

Vol. IV.

No. 4.

THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

APRIL 1905.

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QADIAN,

DISTRICT GURDASPUR, PUNJAB, INDIA.

Annual Subscription ... Rs.4. | Single Copy As. 6.

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
نَحْمَدُهٗ وَنُصَلِّیْ عَلٰی رَسُوْلِهِ الْكَرِیْمِ

Polygamy.

2 Polygamy in Islam.

GENERAL GROUNDS.

In the last issue we briefly stated the reasons which necessitate polygamy in exceptional cases and these reasons are a sufficient justification of polygamy in Islam. In fact, when the necessity of polygamy is shown on general grounds, there does not remain much to be said about its sanction in a particular system. On the other hand, a religion which makes provision for the needs of human nature and is not carried away by the apparent attractiveness of a principle which is not suited to the requirements of humanity at large, affords evidence of the comprehensiveness of its principles and of its deep insight into human nature. The religion of Islam was meant from the beginning to be the universal religion of the whole world as the Holy Quran says in plain words: "Say, O men, I am a messenger of God towards you all." This universal religion was moreover meant to be practical. It was meant to meet the needs of different people. It was not meant for a few sentimentalists, but for the world at large. Therefore, it was necessary for it to make provision for cases in which polygamy became a necessity whenever and wherever such cases might arise. This is the reason of the permission of polygamy in Islam.

TREND OF THE TEACHINGS OF IS- LAM.

The censure is very often cast at Islam by blind and prejudiced critics that it is an easy and sensual religion and that its object is not to free men from

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the power of evil, but to provide for their baser passions. There was a time when such remarks made by ignorant Christians were taken to be the very truth, when any body without reading the Holy Quran believed and preached that it was "calculated to lead man daily further from God, and to unite him closer to the Prince of darkness." But thanks to the efforts of many impartial students of comparative religion that such remarks are now believed to be base lies invented to keep men in the dark. In fact, the blame of sensuality upon Islam is such a daring falsehood that the same critics have often to contradict themselves by blaming Islam for its austere practices of five prayers a day and fasting. The wonder is that a religion which by teaching the doctrine of atonement has opened the way for many evils is considered to be the religion of holiness, while another which lays stress upon everyone exerting himself to attain the purity of heart and to shun every evil is condemned as a sensual religion. The Holy Quran says plainly, on the one hand, *قد افلح من زكها* "Only he is saved who purifieth his soul of every dross and every evil," and repeatedly exhorts for the attainment of righteousness; and enjoins practices on the other, which appeal to anything but sensuality and easiness. Can a religion be said to be easy which requires a man to say prayers five times a day and which further requires him to spend a long portion of the night in devotion to God, hours at which a sensual man would be lying drunk in a saloon or brothel? Take the Islamic institution of fasting again, which requires every Muslim to fast for one whole month during the year. Are these indications of an easy and sensual religion? The truth is that it is these austere practices which are a hinderance in the acceptance of Islam in the way of many, while the comparative easiness of other religious systems has allured large numbers. It is also a fact that these injunctions have been laid down by Islam to keep men back from evil as the Holy Quran says: *ان الصلوة تذهي عن الفحشاء والمنكر*: "Prayers have been enjoined because prayers restrain a man from evil courses and from that which is blameworthy," and says further on: "and assuredly the gravest duty is the remembrance of God." The institution of fasting is also meant to teach a man, to teach him not in theory but in practice, how to shun that which is forbidden to him, for when he can so control his desires in keeping fasts as to be able to restrain himself even from that which is allowed to him under

ordinary circumstances, how much more power would he find to control his passions and desires in shunning evil courses and keeping from forbidden paths. It is one of the numerous peculiarities of Islam which distinguish it from all other religious systems and serve as criteria of its truth that it teaches practical methods by adopting which a man is enabled to overcome evil. The Holy Quran says: *واستعينوا بالصبر والصلوة وانها لكبيرة الا على الخاشعين الذين يظنون انهم ملقوا ربهم وانهم اليه راجعون* (البقرة ٤٥-٤٦) "And seek help to overcome the power of evil with fasting and prayers: and a hard duty indeed is this, but not to the humble who bear in mind that they must meet their Lord and that unto Him they shall return" (II: 45, 46). The Holy Quran calls it a hard duty, but it is the only way, as the Quran has rightly said, to find union with God and to overcome the baser passions and evil desires. Thus the trend of the teachings of Islam and the object which it has in view in ordaining certain practices, is only this that a sensual life may be farthest away from the ideas of a Muslim, and it is the gravest error to call such a system an easy and sensual religion.

EVIDENCE AFFORDED BY PROHIBITION OF DRUNKENNESS.

Besides the general considerations referred to above, which show clearly that the principles and practices of Islam are farthest away from leading men into sensuality, that they foster a spirit of true piety, humbleness and righteousness, and that they enable a man to overcome evil, there are other evidences of a particular nature which support the same conclusion. Take for instance the prohibition of strong drinks which directly affords evidence of the strong hatred of Islam for sensuality. We do not here raise the question why does not Christianity, if it is not a sensual and easy religion, prohibit the use of intoxicating liquors, for we are not concerned with it at present. But we ask if the devil of drink does not excite the sensual passions, and if an utter prohibition of wine in a religion is not the surest and clearest evidence of its hatred for sensuality and its love for true righteousness and the purity of heart and soul. Why did Islam prohibit the use of all intoxicating liquors if, as its blind enemies think, it was a sensual religion and was meant to gratify the baser passions and evil desires of men? We wonder when we hear

some so-called Muslims say that the institutions of Islam were meant for an early stage of society and that they are not adapted to the advanced stage at which they pretend to have arrived. Alas! that men form their conclusions, not on facts, but on pre-conceived notions. There is no purity or holiness like that which Islam has taught, but this purity is called sensuality, while the sensuality to which drunkenness opens the way is falsely represented to be purity. It is wine which excites the sensual passions of man, and Islam has practically shut the door to sensuality by extirpating the evil of drunkenness. The world is blind yet to the transcendent beauty of truth, but the time is not far when its eye will be opened to receive the light and to see that the institutions laid down by Islam aim at the suppression of baser passions and the uprooting of sensual desires.

TWO OPINIONS. By the Western mind to which polygamy conveys the idea of an unmitigated evil, two opinions are generally favoured as to the permission of polygamy in Islam which are both considered to be in consonance with the more advanced views regarding the teachings of Islam which the study of comparative religion has brought about. According to one view the Holy Prophet saw that polygamy was an evil, but he did not abolish it because it was impossible to check it at that early stage in the growth of human society. This is the more generally received opinion, but there is also another according to which the Holy Prophet could not see the alleged evils of polygamy. Strangely enough both these opinions find adherents, to a greater or less extent, among the so-called advanced Muhammadans who are blindly imitating the West without considering for a moment the good or evil effect of the institutions which they desire to adopt or those which they wish to get rid of. Mr. Amir Ali considers polygamy an institution against equity, but it was permitted according to him "because it was impossible to stop the practice in the then state of civilization." The view held by him is exactly the same as that entertained by many Christian writers. We will attempt to show below that both these views are erroneous, as erroneous as the one already considered, *viz.*, that Islam being a sensual religion adopted the institution of polygamy as a means for the gratification of the sensual passions.

**THE EXTENT OF
THE PREVALENCE
OF POLYGAMY.**

The opinion that the Holy Prophet found it impossible to check polygamy in the then state of civilization supposes in the first place that polygamy was not an exception then as it is now. Otherwise we do not see the difficulty. An institution the benefit of which extended but to a few men in comparison with the vast majority could not present as many difficulties to an attempt to uproot it as an institution which affected the vast majority. Now we know, as a matter of fact, that even in the Arab society of our Holy Prophet's time monogamy was the rule and polygamy an exception, though the constant warring of the tribes reducing greatly the number of males made it more general than it would be in a peaceful community. But after all in a community in which marriage was believed to be a sacred institution, and marriage, not celibacy, was considered the perfection of humanity, all the males could not find more than one wife, and hence polygamy must of necessity have remained, as it always must remain, only an exception. To say that the Holy Prophet found it impossible to uproot such an institution, although he knew it to be an evil, is the veriest absurdity. No peculiar difficulty lay in the way of the Holy Prophet to abolish polygamy. On the other hand, since this institution affected smaller number, it was the more easy for him to free society of it if he thought it to be an evil.

**THE EVILS ABO-
LISHED BY ISLAM.**

There is another aspect of this question. It has been said that polygamy was an institution so deeply rooted in Arab society that no reformer could by mere word of mouth abolish the practice. For reformers who do not possess the magnetic power, which is granted to the prophets of God and which was granted most of all to the holy one who rose in Arabia, it is no doubt impossible to uproot inveterate practices by mere word of mouth or by mere exhortations. But to the prophets of God the heavenly magnetism is granted with which they can extirpate the most deep-rooted evils with one word, and this is one criterion which distinguishing them from the worldly reformers shows the Mighty power of Him who sends them for the regeneration of mankind. If we were to describe the state of Arabia before the appearance of the Holy Prophet, the Arabia of the days of ignorance

as it is generally called, and then contrast it with the transformed Arabia, the subject would not be finished in a volume. How many were the evils which prevailed in Arabia and how deep in the society were they rooted, is a fact which no reader of history could have overlooked. Yet how all these were uprooted in the course of twenty-three years! Such a complete and such an entire transformation is without a parallel in the history of any people or the life of any prophet or reformer. Take idolatry for instance. It was so deeply rooted in the lives of the Arabs that all their institutions were governed by it. Had the reform of the Holy Prophet been only directed at the social institutions of the people, his task would not have been so difficult. The opinion has been entertained by many writers upon Islam that the Holy Prophet found extraneous support in the abolition of idolatry, and that if such support had not been available, he would not have even made an attempt. This is a great misconception. It is true that the Arabs acknowledged, as in fact all idol-worshippers acknowledge, a supreme Deity above their idols which they regarded as minor Deities, and it is also true that about the same time had arisen other men who called themselves Haneefs and who hated idolatry and wanted to carry on a crusade against it. Thus there was a groundwork of belief in the unity of God, this being in fact only an evidence that a belief in the unity of Godhead is implanted in human nature, and a sentiment of hatred for idolatry was also beginning to grow, but to say that the Holy Prophet counted upon these circumstances in preaching against idolatry is a most serious error. The groundwork of belief in the unity of God was thought by the idolaters to be consistent with the worship of idols, and the sentiment of hatred for idolatry was so weak that in comparison with the beliefs entertained by the vast masses, it may be said to have been almost non-existent. Had these external supports had any real value, other men, the Haneefs for instance, could have availed themselves of them. But their failure and the strong opposition, the strongest in fact which a reformer has ever met with, which continued for a quarter of a century against the Holy Prophet, show clearly that no help was rendered by these alleged extraneous supports, nor did the Holy Prophet ever consider that these circumstances could render him any assistance in his crusade against the erroneous belief. Was it not for preaching against idolatry that the Holy Prophet had to pass through the severest ordeals and that

he was persecuted even to death, and that his companions were ruthlessly butchered and driven out of their homes? The uprooting of no other evil brought him face to face with so many hard trials and dangers as the abolition of idolatry. Yet caring nothing for all these difficulties, caring nothing even for his life, he went on doing his work until the whole of Arabia resounded from corner to corner with the one voice: "There is no god but God, and Muhammad is His prophet." Can this man be said to have feared that he would not be successful in abolishing polygamy? Is there a single reform which he desired to accomplish and which was left unaccomplished because of any opposition on the part of the people? If there was any one evil which it was more difficult to combat than any other, it was idolatry, in the abolition of which he had to face the greatest trials and dangers and the severest persecutions which any prophet or reformer has ever met with. But his was the undaunted courage and resolute will to which no opposition and no difficulty was insurmountable. Was polygamy more deep-rooted than idolatry, than the blood-feuds which swept off thousands of men on the most trivial quarrels, than infanticide, than gambling and drunkenness? Let the impartial critic consider for a moment if the abolition of polygamy could have proved a difficult task to the master mind who raised a most savage people to the height of civilization.

**THE SECOND
THEORY.**

It is clear from the above that the Holy Prophet never considered polygamy to be an evil, otherwise he could have checked it as he checked so many other evils. Nor can it be said that he did not give it any consideration. He saw polygamy as it was practised and introduced into it the necessary reforms, showing that he saw its necessity, and therefore while sanctioning it, put a restraint upon its abuse. We will now consider the theory according to which the Holy Prophet failed to see the evils of polygamy. This subject will be dealt with at length under the third head proposed for discussion when we shall answer the objections against polygamy. There it will be shown that the evils of polygamy exist nowhere outside the imagination of those who on account of an hereditary prejudice or blind imitation entertain feelings of hatred towards this time-honoured institution. Here we will discuss the subject from two other points of view.

**SUPPRESSION OF
THE ANIMAL PAS-
SIONS.**

The greatest objection against polygamy is that it excites the sensual passions. Without answering this objection we will here enquire whether the Holy Prophet could remain unaware if the institution had really such an evil effect. The religion which he preached required a true purity of life as the only means to salvation. It was not satisfied with theories which suggested that the sins of one man could be taken away by another. Being therefore essentially based upon purity of life, as the name of Islam (entire submission to the will of God and perfect freedom from the control of all other desires) denotes, it took all necessary measures to curb the evil passions and to check the baser desires in man. It put a stop at every opening through which the evil desires could find an entrance into human heart. It is for this reason that no other religion has suggested so many practical methods of obtaining a true purity of life as Islam. This assertion is not devoid of proof, but we would not go into details. We will take two chief excitors of the sensual passions, and show how minutely and deeply Islam has studied the various sides of human nature to curb the evil desires. These two are drunkenness and the free intermixing of the two sexes especially in festivities and games when the animal passions are in excitement. As regards the first of these, it is admitted on all hands that it is the greatest enemy of mankind and the most dangerous exciter of the carnal desires. Which religion in the world has put a check to it like Islam? And mark the magnetism of the power which put a stop to it with one word, and turned inveterate drunkards into the haters of all intoxicating liquors. No human effort could do what the word of one man did, at whose command wine-pots and bowls were for ever broken. And yet this man and these people are called sensual, and it is suggested as an explanation of the permission of polygamy in Islam that the Holy Prophet being unable to curb the sensual passions of his companions allowed an evil to prevail. What has the world found more difficult to check, polygamy or drunkenness? A plain answer to this question at once decides the issue. And before giving the answer, our critics may also consider if the checking of polygamy has not brought about the prevalence of adultery and if the prohibition of drunkenness has not been conducive to true purity of life. Among a polygamous people

there would not be found more than 10 per cent. people practising polygamy. Such was in fact the case once among the mormons, among whom polygamy was practised as a duty and as a meritorious deed. But among a people, among whom, as in Islam, polygamy is considered to be permissible, the percentage is much lower under ordinary circumstances. To check polygamy is, therefore, no hard task, and any government can easily do it by means of force. But no government, no exhortation, no lecturer, has been able to uproot the evil of drunkenness where it has taken root. In the whole history of the world there is only one example before us and that is the holy religion of Islam, the religion which is not satisfied with mere words, but requires every man to attain to true purity of life. Another great check put by Islam against the excitement of the sensual passions exists in the form of the *pardah* system. Call it an error if you will, but at any rate it is an error on the side of true purity, an error to put a restraint upon the sensual passions of man. The *pardah*, it is alleged, shows a want of confidence. Yes, it does, but, it is a want of confidence in the sensual passions of the masses, and nothing but ignorance of human nature can condemn this want of confidence. Whatever the *pardah* may be, one thing is certain that the *pardah* was introduced by Islam in its yearning after true purity of heart as one of the means to the attainment of that noble end, and whatever its effect upon the education and progress of woman, it cannot be denied that it is the only means which can practically restrain the sensual passions of the masses of mankind from excitement. At any rate then Islam tried its best to introduce all those reforms into society which could serve as checks against the excitement of carnal desires. One may blame it for going too far in its yearning after purity if one does not care for the extreme purity which it aims at, and we are ready to accept such a blame. And as we have shown in our article upon the *pardah* system, it was really the outcome of a very deep insight into human nature that the holy religion of Islam prohibited the free intermingling of the two sexes, for without such prohibition the true purity of life which Islam aimed at could never be attained to. If then Islam saw so deeply into human nature, and introduced reforms for the restraint of sensual passions which no other philosopher or reformer has ever been able to introduce, it is absurd to say that it failed to see the alleged evils of polygamy. In

pointing out methods for attaining to a true purity of life, Islam never made a mistake. The fact is, as has been explained in the first part of this subject, that Islam would have been guilty of closing one way to purity of heart if it had disallowed polygamy under all circumstances. For, polygamy being a necessity of human nature under certain circumstances as shown above, its prohibition would have meant the opening of the way to adultery. This effect of the prohibition of polygamy is clearly seen in Christian countries and admitted by Church dignitaries. To add one testimony to the many stated from time to time in the pages of this magazine, we quote the words of Canon Isaac Taylor uttered before a Church Congress: "Owing to polygamy, Muslim countries are free from professional out-casts, a greater reproach to Christendom than polygamy to Islam. The strictly regulated polygamy of Muslim is infinitely less degrading to women and less injurious to men than the promiscuous polyandry which is absolutely unknown in Islam. The polyandrous English are not entitled to cast stones at polygamous Muslims. Let us first pluck out the beam from our own eye before we meddle with the mote in our brother's eye." We would willingly admit that Islam really failed to see the evil effect of polygamy in the then state of civilization, if we are shown that in this advanced state of civilization, the prohibition of polygamy has proved a check and not an exciter to adultery. But so long as we must consider facts, the conclusion arrived at is just the opposite of that which is taken for granted by the detractors of polygamy.

THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN. The second great objection against polygamy is that it lowers the position of woman and accordingly the second point of view from which we wish to consider this subject here is whether the general tendency of Islam was to lower or raise the position of woman, for all its principles must be read in the same light. It is an admitted fact that woman was in a very degraded condition before the advent of Islam. She was considered more as a chattel than as a human being. She was a part of the inheritance of the father to the son and could not herself inherit any property. With the introduction of Islam, a wonderful change was brought about in the position of woman. Infanticide was abolished with one word. The infamous marriage of a man with his step-mother was abolished. Women could by doing good deeds aspire to

the same state of blessedness which was promised to men. But Islam did not stop here. It gave women the right to inherit in the presence of male inheritors, and she could claim inheritance as daughter, grand-daughter, mother, grand-mother, wife, sister or aunt. She could dispose of her possessions by testament or otherwise with the same freedom as men could. She was not only given a status, but she was given rights and privileges which she has not acquired up to this time under the most advanced civilization. Her family toils were fully recognised and she was more honoured and valued for her natural duties in the family than a brave soldier for taking up arms in defence of his country. Thus there is a tradition of the Holy Prophet which describes him as saying: ان للحامل من اجر الصائم القائم فاذا ضربها الطلق لم يد راحد ما لها من الاجر فاذا ارضعت كان لها بكل مصة اجرا حياء نفس

“Verily for the pregnant among women is the reward of a man who fasts during the day time and stands up for devotion before God in the night, and when the pain of childbirth smites her, no one knows how great is her reward, and when she gives suck to the babe, she has for every draught of milk drawn from her breasts the reward of bringing one into life.” Does not this show that Islam had a true conception of the position of woman from the beginning? It gives her all the rights, her true position in society, and does not ignore her position in the family. And the fact is that in a polygamous family, the wife has the same rights as in a monogamous family. Her position is in no way lowered by being a second wife. Nay, her position is sometimes actually raised by a polygamous marriage. The hundreds of thousands of outcasts in the civilized countries of Europe can be raised to the eminent position of mothers and wives by being allowed to be taken as second wives. And yet this institution which is calculated to raise the position of woman under many circumstances is wrongly accused of treating the woman as a chattel, while the presence of outcasts is in no way considered to lower the position of women and men who are in such a condition worse than beasts. But Islam is far from degrading the woman to such a beastly creature, and it gives her her true position in society and her true position in the family whether by a monogamous or polygamous system of marriage. Since the monogamous system of

marriage leaves women under certain circumstances to be a prey to the sensual passions of the stronger sex, Islam comes to their aid and raises them to the position of beloved wives and honoured mothers by allowing a polygamous system of marriage.

POLYGAMY WHY SANCTIONED. We come now to the consideration of a more particular question. Why has the Holy Quran sanctioned polygamy? For an answer to this question we must take the verse in which the permission is contained. It is the third verse of the chapter entitled "Women," and the chapter opens with these words: يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ
 يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ
 "O Men! walk in righteousness before your Lord who created you of one *nafs* and of the same created He his wife, and from the two (thus united in marriage), He has spread abroad many men and women (of their progeny). And walk in righteousness before your Lord in whose name you ask mutual favours --and (reverence) the wombs. Verily God is watching you." In the beginning of this verse an ordinance is contained enjoining righteousness which is repeated again in the middle while at the end we are told that a man should not be satisfied that his faults are hidden from other men and that he leads a life which is good in the eyes of men, for Almighty God watches the deeds of a man which are hidden from the eyes of his fellow-beings, and thus true righteousness is that which is righteousness in the sight of God. Here, moreover, the object of the union of man and woman as husband and wife is explained as procreation and the spreading of the human race upon earth. Righteousness is then the basis upon which the Holy Quran proceeds, and it is for this end that it sanctions polygamy. Righteousness is the most important consideration which the Holy Quran has in view. The great object of man's life is to find union with God and for this it is necessary to attain to a perfect holiness of life in which no evil idea can have access to a man's heart. With this object in view, as stated in this verse, the Holy Quran says further on "that a man may marry two, three or four wives.

OBJECT OF MARRIAGE. Many other verses lead us to the same conclusion. In the chapter entitled the Light we read :

و ليستعفف الذين لا يجدون نكاحا حتى يغنيهم الله من فضله (النور ٣٣)

“And let those who have not the means to get married, live in continence till God of His bounty shall enrich them.” In explanation of this we have a tradition of the Holy Prophet which says: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يا معشر الشباب من استطاع فعلية ا لباءة فليتزوج فانه اغض للبصروا حصن للفرج ومن لم يستطع فعليه بالصوم فان الصوم له وجاء اما الذي لا تتوق نفسه الى النكاح فان كان ذلك لعلته به من كبر او مرض او عجز يكره له ان ينكح لانه يلتزم The apostle of God, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him. said: ‘O company of young men, he who is able, of you, to marry let him marry, for marriage indeed helps a man to keep his looks more abridged and to become more inaccessible to lust. But as to the man who is not able to procure the provisions of marriage, let him keep fasts, for the fasts would mortify his passions. As to him, who is disabled from marrying owing to old age or disease or physical disability, he should not marry, for if he does it, he will impose upon himself a duty which he cannot discharge.’ From the verse quoted above, as explained by this tradition, it clearly appears that the great object of marriage in Islam, whether single or plural, is no other than purity of heart and the expulsion of evil desires, lusts and passions. The Holy Quran commands the men for instance that their eyes should never be raised to see the beauty of a strange woman, for this may lead to evil desires, and commands them also that they should observe such perfect continence that sensual passions should find no access to their hearts. It then points out different ways which men under different circumstances may adopt in order that they may be able to attain to the perfect purity of heart to which it desires to take them. The course that it points out for the generality of men under ordinary circumstances is that they should marry. To those who have the power of manhood, but have not the means to marry, it says that they should keep fasts, for the fasts would keep off the evil desires. To those who have grown old or are disabled by nature or by some disease, it forbids marriage. Now there comes a class which is permitted to take more than one wife. Evidently this is the class of men who, as shown in the first part of this subject, are unable to keep themselves perfectly chaste with one

wife only. For as there are in God's creation those who are deprived of all power of manhood, so there are others who are endowed with stronger powers. The Holy Quran wants every man to be so free from all evil desires and to be so contented with his own lot in the world that the idea should never enter into his heart to cast a look at a strange woman to draw any pleasure from her beauty, for such pleasure is a kind of sensual pleasure. For such perfect contentment as Islam requires, it is necessary that a permission of plural marriage should be given. This way can only be closed if the perfect purity of heart which Islam wants a man to attain is not cared for. For, it must be borne in mind that Islam does not prohibit men only from adultery, nay, it is not satisfied even with prohibiting men from looking to lust after strange women, but goes still further, and enjoins them to lower down their eyes when they see strange women, to adopt a course which is most peaceful for society and the best preserver of the purity of the heart. Moreover, being a practical religion, it does not tell men to become recluses or do violence to their nature, and does not place upon them a burden too great for them to bear, but points out for them ways in which they, as working and toiling men, can walk with ease. Herein lies the superiority of Islam, *viz.*, it teaches transcendent purity on the one hand, and points out practical methods, on the other, by adopting which a man may attain to that perfect purity. The general principle of shunning evil is well explained in a tradition which says : *من حام حول الحمى يوشك ان يقع فيه* "He who approaches a thing prohibited is near to falling therein." Thus Islam enjoins a man not only not to commit an act of disobedience, but not to approach it even and not to walk in a path which may lead to it. Islam, as we have often said, puts the check at the source where it is easiest to check the evil. Thus, regarding adultery the Holy Quran says : *لا تقربوا الزنا* "Do not even approach adultery," which means that a man should not even take the liberty to do deeds which may ultimately lead to adultery. This is so sound a principle that none but the blind enemies of Islam, whether they pass under the name of Muhammadans or under any other name, would question its truth. And so long as such strong hatred of adultery and of all its preliminaries must be entertained, polygamy cannot be prohibited. Let every man who owns a belief in God consider with a mind free

from prejudice, if the true purity of heart which Islam teaches, is not necessary to obtain a true connection with God, and let every man who denies the existence of God ponder whether such purity is not the one thing needed for the elevation of humanity.

THE NECESSITY OF PROCREATION. From the above it is clear that to attain true purity of life a man is allowed by the Islamic law to take more than one wife if necessary. Apart from the arguments produced above, it is easy to see that the repeated exhortations of the Holy Quran for the observance of true righteousness could not have been carried out if polygamy had been utterly forbidden. Had the object of the Holy Quran been like the Gospels to preach certain doctrines pleasing to sentimentalists, as the doctrine of turning the left cheek when the right is smitten, then indeed it would have disallowed polygamy. But the religion of Islam was meant to be a practical religion, and hence when requiring men to follow true righteousness, to overcome the sensual and baser passions and to be inaccessible to every evil desire, it had to make allowance for the requirements of human nature under different circumstances, and hence while checking every evil, it did not absolutely put a stop to polygamy. And as it appears from the context that the Holy Quran allowed polygamy for the sake of true righteousness, it is further evident that the bringing about of the object of procreation was also considered by it to be a necessity for the permission of polygamy. For in the verse quoted above, we are told that the result of the union of a man and a woman as husband and wife is that the human race is spread upon the earth. On other occasions the Holy Quran teaches a man to pray that he may be granted good and virtuous offspring, as in the verse *ربنا هب لنا من أزواجنا وذرياتنا قرة أعين واجعلنا للمتقين إماما* (الفرقان ٧٤) "O our Lord, give us in our wives and offspring the joy of our eyes, and make us exemplars to those who act righteously." Similarly a righteous man, Zacharias, is made to say: *رب هب لي من لدنك ذرية طيبة* "O Lord! grant me virtuous offspring." These verses show clearly that polygamy is also allowed for the sake of raising virtuous offspring. These being the two chief reasons for the necessity of polygamy, they are also given a prominence by the Holy Quran in sanctioning this sacred institution. And since it is impossible to enumerate the varied circumstances which give rise to the necessity

of polygamy under different conditions, hence the Holy Quran has left it for the individual, guided as he must be in each case by the moral force of the society, and by various other considerations to which we shall refer later on, to see whether he actually stands in need of polygamy and whether the circumstances of the case are such as justify his contracting a plural marriage.

THE VERSE SANCTIONING POLYGAMY. The next point for consideration is the meaning of the verse itself by which polygamy is sanctioned. It runs thus: *ان خفتن الا تقسطوا فى اليتامى فانكحوا ما طاب لكم من النساء مثنى وثلاث وربع فان خفتن الا تعدلوا فواحدة او ما* And if you are apprehensive that you shall not deal fairly with orphan (girls), then of other women who seem good in your eyes, marry two, three or four; but if you fear that you shall not act equitably, then marry only one free woman or that which your right hands have acquired: this, (*i.e.*, marrying one woman only) is more proper so that you may not act wrongly." The first portion of this verse indicates the occasion of its revelation. By the word *يتامى* (orphans) here are meant orphan girls, as appears from a later verse revealed in the same *Sura*: *ويستفتونك فى النساء قل الله يفتيكم فيهن وما يتلى عليكم فى الكتب فى يتامى النساء التى لا تورثهن ما كتب لهن وترغبون ان تنكحوهن* And they consult thee in regard to women: say, God has made known His Will concerning them, and His Will is rehearsed to you in this book (the chapter entitled 'Women') concerning female orphans to whom you give not their legal due and yet desire to marry them." The reference contained in this verse is to the verse under discussion. Great injustice was done by the Arabs of ignorance to orphans, and when an orphan girl was placed in their charge, they married her, but since she had no male relatives who could press the husband to fulfil the legal obligations due to her, she was often wronged and treated unjustly. But if she was not taken in marriage by her guardian, the case was different, for in that case the guardian would be the protector of her rights. It was to remedy this evil that the verse was revealed and in this connection polygamy was sanctioned in a limited form and subject to certain conditions.

HOW FAR SANCTIONED. It is necessary to state before giving further explanation of the meaning of this verse that the only

harm which can possibly proceed from polygamy is that the rights of the first wife may be ignored when a second is taken. This harm the Holy Quran has not failed to see. For while permitting polygamy it immediately says : *فان خفتم الا تعدلوا فواحدة* : "But if you fear that you cannot act justly, then marry only one wife." In fact, considered from one point of view this verse while permitting the two practices, *viz.*, marrying an orphan girl placed under one's charge and contracting a plural marriage, urges the Muslims to resort to them very sparingly for they may both lead to injustice. The forms of expression used in both cases are the same. In the first part of the verse we are told with respect to marriage with an orphan girl by her guardian that it is not prohibited, but still if you fear that you cannot act justly, then marry some other woman. In the latter part we are told with regard to plural marriage that it is not forbidden, but if you fear that you cannot act justly then marry only one. The Arabic words which speak of the two practices are almost identical : *وان خفتم الا تقسطوا* in the one case and *وان خفتم الا تعدلوا* in the other, the words *تقسطوا* and *تعدلوا* being almost synonymous and conveying the significance of acting justly. If necessary, a guardian may marry an orphan girl in his charge, but if he fears that he would not be able to act justly towards her, then he is forbidden. If necessary, a man may contract a plural marriage, but if he fears that he would thereby override the rights of the first, then he is forbidden to take a second wife. This is a plain interpretation of the words of the Holy Quran.

NOT RECOMMENDED GENERALLY. We have said that polygamy, though permitted by the Holy Quran, is not recommended generally and we have shown this from the verse itself which gives permission. The last words of the verse make the matter still more clear. After saying that if there is any apprehension of injustice then monogamy is the safer course, the Holy Quran says *ذلك ادنى الا تعدلوا* "This, *i.e.*, the taking of a single wife, is the better course by walking in which you would not be tempted to act unjustly towards women." In fact, the subject of polygamy is attended with great difficulties. On the one hand, are the necessities of human nature which no true reformer can ignore, and, on the other, are the harms which are likely to proceed from a too free and general practice of polygamy. In these difficulties Islam chooses the

middle path : it does not utterly prohibit polygamy, but at the same time having regard to the injustice which may be done to women it prohibits it where there is any *apprehension* of injustice. And at the end of the verse, we are plainly told that the man who wishes to avoid the temptation of falling into injustice should be content with one wife only. The Holy Quran reverts to this subject in a later verse in the same chapter where it says : *وان تستطيعوا ان تعدلوا بين النساء ولو حرصتم فلا تميلوا كل الميل فتذروها كالمعلقة وان تصلحوا وثقروا* (النساء ١٢٩) "And you may not have it at all in your power to treat your wives with equal justice, even though you fain would do so, but (if it becomes necessary to take a second wife) incline not wholly to one side so that you leave the other like a woman who has neither a husband nor is she husbandless, and if you set the matter right and act righteously, then verily God is forgiving, merciful." (17: 129). In this verse too both sides of the question are considered and it reveals a state of contention between the necessity of polygamy and the difficulties of maintaining the justice required by the Holy Quran. It sanctions polygamy only under exceptional circumstances, for it says that dealing equitably with the wives may be found beyond the power of ordinary mortals, but still it does not remove the condition imposed in the 3rd verse. It only says that if justice is done so far as it lies in the power of a man, then God will be forgiving, thus indicating clearly that polygamy should not be practised ordinarily, but if a man driven by necessity contracts a plural marriage, he should act justly so far as it lies in his power and God would forgive the defects. If it were meant that a man was at liberty to take a second wife at his will, whether he had really any necessity for it or not, the form of expression adopted to indicate this object would have been different. In such a case the fulfilment of the condition of justice would have been required in all its strictness. But here an indulgence is shown, for the verse ends with the words that God is forgiving, and a man cannot implore the forgiveness of God who does a deed without any lawful necessity. The Holy Quran forbids such deeds and looks upon them with disfavor, as it says *والذين هم عن اللغو معرضون* "The faithful are those who shun idle words and deeds." But God has pity for those who do a thing under necessity. Only he can be an object of

Divine indulgence who is excusable in some way, and a man who contracts a plural marriage is excusable if he does it under lawful necessity, but not otherwise. Hence this verse furnishes the clearest testimony that the Holy Quran sanctions polygamy in exceptional cases and does not favour the practice generally. On the other hand, as it appears from the concluding words of the 3rd verse of this chapter, monogamy is recommended as the preferable course which is not to be departed from unless some such necessity arises which cannot be satisfied without polygamy.

MARRIAGE WITH SLAVE GIRLS. The words *او ما ملكت ايما نكم* "Or what your right hands have acquired" occurring in the verse quoted above require some explanation. The explanation of these words is found further on in the same chapter. After mentioning the prohibited degrees of marriage, the Holy Quran says : *ومن لم يستطع منكم طولا ان ينكح المحصنات المؤمنات فمن ما ملكت ايما نكم من فتياتكم المؤمنات والله اعلم بما ايما نكم بعضكم من بعض ذ لك لمن خشى العنت منكم وان تصبروا و خير لكم والله غفور رحيم (النساء ٢٥)* "And whoever of you has not the means to marry free believing women, then let him marry such of your believing maidens as have fallen into your hands as prisoners of war : God well knows your faith. You are sprung the one from the other This law is for him among you who fears the commission of fornication, but if you abstain, it will be better for you. And God is forgiving and merciful " (iv : 25). This verse clears two points. In the first place it explains the meaning of the words *او ما ملكت ايما نكم* occurring in the 3rd verse of the chapter. It shows that when a man has not sufficient means to pay the dowry of or maintain a free woman, he may marry a maiden who has been captured in war (ordinarily termed a slave), if he fears that by remaining unmarried he would fall into the evil of adultery. Secondly, this verse again brings out before us the object of contracting a marriage whether monogamous or polygamous, which is that a man may not be led to the commission of fornication. If marriage with a slave girl is permitted only when a man fears the commission of fornication, it is apparent that polygamy is permitted on similar considerations.

REGARD FOR WOMEN. We have stated above that the verses sanctioning polygamy occur in the chapter entitled "Women."

It is in this very chapter that the rights of inheritance and of the possession, disposal and bequeathal of property are given to women. Immediately after giving the permission for polygamy, the Holy Quran considers the rights of women which were denied them not only in Arabia, but throughout the whole world, and which women are obtaining even now only partially. This arrangement of the verses is itself an evidence that polygamy was designed as an institution for the welfare of the society at large and for the betterment of the position of women in particular. There is another consideration which shows that the Holy Quran has given the greatest importance to the rights of women in this chapter. We have quoted above the first verse of this chapter and shown how great is the stress it lays upon righteousness and the purity of heart, this being in fact the chief reason of its sanctioning polygamy. Another important word occurs in that verse to which we now desire to call the reader's attention. While exhorting men to entertain true fear of God, it says that reverence should also be shown for the wombs. It says *واتقوا الله... والارحام* "and have true regard for God and the wombs," thus mentioning the rights of women in the same breath with the rights of God. On one other occasion the Holy Quran mentions the observance of certain duties along with an injunction to be truly obedient to God. These are the duties which a man owes to his parents and it is for the purpose of giving them particular importance that the Holy Quran thus mentions them along with obedience to God. Such is the object of the Holy Quran here also. It wishes to give importance to the rights of women and hence particularly refers to a man's obligations to the relations of the wife and the mother. In this connection we may mention an incident showing how extensive were the views in this connection of the holy one who was the recipient of this revelation and how he desired his followers to act. When the troops of the second Caliph, Omar, conquered Egypt, they were commanded to be particularly lenient to the Egyptians. The Bishop of Alexandria on asking the reason of this was told that the Holy Prophet had particularly enjoined this leniency when prophesying the Muslim possession of that country, upon the consideration that he was related to the Egyptians by the mother's side (meaning Hajer, the mother of Ishmeil, his great ancestor). On hearing this the Bishop exclaimed that none but a true prophet could have such vast sympathies. In

short, both before and after the verse permitting polygamy, the greatest stress is laid upon the rights of women. Moreover when the injunction is given to men to have reverence for the wombs, it is meant that a man should have great consideration for the feelings of the relatives of his wife who would, no doubt, be parties concerned in the case of his taking a second wife. No one would then dare to injure their feelings unless there was a necessity which could not be otherwise satisfied.

LIMITS PLACED
UPON A FREE
PRACTICE OF PO-
LYGAMY.

The question may here be raised what restraint is placed by the Muslim law upon the caprice of the individual. Would it not have been better to make the permission of polygamy subject to the decision of a Qazi or a Court of Justice so that the individual might not have been able to infringe the law at his will? Such proposals are simply daring speculations which may no doubt seem pleasing, but which can never be practicable. If indeed it is ever practicable that the marriage laws of Utopia, discussed with such lofty flight of imagination by Mr. Wells in the Fortnightly Review, should ever become the guiding laws of men actually living and working upon this earth, the permission of polygamy would then be easily placed in the hands of the state. But so long as the power is left with the individual to enter a marriage contract, the individual should also have the power to decide whether circumstances have arisen which necessitate polygamy. In fact, so intimately connected are these circumstances with the individual that it would be impossible for any other man, whether a Qazi or a Court of Justice to see his real necessity. If the state does not interfere in the case of those who do not marry at all, why should it interfere in the case of polygamy? The individual must have the same rights in both cases. A man who does not marry may do greater harm to society by committing fornication than the man who contracts a polygamous marriage without lawful necessity, and if it is unjust on the part of the state to interfere in the former case, it is still more so in the latter. But we do not intend to discuss this subject here on general grounds, for such discussion properly belongs to the third part. We have only to see what checks has the Holy Quran placed against a too free practice of polygamy. In the first place are the pecuniary considerations of

a man. According to the Islamic law a husband must be able to pay the wife's dowry and to maintain her. This wise provision in the Muslim law secures the married woman against toil and hard-work, and thus Islam looks upon the natural duties of women which consist in bearing and bringing up children as substantial service. It is moreover an indication of the great regard which Islam has for the rights of women, for by securing to them maintenance regularly and making it obligatory upon the husband, it saves them from various hardships and evils. So obligatory is the maintenance of the wife made upon the husband that the Holy Quran contains plain injunction to the effect, which we have quoted above, forbidding such men to marry as are not able to pay the dowry of or support their wives. Now under ordinary circumstances this duty is sufficiently heavy and no one would think of having a second wife unless he actually feels the need. Some commentators, the famous Imam Shafai among them, interpret the words *لا تعولوا* *ذلك ادنى* in the third verse of the chapter entitled "Women," the verse by which polygamy is sanctioned, as meaning that marriage with one wife only is the better and more proper course so "that you may not have numerous families or households." If a man had only the satisfaction of sensual passions in view, to him fornication would be a far easier course than polygamy which brings with it obligations of a very serious and important nature. Again there is the consideration of justice which is so important that a man is forbidden to contract a plural marriage who is not able to do justice and this is a very hard duty. Besides this, the Holy Quran gives due importance to a regard for the feelings of the relatives of the wife. There would be many other circumstances varying in the case of different individuals, which would keep back a man from polygamy unless he feels true need for it.

THE PRACTICE OF
THE EARLY MUS-
LIMS.

The above considerations are sufficient to show that polygamy in Islam is an institution the benefit of which extends, but to a very small portion of the society, and the permission of it, instead of exciting the sensual passions, must serve as a kind of restraint upon them on account of the very serious and important obligations which are attached to it. It is sometimes thought that polygamy was practised without any necessity by the early Muslims. This is an error which

arises from ignorance of the true facts. It is a well-known fact that the various tribes of Arabia were constantly warring with each other, and the most trivial quarrel between two individuals belonging to two different tribes brought the loss of thousands of lives. Notwithstanding the inhuman practice of infanticide, this circumstance brought about a preponderance of the female sex over the males. With the introduction of Islam other difficulties appeared. Its opponents tried all possible means to blot it out of existence, but failing in their attempts they turned to the last resort of a fighting nation. The sword was taken up to uproot the new religion and to bring destruction upon its adherents. Islam which had hitherto borne all persecutions was now obliged to take up the sword in defence, so that those who had taken up the sword might be punished with the sword. In the struggles that thus ensued both parties lost hundreds of lives. This circumstance further reduced the number of males and it was of the utmost necessity that the excess number of females should be provided with husbands. For this the only course was the adoption of polygamy. The Muslim society was cut off from their kith and kin and there could not be intermarriage between the Muslims and the unbelievers. All these circumstances go a long way to prove that a great necessity had arisen in the early Muslim society for polygamy, and it was for the reasons given above that polygamy prevailed among the early Muslims to a greater extent than it prevails now. In the matter of ignoring these circumstances, not only are those Muslims to blame who, like Mr. Amir Ali and Mr. Dilawar Husain, both of whom belong to the Shia sect, look upon polygamy as an evil, but even those cannot be acquitted of the charge who while defending polygamy as an institution needful for human society, like the late Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, have still expressed pleasure because it is less frequently practised now, as if the early Muslims practised it without any lawful necessity. The early Muslims had become an isolated society on account of the cruel persecutions of the unbelievers, and Muslim women could not be given away in marriage to the latter. These statements are based on facts which no one can deny.

PLURAL MARRIAGES OF THE PROPHET.

Much misconception prevails as to the plural marriages of the Holy Prophet which afford in fact only a proof of the statements made above. Marriages

in which the motive of the Holy Prophet was no other than pity for the forlorn condition of the persons concerned or political alliances bringing about a unification of the jarring tribes of Arabia, and which had great religious ends in view, are misrepresented by blind critics as having been contracted with sensual motives. It is an established fact that when the Holy Prophet married at twenty-five, he was reputed for the purity and chastity of his life. After his marriage with Khadija, he passed twenty-five years of his life without taking any other wife, although unrestrained polygamy at that time prevailed in Arabia. Those who without any knowledge of facts begin to impute bad motives to innocent deeds should also seek the reason why the Holy Prophet did not contract any polygamous marriage until the age of fifty-five when he was quite an old man. If sensuality could ever affect his feelings, the period fit for it was when he was a young man. But during this period we find him even refusing the offer of a plural marriage. When the Quresh were willing to take him for their chief and offered him the most beautiful women of Arabia for wives, only if he gave up denouncing idol-worship, he only replied that if the sun were placed on his right hand and the moon on his left, he could not give up his mission. It cannot be denied that the only time of the excitement of sensual passions is youth, but since the youth of the Holy Prophet is admitted even by his enemies as affording an example of transcendent purity and perfect chastity, there is not the slightest reason to take him for a sensuous man.

MOTIVE OF THE PROPHET.

We will now consider the motive of the Holy Prophet in his later marriages contracted in old age when he was about fifty-five years of age. In the early years of the prophet's mission at Mecca, though persecuted, the Muslims were not quite cut off from their relatives. Such of them as held any position in society had their relations with the unbelievers and even marriage relationships were contracted with them. The Holy Prophet himself had given away one of his daughters in marriage to an unbeliever. Abubekr's daughter, Ayesha, was also betrothed to an unbeliever's son (Jubair, son of Mut'im), but the boy's father did not accept the match saying that he feared Abubekr would take the boy to his own faith, whereupon Ayesha was betrothed to the Holy Prophet. But during the later years of the prophet's stay at Mecca, the relations of the Muslims with the unbelievers had be-

come very stretched and Muslim women could not be given away in marriage to the latter for fear of cruel treatment. By the Holy Prophet's flight to Medina, the relations became still more strained. Under these circumstances Muslim husbands had to be sought for Muslim girls and widows. Now it is a well-known fact that with the exception of Ayesha, who was betrothed to the Holy Prophet after the death of Khadija, while he was yet at Mecca, all the other women who became his wives were widows. They may be divided into two classes, *viz.*, the widows of such of his companions as had emigrated to Abyssinia or Medina, and the widows or daughters of hostile chiefs who had fallen in battles. We will mention them in order. After Khadija's death, *Sauda* was the first woman whom the Holy Prophet married. She was with her husband one of the early exiles to Abyssinia where she became a widow. *Hafsa*, the daughter of Omar, was the next widow whom the Holy Prophet married. She was also one of the exiles as was her husband also. On his death, Omar offered his widowed daughter first to Othman and then to Abubekr, both of whom did not accept the offer. Omar's thus offering his daughter is a clear proof how difficult it had become for the Muslims to find Muslim husbands for their women. *Hafsa* was then married to the Holy Prophet long after the battle of Badr, for her first husband is reported to have fought in that famous field. Then comes *Umm-i-Salma*. She was also with her husband one of the earliest Muslims and they were included in the first band of Muslims who emigrated to Abyssinia because of the cruel tortures which they suffered at the hands of the unbelievers. On their return, *Umm-i-Salma's* husband received a wound in one of the battles from the effect of which he died some months later. Next to *Umm-i-Salma* comes *Umm-i-Habiba*, the daughter of the famous Quresh chief, Abu Sufian. She was included in the second band of exiles to Abyssinia. There her husband went over to Christianity and died soon afterwards. But *Umm-i-Habiba* remained firm on Islam. Then comes *Zeinab*, daughter of Jahsh, whose case we will consider last of all. After her the Holy Prophet married *Zeinab* termed "the mother of the poor." Her husband had fallen in the field of Ohd. She herself died two or three months after her marriage with the Holy Prophet. *Maimoona* is the last of the wives of the Holy Prophet belonging to this class. From this list it is clearly seen that all these

women were among the earliest converts to Islam, and at last, persecuted by the unbelievers, they were obliged to emigrate to foreign lands. They belonged to noble families of the Quresh. Emigration had already made them homeless and poor, but still their husbands supported them so long as they lived by hard work and toil. But their extreme pitiableness after the death of their husbands can be easily imagined. What was to be done with them now? Were they to be sent back to the unbelievers to be torn to pieces? Were they who had so faithfully adhered to the cause of Islam and suffered every difficulty for its sake now to be left to perish? Islam was too noble a religion to deal thus unjustly and cruelly with its adherents. Taking pity on their forlorn condition, the Holy Prophet took them for his wives. This is only one view of the question. The plural marriages of the Holy Prophet served other very important purposes, but the limits of this article do not allow us to discuss this subject here.

To the class of women who were taken as captives and whom the Holy Prophet subsequently married belong *Jawairiyya* and *Safiyya*. The former of these was the widow of an unbeliever who was killed in one of the battles and she fell in the lot of Sabit, son of Qais, who demanded a high ransom from her which she was unable to pay. She then came to the Holy Prophet and mentioned to him all that had befallen her. She also stated that she was the daughter of a chief and as such the chief of a tribe. To allow her to go back would have involved the Muslims again in a trouble, and on account of the pride of nationality she could not have consented to be the wife of any but a chief. *Safiyya* was also taken captive in a war, and was the daughter of the chief of the Jews of Khaibar. Her husband had died. The Holy Prophet had given her away to one of his companions, but some people remonstrated saying that she was the daughter of a chief and could only be a match for the Holy Prophet. Thereupon the Holy Prophet married her. So the object of the Holy Prophet in both these marriages was no other than bringing about a union among the various tribes of Arabia which had for centuries been at war with each other. How successful he was in the attainment of this noble object is too well known for us to mention.

theory is the similarity of the names of many localities in Afghanistan, Kashmere and Tibet, and those in ancient Syria, but the writer does not seem to have obtained any knowledge of it. This subject was exhaustively dealt with in this magazine last year. Mr. Hyamson writes :—

“Of the many other odd theories with which the fate of the lost tribes has been connected, I propose merely to deal with two, those that trace the Afghans and the Nestorian Christians respectively to an Israelitish origin. Both are certainly far more justifiable than any of the others and the traditions on which they are based are well worthy of consideration. According to the Afghans themselves they are the descendants of Melic Salut or King Saul. They relate that Israel and Amaleck were at war and the latter prevailed. Among the booty of the victor was the Arc of the covenant, which the Amelekites attempted to destroy. Melic Salut was at that time a herdsman, and one day had the misfortune to lose one of the cows of which he had charge. He appealed to Samuel to assist him to recover it, and the prophet noticing his gigantic stature proclaimed him king. After a reign of some length, Salut fell in battle against the enemy and was succeeded by David. Two of Saul’s sons, Berkia and Irmia, took service under David, who loved them. Berkia had a son who was called *Afghan* and he was especially distinguished for his great strength. He used frequently to make excursions into the mountains, where his descendants settled after his death, built forts and made themselves masters of the land.

“According to tradition, Nebuchadnezzar after the destruction of the Jewish state transplanted the Israelites to the town of Ghore, near Bameean. The modern Afghans derived their name from Afghana, one of their chiefs, who was a grandson of Berkia. The Afghans remained worshippers of Jehovah until on the advance of Muhammadanism they were summoned by Khalid or Caliph to fight against the infidels. The Afghans of the present day call themselves Beni-Israel, although they entertain strong prejudices against Jews and are not likely to claim kinship with them without reason. They possess Jewish physical characteristics, and in accordance with the Mosaic Code the younger brother marries the widow of the elder. A considerable portion of Afghanistan is known as *Hazaret*, and this

The Lost Ten Tribes.

An interesting article has appeared on this subject in the February issue of the *New Era*, a Jewish Magazine. Mr. Hyamson has judiciously considered the various theories, both Jewish and non-Jewish, which have from time to time found favour. The lost tribes have been identified sometimes with one nation and sometimes with another. Mr. Hyamson says:—

“From time to time they have been rediscovered in various parts of the world. In fact, hardly a year passes in which some traveller, whose imagination exceeds his judgment, does not return to civilization with the story of how he discovered the long-lost descendants of Israel in some unexpected spot, and whenever a little known district of the earth’s surface comes prominently before the public eye, among the earliest of the stories we hear if it is that its inhabitants are descended from Israel. Thus, within the last few months, there has suddenly sprung up in a dozen states the theory of an Israelite descent of the Japanese.....Still later, the Tibetan theory of an Israelitish settlement has been revived. When the eyes of the world were directed toward South Africa a few years ago, we were regaled with remarkable similarities between the Hottentots and the Jews. The prominence of the Maoris suggested an Israelitish descent for them. In the middle of the seventeenth century, English public life was convulsed by the disputes of the two parties, respectively, in favour of and opposed to the view that the natives of the American continent were descended from Israelitish refugees. In China, in Afghanistan, in the Sahara, indisputable proofs of their settlement have been produced. By turns, the English, the Irish, the South Sea Islanders and the Aztecs, we have been assured, are of Hebrew descent. It has even been suggested that Israel was involved in the destruction of Atlantis.”

After considering the various Jewish legends and traditions and non-Jewish theories, Mr. Hyamson takes the theory which identifies the lost tribes with the Afghans and gives it preference to all others. This part of the subject is not exhaustively dealt with, but the writer considers the theory to be founded on more solid facts and more reliable traditions. The most convincing argument in favour of this

MARRIAGE WITH ZAINAB. We finish this article with brief remarks upon the marriage of the Holy Prophet with *Zainab*, the divorced wife of *Zaid*. The motive of this marriage was not only pity for the forlorn condition of a woman who had suffered persecutions for the sake of Islam, but also the uprooting of an evil custom. The marriage of *Zainab* with *Zaid*, a freedman, had been arranged by the Holy Prophet himself, but the match did not prove a good one and *Zainab* ultimately got a divorce. She was very nearly related to the Holy Prophet and *Zaid* was his adopted son. We have given the reasons of this marriage fully in some past issue.* Here we quote the words of a Christian. Bosworth Smith says in his lectures on "Muhammad and Muhammadanism:" "But I am satisfied, after a close examination of the circumstances of the case, that it does not bear the usual interpretation placed upon it by Christians. It raised an outcry among the Arabs of the ignorance not because they suspected an intrigue on the Prophet's part to secure a divorce; but because they looked upon an adopted as though he were a real son, and considered, therefore, that the marriage fell within the prohibited degrees. This restriction, which Muhammad for whatever causes, considered to be an arbitrary one, he abolished by his marriage, not for his own benefit only, but for that of the Arabs at large." And then adds in a foot note: "It should be remembered, however, that most of Muhammad's marriages may be explained at least, as much by his pity for the forlorn condition of the persons concerned, as by other motives. They were almost all of them with widows who were not remarkable either for their beauty or their wealth, but quite the reverse. May not this fact and his undoubted faithfulness to *Khadija* till her dying day, and till he himself was fifty years of age, give us additional ground to hope that calumny or misconception has been at work in the story of *Zainab* Anyhow it is certain that *Zaid*, if he had suspected, as Christians have done, any thing in the nature of an intrigue on the Prophet's part to alienate his wife's affection from him, could not have served him as he did even to the day of his death with all the loyalty and devotion of a zealous disciple."

To be continued.

*See Vol. II, No. 8, pages 297—316.

it has been suggested is identical with Arsareth, according to Esdras, the destination of the wanderers. Moreover, it is certain that whatever became of a portion of the Israelites, a remnant must have remained near the place of their captivity, that is to say, in a wide district of which Afghanistan forms a portion."

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Was Jesus Married ?

There was a time when to say that Jesus had real brothers and sisters was thought to be an indignity to him, for how could the mother of God be said to have given birth to mortal issue. But this is no longer the case. It is now an admitted fact that Mary had other sons and daughters besides Jesus. The idea of Jesus having a wife is still more repugnant to the church as if this were the only circumstance inconsistent with his alleged divinity. A man who felt hunger and ate, ate even after his supposed resurrection, and who felt thirst and drank, could not lose anything by being married. But the church has found it convenient to deny that Jesus was married, though it has never thought that the logical outcome of this denial is that in celibacy, and not marriage, lies the perfection of humanity. Moreover, if Jesus did not marry, then every true Christian must imitate him in this matter. Mormonism, however, as we showed in a recent issue, deals a death-blow to the orthodox position.

The Agnostic Journal publishes in its issue of the 18th March an article on Mormonism in the course of which it shows that the Mormons not only believe that Jesus was a married man, but that he was actually the husband of more than two wives at one and the same time. There is nothing strange in this assertion, for polygamy was generally practised in his day, and he never said a word against it. If he did not disapprove this practice, there is no denying the conclusion that he was in favour of it, and that he may have acted upon it. The Mormon President, Orson Hyde, is reported to have said in 1854 in a sermon which he delivered at a General Conference of the Mormons: "How was it with Mary and Martha and other women who followed him? In old times and it is common to this day, the women, even as Sarah, called their husbands lord. The word 'Lord' is tantamount to husband in some lan-

guages, master, lord and husband being synonymous. When Mary of old came to the sepulchre on the first day of the week, instead of finding Jesus, she saw two angels in white: 'And they said unto her, woman, why weepest thou? She said unto them, because they have taken away my lord (or husband), and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She supposing him to be the gardener saith unto him, sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself and said unto him: Rabboni, which is to say, master.' Is there not here manifested the affections of a wife? These words speak the kindred ties and sympathies that are common to that relation of husband and wife. Where will you find a family so nearly allied by the common ties of religion?"

Orson Hyde then goes to the Gospels to seek further proof of the marriage of Jesus, to find where the Gospels say that Jesus "was actually married." This proof he finds in the second chapter of St. John's Gospel, where a marriage-feast at Cana is described. It is surprising to find that in this marriage not only do Jesus and his mother partake, but the disciples are also called in. The Gospel is silent and does not say who the bridegroom was. But the circumstances point out Jesus as the bridegroom with a certain degree of clearness. Two kinds of persons are made to partake in the marriage-feast, *viz.*, the blood relations of Jesus and those connected with him spiritually. The only link between these two was the personality of Jesus, and none but he could be the bridegroom. There are other indications in the narrative which Orson Hyde considers as pointing him out to be the bridegroom: "And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine." Had the mother of Jesus been only one of the guests, why should she have troubled herself on seeing that the supply of wine had fallen short. "Jesus saith unto her: woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." The mother of Jesus here seems to have an authority over the servants which she could not have if she were a mere guest. She also appears to have been a little offended at her son's reply and, therefore, tells the servants to do as Jesus bade them: "And there were set

six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them: Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he said unto them, Draw out now, and bear to the governor of the feast. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water made wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants which drew the water knew), the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him—that is, the ruler of the feast saith unto the bridegroom, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when the men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now? Gentlemen, that is as plain as the translators or different councils over the Scriptures dare allow it to go to the world, but the thing is there, it is told Jesus was the bridegroom at the marriage of Cana of Galilee, and he told them what to do. I do not despise to be called a son of Abraham, if he had a dozen wives, or to be called a brother, a son, a child of the saviour, if he had Mary and Martha and several others as wives, and, though he did cast seven devils out of one of them, it is all the same to me.”

An evil resulting from the absence of pardah.

The following extract has been taken from the Review of Reviews which quotes it from the Grand Magazine for February under the heading “An abomination of our Hospitals.” The article from which the quotation is made has been contributed by one who signs himself ‘A medical practitioner’ and writes from his personal experience. He says:

“In every hospital, recognised by the Medical council as a place of instruction for students, the treatment of the patients is entirely subordinated to the instruction of those students. If a woman objects to being stripped for the casual inspection of two or three dozen youths, she is forthwith ordered to leave. It may be said with perfect truth that the girls and young women who attend the public hospitals gain the possible healing of their bodies at the expense of mortal injury

to their souls. What, I ask, must be the moral effect on a modest girl who goes to a hospital complaining of some trivial ailment, and is stripped naked to the waist and subjected to the salacious scrutiny of some dozens of youths, who lay hands on her and maul her about to their herat's content? It is immaterial whether she complains of or has anything the matter with her chest or not. She, in common with her sisters in misfortune, is utilised as material for the instruction of students. As in the other cases, any protest or objection and she is forthwith bundled out."

"Some months ago, when noting these facts in a large institution, a young man came in and told the visiting physician that he would 'like to examine some hearts.' 'Oh, by all means,' said the gentleman who devotes three afternoons a week to the service of the poor; 'I'm afraid, I haven't any good cases, but you can see for yourself.' Thereupon every girl and woman who was waiting to be seen was sent 'behind the screen' and ordered to strip to the waist. At one time I saw fourteen young women, of ages from twelve to twenty-five, all standing stripped in this manner. One girl, aged eighteen, told me she had been attending the hospital nearly every fortnight for over three years. Imagine how much modesty would be left in her after exhibiting herself in this fashion for years to many hundreds of students. There was not the slightest hope of cure or improvement, so that this girl was regularly exposed in this manner merely because she was 'an interesting case.' In the wards it is no uncommon thing to see the visiting physician or surgeon pull down the bed clothes and exhibit a woman entirely naked, merely for purposes of demonstration. I have myself seen this done some hundreds of times."

Those who senselessly deprecate Islamic institutions should ponder if the deplorable state of things revealed here is not a clear proof of the evils which the absence of the *pardah* system is working. In those countries where women are thought to be free because they are not kept in seclusion, they are exposed to the outrages of the stronger sex, and indecencies which are unknown to societies which observe the *pardah* system are freely practised there. And why is the *pardah* condemned? Only because by disallowing a free mingling of the two sexes in games, and festivities and on other occasions it puts a restraint upon the sensual passions. There is a hankering after pleasure, but it

is never thought that such pleasure can only be obtained at the expense of morality. That it is actually being obtained in this way is sufficiently clear from the above extract. It moreover appears from here that the effect of education upon morality is not what it is often asserted to be. The detractors of the *pardah* system are often heard saying that education is a safer and stronger guard of morality. But we ask, is it not about educated young men that "a medical practitioner" is speaking? There would be very few ignorant men who would not shudder at the indecencies of these civilized educated men who are the most important members in a civilized society. Yet it is not their fault, but the fault of the system which allows young men to mix freely with young women,

The Masai Tradition concerning Adam.

The Masai are a Negro tribe in German East Africa, and Captain Merker gives the following tradition as being current among that people:—

"In the beginning the earth was a waste and barren wilderness in which there dwelt a dragon alone. Then God came down from heaven, fought with the dragon and vanquished it. From the dragon's blood, which was water, the barren rocky wilderness was made fertile, and the spot where the struggle between God and the dragon took place became Paradise. Thereafter God created all things—sun, moon, stars, plants and beasts, and finally two human beings. The man was sent down from heaven and was called *Maitumbé*, and the woman *Naitergorob* sprang from the bosom of the earth. God led them into Paradise, where they lived an untroubled existence. Of all the fruits therein, they might eat by God's permission; of one tree alone they might not taste: this was the *ol oilai*. Often God came down to see them, when he climbed down a ladder from heaven. But one day he was unable for a long time to find them, but finally he discovered them crouching among the bushes. On being asked the meaning of his conduct, *Maitumbé* replied that they were ashamed because they had eaten of the forbidden fruit. *Naitergorob* gave me

of the fruit," he said, "and persuaded me to eat of it, after she had eaten of it herself." *Naitergorob* sought to excuse herself by saying: "The three-headed serpent came to me and said that by tasting the fruit, we should become like unto thee and almighty." Then was God wrath, and banished the two first human beings from Paradise. He sent Rilegen, the Morning star, to drive man out of Paradise, and to keep watch thereover."

An Invitation.

"A warner came into the world but the world rejected him, but God will accept him and show his truth by powerful attacks."

Heaven raineth signs, 'the hour is come,' says the earth,
The promises of the Prophets and Messengers of God are fulfilled.

How long wilt thou fight against God and oppose Him,
Thou fool! fear the wrath of the Lord of worlds.

As it is my duty to invite men to the true path and to deliver to them the message of my Lord, I, therefore, again inform the public, and God bears witness that the fact has been revealed to me by Divine inspiration, that His wrath is now kindled upon the world, for the vast majority are so deeply immersed in sinfulness and worldliness that they have no faith in God. He who has been sent by Him for the regeneration of mankind is laughed at, and scorns and abuses have overstepped all limits. Almighty God has, therefore, said that He would now fight against the abusers and the scoffers, and that He would do it by means of His angels and the powers of nature. He has said that His assaults on them would be such as they have never thought of, for they so loved falsehood as to tread the truth under their feet. Almighty God therefore says that He has now willed to save his humble people from the attacks of these beasts and to manifest many signs in support of the truth. He says that a warner came to the world, but the world rejected him, but God will accept him and manifest his truth with powerful attacks. Consider how terrible are

the days which have come. Tell me truly if your fathers or grand-fathers ever heard that the plague made such havoc ever before as it is now making, and if you or your forefathers ever witnessed such a terrible earthquake as the one which occurred on the 4th April and brought about an enormous waste and destruction and so shook your hearts as to make you like mad men. Bear in mind that there is no stretching or unnatural interpretation in declaring these incidents to be prophetic, for years before their occurrence prophecies had been published concerning them in my work entitled the *Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya* as well as other works. This is what I said long ago, but it is possible that many should have forgotten it now, for forgetfulness is the necessary consequence of the combination of neglect, enmity and suspicion. The promises of God are only remembered if there is true faithfulness in the heart, and the person whose heart is devoid of faith, throws away hundreds of signs after witnessing them as if they were worth no more than a straw. In short, I do not here refer only to old prophecies, but to such also as have been published recently and since whose publication only about a month has passed (*vide* my notice entitled "an exhortation" issued on the 27th February 1905, printed in *Alhakam*, Vol. ix No. 7 and the *Review of Religions* for March 1905). In one of the prophecies so published, I wrote: "This country is about to be laid waste with Divine punishment, neither permanent abodes affording a security nor temporary ones. On the 27th February, I have seen in a vision that there is a great noise caused by painful deaths. At the same time the following words of Divine revelation were on my lips, 'Death on all sides.'" Again about the end of March, Almighty God informed me in a revelation that a sign would be shown to those who charge me with falsehood. This prophecy was also published in *Alhakam* of 24th March. Now consider if this terrible earthquake which has brought a general waste and destruction is not the sign which was foretold? Bear in mind also that it was recorded in books long ago that the sun and the moon would eclipse in the month of Ramazan in the time of the Mahdi, and you will find it written in the Gospels that at the appearance of the Promised Messiah there would be heavy pestilence and destructive wars and terrible earthquakes. Now you have witnessed the fulfilment of all these signs with your own eyes. But if all the

signs are fulfilled and I, the claimant to both these heavenly offices, have been among you for more than twenty-five years, whom are you looking for still? To whom do all these signs point except to him who claimed to be the messenger of God before their appearance. For signs could not be shown for one of whom no trace can be found in the world. A wonderful hard-heartedness this that when all the prophesied signs have appeared in support of my claim and all attempts to bring me to naught have proved futile, still another is expected. It is true that I have not with this body of clay descended from heaven, nor have I come into the world to cause wars and bloodshed, but I am from God and have come to sow the seed of peace. I prophecy that after me no Mahdi would come who should fill the earth with blood, nor would any Messiah ever descend from heaven. Be despaired of both of them, for these are vain hopes which will be buried in graves with this generation. The promised one has come, and I am he by whose appearance the promise of God has been fulfilled. He who rejects me fights with God. He does not question my truth, but opposes the Will of God and says, why did He bring about the fulfilment of His promises in this manner? Such errors in understanding the meaning of prophecies were also committed by the Jews, and many who were learned among them, stumbled on account of a misconception of the prophetic word. They thought one way and the truth turned out to be elsewhere. Do not be insolent, for the days of God are come, and heaven is showing you the wonderful signs which your fathers never dreamt of. Blessed are they who do not stumble in judging and accepting me. And peace be on him who follows guidance.

5th April 1905.

MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD.

A Warning.

(Read it attentively for it is the Word of God.)

To-day at about three o'clock in the night the Word of God came to me as given below : تازه نشان تازه نشان کا دھکا زلزلة الساعة : قوا انفسکم ان الله مع الابرار ذی منک الفضل جاء الحق وزهق الباطل
 The first part of this revelation signifies that Almighty God will show

a fresh sign, the shock of which shall be felt by the world ; it would be a terrible shaking like the shaking of the hour of judgment. I do not know whether the shock spoken of here would be the shock of an earthquake or any other terrible disaster which will visit the world and which on account of its severity will deserve to be called the shaking of the day of judgment. Nor do I know when this will happen, whether in a few days or weeks or after months or years. But the disaster would certainly, sooner or later, overtake the world and it would be more terrible in its effects than what the world has hitherto seen. An extremely terrible disaster would it be. It is only out of sympathy for my fellow-beings that I publish this fact. The disaster with which this country is now wasted was foretold by me five months before this in two newspapers, *Alhakam* and *Albadr*. It was stated beforehand that there would be a heavy destruction and great noise like that at the last hour would be raised and heavy loss of life would occur. The words of one of my revelations thus published beforehand were : عفت الدنيا رما مكلها ومقامها , i.e., "A great destruction would overtake the country which would blot out traces of many great and small buildings." How clearly are these words fulfilled. Any one who understands Arabic can see that this revelation foretells a disaster which would ruin the abodes of men. The plague destroys life only, but the words of this revelation foretell an evil which would destroy both the house and the owner of the house. This prophecy that was published beforehand and was published also in my previous notice has thus been clearly fulfilled, but the disaster that yet awaits the world is greater than this. God have mercy on this people and turn them to the ways of righteousness. In the latter portion of the revelation quoted above, Almighty God says that men should save themselves by doing deeds of virtue before the terrible day comes which would destroy vast masses in an instant, ~~for he is with those who act righteously and shun every evil.~~ Again addressing me, He says that His grace has come near to me, in other words, that the time has come when I should be fully recognised, for truth has come and falsehood has vanished away.

In short, the signs which have already appeared and those which are yet in store for the world are meant to turn people away from evil and to show them the way for the acceptance of the messenger of God. Therefore, I say to you that you should eschew every evil,

for the time has come when every one shall be questioned of what he does. He who does not forsake the setting up of gods with God shall have to answer. He who transgresses the Divine commandments shall have to answer. He who is absorbed in worldliness and is surfeited with the cares and anxieties of this world shall have to answer. He who denies the existence of God shall have to answer. He who abuses the righteous servants and apostles of God and does not repent shall have to answer. I have plainly told this to you, and heaven bears witness to it as well as earth, that every one shall have to answer who forsakes the truth and makes mischief and defiles the earth with his vices. Almighty God says that His wrath must come down upon the earth, for the earth is full of sin and iniquity. Rise and prepare yourselves, for the hour has drawn nigh of which the prophets had spoken. I swear by Him who has sent me that it is not from myself that I am speaking, but from God. Ah! that my words were not taken with mistrust. Ah! that I had not been declared a liar so that the world should have been saved from destruction. This writing of mine is not an ordinary one, but it is an outcome of the truest and deepest sympathy. If you change your ways and turn away from evil, then will you be saved, for God is merciful as He is wrathful. Even if some of you mend your ways, then will also mercy be had on you. If not, the day is coming which will turn men mad. The fool will say that this is an untrue threatening. The sun is about to rise: why does he not open his eyes? After I had received this revelation, the voice of an impure soul fell upon my ears. I heard it saying that in sleep it went down to hell. What will a man lose if he forsakes evil and iniquity? What harm there is if he worship not the creatures? The fire has been kindled: rise and extinguish it with the tears of your eyes. Of the Israelites he who transgressed was ordered to kill himself. Though this commandment is not given to you, yet you ought to pray and repent to such a degree that you may be almost dead, so that the merciful God may have mercy on you. And peace be with him who follows true guidance.

Note.—Regarding this earthquake a revelation is contained in the Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya, published nearly twenty-five years ago: *وا صنع الفلك با عيننا ووحينا ولا تخا طبنى في الدين ظلموا انهم مغرقون* Regarding the same there is another revelation published recently in the newspaper *چونکا دینی والی خبر* or startling news, and still earlier, *زلزلہ کا ایک دھکا* or a shock of earthquake.

8th April 1905.

MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD