief in an earthly and a heavenly Adam fully developed in the Jewish doctrine of Adam Kadmon.² The heavenly man as the perfect image of the Logos is neither man nor woman, but an incorporeal intelligence or idea. Philo combines the *Midrash* and Platonic philosophy.

The Pharisees held (Gen. R. viii. 1) the same dual idea. According to the Rabbis, the spirit of Adam existed, not only before the creation of the earthly Adam, but before the whole creation. This pre-existing Adam was even called the Messiah. Akiba in the Talmud, although denying any resemblance between God and other beings, even the highest type of angels, teaches that man was created after an image, an archetype, for "He made man in his image."³ The later Zohar and Kabbalah even give illustrative diagrams of this Adam Kadmon in which the divine attributes of wisdom, intelligence, beauty, love, justice, splendour, etc., are written across the various bodily members of the ideal man, the prototype of the earthly Adam. This Philonic and Talmudic doctrine was taken up later in the Clementine

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 938. Cf. A. E. Waites, *The Holy Kabbalah*, p. x, footnote.

² *Jewish Encyclopædia*, vol. i. pp. 181-183. Cf. *Judaica*, vol. i. *in loco*.

³ Compare a recent article by Dr. Jean Hering in *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses* (Strasburg, October 1936), pp. 196-209: "C'est précisément parce que Jésus était déjà Homme dans sa pré-existence, qu'il fut préparé à l'incarnation et à son rôle de premier né des morts et par là de chef d'une humanité nouvelle. Il ne peut donc être question chez Paul d'un changement d'essence dans le sens de 'Deus fit homo'; car malgré la Kénose, un élément essentiel de son essence subsiste: son caractère de *Anthropos*."

THE WORSHIP OF ADAM BY ANGELS

Homilies, as well as by the Ebionites and other Judaeo-Christian sects. They held that "the heavenly Christ was thus actually incarnated twice and lived twice on earth—in Adam and in Jesus. But He had often assumed an occasional and visible form, and had thus revealed Himself to the most distinguished saints of the Old Testament." ¹

Mohammed was undoubtedly influenced by these Ebionitic and Gnostic doctrines, and his conception of revelation betrays this relationship. ²

There is a curious parallel tradition in Bukhari which tells how the mighty 'Omar brought fear into the heart of the Devil himself.

"According to the legend, the Devil came to the Prophet one day, and asked: 'Is it possible for me to repent?' And Allah's Apostle answered: 'Yes, go to Adam's grave, prostrate yourself and kiss the earth, and then Allah may forgive you.' (It should be remembered that according to the Koran, Satan's fall was due to his refusal to prostrate himself before Adam.) Joyfully the Devil set out to find Adam's grave. But on the way he met 'Omar, who asked him, 'Where are you going, and what are you up to?' The Devil stated his purpose. Then 'Omar said: 'Allah can never forgive you. When He commanded you to bow down before Adam, while he yet lived, you refused, but now when the Prophet commands you to kiss the ground upon Adam's grave you are willing to obey. Shame on you, you miserable wretch!'" ³

In view of all this, we reach the following conclusions:

(1) The angelology of Islam is mostly borrowed from post-exilic Judaism, but the story of the angelic worship of Adam has elements from the *Midrash*, and also from *Judaeo-Christian tradition*.

(2) The quotation in Hebrews i. 6 from the Septuagint is used by a writer who was familiar with the Gnostic and Philonic interpretation of the double creation story in Genesis.

¹ Tor Andrae, *Mohammed*, p. 139. Cf. *Encyclopædia Judaica*, vol. i. p. 783.

² *Ibid.*, p. 149.

³ Tor Andrae, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

(3) Dr. Moffatt's rendering of the Greek text is to be preferred, and the period referred to in Hebrews i. 6, therefore, when the angelic host worshipped the Firstbegotten of all creation, *is that before the Incarnation, not at Bethlehem nor at the second Advent.*

(4) The Koran text, *literally interpreted* (as a Moslem in Baghdad once observed), would make all the angels guilty of *shirk* by worshipping the creature instead of the Creator, and Satan a *Moslem* for refusing to do so. Mohammed was confused by the very story that intrigued him.

After writing this, we found, much to our surprise, that Jonathan Edwards, in some Miscellaneous Observations at the close of his volume of sermons, speaks of the fall of the angels in terms that are, in a sense, almost parallel to the conclusions we have reached (*Edwards' Works* (New York, 1830), vol. viii. pp. 496-509):

"It seems to me probable that the temptation of the angels, which occasioned their rebellion, was, That when God was about to create man, or had first created him, God declared his decree to the angels that one of that human nature should be his Son, his best beloved, his greatest favourite, and should be united to his Eternal Son, and that he should be their Head and King, that they should be given to him, and should worship him, and be his servants, attendants, and ministers: and God having thus declared his great love to the race of mankind, gave the angels the charge of them as ministering spirits to men. Satan, or Lucifer, or Beelzebub, being the archangel, one of the highest of the angels, could not bear it, thought it below him, and a great debasing of him. So he conceived rebellion against the Almighty, and drew a vast company of the heavenly hosts with him." (p. 496.)

". . . And as all the angels are called *the sons of God*, Lucifer was his first-born, and was the first-born of every creature. But when it was revealed to him, high and glorious as he was, that he must be a ministering spirit to the race of mankind which he had seen newly created, which appeared so feeble, mean, and despicable, so vastly inferior, not only to him, the prince of the angels, and head of the created universe, but also to the inferior angels, and that he must be subject to one of

THE WORSHIP OF ADAM BY ANGELS

that race that should hereafter be born, he could not bear it. This occasioned his fall; and now he, with the other angels whom he drew away with him, are fallen, and elect men are translated to supply their places, and are exalted vastly higher in heaven than they. And the Man Jesus Christ, the Chief, and Prince, and Captain of all elect men, is translated and set in the throne that Lucifer, the chief and prince of the angels, left, to be the Head of the angels in his stead, the head of principality and power, that all the angels might do obeisance to him; for God said, 'Let all the angels of God worship him'; and God made him his first-born instead of Lucifer, higher than all those thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, and made him, yea, made him in his stead the first-born of every creature, or of the whole creation." (p. 503.)

Jonathan Edwards fortifies his conclusion that the occasion of the fall of the angels was their unwillingness to do obeisance to the Messiah, by referring to Zanchius and Suarez,¹ "the best of the schoolmen," without giving any

¹ Zanchius was a Calvinistic theologian (1516-1590) who wrote *De primi hominis lapsu de peccato et lege Dei*; Francisco Suarez, a Jesuit scholastic (1548-1617), whose works were published in 28 volumes. Zanchius, tome iii. (edition 1613), liber iv. cap. 2, p. 170, in his long account of the fall of the angels, states: "Some say Satan's sin was rebellion against God through pride. Others assert: 'Peccatum angelorum nihil aliud fuisse, quam invidiam qua homini donum, quod a Deo acceperat, quia ad imaginem Dei factus erat inviderunt.'" And he cites Athanagorus, Petrus of Alexandria, and Augustine in proof.

Suarez, in the second volume of his collected Works (Paris, 1586), devotes an entire book to the fallen angels, and states (p. 890): "Et ad hoc confirmandum solent adduci verba Pauli ad Hebr. 1, et cum iterum introducit primogenitum in orbem terrae, dicit: et adorent eum omnes Angeli ejus. Quod testimonium aliqui contemnunt, sed licet non cogat, quia varias habet expositiones, non est cur illa etiam, in qua hic inducitur, improbabilis censeatur. Nam particula iterum, licet possit ad solam sermonis continuationem referri, etiam intelligitur optime ex parte objecti de secunda introductione, ut Ribera ibi cum aliis exponit. Item, quia licet sic exposita plures sensus recipiat, quia secunda introductio Christi in orbem terrae, multiplex cogitari potest, nam Incarnatio ipsa potest dici secunda introductio respectu aeternae generationis Verbi Dei, et Resurrectio Christi Domini respectu Nativitatis ejus, et secundus adventus respectu primi, et sic de aliis; nihilominus etiam est pia expositio, ut prima Christi introductio fuerit per fidem, in mentibus praesertim angelicis, secunda vero fuerit per realem executionem, et conceptionem. Sed quidquid sit de rigore litterae, inde colligimus ad Christi praesentiam, vel repraesentationem consequi praeceptum adorandi ipsum: nam ideo dixit Deus, et adorent eum omnes Angeli ejus, quia hoc erat debitum dignitati ejus, quam Paulus eo loco ostendebat."

Compare this summary of the story in a modern "Life of the Devil": "And this Satan, who desired to be God, was not the madman imagined

STUDIES IN POPULAR ISLAM

reference (p. 507). Further, he states that Mr. Charles Owen in his book *Wonders of Redeeming Love* (p. 74) has the same opinion, and that Dr. Goodwin in the second volume of his works, in a *Discourse on the Knowledge of God the Father*, states:

“A lower degree of accursed pride fell into the heart of the devil himself, whose sin in his first apostatizing from God, is conceived to be a stomaching that man should be one day advanced unto the hypostatical union, and be one person with the Son of God, whose proud angelical nature (then in actual existence, *the highest of creatures*), could not brook.” (p. 509.)

Thus at least some Calvinistic theologians agree in their interpretation of Hebrews i. 6, and the true interpretation of both the Koran and the New Testament passages finds its climax in the Te Deum:

“To Thee all angels cry aloud, the heavens and all the powers therein. To Thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth. . . . Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ. Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.”

by the old theologians. He desired divinity, but in a way which had nothing impossible in it, since he wished simply to be taken by the Word and form with Him a single personality, while yet preserving his separate nature. Suarez, struck by all these points, adopted the new theory and declared that, in his opinion, the sin of the Devil came from his desire to be taken himself by the Word as a term of the hypostatic union, instead of the human nature of Christ being that term.”—*The Life of the Devil*, by Father Louis Coulange (Joseph Turmel); tr. Stephen Haden Guest (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930), p. 23.