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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نقد و نصلي على رسوله الكريم

Slavery.

4. Did Islam sanction slavery as a permanent institution ?

I have shown in the last issue that considerations of the welfare of society in general as well as of masters and slaves compelled Islam to adopt the method of the gradual emancipation of slaves. Slavery was, therefore, permitted by Islam until it should gradually die out without disturbing social order. But although slavery had thus to be suffered to continue in existence for some time, the evils which resulted from this institution were all swept off at once, as I have shown in the article on the "Treatment of slaves." Such is my brief answer to the question which I have set for discussion in this article. There is not a single word in the Holy Quran which shows that slavery was sanctioned as a permanent institution. The mere fact that slaves are spoken of in the Holy Quran does not warrant the conclusion that slavery is inseparable from Islam. Adverse critics seem to argue like this that since the Holy Quran enjoins goodness to slaves, or enjoins their emancipation, or allows the taking of slave-girls as wives in certain cases, therefore it follows that Islam enjoins the Muslims to always keep slaves to carry out these orders. The absurdity of such an argument is too evident to be pointed out.

It will be seen from what has been said that it is an error to regard slavery as an institution so ingrafted on Islam as to be inseparable from it. On the other hand, Islam cleared the way for the utter abolition of slavery and permitted its continuance only so far as

its abolition was fraught with evil consequences. It is generally thought that though Islam gave orders for the emancipation of slaves, it did not put a check upon the sources of slavery and did not prohibit the making of new slaves. This is a great error. Leaving aside the Islamic wars to which I will presently come, there is not a single instance in which Islam reduced free men to slavery in any one of the ways which were prevalent before its advent in Arabia. Nor is there any provision in the Muslim law which legalizes such a course. The Holy Quran nowhere says to the Muslims that they are enjoined or that it is lawful for them or permitted them to reduce freemen to slavery by sale or by violence. Nor is any such injunction or permission contained in any tradition. When the Holy Book contains the necessary directions as to the emancipation of slaves, as to their good treatment, as to their marriages, and as to their punishment and immunity from punishment, we are safe in drawing the conclusion that if it had permitted the enslaving of freemen, it should have given clear directions as to the cases in which it gave such permission. But since there is no such direction either in the Holy Quran or in the traditions, it follows that Islam does not sanction the enslaving of freemen.

If it is said that neither does Islam prohibit such a course, I answer that this is not true. The two processes, *viz.*, the freeing of a slave and the enslaving of a freeman, are opposed to each other, and if one of these is regarded by a man as a deed of virtue, the other must be looked upon by him as an evil deed. Now read the Holy Quran and see which of these two is enjoined by it upon all true believers as a deed of virtue. Had not the Holy Quran attached that meritoriousness and importance to the freeing of slaves which it did, the case would have been different. Slaves were emancipated even before Islam and among nations other than the Muslims. But with the advent of Islam, the emancipation of slaves received a new meaning. It was made a religious duty and pronounced to be a deed of great virtue and meritoriousness. Its opposite, therefore, *viz.*, the enslaving of freemen, could not but be considered an evil deed. To make this point clearer let me refer to the injunctions requiring the emancipation of slaves already quoted in the last article. In one of these after describing His manifold blessings upon man,

Almighty God says: "Yet (man is so ungrateful that notwithstanding all these blessings upon him) he attempted not the steep; and what shall teach thee what that steep is? It is to emancipate the slave, or to feed in the day of famine the orphan who is near of kin, or the poor that lieth in the dust" (xc: 11-15). Now whatever view may be taken or the mere neglect to act upon this injunction, there is not the slightest doubt that to act against the plain requirement of this commandment, enslaving the freeman or robbing an orphan or a poor man of his food, would be according to the Holy Quran a transgression of its commandments. Similarly on other occasions where the emancipation of slaves is enjoined, it is mentioned along with the giving away of one's wealth, as a deed of charity, "to his kindred, and to the orphans, and the needy, and the way-farer;" the observing of prayers, the paying of legal alms and being faithful to one's engagements (ii: 179). Any one who thinks that the enslaving of freemen is permitted by the Holy Quran shall also have to admit that doing the opposite of the other virtuous deeds enjoined here is also permitted. Moreover, as I said in the last article, the emancipation of slaves is considered by the Holy Quran to be an atonement for sins, a deed pleasing in the sight of God, and hence the enslaving of freemen must be considered by the same Book as a sin, a deed offending in the sight of God. It is also worth noting that whereas the Holy Quran enjoins that a part of the poor rates should be spent for emancipating slaves, it nowhere says that another part should be spent in enslaving freemen.

If we look at traditions, the conclusion already arrived at gains still more strength. The same stress is here laid upon the emancipation of slaves, and the deed is extolled as one of the highest merit. Not a single tradition narrates an incident in which a freeman was made a slave. Nor do we meet with any trace of a slave market among the Muslims in the time of the Holy Prophet. Nay, here we have positive evidence that the enslaving of freemen was strictly forbidden by the Muslim law. Abu Huraira reports the following saying of the Holy Prophet قال الله ثلاثة انا خصمهم يوم القيامة رجل اعطى بى ثم غدر رجل باع حرا فاكل ثمنه (وفي حديث عبد الله ابن عمرو رجل اعتبد معررا) ورجل استاجر اجيرا فاستوفى منه ولم يعطه اجره
 "Almighty God says that there are three sorts of men whose adver-

sary He will be on the day of judgment, *viz.*, the man who makes an agreement in God's name and then breaks it, and the man who sells a freeman and appropriates his price, (and according to the report of Abdulla, son of Omar, the man who enslaves a freedman), and the man who employes a labourer to do some work and when he has done it withholds payment of his wages." Here we have additional evidence that Islam strictly forbids the reducing of freemen to slavery. In the Bukharee, the most trustworthy of all the books on traditions, the only chapter on slaves is headed: "The emancipation of slaves and its excellence," and in this chapter the reputed author describes the cases of the emancipation of slaves and their good treatment. This was what Bukharee understood to be the essence of the teachings of Islam as to slaves. This early and trustworthy writing shows clearly what the mission of Islam was so far as slaves were concerned. It was the freeing of those who were already in a state of slavery, and not the enslaving of those who were already free.

Though much of the law was given to the Muslims after their flight to Medina, yet the law relating to the kind treatment of slaves and their emancipation, had been revealed and proclaimed at Mecca. The emancipation of slaves was one of the phases of reformation which Islam took in hand at a very early date. This is a fact which stands in striking contrast to the baseless assertions of the adverse critics who say that the unlawful slavery now prevailing in some Muslim countries cannot be abolished without doing harm to the principles of Islam. The way in which slaves are now made and sold by some Muhammadans and in some Muslim countries is as repugnant to the doctrines of Islam as the murdering of non-Muslims on the pretence of religion to which is given the name of *Jehad*, or as the drinking of wine, all which deeds are strictly prohibited by the Islamic faith.

Having shown that Islam had put a strong check upon the existing sources of slavery, I now come to a consideration of the case of the captives made in war. It should be borne in mind that the battles fought by the Holy Prophet were all fought under compulsion as they were only defensive. At Mecca Islam had for thirteen years been trampled under feet and the Muslims had at last to seek shelter in Medina for the safety of their lives, and to promulgate

peacefully the noble doctrines of their religion. But their old enemies, the Quresh, followed them thither to deal a final blow with the sword. The Muslims met them at the field of Badr, only three days' journey from their new home, Medina, and here they had to fight with the Quresh, the odds being three unbelievers to every believer. With this great disparity in numbers and with the still greater disadvantage of there being raw and unexperienced youths on the side of the Muslims, the latter had to fight or, as an alternative, voluntarily to submit to death. The result of this unequal combat was, however, a complete victory to the Muslims as had been promised to them years before at Mecca. This was the first battle fought by the Muhammadans. Some seventy of the Quresh leaders fell on the battlefield and about the same number were taken prisoners. This was the first occasion on which the Holy Prophet had to deal with prisoners of war. They were not ordinary prisoners, nor was their only offence an offensive battle. They were the leaders of the Quresh who had for years tortured and butchered innocent Muslims because they would not bow before idols. They deserved to be put to death on account of the heinous nature of their crimes. In fact, such was the view taken, and this the very argument advanced, by Omar, as narrated in a trustworthy tradition. But Abu Bakar was for releasing them on payment of ransom, and this was the actual course taken by the Holy Prophet. Their release brought fresh trouble to the Muhammadans in the battle of *Ohd* and that of the *Confederates*. However, one point is certain, *viz.*, they were not made slaves, nor was any such proposal made by any companion of the Holy Prophet.

This occurred long before the commandment contained in the Holy Quran as to the release of the prisoners of war was revealed. This commandment to which I have already referred in the last issue is contained in the words *فَاِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُكَ وَالْكَافِرُ الْغَالِبُ* which Rodwell renders thus: "And afterwards either show liberality by free dismissals or exact ransoms until the war hath laid down its burdens" (xcvi, 5). In this verse Almighty God has laid down a universal law as to what should be done with captives made in war with the enemy. The Holy Quran does not tell us, as the hostile critics assert, that the prisoners of war are to be made slaves, but it states in clear words a comprehensive rule that they are to be set free

either as an act of generosity or on receipt of ransom. I do not think that the reasonableness of this most humane law can be questioned by the most prejudiced critic. It must be further borne in mind that this is the only law mentioned in the Holy Quran as to the disposal of the captives made in war, and there is not a single word leading to the conclusion that the prisoners of war are to be at once made slaves. This noble and humane law holds good in all ages and in all countries, and a better rule cannot be pointed out.

In the stage of society, however, of which I am speaking, there were other difficulties which were only of a temporary and local nature. Accordingly the Holy Prophet met these in accordance with the requirements of the time. The Holy Quran recommended a free dismissal in the first instance of the captives made in war, and if that was considered inadvisable, it ordered their release on payment of ransom. But under the particular circumstances of that time, it sometimes happened that the conquered tribe or people did not care for the return of those who had been made captives by the conquerors and the payment of ransom was accordingly withheld. Of course free dismissal could not be resorted to in all such cases, for that was strengthening the enemy and encouraging him to withhold the ransom under all circumstances. This temporary need was satisfied by a temporary remedy. Such prisoners instead of being made a burden to the state were distributed among the Muslims who were bound to keep them in as good a condition as they themselves lived in. No one would seriously contend that they had not lost their liberty. Liberty they had none, as the prisoners of war do not enjoy liberty even to-day in any civilized country. But apart from the loss of liberty they had no other disadvantage. They were not sent to work in fields as labourers for the conquerors, as had been the practice among all the nations of antiquity. Nor were they allowed to remain quite idle, as such a course should have made them quite worthless in a few years. They did some work and lived as members of the household to which they were attached. And they had under all circumstances the right to obtain liberty on payment of ransom.

Before going any further it is necessary to explain that the reformation which originated with Islam was gradual and prog-

ressive. It struck at the root of all evils one by one, until the reformation was complete at the end of twenty-three years. So long as the Holy Prophet did not receive a revelation abolishing any old practice or institution, he did not interfere with it. Now, as I have shown above, though the injunction requiring the emancipation of slaves, and thus forbidding the enslaving of freemen, had been given at a very early period, the commandment dealing with the captives made in war, who forfeited their liberty by their own deed, was not given till very late in the life of the Holy Prophet. This commandment is contained in the chapter entitled "Muhammad" which was revealed about or after the time when Mecca was conquered. Now the general practice among all nations of antiquity was that the prisoners of war were all reduced to slavery, and were sometimes even put to death. But even before receiving the Divine commandment, the Holy Prophet showed the utmost lenience in dealing with them though he would have been justified in acting upon the prevalent usage. The captives made in the battle of Badr were all set free on payment of ransom, though politically this step only strengthened the Quresh and subjected the Muslims to further troubles from that quarter. All that can be asserted with any degree of certainty is that out of about nineteen battles which the Holy Prophet had to fight, the prisoners of war were made slaves on two occasions only, both times before the revelation of the verse which contains the Islamic law on the point. On both these occasions, the Holy Prophet had to deal with the Jews, with the Beni Quraiza on the first occasion and with the Jews of Khaibar on the second. In all the other battles the prisoners seem generally to have been set free. At least several cases of this kind are recorded. In one case so many as six thousand prisoners were set free without exacting any ransom. The Arab tribes had inflicted so many wounds on the Muslim community that they deserved to be treated as murderers. Wherever they could lay their hands upon the Muslims, they mercilessly put them to death. On one occasion seventy learned companions of the Holy Prophet were murdered in cold blood by an act of treachery. But when being subjected in battles and made captives, they lay at the mercy of the Holy Prophet he did not punish them according to their atrocious deeds, he did not even take advantage of the established practice of reducing the vanquished enemy to slavery, but with a

magnanimity which is equalled by none, he set them free, sometimes on payment of ransom, often without it.

As I have said above, in two out of the nineteen battles his treatment of the prisoners of war was different from that in the other seventeen. In one case the Korezites of Medina who had twice played the traitor with the Muslims and had dealt blows which would have destroyed the whole Muslim community, had it not been for Divine protection, were dealt with according to their deeds, the traitors being put to death and the rest being reduced to a state of subjugation which for want of a better name must be designated by the name of slavery. But this fate they had chosen for themselves. After they were found guilty of traitorousness and had failed to acquit themselves of the charge, they relied on the judgment of Sa'd, son of Ma'az, and were dealt with in accordance with the verdict which he gave. In the other case, several prisoners were made from the Jews of Khaibar and reduced to slavery. But there is evidence to show that those who could afford to pay ransom were made free. Besides this the emancipation of slaves was carried on in accordance with the directions of the Holy Quran. If these people had been reduced to a permanent condition of slavery, some of them should have remained with the Holy Prophet or Abu Bakr. But there is positive proof that both of them possessed no slave at all, from which it follows that those who were made slaves in these two battles, were immediately or soon afterwards set free.

It should not be considered that the Holy Prophet showed severity towards the Jews in dealing with them in an exceptional manner. The Arabs were an ignorant people and possessed no revealed law, but the Jews claimed to possess a law given to them by God. What the Holy Prophet did was that he dealt with them according to their own law in its mildest form. According to the Jewish law the enemy was wholly destroyed, even the women and children being slaughtered. (See Deut. 13: 12-18; 20: 16, 17; Nu. 21: 3; Judg. 1: 17, 21: 10-12; Josh. 6: 1-24; I Sam. 15: 3, &c.) A milder law was that men were put to death while the women and children were reduced to slavery. (See Deut. 23: 20-14). If, therefore, anyone is to blame in the case of the Korezites, it is not the Holy Prophet who accepted the Jewish terms of surrender and dealt with them according

to the verdict of Sa'd, son of Ma'az, whom the Korezites themselves had proposed as an arbitrator, nor is Sa'd to be blamed for giving a verdict which was the mildest law in the Jewish Scriptures which could apply to the case of the Korezites, but the whole blame lies at the door of the Jews themselves who proclaimed even severer laws than this. Similar was the case of the prisoners of Khyber, they also being Jews. The Holy Prophet was quite justified in dealing with the Jews according to their own laws, and the mildness of his temper is shown by the fact that he chose the mildest of all laws for their punishment. Nay, he further softened the severity of this Jewish law by setting free the slaves which were allotted to him and by inducing his followers both by precept and his own example to set them free. The prejudiced Christian critics, who blindly charge the Holy Prophet with cruelty on this occasion, should bear in mind that no one, but the Jewish law is responsible for the much-bewailed fate of the Jews, and the Holy Prophet is only to be praised for his introducing mildness even in the severe Jewish law. The Jews had rendered themselves culpable and the punishment given to them was in accordance with their own law. Why should then they complain, or why should their advocates of the Christian faith who themselves butchered tens of thousands of innocent Jews only on account of their rejection of Jesus Christ make this occasion a cause of complaint and calumny against the Holy One who is quite blameless?

The laws of Islam as revealed in the Holy Quran are universal laws, but any thing that may have been done before the revelation of those laws on a particular occasion, must be considered to have been done to meet a temporary need and it does not throw any light upon what the true Islamic principle is. The principle must be sought from the Holy Quran and from the practice of the Holy Prophet later than the revelation of a particular commandment. Thus we meet with cases of drinking in the early days of Islam, but such a fact should not lead us to the conclusion that drinking is not prohibited among the Muslims. The true Islamic law on this point is contained in the Holy Quran which strictly forbids all intoxicating liquors. Similarly the actual law as to the prisoners of war should not be guessed from particular instances, but it is contained in the verse, *فَا مَا مِّنَّا بَعْدُ وَا مَا فِدَاءُ* i.e., the captives made in war should be set free either as an act of generosity, or if necessary, on payment of ransom,

This is the law which Islam offers as a law of universal application with regard to the prisoners of war.

From the above, the reader would easily see that Islam practically put a stop to all sources of slavery and led to a gradual emancipation of the old slaves. The prisoners of war were made slaves only in exceptional cases when ransom was not paid and their free dismissal was not politically advisable. But in such cases too, the payment of ransom entitled them to freedom at any time and the ordinary ways of obtaining emancipation were also open to them. Moreover, they were not kept as slaves as in other nations. They were kept as brothers and as members of the household. It is a great misconception that the companions of the Holy Prophet possessed large numbers of slaves. Before their conversion to Islam the rich among them had no doubt great numbers of slaves, but after their conversion they followed the example of the Holy Prophet in freeing their slaves. In a tradition recorded in Bukharee, it is accidentally mentioned that at Medina the *Muhajirs* (the Refugees) and the *Ansar* (the Helpers) had no slaves to do menial work for them. When the Quresh in large numbers besieged Medina to crush the Muslims, the latter had to dig a ditch for their safety. Speaking of that occasion, Bukharee relates the following tradition : خرج رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم الى الخندق فاذا المهاجرون والانصار يحفرون في غداة باردة "The Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, went out to the place where the ditch was being dug. There he saw the Refugees and the Helpers digging in a cold morning, *for they had no slaves who should have done this work of labour for them.*" On the other hand, it appears from an account of the lives of the companions of the Holy Prophet that there were large numbers of freedmen among them. For this purpose I intended to go through the whole of Isaba, but unfortunately I could not find sufficient time for this purpose. I read, however, an account of the lives of 134 companions, and strange to say that not a single one of these is mentioned as a slave, while at least thirteen are mentioned as being freedmen. I think the reader can see from this brief discussion how groundless are the charges against Islam.

To be concluded.

Sell on Islam, IV.

In this article I shall deal with an alleged episode in the Holy Prophet's life which Christian writers call the "Lapse of Muhammad" or "Compromise with idolatry." Muir lays even greater stress upon it than Sell and tries to establish its accuracy in order to cast a doubt upon the Divine mission of the Holy Prophet. This is one of the instances in which religious prejudice has carried the critic away from history. There is a concurrence of opinion among all learned Muslim authorities that the story of compromise is a fabrication. Without giving any argument as to why all these learned authorities who have taken pains to inquire into the truth and character of every reporter of a tradition are to be rejected, Muir makes the baseless assertion that "pious Mussalmans of after days, scandalised at the lapse of their Prophet into so flagrant a concession, would reject the whole story." There is not a grain of truth in this assertion. It is absolutely false that the Musalmans of earlier ages believed in the truth of this story and those of after days rejected it. It is a fabrication like the story itself.

Muir regards the authorities which give this story to be "too strong to be thus summarily dismissed." I will, therefore, see first which are Muir's "too strong authorities." He mentions only two, *viz.*, Waqidy and Tabari. The chief mistake which Muir has made in writing his life of the Holy Prophet is that although he has written much about the value to be attached to traditions, yet he has himself been sometimes very careless in their use. It is true of course that he was not in a position to distinguish personally reliable from unreliable traditions, but this laborious work has already been done for the historian by the *Muhaddisin* who carried their investigations into the truth of every single tradition and the reliability of every single reporter to a surprising extent, and Muir could have benefitted by their investigations if he had chosen to be a little more careful. It is highly discreditable to his claims of acquaintance with the Islamic literature that he prefers Waqidy and Tabari to Bukharee, Muslim, Abu Daoood and the host of learned men who in one voice declare the tradition under discussion to be a fabrication. do not think that Muir was ignorant of the very low opinion which

all Musalman authorities entertain with regard to Waqidy. The *Meezán ul Fiddál* which is a criticism of the lives and character of the reporters of traditions gives the following information regarding Waqidy: "Ibn-i Maja does not even name him. Ahmad bin Hanbal says, he is a liar. . . . Ibn-i-Maban says, he is not reliable. Bukharee says, he is *Matrook* (forsaken). Abu Hatim and Nasai say, he fabricates traditions. Dar Qutni says, there is weakness in him." After stating several other opinions the account is concluded with the words that "there is a concurrence of opinion on the weakness of Waqidy". It is in favour of this man that Muir rejects all learned authorities. As regards Tabari, I showed some time ago that he only collected the traditions and reports which he found current without sifting true from false. Muir himself elsewhere writes of Tabari that he inserted fabricated traditions in his book, and represents him as guilty of "indiscriminate reception." (See note on page 49 of Muir's life of Muhammad).

Now consider the authorities rejected by Muir, because they reject this story as a fabrication. The learned author of the *Ruh-ul-Ma'ani*, a voluminous commentary of the Holy Quran, says: "Those who reject this story are highly learned men who know what is meagre and what is vigorous in traditions, and they have made comprehensive investigations into the truth about it Their number is greater than those who accept it, and among them are men far more learned than the latter. They made investigations regarding all the reporters in all the ways in which this tradition is reported and they found them unreliable." Further on, the same author writes that if there had been any truth in this story, it was not possible that the learned authorities who wrote the six reliable works on tradition should have failed to narrate it, notwithstanding that it was a wonderful story. It is still more wonderful that Bukharee, Muslim, Abu Daood, Nisai and others report a tradition which essentially contradicts the narrative of the compromise. The only thing all these authorities relate is that the Holy Prophet recited the chapter entitled *Al-Najm*, and prostrated himself and every one else who was present did the same." It is most unnatural to draw from it the conclusion that the Holy Prophet must have praised the idols and that otherwise the Quresh could not have prostrated themselves.

Muir has asserted that the earlier authorities believed the story of the lapse to be true and that the idea occurred only to the Muslims of the after days that it was a scandal and that hence they rejected it. The two great authorities cited by Muir are Waqidy who was born in 192 A. H. and died in 270 A. H., and Tabari who was born in 224 A. H. and died in 310 A. H. Against these two we have Imam Muhammad bin Ishaq, who collected traditions relating to the life of the Holy Prophet and lived in the first half of the second century of Hegira and died as early as 151 A. H., long before Waqidy was born. It is stated in the Bahrain that when he was questioned as to this story, he said it was a fabrication of the *Zindeeqs*. It is also related that he wrote a book refuting this false story. Then there is the most trustworthy authority on tradition, the famous Bukharee who is by no means a later authority than Waqidy and lived from 193 to 256 A. H. He made the most searching enquiries into the life and character of every narrator of traditions, dead or living, and after a full investigation he came to the conclusion that the part of the story relating to the praise of idols was a fabrication and therefore rejected it. As much of this report as he found to be true, he has narrated in his book, and that part I have already quoted. Bukharee reports this tradition through five different chains of narrators and none of them states the words which are attributed to the Holy Prophet. Then there is Shaikh Abu Mansur Almaturidy, who is considered by all Muslim authorities to be an Imam in theological literature. He died in 333, *i.e.*, only a few years after Tabari. He too attributed the circulation of this story to the *Zindeeqs*. Qazi 'Ayaz says that this story is not reported by a single man who is free from doubt or suspicion, nor is a single narrator to be found in the chain of its narrators who can be considered to be reliable. And as I have already said the six reliable works of tradition known as the *Sihah Sitta*, (or the six correct books), all unanimously reject this story. And the investigations of all these men are based on independent researches. They laid open the character of every body who appeared before them as a narrator of a tradition, and they had no regard for persons, but did their best to find out and make known the truth.

I will now show that there are elements in the story itself which show it to be a fabrication. Muir's authority Tabari gives it as follows:—

When the Holy Prophet saw the hatred of his people, and their estrangement from what he had brought to them grew heavy upon him, he desired it in his soul that something should be revealed to him from God which should bring about a reconciliation between him and his people. And it pleased him along with the love of his people and his desire for their conversion that the unkindness of their manners towards him should be softened to a certain extent. So he desired it and loved it, and Almighty God sent down to him the chapter *Najm*. So he recited, "By the stars when they set, your associate erreth not, nor doth he go astray, neither he uttereth aught of his own desire." When he reached the Word of God, "What think ye of Lat and Ozza and Manat the third beside," Satan put the following words in his mouth, on account of what he talked within himself and desired that he should bring to his people, "These are exalted females whose intercession is verily to be sought after." When the Quresh heard this, they were highly pleased and rejoiced for the praise of their idols When he had finished, he prostrated himself and the Muslims also prostrated themselves in obedience to him while the unbelievers prostrated themselves for what they heard of the mention of their deities. So there was no believer or unbeliever in the mosque who did not prostrate himself with the exception of Walid, son of Mughira, who was an old man, and unable to prostrate himself, took a handful of earth and worshipped. Then the people dispersed and the Quresh also went out, and they were pleased with what they had heard of the mention of their deities, and they said: "Now verily Muhammad has spoken well of our deities, for he said in what he read that they are exalted females and their intercession is to be sought after. This news of the prostration of Quresh reached the companions of the Holy Prophet in the land of Abyssinia, and it was rumoured that the Quresh had become Muslims. So some of them set out for Mecca while others remained behind. And Gabriel came to the Holy Prophet and said: "O Muhammad! What hast thou done; thou hast recited to the people verses which I did not bring to thee from the Lord God, and hast spoken words which God did not speak to thee. So the Holy Prophet grieved sore and feared the Lord greatly. Then Almighty God sent down to him the verse: *وما أرسلنا من قبلك من رسول ولا نبي إلا ما يلقى الشيطان في أمية فينسخ الله ما يلقى الشيطان ثم*

يُحْكِمُ اللَّهُ أَيْمَانَهُ وَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ Thus Almighty God took away the Prophet's grief, and gave him security from what he feared, and abrogated the words which Satan had put into his mouth by replacing them with the words : *إِذَا قَسَمَ ضِيقِي* to the words *لَمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَرْضَى*

The arrangement of the verses suggested in the concluding portion of this story is a strong testimony of its fabrication. The period to which this story is assigned can be ascertained definitely. This circumstance, we are told, had some connection with the return of the first band of emigrants to Abyssinia after only a three month's stay there. We can say, therefore, with certainty that the alleged story cannot be referred to any period later than the fifth year of the Holy Prophet's ministry. But the alleged exculpatory verse said to have been revealed on the same evening was really revealed at a much later period. It occurs in the chapter entitled *Pilgrimage*, which many authorities hold to have been revealed at Medina. Rodwell holds the same view for he places it in the *Medinite Suras*. At any rate no verse of this chapter was revealed as early as the date of the alleged story, and the verse under discussion can, therefore, be at the most placed among those revealed in later years at Mecca, about the 12th or 13th year of the Prophet's ministry. This conclusion is so clear that even Muir has not been able to deny it. So he altogether omits the latter portion of this tradition from the text of his book, simply adding in a foot-note: "Tradition tells us that Mahomet was consoled by the following passage in Sura xxii, which, however (from the reference to former apostles and prophets), must have been revealed at a somewhat later period." He also says after quoting the first half of the tradition which I have quoted in full: "At the same time it is by no means necessary to adopt in its entirety the exculpatory version of tradition; or seek in a supernatural interpretation, the explanation of actions to be equally accounted for by the natural working of the Prophet's mind." It is rather surprising that a man elsewhere so sensible should yet believe the lapse to be true. When the portion of the tradition in which exoneration from the compromise is sought is rejected as untrue, as Muir has done it, it follows naturally that the part which charges the Holy Prophet with the guilt of compromise must also be condemned. All those who have accepted

this tradition have accepted it in its entirety and therefore we are bound to accept or reject it in its entirety. But as soon as the fabrication of an essential portion of the tradition without which the false story loses its whole interest is admitted, it is absurd to lay stress on the validity of the other.

Sell as usual is even more injudicious. He not only represents the whole story to be true including what Muir calls "the exculpatory version," but in true imitation of the early fathers adds other details, for which so far as I know, only his ingenious brain is responsible. After stating that the Holy Prophet consoled himself and satisfied his followers by the revelation which says* "that Satan had deceived other prophets," Mr. Sell adds that the Quresh did "not accept this theory of Satanic influence." "If the Holy Quran," they argued, "were really God's Word, surely this shifting about and cancelling of verses were not divine." "This latter charge was a difficult one to meet and so another revelation came, saying: 'When We change one verse for another and God knoweth best what He revealeth they say, Thou art only a fabricator.'" This verse which Sell makes fit in with this story occurs in the chapter entitled *Nahl* (xvi: 103) which again both Muir and Rodwell place at a much later period. If this addition to the story is only an invention on the part of Mr. Sell, it is hardly necessary to discuss it, but the circumstance would no doubt help the reader to see how the fabrication has gone on. But if he states it on the authority of some earlier source which I have failed to discover, the fabrication is clear from the dates of the different revelations as I have shown above. Moreover, here Almighty God speaks of the verses revealed or the signs shown by Himself, and this verse has nothing to do with Satanic suggestions.

Other considerations which show the story to be a fabrication may be briefly mentioned. In all the versions of this tradition, the report which is said to have reached the Muslim exiles in Abyssinia is unanimously stated to be that the Quresh had become Muslims. Had the story of the lapse been true, the rumour which should have spread and gone over to Abyssinia should have been that the Prophet had repented of his condemnation of idols. But such a rumour or

* This translation of the verse under discussion in chapter xxii is wrong, as I would show later on.

report is not met with in a single tradition. Even Waqidy and Tabari agree in this report with the more reliable authorities. Great stress has been laid by Muir upon the circumstance of the return of the refugees in consequence of this report, but all that it shows is that the unbelievers did an act which was considered to be equivalent to their profession of Islam, and that was prostrating themselves along with the Holy Prophet when the *Sura Najm* was finished. But the prostration of the unbelievers does not lead to the conclusion that the Holy Prophet had admitted the greatness of their idols. It was the greatness of Allah before which they bowed and not the greatest of their idols. If the unbelievers had prostrated themselves in the beginning of the chapter when their idols were spoken of, we could have inferred that their prostration was due to the praise of their idols, but when we know it for certain that they prostrated themselves when the greatness of God was impressed upon them, we may be sure that they had no idea of their idols at the time. Our admission, therefore, that the refugees returned to Mecca and that they returned in consequence of a report that Mecca had been converted, does not lead us to the conclusion that the Holy Prophet had praised the idols. In fact such a conclusion is the most unnatural. Muir makes use of a fallacious argument when he says that to the fact of the return of the refugees "in consequence of a rumour that Mecca was converted," "the narrative affords the only intelligible clue."

Muir further tells us that the lapse was not a sudden event. "It was not a concession," he says, "won by surprise, or an error of the tongue committed unawares, and immediately withdrawn. The hostility of his people had long pressed upon the spirit of Mahomet; and, in his inward musings, it is admitted even by orthodox tradition, that he had been meditating the very expression which, as is alleged, the Evil one prompted him to utter. Neither can we believe that the condition lasted but a day. To outward appearance the reconciliation must have continued at the least for some days, probably indeed longer, to allow of the report going forth and reaching the exiles in a shape sufficient to inspire them with confidence." Here we have in fact a criterion which can determine the truth or the fabrication of the story of compromise. There is no doubt that if the Holy Prophet acceded to any such concession, it could not have been the work of a moment and the tradition which

states it to have lasted for only a few hours at the utmost must be rejected as untrue. The only thing to be seen will then be whether the story itself being false, there is any truth underneath it. If there is any truth in it, the considerations which, it is alleged, ultimately weighed with the Prophet to give a concession in favour of idols, must have been preying upon his mind for a long time. It is unquestionable that the first principle with which the Holy Prophet entered on his ministry was a strong denunciation of the idols and therefore any change in this attitude could not but be the work of long reflections. Now Muir himself tells us that the Holy Quran is an image of the Holy Prophet's mind. Accordingly for any proof of a particular attitude of the mind of the Holy Prophet, we must go to the Holy Quran and see if we can find any trace in the Holy Book of the change of mind attributed to him. This enquiry would show with certainty whether any such change had taken place or not. For this purpose the reader must study the chapters revealed before and after *Al-Najm*, and he will easily come to the conclusion that the story of the lapse is as great a falsehood as was ever invented. I briefly state below my own conclusion from a perusal of these chapters. So far as the arrangement is concerned, I will accept the judgment of Rodwell with whom Muir agrees in the main.

Before referring to the Holy Quran, I may state that it was about this time that the Quresh in various ways approached the Holy Prophet to deter him from denouncing their idols. They expostulated with him in their assemblies, entreated him, offered bribes of wealth, rank, dignity, &c., and ultimately threatened him with death. But nothing made him swerve a hair's breadth from the path into which Almighty God had guided him. When they went to his uncle Abu Talib, the Prophet's reply was that if they brought the sun on his right hand and the moon on his left, he would not give up the work with which God had entrusted him. These incidents which are recorded in all trustworthy traditions are sufficient to condemn the story of the lapse or reconciliation with idolatry.

Now turn to the Holy Quran. The chapter entitled *Tûr* was revealed before the *waqiah* which again was revealed immediately before the *Najm*, and in this the idols are condemned in language almost identical with that employed in *Najm*. The 39th verse of this chapter reads thus: *إِلهَ (لَبَنَاتٍ وَلَكُمُ) أَبْنُونِ* "Or hath God the daugh-

ters and ye the sons ? ” And in the *Najm* we read **الْمِ الْأُنثَىٰ لَا تُؤْمِنُ** “ Shall ye have male progeny and God female ? ” Now it is suggested that the Holy Prophet changed the words of the latter verse into a praise of the idols in order to please the unbelievers and to win them over to his side. But such a change could not please the Quresh so long as equivalent words of the condemnation of idols were still to be found in an earlier chapter. Nor were they unawre of it. Every verse was promulgated among friends as well as foes as soon as it was revealed. Even if the Holy Prophet had changed the verse in the *Najm*, it could not have satisfied the unbelievers unless they were assured that every verse of the Holy Quran condemning the idols and revealed up to that time had been abrogated. Such assurance was, however, never given to them, nor did the verse revealed say that all that had been hitherto revealed concerning idols was abrogated. Hence even if it be supposed that one verse was changed for another, the change was by no means sufficient to please and win over the unbelievers. In the 43rd verse of the same chapter again, idol worship is thus condemned: **أَمْ لَهُمْ آلَهُ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ** “ Or have they any god beside God ? Glory be to God above what they join with Him.” And again : “ Leave them then until the day come upon them when with the awe of Divine punishment they shall be struck as dead ; on that day their plans shall not at all avail them, neither shall they be assisted (by their idols). ”

In the chapter entitled *Zdridt* (scattering) placed immediately before *Túr* from which I have already quoted, idol-worship is denounced in the same strain. “ And the Heaven, with Our hands We raised it high, and We verily gave it its expanse ; And the earth, We stretched it out, and how good We have made it ! And of everything We have created pairs so that you may reflect. Fly then to God (*i.e.*, trust not in idols) : verily I come to you from Him a manifest warner ; and set not up another god with God : verily I come to you from Him an open warner. Turn away, then, from them, and thou shalt not incur reproach.” What evidence is there, I ask, in these two chapters of the change of mind attributed to the Holy Prophet ? Is there the slightest indication that his mind was prepared for granting a concession to idolatry ? Is there not here, on the other hand, the clearest testimony that the Holy Prophet still had the deepest hatred

for idolatry and the sublimest faith in one God? In a still earlier *Sura*, said to have been revealed on the occasion of a proposal made by the unbelievers that they would worship God if the Holy Prophet worshipped their idols, he was commanded to say; "O ye unbelievers! I worship not what ye worship, and ye are not worshippers of what I worship." This plain renunciation of Meccan idolatry was followed by a distinct recognition of Divine unity: "Say, He is one God, God who hath no equal, He begetteth not, and He is not begotten; and there is none like unto Him." Not a single verse of a single *Sura* can be pointed out in which the Holy Prophet's attitude of mind towards idolatry should appear to have been changed.

Nor is there any indication of the alleged change of mind in the chapters following the one which is the subject of discussion. Open the Holy Quran and read any one of the *Suras*, and you will find the same stress laid upon Divine unity, and the same hatred expressed with regard to *Shirk* (setting up gods with God), the same unshaken faith in the heart of the Holy Prophet with regard to his future triumph and the same powerful threats of punishment to the unbelievers in the near future. Rodwell places *Al-Ma'drij*, *Ar-Rahman*, *Qamar*, and *Was-Saffat* immediately after *Najm*, and I will be content with a few selections from each of them to show the misrepresentations of Muir. "Verily we have created them, they know of what! And I swear by the Lord of the East and of the West that We truly have power to replace them with better than themselves, neither is there anything in the world that can hinder us. Wherefore let them flounder on and disport themselves, till they come face to face with their threatened day" (lxx: 39-42). In the chapter entitled *Al-Qamar*, after describing how those who rejected the prophets of God aforetime were punished, the Holy Quran goes on to say to the idolaters of Mecca: "Are your infidels, O Meccans, better men than these, or is there any exemption from punishment for you in the sacred books? Will they say, 'we are a host that can defend itself?' The host shall be routed, and they shall turn the back. But the "Hour," is their threatened time, and the hour shall be most severe and bitter. And Our command is but one word, swift as the twinkling of an eye. And already We have destroyed the like of you—yet is any one warned?" (liv: 43-51). "Gather together

those who have acted unjustly and their comrades, and the gods whom they worshipped beside God ; and guide them to the road for hell. And stop them, for verily they shall be questioned : How now that ye help not one another. Who when it was said to them, ' There is no god, but God,' were proudful, and exclaimed, ' Shall we in sooth abandon our gods for a crazed poet ? ' Nay, rather, he cometh with the truth and confirmeth the sent ones of old. Ye shall verily taste the painful punishment." (xxxvii : 22-38). Then after quoting Abraham, " when he said to his father and to his people, ' what is this ye worship ? Prefer ye with falsehood gods to God ? And what deem ye of the Lord of the worlds ? ' ", the Holy Quran describes how Abraham broke the idols of his people, thus predicting the destruction of the idols of the Meccans. Then in the same chapter the prophet Ilyas is spoken of as having said to his people : " Fear ye not God ? Invoke ye Baal and forsake ye the most excellent Creator, God your Lord and Lord of your sires of old ? " And then about the end of the chapter, the Meccans are again condemned for their idol-worship : " Inquire then of the Meccans whether thy Lord hath the daughters, and they, the sons ? Have we created angels females ? and were they witnesses ? Is it not truly a falsehood of their own when they say, God hath begotten, and they verily are the liars. Hath He preferred daughters to sons ? What reason have ye for thus judging ? Will ye not then receive this warning of punishment ? " (xxxvii : 149-155). These brief quotations from the chapters revealed before and after the chapter *Najm* show clearly that the Holy Prophet did not for a single moment cease to denounce idols, nor was his mind ever changed as Muir suggests. Muir's statement that the prophet's mind was long the haunt of thoughts of reconciliation with idolatry is a pure falsehood, and there is not the slightest indication in the Holy Quran or in the traditions that he ever entertained such an idea than which nothing was farther off from his heart.

The strongest evidence of the fabrication of this story is, however, in the chapter itself to which it is alleged to refer. There is no doubt that the two sentences " These are exalted females and their intercession is to be sought after," are of Satanic origin, for they are the fabrication of some wicked mind, but the question is whether they

could have any place in this chapter in consonance with the rest of it. The reader will find that every verse of this chapter is a strong testimony against a positive answer to this question. There are two alternatives besides which no other supposition can hold good, *viz.*, either the Satanic sentences never formed a part of this chapter, or the whole chapter was made up of only these two sentences. I have read the chapter again and again and I can not find any place where these sentences can be so inserted as to give the unbelievers an idea that the chapter contains a praise of idols. At any rate, since we know it for certain that the whole chapter was recited to the unbelievers, if there is even a single verse which distinctly and certainly contradicts and condemns the Satanic words, there will be no doubt left that these verses never formed a part of the chapter.

In the first place, I will consider if the two sentences could take the place of the two now following, "Have ye considered *Lat* and *Uzza* and *Manat* the third besides." Context shows that they could not. If the Prophet wanted to conciliate the Quresh, certainly the words used in the following verses were calculated to lead him farthest off from the attainment of the desired object. According to Sell, the only alteration made afterwards by the Holy Prophet was that for the two sentences "These are exalted females and verily their intercession is to be sought after" was substituted the verse, "What? shall ye have male progeny and God females?" He, therefore, admits that the verses following remained unaltered and were recited in the assembly of the Quresh who prostrated themselves in imitation of the Holy Prophet. Now let the reader see if these verses are in consonance with the alleged concession, or if the insertion of the two verses could in the presence of those following give the Quresh an idea that their deities were admitted by the Prophet to be intercessors with God. According to Sell, the chapter would read thus: "Have ye considered *Lāt* and *Uzzā* and *Mandt* the other third: these are exalted females and their intercession is to be sought after. They are but names which ye have named, ye and your fathers! God has sent down no authority for them. The unbelievers do but follow their own suppositions and what their souls lust after! And verily there has come to them guidance from their Lord. Shall man have what he desires? But God's is the hereafter and the present. (What!

will their idols intercede) and the heaven is full of angels whose intercession avails not at all, save after God has given permission to whomsoever He will and is pleased with!" This is too ridiculous to be believed by any person endowed with the ordinary share of common sense, and the ludicrousness of the position of Mr. Sell is too obvious to be dwelt upon any more.

Others assert that the two verses praising the idols were substituted for the whole passage condemning them as quoted above. The device seems to have been made to get rid of the difficulty alluded to above, but the difficulty is not obviated by it. The utmost limit of the alteration does not go beyond the concluding words of the passage quoted above, but now mark the verse following this passage. It says: "Verily those who believe not in after life, name the angels with female names! but they have no sure knowledge thereof; they do but follow their suppositions, and verily suppositions and conjectures shall not avail against certainty at all!" It can be easily seen that the same strain of the denunciation of idol-worship is continued in this verse. When the Arabs were charged with the worship of inanimate objects, such as stones and idols, they advanced as an excuse that the female idols they worshipped were really representatives of the angels of heaven. This their supposition is condemned in this verse and they are told that it is a mere conjecture on their part that their stone deities are the representatives of angels, while the existence of God is a certainty, and that such conjectures on which idol-worship and the intercession of idols is based shall not avail in the least against the certainty of a belief in the Unity of God. The next verse says: "But turn aside from him who turns his back upon our warning and desires only this present life." If the Quresh had really been conciliated by the admission that their idols could intercede and they were now one with the Holy Prophet, who it was from whom he was commanded to turn aside? Plainly the unbelievers are here addressed as turning away from the warning of God, but if there was no unbeliever among the Quresh, a natural consequence of the compromise, this verse was quite useless and unmeaning. Proceeding further we read in the next verse: "Truly thy Lord best knoweth him who erreth from His way, and He best knoweth him who hath received guidance." Here again two parties

are spoken of, the party of the idolaters who erred from the true way and the party of the believers who received the guidance sent to them from God through the Holy Prophet. These two parties are spoken of in the same way as they are spoken of elsewhere in the Holy Quran. There is nothing to indicate that any such change as is involved in an admission of the intercession of idols had taken place. If the unbelievers were now all believers, who was it that erred from the right path? This description could not apply to any but the idolaters, and if the alleged concession had been granted to them, they should have cried out when these verses were recited to them that as these descriptions no more applied to them, they should no more be referred to. And what did withdrawing from them mean? All these commandments express a dislike of the doings of the unbelievers, at the root of all which was idol-worship, in the same manner as the earlier and the later injunctions. And they are all in fact a strong denunciation of idolatry.

As we go further on, we still see the same stress laid upon Divine unity and the utter weakness of all besides God. In fact, there is in every word in this portion a rejection of the worship and intercession of idols. Read for instance the following verses: "Has not man been informed of what is in the pages of Moses and of Abraham who fulfilled all the commandments of God, that no burdened one shall bear the burden of another, and that man shall have only that for which he strives, and that his efforts shall at last be seen in their true light." This verse contains a plain denial of the intercession of idols. The Quresh believed that their deities would intercede with God for their evil deeds and that they would thus escape the consequences of their wickedness. This doctrine is rejected in clear words here. Now supposing for the sake of argument that the intercession of the idols had been admitted by the Holy Prophet in the beginning of the chapter, it was denied several times before the assembly arose, and the Quresh could not remain deaf to the words that their burden shall not be borne by their deities. In the verses following every power is described as belonging only to God which the Quresh could easily understand as a plain denial of any power or authority belonging to their idols: "That it is He who makes men laugh and weep, and that it is He who causes to die and makes alive, and that He has

created the sexes, male and female, from the diffused germs of life, and that with Him is the second creation, and that He enriches and gives possession, and that He is the Lord of the Sirius (a star worshipped by the Arabians), and that it was He who destroyed the ancient Adites and the people of Samood, and left none of them, and before them the people of Noah He destroyed too, for they worshipped idols and committed outrages, and the cities turned upside down, it was He who overthrew them, and great destruction overtook them which covered them for ever: Which then of your Lord's benefits, O Meccans, do ye dispute (and impute it to your deities)? Those warners of old (you know what they brought down upon their people): this Prophet too is one of these very warners. The fearful day approaches, *none besides God can avert it*. Is it at this saying that ye marvel, and ye laugh and weep not, and ye are confounded? Prostrate yourselves then to God and worship." With these awful words ends one of the most awe-inspiring chapters in the Holy Quran.

In order to understand fully the significance of the false story, the reader must know what is meant by intercession. Intercession really means a coming between two persons or pleading with one in authority on behalf of a party which has done something to deserve a punishment. What the idol-worshippers meant by the intercession of their idols was this that the punishment which the Holy Prophet repeatedly said would overtake them on account of their evil deeds and transgressions would be averted by the intercession of their deities, both in this world and in the next. A concession on the part of the Holy Prophet that he regarded the idols as intercessors would, therefore, have meant an avowal that the punishment with which he had hitherto threatened them would now be warded off. To see, therefore, whether the story of the concession is an authentic or a forged story, the reader has only to see whether the Holy Prophet withdrew his assertion in this *Sura* as to the threatened punishment to the unbelievers or whether at least he kept silence on this point. A reference to the concluding verses of the chapter will convince every reader that the story of the lapse is a fabrication. Not only has the Holy Quran not withdrawn in this chapter any of its statements threatening the unbelievers with punishment, but it actually repeats in the assembly of the Quresh that very threatening in the most forcible words. How Ad were destroyed and then Samood, and the people of Noah

before, how populous cities were overthrown because of their bold transgressions, it describes in clear and awe-inspiring words, and then face to face with the Quresh, the Holy Prophet denounces their deeds as deserving a similar punishment. He was not to be ignored or rejected, for he was a warner like the warners of yore. The day was approaching, the terrible day which would bring destruction on their heads. That was the time when the intercession of the idols could have benefitted them or averted the evil from their heads, and this was the occasion for the Holy Prophet to admit such intercession. But in the most clear and decided words, the Holy Quran added that "none besides God can avert the evil of that terrible day." No power in heaven or earth could do it, and Lat, Manat, Uzza and the host of Quresh idols and Meccan deities could not in the least avail against it. What plainer denial of the intercession of idols could there be? And what plainer proof of the fabrication of this story is needed?

It is a noteworthy circumstance that the chapter *Najm* begins with a plain assertion that every word coming from the mouth of the Holy Prophet was a Divine revelation, and that *he did not utter aught of his own desire*. And yet the first accusation conveyed in the story of reconciliation is that the alleged alteration of the Word of God was due to the *Prophet's own* desire. Here then we have two contradictory statements, the Holy Quran affirming that the Prophet did not speak a single word out of his desire, and a tradition stating that the Holy Prophet introduced a verse into the Holy Quran which was the outcome of his own desire. This is a sufficient justification for the rejection of the tradition as a fabrication. Moreover, in the Holy Quran we are told repeatedly that the spirit of evil cannot influence the ideas of the righteous servants of God, while with regard to the messages with which the prophets of God are entrusted, it is stated in the chapter entitled *Jinn*: "For verily God sends watchers before and after His apostles, that He may know that they have delivered the errands of their Lord." This verse falsifies the story of lapse, for it affirms that no one can have power to change the verses revealed by God until they are safely delivered to the people.

It should also be borne in mind that the idolaters of Arabia regarded their idols as invested with power from God and believed in their intercession with the Almighty, and, therefore, an admission on

the part of the Holy Prophet of the greatness and intercession of idols would have amounted to a total relapse into idolatry. In that case a revelation from on high would have been quite meaningless and the Holy Prophet would have been no more a prophet. The whole of the Quran revealed up to that time would have been given up as an error, and all the Muslims would have gone back to their ancestral religion. The rumour which spread abroad should have been not that the Quresh had been converted to Islam, but that the Muslims had gone back to idolatry. And the Muslims who had been subjected to the cruellest tortures for their relinquishment of idolatry would have asked the Holy Prophet what he meant by all this. But as it is certain that not one of these circumstances ever happened, it follows conclusively that the episode of the lapse is a fabrication of the enemies of Islam, which, among the great number of fabricated traditions, was taken by careless writers for a true report. On the other hand, it does not appear that the Quresh followed the Holy Prophet at that time. There is no statement on record that during the time of the alleged reconciliation they had begun to believe in the truth of the Holy Quran, or recited it in their assemblies or learned by rote any portion of it like the Muslims, or said their prayers like the Muslims, or along with them in assemblies, or treated the Muslims as their brethren. I do not think any sensible person would in the face of these circumstances consider the story of the lapse to be true.

Two points remain to be cleared. Why did the unbelievers prostrate themselves along with the Holy Prophet when he recited the chapter *Najm* in an assembly of the Quresh? In the lengthy quotations from this chapter given above, the reader would notice that the last *ruku'* of this chapter describes nothing but the mighty power of God displayed in creation and in His dealings with men generally and with the persecutors of the prophets particularly. The *ruku'*, and with it the chapter, is brought to a close by a description how Ad and Samood and the people of Noah were destroyed, and how populous cities were destroyed in an instant by turning them upside down; and the unbelievers were then, while sitting face to face with the Holy Prophet, told that an hour lay in wait for them also, the terrible disaster of which could be averted by none but God. These words had fallen upon them like thunderbolt and in the pitch of their

fearfulness they heard the concluding words of the *Sura*: "Do you wonder at this word and will ye still laugh and weep not, and you are perfectly confounded? Prostrate yourselves then to God and worship." Here the Holy Prophet prostrated himself and so did the believers, and so great was the effect of the threatening and so impressive this scene that in a half unconscious state the Quresh also prostrated themselves before God.

It is a miracle of the Holy Quran and a sign of the truth of the Holy Prophet. The threat of punishment given by the Holy Prophet was never taken lightly by the Quresh. They greatly feared the prayers of the Holy Prophet against them. Many instances of this are on record. On one occasion when Omar pursued his steps in the task of the night to murder him, he turned back and remonstrated with Omar on his thus boring him in the light of day and the dark of night. Omar became fearful and thought that the Holy Prophet was going to invoke an evil upon him. So he advanced and promised never more to do it, requesting the Holy Prophet not to call down evil upon him. Again when Otba, son of Rabi'a, was sent by the Quresh to the Holy Prophet to request him not to say anything against the idols, the Holy Prophet recited to him a portion of the Holy Quran beginning with the 41st chapter. When he came to the words: *فان اعرضوا فقل انذرتكم صفة مثل صفة عاد و ثمود* "But if they turn away, then say: I warn you of a punishment like the destructive punishment which overtook Ad and Samood," Otba requested him to stop and went away with these words in his mouth. When he came back to the Quresh, he told them what had happened and how when he came to the words, "But if they turn away, then say, I warn you of a punishment like the destructive punishment which overtook Ad and Samood," he stopped him and entreated him for the sake of his near relationship to them to desist from uttering the prophecy, and added, "and I know that Muhammad when he speaks about something does not lie, and I fear lest punishment should come down upon you." In fact, as I said on a former occasion, the unbelievers had a presentiment from the first that the warning of the Holy Prophet was not in vain.

The Holy Quran was in fact such a miracle that its mere recital had often the effect of convincing the hearers of its truth. The sub-

limity of its language was moreover such as made even the unbelievers bow their heads before it. Abu Bakar was prohibited by the Quresh leaders to recite the Holy Quran in public as this, they said, had the effect of attracting their women and children to the new faith. One can easily understand how mighty its effect was when the recipient of the Divine revelation himself recited it in an assembly of the Quresh. The warning had been repeated, the fate of the evil-doers of yore had been dwelt upon and then came the mighty and thundering word which commanded them to prostrate themselves to God if they would have the punishment averted. So awed were the unbelievers by what they had heard and so great was the impression that their opposition gave way for a while and their stiff necks were bowed before the mighty Word of God whose power even they recognised. It is far more probable that the Quresh prostrated themselves before God whom they recognised as the Creator and as the Supreme Deity than that the Holy Prophet praised idols when it is certain that he had been consistently condemning them for many years. Nay, the eloquence and beauty of the language of the portion recited was in itself sufficient to make them bow their heads before it. Apart from all other considerations to which I have referred above, it is far more reasonable to believe that a party of the Quresh had for an instant forgotten their opposition which was carried on quite unjustifiably than that the Holy Prophet had against his own forcible teachings and denunciations and the dictates of his conscience lapsed into idolatry.

It remains now to explain some of the verses which are held by some to refer to this episode. The first of these occurs in the chapter entitled *Pilgrimage* which was revealed at a very late date. To understand its real significance, I give its translation along with that of the preceding and subsequent verses, for the context throws much light upon the interpretation of the verse in question. "Say, O men! I am only an open warner for you. . . . But they who strive to invalidate Our signs shall be inmates of hell. *Nor have We sent any apostle or prophet before thee, but when he desired (to bring about purity in the world) Satan interfered in his desires, but God shall bring to naught the hindrance of Satan, then God shall establish His revelation: for God is knowing, wise.*" I think

the purport of the italicised words is made sufficiently clear by the previous verse. There is no mention here of Satanic suggestions, but as related in the previous verse some men sought to invalidate the signs of God and put obstructions in the Holy Prophet's way. It is regarding their opposition and efforts that the Holy Prophet is consoled in the next verse where it is said that such obstructions were placed in the way of every prophet or apostle who passed before him, but that ultimately God removed all these hindrances and established His revelations so that their truth became clear. It is this Divine law that is mentioned in these verses. If this meaning is not attached to this verse, it cannot have any connection with the context. The subsequent verses make it clearer: "But the unbelievers will not cease to doubt concerning it until the Hour come suddenly upon them, or until the chastisement of the grievous day come upon them," i.e., they shall continue to place hindrances in the Prophet's way until the appointed hour of punishment overtake them when a complete victory of the truth shall make these hindrances naught.

The other verses which according to Muir show that the Holy Prophet "retained a keen sense of its dishonour" in later days, really lead to the opposite conclusion. I give below these verses with their literal translation: *وان كان لا يفتنونك عن الذي اوحينا اليك لتفتري علينا غيره وان لا تتخذوك خيلا ولو لان ثبتنك لقد كنت تركن اليهم شيئا قليلا ان لا ذقتك ضعف الاحيوة وضعف المماة ثم لا تجد لك علينا نصيرا* (بنفي اسر ائيل ٧٣-٧٥) "And truly they desired to tempt thee to swerve from what We had revealed unto thee, that thou shouldst devise concerning Us a different thing, and if thou hadst done it, they would surely have taken thee as a friend. And if it had not been that We had established thee beforehand, verily thou wouldst have desired to incline to them a little, and if thou hadst done it, then verily We would have caused thee to taste double the punishment of this life and double the punishment of the next; then thou shouldst not have found against Us any helper" (xvii: 73-75). These words, far from leading to the conclusion that the Holy Prophet had swerved from the the right path and inclined to the unbelievers, clearly show that he never did it. The unbelievers, no doubt, desired to tempt him, as I have shown in the last issue, by offering him wealth, rank, dignity, and kingdom, but he spurned all these inducements. And

the Holy Quran clearly says that if the Prophet had inclined even a little to the unbelievers, God would have punished him with double the punishment of others, and he would not have found any helper against Him. To establish the truth of the story of reconciliation, it is necessary to show that the Holy Prophet was (God forbid) punished by God in this world and was deserted by Him and that no assistance was granted to him by God after this. The other verse which is alleged to be a remembrance of the "sense of dishonour" is a still clearer evidence of the falsity of this story. It occurs in the chapter entitled Pilgrimage, and Muir translates it thus: "And when they see thee, they receive thee no otherwise than scoffingly. *Ah! is this he whom God hath sent as an apostle? Verily he had nearly seduced us from our gods, unless we had patiently persevered therein.* But they shall know hereafter when they see the torment, who hath erred most from the right way" (xxv: 43). Here we find the unbelievers clearly admitting that they had been nearly seduced from their gods.

Notes from the Diary for September.

16th September.—In the course of a long conversation as to the measures which should be taken for the spread of Islam, the Promised Messiah remarked:—

"Bear well in mind that the time of religious wars is now gone. The battles fought by the Holy Prophet were not meant to compel people to accept the religion of Islam, but they were fought in self-defence. When the Muhammadans were very severely persecuted and turned out of Mecca and many had been killed, then it was that Almighty God commanded the Muslims to take up the sword in self-defence. But such is not the case now. We are living in peace and security. Islam is now attacked with the pen and not with the sword, and therefore it is the pen which the Muslims should now take in hand to meet their opponents' attacks. For, Almighty God says in the Holy Quran that we should make preparations for defence similar to

those which our opponents make for attack. Now the unbelievers are not mustering forces to crush Islam, but they are writing books against it, and therefore we should adopt a similar line of defence. Very fortunate and blessed is the man whose heart is pure and whose true desire is the manifestation of the glory and majesty of God, for Almighty God prefers him to others. As to those who oppose me God alone will judge between them and me. He knows what is in our hearts, and He sees whose heart is devoted to the attainment of the objects of this world and who it is whose heart melts solely for the sake of God. Remember that you cannot make any spiritual advancement until your hearts are purified of every dross. But when there is purity in the heart, there is also generated with it the power which enables a man to make spiritual advancement. Consider how the Holy Prophet when quite alone and helpless was commanded to proclaim to the whole world: 'O ye people! I am a messenger of God to you all.' Who could think at the time that these words would ever be fulfilled? Yet the success which crowned his efforts is the most marvellous that the world has seen. It was from among his deadliest enemies that his devoted followers came. This leads us to hope that even from among these people men will come out who will combine true purity of heart with an entire submission to Divine will.

"We have not in our way those difficulties which the Holy Prophet had, but still his life here did not end until he was perfectly successful and until he witnessed the large ingress of people into Islam which is described in the words, 'When the help of God came and the victory and thou sawest men entering into the religion of God by troops.' Our opponents are doing all that they can to bring us to naught, but God is to be thanked that their efforts have all failed, and they have seen that the more they exerted themselves in opposing us, the greater the failure they witnessed. Almighty God has been making His dispensation more and more successful. Unable to stop its progress, they now think that my death will bring about a dispersion among my followers and that it would thus meet a failure like the Brabmo Samaj and many other sects that have risen and fallen recently. But they are mistaken. It is the will of God that this sect should spread in the whole world and be a progressive religion. Even the Holy Prophet, Moses and Jesus when they began their work were looked upon with the same suspicious eye by their adversaries.

If there are sects that died, there are those also that flourished and spread in the world. Those who annihilate their own selves entirely, and whose sole desire is to establish the glory and majesty of God in the world, and who are ready to bear every hardship in the way of God, even to sacrifice their lives, are not destroyed by God. It is God's work they do and therefore God helps them and sends them His assistance.

"There is a clamour for advancement, but most men do not know the way to it. Righteousness is the true way to progress, and we have an example of it in the life of the Holy Prophet. The early Muslims made advancement, because they walked in righteousness and sought to do the will of God, and it is by walking in their footsteps that our condition can now be bettered. Islam does not forbid a man to earn his livelihood by adopting any profession or handicraft, but what it forbids is the hankering after world and making worldly attainments, comforts and pleasures as the sole object of this life. But unless the heart is purified, every step that is taken is backward.

... Those who are foremost in the cry for advancement really seek wealth and nothing more. They do not care for the purity of heart and in imitation of Europe fall into numerous evils."

23rd September.—"Immediately after death a man finds himself in the other world. At such a time the man who has wasted his whole life in the attainment of worldly desires and has not sought any connection with God, finds death a bitter cup and departs from this world in sorrow and grief. This is the beginning of his tortures because he never made any preparation for the after life. It is, therefore, necessary that a man should not have the love of this world in his heart, because it is the love of this world which precludes all happiness in the next life. And since the time when death will come is not known to any one, a man should, therefore, always be prepared for that hour. This would keep him in close connection with God for he would know that his true happiness lies in the next life. This life is in fact a kind of preparation for the next, and it is here that everything should be done for comfort there. If a man makes no preparation for the next life, the hour of death will find him entirely involved in the cares and anxieties of this world, and hence he will experience the greatest grief and sorrow in bidding farewell to it and will have nothing but

pain and torments in the next, because pain and torments are the result of the cares and anxieties of this world. Death always comes suddenly and the man of world thinks that it has come prematurely. This is because he is not prepared for the next life, for if he had made any preparation, he would have been ready to receive it as if it were at the door. Hence all righteous men have taught that a man should always take an account of his own actions, and see whether if death came to him just at that moment, he was prepared for the journey or not."

24th September.—"The true believer in God is never in despair because he knows that the God whom he worships is a powerful God. He doth what He willeth and there is good in what He doth. The atheists and those who do not believe in a powerful God, lead lives of ease and luxury so long as they are not confronted by difficulties but the appearance of difficulties in their way quite perplexes them because their only trust is in means and they have no faith in the power of God. Therefore it is that since faith in God is rapidly declining in Europe, suicides are committed there so often on trivial failures. Their hearts are weak because they have no connection with the source of all strength. But a believer in God has a strong heart because his trust is in the Mighty God, and even when all apparent means fail, he does not despair, but has always a living hope in God. He feels an inward satisfaction in all his outward troubles.

When will it be?

This question has been asked of every prophet of God. When Jesus of Nazareth said that there would be pestilences, famines, earthquakes and war, one can easily guess that the first question put to him was: "When will it be?" It was in answer to this question that he replied: "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." (Matt. 24: 34-36). The same question was often asked of the Holy

Prophet when he warned the people of the punishment of God that was sure to befall them. This question was repeatedly put to him, as we see from its repeated mention in the Holy Quran. As often as the Holy Prophet gave the warning, and there is hardly a chapter in which it is not once or twice given, the unbelievers asked : "When shall this threat come to pass ?" The reply given was : وان ادري
 "اقرب ام بعيد ما ترعدون" "I do not know whether the punishment of which I warn you is near or far, *i.e.*, whether it will overtake you in a few days or in a few years," and they were plainly told that it would come upon them all of a sudden and that therefore the exact hour would not be revealed to them.

It has surprised me to hear this very question put by those who receive the Gospels and the Holy Quran as their sacred scriptures and as their Divine revelations. A Muhammadan gentleman writes to me that the Promised Messiah's prophecy relating to a second earthquake is of little value unless the exact date, time and place are mentioned, for, he says : "The God who was kind enough to reveal the news to His servant surely will not refuse to name the day, date, time and place of the second earthquake." The same question has been repeatedly asked since the Promised Messiah's publication of the prophecy of a second earthquake by apparently learned Christians and Muhammadans. How many religious controversies are cut short if the Divine law with regard to the prophets of God is kept in mind. If a prophecy loses all its value, because the exact hour of its fulfilment is not mentioned, the prophecies of Jesus and those of our Holy Prophet shall have also to be declared as useless. But this is not true. A prophecy is a prophecy if it gives any knowledge with regard to the future which is beyond human power, and it is not necessary that it should give all the details which any one should like to have made known. My friend refers me to Jeremiah xx, but even there the exact date and hour of destruction are not mentioned. In fact such has never been the Divine law, and in the case of every prophet of whom any trustworthy record is left, we find the prophecies of the destruction of a people without any details as to the exact nature and date of the punishment.

If Jesus could not say anything about the date and hour of the prophesied earthquakes and famines except that they would be wit-

nessed before the generation then living passed away and his prophecy is still not looked upon as defective by any Christian, the Promised Messiah's prophecy regarding another earthquake, which must be witnessed in his own life-time, cannot be rejected as indefinite, especially when it reveals particulars as to the place and nature of the calamity not to be met with in Jesus' prediction, *viz.*, that this country is to be its scene and that its effect would be far more terrible than that of the earthquake of 4th April last. In like manner, the Holy Prophet was repeatedly asked to state the exact date and hour of the prophesied punishment, but he only answered that it must overtake them suddenly and that God only had the knowledge of that hour. But this in no way lessened the value of the mighty prophecy on whose fulfilment he laid the greatest stress and which he offered as a sign of his truth. The essence of the prophecy lay in the final vanquishment of the opponents of the Holy Prophet, and this was foretold at a time when all the circumstances pointed to its utter impossibility. In a like manner, the prophecy published by the Promised Messiah is made under circumstances which point to the impossibility of its fulfilment, because Professor Omori, the learned Seismologist is sure that there would be no earthquake as terrible as that of 4th April for 200 years in this country. If it, therefore, comes to pass, it would in itself be a conclusive testimony that the knowledge of it was beyond the power of man. And what for is it announced? Only that men may know that there is a God who knows the deep secrets of the future and that knowing Him they may not walk in evil ways and that purity and righteousness be spread upon earth, so that the wrath of God may be averted from this people. They are atheists who think that the transgressions of men have nothing to do with the dire afflictions which come upon them. Had they believed in God, they would have believed in the teachings of His prophets.

Review.

An Orthodox Christian View of the Promised Messiah.

A paper headed "The Messiah of Qadian," by the Rev. H. D.

Griswold of Lahore, was read in the author's absence at an ordinary general meeting of the Victoria Institute, or Philosophical Society of Great Britain, London, on the 15th May last. A copy of this lecture has been handed over to me by a friend. Though the paper is written by a Christian Missionary for a Christian meeting, and therefore necessarily in an antagonistic spirit, yet it gives on the whole, it must be admitted, a correct idea of the claims of the Promised Messiah. Excepting occasional remarks which were necessary to make the paper fit for reading in a Christian meeting, the author has very clearly stated the necessary facts for forming a true idea of the Ahmadiyya movement and has taken immense pains to collect from different places all the arguments bearing on the subject, and to arrange them in an order. The paper cannot fail to give an impression to unprejudiced readers of the truth of the Promised Messiah's claim. Explaining the nature of the claim, Mr. Griswold writes: "He does not mean that he is the very person of Jesus Christ re-incarnated in India, but rather that he has come in the spirit and power of Christ. His conception is that just as, according to the interpretation of Jesus, John the Baptist was the Elijah which was to come (Matt. xi : 14), because he came 'in the spirit and power of Elijah' (Luke i : 17), so he, the Mirza, is the Messiah which is to come, because he is come in the 'spirit and power' of Christ." Mr. Griswold's retort to this argument is: "But note the logical consequences of this claim. If the Mirza Qadiani is the Promised Messiah, then (1) his appearance is the fulfilment of all the Bible promises which speak of Christ's coming, (2) no literal coming again of the 'same' Jesus of Nazareth is to be expected, and (3) the expectation of a literal Second Coming of Christ on the part of Christians is based on misinterpretation." These are no doubt the logical consequences of this claim, but what then? Is not Mr. Griswold aware that these very difficulties prevented the Jews from accepting Jesus as the true Messiah. The book of Malachi said that Elijah the prophet would appear before the advent of the true Messiah. It did not say that some one in the "spirit and power" of Elijah would come. If Jesus was the true Messiah, then (1) "no literal coming of the same" Elijah the prophet was to be expected, and (2) "the expectation of a literal Second Coming" of Elijah on the part of Jews "was based on misinterpretation." These very considerations which weigh with Mr. Griswold in rejecting the Promised

Messiah weighed with the Jews of old in rejecting Jesus Christ. And again if Jesus was the true Messiah, then another logical consequence was that "his appearance was the fulfilment of all the Bible promises" which spoke of Elijah's second coming and the advent of the true Messiah. The wonderful signs had not appeared, no extraordinary manifestation of Divine power had taken place, the era of universal peace had not set in, harmony and brotherhood had not been established, and Jerusalem had not become the centre of the world. Yet the fulfilment of all these signs was necessary according to the Bible prophecies. It is indeed to be wondered that with all these precedents in hand, the Christian should yet wander away from the truth.

Betting and Gambling.

"Betting and Gambling" by B. S. Rowntree has been published recently. In this book the author deplores the fearful spread of this evil in England. The chief excuse for gambling and betting is that it affords a diversion from the more serious duties of life, but the author of this book has shown that this possible gain is more than outbalanced by the evils flowing from this practice. He proves it to be not only detrimental to the morals of the community, but also corrupting to its intelligence. In fact, no better description of the two evils, *viz.*, gambling and use of intoxicating liquors, can be given than that which is given in the Holy Quran: "They will ask thee concerning wine and games of chance. Say: In both is great sin, and advantage also to men, but their harm is far greater than their advantage." This was the reason why the Holy Founder of Islam prohibited them both. And now experience has taught the Christians that the whole truth about these two evils is contained in their description as given in the word of God, and that this truth was first made known to the world 1300 years ago by the Holy Prophet. It should also be noted that these two evils are mentioned together in the Holy Quran. The reason of this may be seen from the following passage occurring in the book under review:

"The passion of gambling once settled in a man, seems to take physical root in him and to be almost as difficult to expel as drink,

opium, or any other acquired physical vice. Gambling commonly consorts with drink : gambling houses are commonly places for the sale of alcoholic liquors, and wherever the law permits, or can be evaded, drinking shops are betting haunts. The business of gambling is often done in an atmosphere of alcohol. This is not, indeed, invariably the case. . . . But in Northern European peoples drink is usually necessary to induce that instability of judgment and disregard of the future which are conditions of gambling."

As regards the extent to which this evil prevails in England, Mr. Rowntree shows that it is no more limited to the rich and well-to-do people, but that it rages even among the working classes. He says : " Briefly summarised, the evidence (before the select committee of the House of Lords 1901-2) showed that the practice of betting had grown to such an extent amongst the working classes that it was quite commonly carried on in factories and workshops by agents of the book-makers, and outside of them by the street betting men. In speaking of the former method, one of many testimonies was given by the Lord Provost of Glasgow, who said that betting was carried on to an enormous extent in the great workshops there, while an idea of the latter can be obtained from Police Superintendent Shannon's statement that in Lambeth alone 441 persons had been proceeded against in the previous year, the fines amounting to £2,000. The evidence proved also that it was not confined to men, but had spread to women and children ; that it caused the neglect of wives and children, disregard for parents, and carelessness and indifference in their occupations, frequently resulting in embezzlement from their employers."

It is also shown that betting is not now confined to large cities, but has spread to almost every town and village. It is to be met with not only in places where different men gather in numbers, but offices, shops and even homes are infected with it. Unfortunately the evil is rampant among women, and a whole chapter is devoted to gambling among women. Cases of suicide and embezzlement are largely due, we are told, to the practice of betting. The *Indian Church News* of Calcutta contrasts the conditions of Bridge playing in England with those in India in an article refuting the arguments of the Bishop of Lahore against such games of chance. I may quote this passage as casting some light on the internal condition of civilized society in connection

with such subjects. It runs thus :—

“There is one thing about Bridge that constitutes a serious danger to society in England. Devotees to this fascinating game gradually cease to care for ladies’ society. . . In days of yore, the men came back from the coverts at sunset and sat in the hall with the ladies till the dressing bell rang. Now, the moment a cup of tea has been swallowed, some man says : ‘Have a game of Bridge’ ? whereupon every man strolls off to the smoking room till dinner. This is exasperating to a hostess and mortifying to the girls ; but it is a fact. The same state of affairs does not exist in India because, in ordinary Cantonments on the plains, the ladies leave us for the hills for six months, and every third or fourth year go to England for 18 months. This a good thing that the bereft husband has a game that drives away melancholy and fascinates him.”

One may venture to ask, what about the bereft lady ? Or is it that she does not feel solitary or is fascinated by something else ?

A New Translation of the Holy Quran.

Abdul Hakim Khan, M. B., has just published an English translation of the Holy Quran with brief commentary in the form of foot-notes. It is the first attempt of a Muhammadan at an English-translation and must receive encouragement from the English-knowing Muhammadan public. There exist already several translations of the Holy Quran by Christian writers who have added, wherever they had an opportunity, notes which could throw discredit on Islam. The chief superiority of Abdul Hakim Khan’s translation is its freedom from such notes. His notes are generally taken from authentic traditions or reliable commentaries.

Besides this the translation has many new features helpful to a reader of the Holy Quran. It can be had from the author at Patiala for Rs 5. 8 a., bound in cloth, which for over 900 pages of printed matter is a moderate price.