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# THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

## The Collection of Traditions.



In the last issue I briefly traced the history of Tradition to the end of the first century and pointed out the means of the preservation and safe delivery of traditions which existed in the time of the Holy Prophet and after him in the time of his companions. In one sense, therefore, the task of the collection of traditions had begun in the life-time of the Holy Prophet himself, for there were companions whose sole pursuit even then was the collection of traditions, *i.e.*, committing them to memory and safely delivering them to others. After the death of the Holy Prophet, the collection of traditions was still more ardently pursued, and I have mentioned instances in my last article on Tradition in which the companions of the Holy Prophet undertook long journeys to Syria, Egypt and other distant places for making themselves sure of traditions which they heard reported by other companions who had gone to these places. I have also shown that in many cases in the life-time of the Holy Prophet, and more frequently after his death, the companions kept memoranda of traditions. The rules relating to *zakat*, the legal alms, were all written down in the time of Abu Bakr, and Anas tells us that he used to make copies of them to be sent to the collectors of poor-rates. The practice of searching traditions from every possible source and committing them to memory and in some cases putting them to writing as an additional measure of safety had thus begun at a very early time. But we also speak of the collection of traditions in the sense of their being written down in books with proper arrange-



ment and classification under different heads and chapters, these books carrying such authority with them as was sufficient to dispense with the necessity of oral reports. It is in this sense that the statement as to the collection of traditions having been undertaken after the first century of Hejira is to be understood. The confusion of these two distinct senses of the word has given occasion to the hostile critics to throw doubts on the credibility of traditions. It is true that traditions were circulated in a book form at the earliest only in the second century of Hejira, but this does not imply that they were not collected before that or that the means of their preservation and safe delivery did not exist till these books were written.

Properly speaking there were five different stages in the collection of traditions. In the first stage which belongs to the time of the Holy Prophet, we find some of the companions exclusively devoting their time and attention to the preservation of the sayings of the Holy Prophet and his practice. Foremost among these was Abu Huraira, who had won a reputation in the life-time of the Holy Prophet for his excessive desire of committing to memory all the traditions which came to his knowledge. There were also others who on account of the relation in which they stood to the Holy Prophet had opportunities of knowing a great number of traditions, such as Ayesha, the wife of the Holy Prophet, and Anas, son of Malik, his freedman and servant. The Holy Prophet had other wives, but they were not gifted to the same extent with the qualifications needed for the preservation of traditions. Ayesha was a woman of wonderful gifts and talents and she had a wonderfully retentive memory. She could repeat thousands of the verses of the poets of ignorance and had a great love of learning. Some other companions like Abdulla, son of Abbas, and Abdulla, son of Omar, were young men of remarkable aptitude as many of the traditions show, and they had both at an early age acquired a deep love for learning the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet. Abdulla, son of Amru, was another companion whose special pursuit was the collection of the sayings of the Holy Prophet which he used to write, as Abu Huraira tells us. Similar anecdotes are met with regarding many other companions of the Holy Prophet which show that they had begun to treasure up his words in his life-time. These particular cases were really cases of the collection of traditions.



The second stage in the collection of traditions begins with the death of the Holy Prophet. Apart from the companions who collected and preserved traditions in the life-time of the Holy Prophet, there were thousands of other companions who preserved particular traditions, and the collection of traditions in this stage meant their collection from all the available sources. This hard task was, however, facilitated to a large extent by the particular circumstances of the time. In the first place, as already shown, any companion who knew a tradition deemed it his duty to deliver it to others, for the Holy Prophet had clearly enjoined his companions to transmit his words to others. The companions had at a very early time spread in distant countries, and accordingly such traditions as they knew were circulated in those places, and by transmission from one generation to another were safely preserved till the time when the collection of traditions on an extensive scale began. Secondly, in the time of the Caliphs certain men claimed certain rights on the authority of certain words uttered by the Holy Prophet, and accordingly such traditions came into public record and public notice. An example may make this point more clear. Mughira went to Abu Bakr and laid claim to certain property on the authority of a tradition. As this tradition was not generally known, he was required to produce a witness who should confirm his assertion as to the truth of the tradition. The witness was produced and the claim admitted and the tradition thus became generally known. Large numbers of traditions thus continued to come into public notice and to be added to the traditional lore of the community. Thirdly, new contingencies and requirements of the increasing Muslim society brought many a tradition from the recesses of memory into public notice. The Muslim society had made a progress with leaps and bounds after the Holy Prophet's death, and numerous cases were constantly arising which could be decided with the help of traditions. Where a tradition exactly in point could not be discovered, analogous instances were sought and applied. That many cases even in the early days of Islam were decided on the principle of analogy shows clearly that a searching inquiry was made regarding all traditions of the kind. In such cases, undoubtedly those companions who were noted for their love for the preservation of traditions in the life-time of the Holy Prophet, as Abu Huraira, Anas, Abdulla, son of Abbas,



Ayesha and others were consulted first as many anecdotes show. Abdulla, son of Abbas, notwithstanding that he was a young man, was respected by Omar simply on account of his knowledge of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet. Fourthly, the companions were not slackened in their zeal for the search and collection of traditions. Apart from all necessities, contingencies and requirements, they continued their search for traditions. In the last article I have given instances of long journeys taken by them to Syria and Egypt and other distant places in quest of a single tradition which they heard reported by some companion at that place. The process of the concentration of traditional knowledge was thus simultaneous with its propagation and circulation. Fifthly, there was a large ingress of people into Islam after the Holy Prophet, and the more zealous among them made all kinds of inquiries from the men who had been with the Holy Prophet. The same was the case of the new generation, the offspring of the companions of the Holy Prophet. Hundreds of anecdotes show that their inquiries related to every sphere of the faith of Islam and to the minutest details of the Holy Prophet's life. Thus they obtained whatever knowledge they could from the companions, and their zeal undoubtedly became greater as they saw the companions gradually pass away. Hence we have reason to conclude that the traditions which the companions of the Holy Prophet knew were transmitted by them to the next generation. Sixthly, such of the companions as possessed a large number of traditions attracted large numbers of eager listeners, and the places where they resided became great centres of traditional learning. In fact, like schools of tradition were established at these places whither eager listeners flocked from distant places. Abu Huraira is said to have as many as eight hundred pupils who listened to the traditions of the Holy Prophet from him. Most, if not all, of these became in their turn the reporters of these traditions. By thus establishing centres of traditional learning, the companions of the Holy Prophet had prepared the way for the third stage in the collection of traditions.

In the third stage the work of the collection of traditions was in the hands of the followers of the Holy Prophet's companions. The last of the companions had passed away before the end of the first century of Hegira, and those who had listened from them became



now the teachers and propagators of traditions. Traditions were now generally to be sought from the great centres of traditional learning that had been established, and the knowledge of tradition had become much more concentrated than in the second stage. There were very few solitary traditions that were to be sought from solitary individuals now, for much the greater number of traditions had been searched out and collected by the followers of the companions, and access could now be had to them at the different centres of learning. But all the traditions were not to be met with at any one centre, and hence those who desired an extension of knowledge repaired to more centres than one. Moreover, traditions had in this stage begun to be written though not in the form of books. Many students wrote the traditions which they heard, while a large number still trusted to memory. Caliph Omar II had issued orders about the end of the first century of Hegira that traditions should be put to writing and that the learned men should repeat them in assemblies, so that the course of the transmission of Tradition might not be stopped. The writing of tradition thus became common gradually, though, as I have said, these writings were not in the form of books.

The practice of writing, however, assumed a more permanent form by the middle of the second century of Hegira when books began to be written on traditions, and the fourth step was thus taken in the collection of traditions. Hitherto no tradition was accredited on the mere authority of a manuscript, and it was necessary that every one who reported a tradition should mention the names of the successive reporters from whom he had received the tradition. The authors of the books which now began to be written on the joint authority of manuscripts and oral testimony gave the names of reporters through whom a tradition came to their knowledge, but the book itself was a sufficient authority for all others. The first man who wrote a book on traditions was according to some Abdul Malik ibn-i-Abdul Aziz ibn-i-Juraij, more commonly known as Ibn-i-Juraij, and according to others Rabi' bin Subaih, while a third report gives the precedence to Sa'id, son of Abi 'Aruba, all of whom died about the middle of the second century of Hegira. It is, therefore, certain that works on Tradition carrying authority with them existed before the middle of the second century.



The next great author whose authority is recognised by the whole Muslim world to this day was Imam Malik, son of Anas, who wrote his well-known work, the Muatta, and based it on such of the reliable traditions as he met with among the people of Hejaz as well as the sayings of the companions and their followers. Ibn-i-Juraij wrote at Mecca, and Imam Malik at Medina. Simultaneously with these, other authors undertook the work of collecting traditions in book form at the other great centres of traditional learning. The following names are mentioned. Sufián bin Oyena wrote at Medina, Abdulla bin Wahab in Egypt, Mamar and Abdul Razzáq in Yeman, Sufián as-Sauri and Muhammad bin Fuzeil at Kufa, Hammád bin Salama and Rauh bin Ubáda at Basrah, Husheim at Wásit, and Abdulla bin Mubáarak in Khorasan. Besides these renowned authors there were many minor writers whose writings have not been preserved to us. It is stated that while Imam Malik was writing his Muatta at Medina, many other traditionists of less renown were writing books under the same name. When Imam Malik was told that many other men were imitating him and writing works similar to the one he had written, he replied that the world would soon see which of them had undertaken the work simply for God's sake. Of all these Muattas nothing is now known except that mention is made of the Muatta of Ibn-i-Abu Zeb. But the Muatta of Imam Malik occupies one of the highest places in the Muslim theological literature.

The writings mentioned above constitute what may be called the fourth stage in the collection of traditions, and the work of collection was now complete except that all these authors reduced to writing only such of the traditions as they found at their own centres of learning. Nor were these collections comprehensive but they contained traditions only on particular subjects and did not exhaust the vast sphere of the traditional lore. Even Imam Malik recorded in his Muatta only those traditions which he found to be current among the people of the Hejaz and out of these too only such traditions as related to practice in doctrinal points of the faith of Islam. In other words, the collection of tradition in this stage was purely of a local nature, and limited in its sphere, and another step was yet to be taken to make the collection of traditions complete in all respects. This work was undertaken and successfully completed by the collectors of the next generation who were led by the



renowned Bukharee. Imam Muhammad bin Ismail of Bukhara, commonly known as Bukharee after the place of his birth, was born about the time when Malik died. He began his work of the collection of traditions early in the beginning of the third century of Hejira and died about its middle, *i.e.*, in the year 256. He was followed by his pupil Muslim who in authority is only second to his master. Then came Abu Daood, Tirmazi and Nisai who though not possessing the same authority as Bukharee and Muslim are yet recognised to be reliable authorities on tradition. All these authors travelled from place to place in the search of traditions and devoted all their lives to the task of collection. In the works of Bukharee, therefore, and those who followed his footsteps, we have complete and exhaustive collections of traditions.

Thus we find that the work of the collection of traditions passed through five progressive stages. Looking more closely into the nature of Tradition, we find that this work could not have attained to completion without passing through these stages of gradual progress. In fact each of these stages only prepared the way for the next. First of all we have the time of the Holy Prophet in which though we find several men particularly anxious to collect traditions, yet from the nature of the case different traditions remained with different companions. When the Holy Prophet died, the traditions which any of the companions possessed were related by him to others, and thus there was an occasion for their collection. Those companions, on the other hand, who possessed greater numbers of traditions taught them to eager listeners and their residences became centres of traditional learning. In the time of the followers of the companions, the Tabi'in, the teaching of traditions became more extensive while the pupils now began generally to make memoranda of the traditions which they listened to from their masters. With the help of these memoranda, the next generation, the Taba' Tabi'in, prepared books on traditions which however lacked comprehensiveness because in them were collected only such traditions as were current at the particular centre of learning where the book was written. Moreover, these books did not undertake to record all kinds of traditions as their writers had particular objects in view. Hence the next generation improved upon these works, and comprehensive collections of reliable traditions were made early in the third century. The first work



known as a *Jami*', or comprehensive work, is that of Bukharee, which is at the same time the most important and the most reliable of all works on Tradition. Thus the work of the collection of traditions which began with the companions of the Holy Prophet was made complete by Bukharee after two hundred years, during which period it was progressing gradually.

It is this last stage in the collection of traditions which deserves special notice for it is on works written in this stage that our investigations can now be based. Sprenger, Muir and other hostile critics have questioned the reliability of these works on the ground that their methods of criticism were not sound. Muir states the views of Sprenger in the following words and gives his own assent to them: "The canons which guided him (Bukharee), however, hardly deserve the name of criticism. He looked simply to the completeness of the traditional chain, and the character of the witnesses composing it; and as one of his rules was to refuse every tradition at variance with his own ideas of orthodoxy, it by no means follows that any statement rejected by him is really untrustworthy. His collections, however, differ from the "Musnads" in not having respect to any school of theology, but solely to the character and supposed soundness of the traditions."\* Muir writes in the introduction to his Life of Mahomet to the same effect: "It is evident then that some species of criticism was practised by the compilers; and that, too, so unsparingly that out of every hundred traditions on an average ninety-nine were rejected. But the European reader will be grievously deceived if he at all regards such criticism, rigorous as it was, in the light of a sound and discriminating investigation into the credibility of the traditional elements. It was not the *subject-matter*, but simply the *names* responsible for it, which decided the credit of a tradition. Its authority must rest first on some companion of the Prophet, and then on the character of each individual in the long chain of witnesses through whom it was handed down. If these were unimpeachable, the tradition *must be received*. No inherent improbability, however glaring, could exclude a narration thus attested from its place in the authentic collections. The compilers would not venture upon the open sea of criticism, but steered slavishly by this single canon. They dared not inquire into internal evidence."

\*The Mohammadan Controversy and other Articles by Sir W. Muir, pp. 117, 118.



Such are the remarks of two of the most prominent Christian critics of Islam as to the credibility of the Muslim traditional lore, and I am sorry to say that there is much untruth in them. These gentlemen seem never to have taken the trouble to acquaint themselves with the canons according to which the traditionists distinguished true from fabricated traditions. It is true that they gave great importance to the reporters who were responsible for the propagation of a tradition, but it is quite erroneous to assert that they had no regard for the internal evidence. Here are some of the principles on which traditions were adjudged to be fabricated. I take them from a writing of Shah Abdul Aziz of Delhi whom Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan has also quoted. He enumerates the criteria by which the traditionists generally adjudged traditions to be fabricated. Among others the following criteria are given as leading to the inference that the tradition is forged:—

1. The first criterion is that the report contradicts established historical facts, as for instance the saying that Abdulla bin Mas'ud said in the battle of Siffin . . . . the fact being that the said Abdulla died during the caliphate of Othman. Such traditions can be found out on very slight reflection.

2. The second criterion is that the reporter is a Shia and he narrates a tradition blaming a companion, or when he is a Nasibi and he reports a tradition blaming the Ahl-i-Bait (the people of the Prophet's house) and so on. Then it must be seen that if the tradition is narrated by that reporter alone it must be rejected, but if it is narrated by other reporters also, it must be accepted.

3. A reporter narrates a tradition which ought to be known by and acted upon by the Muslims generally and the reporter is alone in narrating it. This circumstance affords a strong evidence of the falsity and fabrication of the tradition.

4. The time and circumstances under which a tradition is reported afford sometimes a clear testimony of its fabrication, as it happened in the case of Ghias bin Maimoon in the court of the Abbaside Caliph Mahdi. Ghias came to the Caliph while he was engaged in flying pigeons. He at once narrated a tradition saying that "that there shall be no stake, or wager, except in the case of the racing of camels, or of horses or mules or asses, or in the



case of the arrow-head or lance-head, *i.e.*, shooting or casting the lance, or in the case of wings, *i.e.* the flying of pigeons or other birds." The last words speaking of the legality of wager in the case of the flying of birds were added by Ghias to the actual words of a tradition, his object being to please the Caliph, Mahdi. When he was gone, the Caliph said that he knew that the words relating to birds were forged by Ghias. Then he ordered the pigeon to be slaughtered, and being asked the reason, replied that the pigeon was the cause of a tradition being fabricated and therefore he wished to keep it no more.

5. A tradition must be considered to be forged if it is contrary to reason or contradicts the known principles of the Law.

6. The conclusion of the fabrication of a tradition may also be drawn from the circumstance that it contains a story of something having occurred, which, if true, would have been reported by thousands of men.

7. The seventh criterion of a forged tradition is that the words used are incorrect such as no Arab would use, or the sense conveyed in the words is ignoble.

8. A tradition should also be considered to be fabricated if it gives the threatening of the severest punishment on the slightest fault or the promise of the highest blessings for small deeds of virtue.

9. The same is the case when the merit of a pilgrimage is promised for doing ordinary deeds of goodness.

Such were the canons by which traditions were judged to be fabricated. But Muir and Sprenger tell us that the great Muslim critics who sifted true from false traditions "dared not inquire into internal evidence," and that "the spirit of Islam would not brook free inquiry and real criticism." Supreme ignorance! The freedom with which the collectors inquired into the truth of traditions has no parallel elsewhere. Abul Bakhtari, as we have it in one account, was the Qazi of Medina in the time of the famous Caliph Rashid, and if the free spirit of inquiry was possibly hampered, it was in the court or by the court dignitaries. But when the traditionists came to know that the said Qazi had intentionally added a word to a tradition to please the monarch, they forthwith rejected every tradition



narrated by him for the simple reason that it was not safe to trust such a man. Is it not sufficient to show that the collectors of tradition, made free investigations? I will now show why the collectors laid so great stress upon the character and truthfulness of the reporters.

Internal evidence alone could not be sufficient to prove the authenticity of a tradition, for thousands of traditions could and were fabricated which could not be condemned as such upon internal evidence alone. We cannot give credit to all that is said simply because what is said is not contrary to reason. Hence when the collectors could not discover any trace of fabrication, they made the further inquiry whether the different reporters through whom the tradition had come to them were all trustworthy men. The circumstances under which traditions were brought down to that period necessitated this course, and without taking this step, they could never reach a safe conclusion. I have already shown in a previous article that in the time of the companions of the Holy Prophet, we do not meet with the slightest trace of fabrication. Muir and Sprenger are no doubt not satisfied with the later collectors as Bukharee and Muslim because they do not impugn the character of the companions, but the fact is that every generation from the Taba'in, the immediate followers of the companions, to the later collectors of traditions found the character of the companions quite unimpugnable in the matter of reporting traditions. The repeated injunctions of the Holy Prophet to his companions not to circulate any false report concerning him and the severe warning given to any one who should be guilty of such a heinous deed had made such a deep impression upon them that, as various reports show, they even refrained from reporting traditions in which they feared they might quite unintentionally make an error. The collection of traditions had begun at a very early date, and it is quite impossible that if the companions had been guilty of fabrication, the circumstance should have remained unnoticed. The companions never hid crimes, and if any one was guilty of any crime, however serious or slight it might be, he was punished. To none was immunity granted for the reason that he was a companion of the Holy Prophet. How could it then be that the most dangerous of all crimes, viz., fabrication, against which the Holy Prophet gave repeated injunctions and warning of the severest



punishment, should have not only gone unpunished, but should have even been countenanced by the most virtuous including the Caliphs themselves? It is a preposterously absurd assertion. Had the Holy Prophet left a dozen or two companions after him, as it happened in the case of Jesus, it was possible that they should have agreed upon a course of fabrication and taken oaths that none should disclose the secret and charge another with fabrication whatever false stories he might report. But the Holy Prophet had more than a hundred thousand companions who were spread in the whole of Arabia in his life-time, and under these circumstances it is absolutely impossible that not one of them should have mentioned that stories were being fabricated by some of them. There were differences among them on secondary doctrinal points as history shows, but not one of the companions ever charged another with having fabricated a tradition to prove his contention. Nay, factions had grown up among them as early as the year 35 A. H., but none of the contending factions ever charged its opponents with the fabrication of traditions. In short, there were religious as well as temporal differences among the companions, but still the charge of the fabrication of traditions was never preferred by one party against the other. Moreover, what is known as *jarh* (the invalidating of the testimony of a witness) and *ta'dil* (pronouncing the witness to be veracious and trustworthy) had its origin in the time of the Holy Prophet himself and rests on his authority. When a witness gave any testimony, his or her character could be called into question to invalidate it. The Holy Quran also said: "If any lead man come to you with news, clear it up at once" (xlix: 6). In the time of the immediate followers of the companions, critical inquiries into the character of the reporters became an established rule in the schools of traditional learning, and hence in this period we find Shibat-ibn-il-Hajjaj and following him Yahya bin Said (among the *taba'in*) collecting information relating to this branch of traditional knowledge. These inquiries did not leave the most sacred person out of their pale, but from the first to the last, not the character of a single companion has been called into question so far as the fabrication of traditions is concerned. There is clear testimony in this that every generation of the collectors of traditions, from the *taba'in* downwards, had satisfied itself as to the blamelessness of the companions of the Holy Prophet. Had it been proved



in a single instance at any stage in the collection of traditions that any one of the companions was guilty of fabricating a tradition, a searching inquiry into the character of every companion would have been necessary, and the collectors who had no respect for persons, but respected character only, would have unhesitatingly undertaken this task.

It, therefore, being an established fact that none of the companions of the Holy Prophet ever fabricated a tradition, every tradition which could be traced back to a companion, was rightly regarded as a trustworthy tradition. Hence the important duty of a collector at the end of the second century was to see that the chain of reporters through whom the tradition had come down to him were all veracious men, whose honesty in reporting the true words of the Holy Prophet could not be impugned in any way. The successive stages through which the collection of traditions had already passed afforded a great facility in this hard task. The reporters of the traditions of the Holy Prophet had acquired a certain fame, and their veracity was subjected to the severest criticism from the earliest times. Hence the first principle which the collectors followed was that if in the chain of the reporters of any tradition there was a man of whom nothing whatever was known, the tradition was not accepted. Many other similar rules were established by which the reliability of a reporter was tested. If it was proved that he had fabricated a single tradition, all his traditions were rejected. The same treatment was accorded to a reporter if it was found that many of his traditions were reported erroneously. His truthfulness and righteousness were minutely inquired into. It was also inquired whether the person from whom he reported was contemporaneous with him, and whether there was possibility of their meeting together in such a manner that the one should have heard the tradition from the other, the more careful among the collectors, as Bukharee, requiring further proof that the one had actually visited the other. It was also seen whether the reporter possessed a good memory or not. It was on these and similar other principles that the collectors adjudged a reporter to be reliable and his traditions to be trustworthy.

The material for carrying the principles mentioned above into practice was ample. In the earliest stages of the collection of tra-



ditions, the men who reported traditions were well-known. Regarding the traditionists who collected and taught traditions in the time of the companions and their immediate followers, full particulars as to their circumstances, veracity, &c., were well-known to the people of the places where they lived and taught. The teaching of traditions was at that time carried on in particular centres of traditional learning, in Hejaz, at Basrah, at Kufa, in Syria, and in Egypt, and the men who taught these were all well-known in their time. It is related by Hákím that there were thirty such traditionists at these different places. With the lapse of time, however, the number of traditionists immensely increased, and there were hundreds of them at each centre. Now these men made complete inquiries into all the circumstances relating to the reliability of traditions at each stage in the collection of traditions, and the knowledge which they gathered was transmitted along with the traditions to their pupils. Hence the traditions of the Holy Prophet were handed down by one generation to the succeeding one along with all the facts and circumstances which pointed to their trustworthiness, and this cumulative knowledge was brought down step by step to the collectors at the commencement of the third century of Hejira. This knowledge greatly facilitated the task of the collectors in judging the trustworthiness of traditions and applying the principles of sound criticism to the different reporters and reports.

Another objection sometimes advanced against the trustworthiness of the traditions contained in the collections of Bukharee and others is that the later collectors made no use of earlier written material or that their collections do not distinctly mention the traditions which were taken from earlier written sources. I have answered the latter objection in my last article on Tradition. As regards the former, it should be borne in mind that the collectors made use of all the earlier sources to which access was possible. In fact, the collection of traditions at each successive stage was based on what had been done at an earlier stage. The schools of tradition were established to teach the traditions that were narrated by the companions; the memoranda of traditions were made at these schools and contained in a written form what the earlier authorities taught orally; the first writings on Tradition were made from these memoranda and from what was taught at these schools; and lastly, the exhaustive collec-



tions of Bukharee and those who followed him were drawn from all these sources. Oral testimony corroborated the written testimony, and cumulative evidence thus established the truth of the traditions. The important business before the collectors was to sift traditions which could be traced to earlier sources from those which had gained currency after the time of the companions, in other words, real traditions of the Holy Prophet from fabricated ones. A memorandum alone, therefore, could not serve their purpose unless the tradition could be traced through all the stages back to a companion of the Holy Prophet. Moreover, the memoranda made at the different stages were not all preserved or handed down to successive generations while the chain of oral testimony was not broken. And even Sprenger admits that "without an oral attestation at each step in the tradition, there would have been absolutely no guarantee whatever against forgery and interpolation." Hence the collectors adopted the only right course which any sound critic would have adopted under these circumstances. They considered written testimony, but they did not base their inquiries on it, because it neither afforded a safe course nor could it be traced back to the companions, while oral testimony answered both these purposes.

Another objection against the collectors which Muir urges is that every one of them followed a different method and had no reliance in what had been done by another. So far as I understand, the pursuance of independent methods by each collector is a circumstance which lends additional strength to the credibility of traditions as contained in their collections. For, the fact is that the common element in these collections far outweighs the slight differences among them. Notwithstanding that each collector worked independently of the others, they all agree in the main, and this fact alone is sufficient to establish the credibility of Tradition. At least this much shall have to be admitted that the traditions which are common to the important collections prepared by different men, working independently of each other in different countries at different times are the authentic traditions of the Holy Prophet. Books which were prepared in the middle of the second century and books which were prepared in the middle of the third century only confirm the reliability of each other, and there is not much difference in them except as to the circumstance that the scope of the former was very limited



while the scope of the latter is much wider. But in the principal points which are discussed in both classes of works, there is an agreement among them in the main.

As regards the differences, most of them are not worth any serious consideration at all. It was necessary that there should have been such differences. Malik, for instance, embodied in his *Muatta*, not only the traditions of the Holy Prophet, but also sayings and judgments of the companions and their immediate followers. He moreover worked at Medina and accordingly those traditions only are met with in his work which prevailed in the land of Hejaz. The author was himself conscious of this, and he did not consider that no reliable tradition was omitted in his work. When Harun-al-Rashid consulted him if he should suspend the *Muatta* in the Ka'ba and order people to act in accordance with the same, Malik told him not to do so, for, he said, "the companions of the Holy Prophet differed in secondary and minor points of Law and they spread in different countries," thus indicating that there might be differences in secondary points based on equally reliable traditions. The fact was that the Holy Prophet himself allowed latitude in derivative institutes of the Law, and hence many of the differences which the hostile critics are making too much of. On another occasion when Mansur, another Abbaside Caliph, came to perform a pilgrimage, he told Malik that he had resolved to send copies of his *Muatta* to all the different provinces, so that there might be a uniformity in practice in the whole of the empire. But Malik told the caliph that such a course was not desirable and urged the same reason as above.

Differences also resulted from the pursuance of different methods. In the *Muatta* of Imam Malik there are only about three hundred traditions. Bukharee has over 2,500, while Muslim and Abu Daood have each nearly 4,000. Now Malik as already remarked collected only the traditions met with among the people of Hejaz and therefore the traditions met with in other centres of traditional learning had no place in his book. Moreover, his work was not a comprehensive one, and he collected only those traditions which related to practice. The later collections were far more comprehensive and they travelled from place to place and collected all kinds of reliable traditions whether relating to practice or to other subjects such as the circumstances of the Holy Prophet's life and his wars, comments



on the Holy Quran and so on. Of all these latter collectors, Bukharee was the strictest in the acceptance of any tradition as reliable. Both Bukharee and his pupil Muslim followed the rule that no tradition was to be accepted as reliable unless every reporter in the chain of its reporters was unanimously considered to be a reliable person and the report was traced back to some well-known companion. It was also necessary according to them that there should be no break in the chain of reporters. But while Bukharee considered it necessary that there should be proof that a reporter had actually met the person from whom he reported, his *shaikh* (master) in the language of the traditionists, Muslim considered only the proof of the contemporaneity of the two to be sufficient. Hence the task of Bukharee was harder to perform, and the test being surer, his collection is the most reliable of all the collections of traditions. Muslim comes next to him and the traditions upon which both agree are considered to be the highest in authority. Abu Daood, Tirmazi and Nisai also occupy an eminent place in the collection of traditions, but they had some, what relaxed the strict rules of Bukharee and Muslim. For instance Nisai accepted a reporter whose authority was questioned by some and accepted by others. Abou Daood has admitted weaker traditions, though only on those points on which more reliable traditions could not be found. Thus these two kinds of differences, *viz.*, differences which arose from the fact that Islam allowed a certain degree of latitude in secondary points and those which were the result of the pursuance of different methods by different collectors, in fact count for nothing. The slight differences that might still remain after making allowance for these two causes are of no account whatever when compared with the remarkable agreement met with in the collections of traditions. In the above discussion, I have given no weight to the Shiah collections because those are largely occupied with exaggerations in the praise of Ali which are on their very face seen to be fabrications. They have moreover followed no canons of criticism at all, and the only rule with which they judged the credibility of traditions was to accept every tradition exalting Ali.

Another objection advanced against the credibility of traditions by the missionary critics is that the collections were made under particular influences. The influences are said to be of two kinds, the



influence of the reigning monarchs and the influence of the collector's own ideas which he had already formed. These are both false charges against the renowned collectors whose collections are looked upon with respect by the Muslims. I do not deny that traditions were fabricated sometimes under the influence of a monarch, but that collectors like Bukharee and Muslim had such respect for ruling authorities that they would omit trustworthy traditions when against the interests of a monarch or include in their collections weak traditions when serving their interest, I consider to be a veritable lie. The collectors never cared in the least for the ruling monarchs. When Imam Bukharee was asked by the governor of Bukhara to come to his palace daily for teaching traditions to his sons, he refused to go. He did not even assent to the proposal that the sons of the governor should go to him, but not be taught with ordinary people. Bukharee said that it was a disgrace to learning and that if the governor liked he might send his sons to learn traditions along with the humbler people. And though he was turned out of Bukhara for not yielding to the governor, he preferred exile to what he considered to be a disgrace to learning. Moreover, none of the collectors sought honor at the court of a monarch. And when they came to know that any court Qazi had fabricated a tradition to please the monarch, they discredited all his traditions.

As regards the influence of thoughts, the charge is equally baseless. Sprenger says that Bukharee rejected every tradition which was against his own ideas of orthodoxy though in the very next sentence he hastens to inform us that Bukharee is distinguished from the other collectors inasmuch as he did not follow any particular school of theology. Nothing can be farther from truth. The more important collectors of traditions such as Bukharee, Muslim, Abou Daoud, &c., did not set out in search of traditions with particular prejudices in their heart. They framed certain rules of criticism to guide them in their search for reliable traditions of the Holy Prophet, and judged every tradition by these rules. Their own ideas carried no weight with them. They rejected hundreds of traditions treating of the meritoriousness of reciting the various *Suras* of the Holy Quran as fabrications when they found them to be such by the canons guiding them although they believed that the reciting of the Holy Quran was a deed of great meritoriousness. Similarly thousands of



other traditions were rejected by them which were in accordance with their beliefs and cherished ideas. Again, they accepted traditions which their own ideas would not favour, because they found them to be reliable by the application of their canons of criticism. For instance, one of their guiding rules was that when a Shia narrator reported a tradition in which some aspersion was cast upon a companion of the Holy Prophet and the tradition was supported by others, it was to be accepted. Who could be dearer to them than the companions of the Holy Prophet, yet a tradition found to be credible by the rules of criticism was not to be rejected because it contained a derogatory assertion concerning a companion. What other idea of orthodoxy there was which influenced the collectors in rejecting traditions otherwise credible or in accepting traditions otherwise condemnable, we have yet to learn from some worthy missionary critic, for our historical knowledge of the collectors traditions leads us only to the conclusion that their collections were not made under any influence.

While condemning the courses of criticism by which the collectors were guided, Muir admits that they were so severe that nearly ninety-nine out of every hundred traditions were rejected as untrustworthy. If then only one per cent. of the traditions was retained by rules of criticism which "hardly deserve the name of criticism," what would have been the result of the supposed sound rules of criticism except that all the traditions should have been rejected. And one may ask if the European critic who finds the Oriental rules of criticism so worthless can dare to apply those rules to the Gospel stories, many of which are sure to find their proper place in the domain of fiction even if judged by the uncritical oriental. But we are assured by Muir himself that "Tradition in the second century embraced a large element of truth." Not even Muir would have ventured to assert that the large element of truth in Tradition was not contained in the collections made by the Muhaddisin but in the traditions rejected by them. It should not be supposed that I hold the collections to be absolutely free from every error or any tradition rejected by any of the collectors to be absolutely unreliable, but it is a fact that the main body of reliable traditions is met with in them and the errors, if any, are only exceptional. The mere



possibility of error in a work does not discredit that work. On the other hand, there must be strong proof that it is actually an error. In like manner a tradition not met with in any of the critical and reliable works can not be accepted as true unless its truth is otherwise established. The works have been written on purely historical principles and we can say of them what we can say of any reliable historical work. The canons which guided the collectors were, as we have seen, the only sound rules of criticism by which the trustworthiness of the traditions of the Holy Prophet could be judged. The canons of criticism which Muir suggests, on the other hand, are rules, which if applied to any history, religious history in particular, will make it a fiction.

Among the collections which completed the work of collection Bukharee's work was not only the first in order of time, but it was also the best in quality and remains to this day the most authoritative of all works on Tradition. Its precedence not only in time, but also in merit, was recognised even by the contemporaries of Bukharee and this was due to the greater caution which he displayed in accepting traditions. The rules of criticism which were generally applied by the collectors in sifting true from false and reliable from unreliable traditions have already been briefly mentioned, but it seems necessary to state the points to which the superiority of Bukharee over all other collectors is due. The ordinary requirements of a reporter were, as already stated, that he should be truthful, that he should not confuse traditions or deceive his hearers in giving the names of the reporters, that he should have a good memory and a sound judgment, that he should be exact, faithful, honest and prudent. But even from among these Bukharee accepted only the more well-known reporters. For instance, those who learned traditions from Zohri may be broadly divided into five classes. Of these Bukharee accepted the traditions reported from Zohri only by the first class which is the highest in authority while Muslim accepts also from second. Now both these classes of reporters are trustworthy so far as the ordinary qualifications of a reporter were concerned, but the first class had the advantage of being longest with Zohri and keeping his company both at his abode and in his journeys, and it had thus won a claim to higher reliability. In exceptional cases Bukharee accepts the traditions of the second class and Muslim those of the



third, but they do not descend to the fourth and fifth classes, Bukharee's choice being always the best. Another peculiarity of Bukharee, as already noted, is that he is not satisfied with a reporter unless there is proof that he paid a visit to the person from whom he reports, and thus the danger of any false tradition finding its way into his collection is reduced to a minimum.

Bukharee was only ten years old when he began to commit traditions to memory and within a year he had so mastered the traditions taught at Bukhara that on one occasion he corrected an error of a famous traditionist there and surprised the people by his wonderful ability and learning. Before he reached the age of sixteen, he had mastered the books of Ibn-ul-Mubarik, Waki' and others. He then went to Mecca and at eighteen he wrote a book on the Judgments of the Companions of the Holy Prophet and their immediate followers. Immediately afterwards he wrote the *Tarikh* (historical work) while at Medina. He went to Egypt, Syria and the Jazira twice and to Basrah four times, stayed in Hedjaz for six years, while he resorted to Kufa and Baghdad so frequently that he himself is reported to have said that he did not know how many times he did it. Another traditionist Hashid relates the following anecdote: "Bukharee while a boy used to go with us to several masters of traditional learning at Busrah, but he did not put to writing the traditions that were related there. We witnessed this for several days, and after sixteen days remonstrated with him on his apparent neglect of traditions. Upon this he asked us to bring to him our manuscripts. On our doing so he reproduced from memory fifteen thousand traditions." Another traditionist tells us that people used to write traditions reported by Bukharee while he was a young man as yet beardless. He was so reputed for his marvellous knowledge of Tradition that his contemporaries used to say that a tradition not known to Muhammad bin Ismail (Bukharee) could not be a tradition.

Bukharee was not reputed only for his wonderful knowledge of traditions, but he was equally well-versed in all branches of traditional learning. He himself is reported to have said that he did not report a tradition from any companion or *tabi'i* but he knew when he was born, when he died and where he lived. Tirmazi, one of the reputed collectors, said that he did not know a man who was better



acquainted with the authorities on which traditions rested and with the defects in them. When Bukharee came to Baghdad, the traditionists there having heard of his fame decided to examine him in his knowledge of traditions. For this purpose they selected a hundred traditions and confused the chains of narrators, ascribing a tradition reported through one chain of narrators to a different chain, and so on. The traditions thus purposely confused were then distributed among ten men, each having ten of them. These men were told to relate these traditions to Bukharee when he made his public appearance. A meeting was then arranged, and when Bukharee sat down in the meeting, one of the ten men stood up and related all his traditions one by one, Bukharee adding after each of these traditions that he did not know any such tradition. When the first had finished, a second stood up and narrated all his traditions with the same reply from Bukharee. When all the ten had finished, Bukharee stood up, and taking up the traditions one by one in the order in which they had been related to him restored the chain of authorities of each tradition to its proper order and the proper words to the proper authorities. At this all the men were struck with wonder and admiration. A similar incident is said to have occurred at the time of his entry into Samarqand where there were at that time four hundred traditionists. Like their brethren at Baghdad they desired to test the memory of Bukharee of which they had heard so much; and for this purpose confused the authorities of one centre of traditional learning with those of another. When these traditions were related to Bukharee, he at once restored the authorities to their proper order without feeling any difficulty.

In Bukharee we have not only a man of great learning and a wonderfully retentive memory, but also a most scrupulous and strict critic. He tells us that he rejected ten thousand traditions reported by a traditionist whose veracity he doubted. And although Christian critics are not satisfied with his canons of criticism, yet if a man like Bukharee had ever sprung up in the Christian religion, the statements of a man like Paul\* would never have found a place in the Christian Scriptures. Had there been a single critic among the

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\*Paul did not consider lying to be a sin so long as the object was the advancement of the Christian religion. He says in Rom. iii : 7 : "For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie, unto his glory, why am I also yet judged as a sinner?"



Christian Fathers who, if not as critical, should have been at least as conscientious as the collectors of traditions, we could have had more access to the real religion of Christ than is possible under the present circumstances. Where we have men like Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, proclaiming their principles in such words as "*I have related whatever might be redounded to the glory and I have suppressed all that could tend to the disgrace of our religion,*" we may be sure that we have more of falsehood there than truth. Among the Muslims there no doubt sprang up men who fabricated traditions, but their fabrications were soon exposed by learned men. The principle of telling lies for the glory of God which Paul and the early Christian fathers openly taught, and which guided the Christian Church for a long time was condemned by the Holy Prophet, and the person who was known by the Muslims to have forged even a single tradition was discredited for ever whatever his worldly position might be. With Fathers and Apostles advocating falsehood for spreading their religion, it is rather preposterous on the part of the Christian Missionary critics to question the reliability of collections of traditions prepared by the most conscientious, scrupulous and critical men.

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## The Sword as Wielded by Islam and Christianity: A COMPARISON.

• Comparisons are generally odious, but my justification for the comparison referred to in the heading of this article lies in the fact that Islam and its Holy Prophet are repeatedly subjected to unjustifiable attacks by the Christian Missionaries while Christianity with the blackest deeds on its record is extolled to the skies. Christian writers are never tired of calling Islam the religion of the sword and Christianity the religion of peace, and all arguments showing the falsity of these two assertions fall only upon deaf ears. In a recent article published in the *Epiphany*, a missionary paper of free circulation, a Muslim writer showed that the Holy Quran nowhere enjoined or permitted the propagation of Islam by the sword and that Christi



anity at any rate had shed much more blood than Islam, but in the editorial comment upon that article there is a repetition of the same worn out objections that have been refuted hundreds of times by the Muslim writers. The paper moreover asserts that "Christians have *sometimes* been guilty of persecution, but they have no shadow of justification for it in the teaching of their master." The writer thinks it to be an easy way of escaping from the difficulty but it is not so easy as the writer might have thought.

Jesus, it must be clearly understood, came in fulfilment of the expectations of the Jews who considered the advent of the Messiah to be a sign of their supremacy and the subjugation to them of all the nations of the earth. They entertained the belief that the Messiah would lead them to conquer and subjugate the whole world. When Jesus first advanced his claim to Messiahship, he himself seems to have entertained similar thoughts. The throne of David was for a time aspired after and these hopes were only dispelled by the concluding events of the drama of his life in Palestine. Christianity had not the power to wield the sword in the days of its founder, and when it attained such power, it most unscrupulously used it for its advancement. Had Jesus the power to call a force into the field sufficient to overthrow the Roman empire or had he even a few thousands of brave disciples ready to sacrifice their lives at his word and had he then refrained from making use of that power, there would have been reason to believe that his disciples who shed human blood quite unjustifiably in a later age when Christianity could command that power were not actuated to do so by the spirit of their master. But in spite of his apparent helplessness, Jesus did not despise the sword altogether. "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one," he remarked on one occasion, and the later history of Christianity shows clearly that however wide may have been the departure of the Christian nations from the other teachings of Jesus, they have been quite faithful to their master in acting up to the above injunction. There was none among them who being smitten on one cheek should have turned the other, or being compelled to go one mile should have gone two, or being sued for the coat should have given also the cloak, but there were hundreds of thousands of Christians who provided themselves with swords and used them for the advancement of Christianity. Jesus himself who



had such an ardent desire that his soldiers should be provided with swords, though they might have even to sell their garments, had not the good fortune to see it done in his life-time, and accordingly he had not the occasion to direct them personally how to use the sword. But we can say with certainty what use he would have made of it if he had had the means to do so. I know that pious Christians do not like to hear any name applied to their master other than the Prince of Peace, though Jesus preferred to be called the Wielder of the Sword when he said, "I came not to send peace, but a sword," but in the interests of justice and for the sake of comparison, I must refer to facts. Jesus was brought up in the Jewish Law and he was well-versed in what were accepted in his time to be the inspired writings of Moses and the prophets. In religion, therefore, he was a Jew to the core of his heart. His faith in the Jewish Law was so strong that he thought it easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one jot or tittle of the law to be abolished. He plainly taught that "whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven," (Mat. 5: 19). Therefore we can say with certainty that if Jesus had been able to wield the sword, he would have wielded it in the manner ordained by the Jewish Law, which says that "when the Lord thy God shall deliver them (the enemy) before thee, thou shalt smite them and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them." A few chapters further on the commandment is given concerning an idolatrous city that "thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword. And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it in the midst thereof, and shall burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof, every whit for the Lord thy God: and it shall be an heap for ever; it shall not be built again," (Deut. 13: 12-18). And again in Deut. 20: 16-17: "But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth, but thou shalt utterly destroy them."

Such would have been the course which Jesus would have adopted, and if the Christian reader is offended with this conclusion, he should



peruse the history of the blood shed by Christianity. The Christian apologists tell us that Jesus cannot be held to be responsible for the indescribable crimes of bloodshed committed by his followers, but the master himself tells us that the tree is known by its fruit. Only on one occasion in his whole life Jesus thought that the circumstances were favorable for the recognition of his claims to be the king of the Jews, and on that occasion the meekness of the Sermon on the Mount was changed for the violence ordained in the Jewish Law. This occurred at the time of his entry into Jerusalem. He rode upon an ass to fulfill the words of a prophecy as Matthew tells us: "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold *thy King* cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass," (Matt. 21: 4, 5). The perusal of the narrative as recorded in the Gospels shows that Jesus was in momentary expectation of becoming a king. The masses certainly were under the impression that he was the promised king who should deliver the Jews from their bondage and his disciples also connected this circumstance with an earlier prophecy in which the Messiah is spoken of as the King of the Jews. "A very great multitude," we are told, "spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way, and cries of "Hosannah to the son of David" were resounded in the streets of Jerusalem as he passed through them. On this occasion seeing that the multitudes sided with him, Jesus went into the temple where in a few minutes a strange scene was witnessed. He "cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves," (Matt. 21: 12). Of course he was incited to this violence by the impiety of those who had converted "the house of prayer" into "a den of thieves," but the question is what deeds of violence he would not have done on similar occasions if he had the means to wield the sword. It is not to be supposed that the Israelite prophets who slaughtered thousands of human beings did it unnecessarily. They had recourse to this violence because they could not uproot the evil of idolatry in any other way. Their motives were undoubtedly good as were also the motives of Jesus in turning the tables of the money-changers and driving them out of the temple by force. There is clear evidence in



this circumstance that Jesus himself would have used the sword much in the same way as his followers used it, had he possessed the means to do it.

The *Epiphany* has made an attempt to explain away Jesus' injunction to his disciples to buy swords, and it is the quaintness of this explanation that tempts me to mention it here. We are told that the swords which Jesus wanted his disciples to provide themselves with were the spiritual swords. In the words of the writer "where Christ speaks of a sword, he is speaking, not of a literal sword, but of the 'sword of the spirit.' He means that Christians are always and everywhere to carry on a warfare, both aggressive and defensive on behalf of truth and righteousness." We need not dispute this interpretation, but would humbly ask the learned exegete if the other words used in connection with the sword are also not to be taken literally. Jesus said: "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one," (Luke 22:36). Remember the sword is to be bought by selling the garment, and the close relation shows that both the sword and the garment belong to the same sphere. Now without contending that the sword here means the spiritual sword as the *Epiphany* asserts, I may venture to ask what the garment means. If the sword is taken to signify the spiritual sword, the garment must be taken to mean the spiritual garment. Jesus' advice to his disciples, therefore, was that they should sell their spiritual garments and buy the spiritual sword "to carry on a warfare, both aggressive and defensive." But spiritually naked men are men devoid of true righteousness. Accordingly the injunction would mean that the Christians should depart from the ways of righteousness and defend their own innovations and attack other religions in whatever way they can. This interpretation does not render the injunction more edifying than if the sword was taken literally. Moreover it is difficult to understand why the Christians could not get the spiritual sword without selling the spiritual garments, and how the transaction was to be effected or how it was actually effected, are also points which must be cleared by the writer in the *Epiphany*. And he would also kindly explain whether the two swords which the disciples showed to Jesus immediately on receiving the injunction to buy swords were spiritual swords or literal ones, bearing in mind at the same time that on seeing these swords, Jesus expressed his



satisfaction, as Luke tells us: "And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords, and he said unto them. It is enough," (Luke xxii : 38).

The Muslims, however, do not blame Jesus for having preached that swords should be bought by selling garments because in this he was only following the Israelite Law. He was one of the Israelite prophets and he cannot be blamed for giving an injunction in accordance with the Law which had been promulgated by Moses. It would be urged that Jesus preached love even to enemies and that, therefore, he was not following the Israelite prophets who preached hatred and vengeance, but the fact is that even Jesus' teaching of love towards enemies is taken from the earlier prophets. Solomon taught that "if thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink" (Pro. xxv : 21); and David prayed to the Lord, saying: "If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy)" (Ps. vii : 4). Similarly, the teachings of earlier prophets are not devoid of the precepts of forgiveness and forbearance and Jesus only proclaimed the same teachings in a new garb. It is, therefore, an error to consider that the earlier Israelite prophets who fought against the idolaters did not inculcate love, kindness, mercy and forgiveness or that Jesus had no inclination to use the sword if a favorable opportunity had offered itself. Jesus Christ was a true Israelite, and accordingly while he promulgated the Israelite doctrines of love and forbearance, he was not averse to the Israelite methods of war, but on account of his rejection by the Jews he had not the means to employ those methods, though to show his adherence to that doctrine he gave it as his dying word to his followers that they should provide themselves with swords even though they might have to sell their garments. In support of this last assertion, I may state that the injunction to buy swords was given by Jesus just at the moment when he was expecting arrest and probably he thought that his faithful disciples would save him at the last moment by using their swords in his defence. A few hours afterwards Jesus was put under arrest but his hopes were not realized, for his disciples had not the courage to stand by him at this critical moment in his life and they all fled.



There is a strange episode mentioned in the Gospels in this connection. When the disciples were commanded to provide themselves with swords, they told the master that they already possessed two swords, and Jesus considered them to be sufficient, though we are not told for what purpose. It was with one of these swords that Peter soon afterwards cut off the ear of one of the multitude which had come to arrest him. This was the only use to which one of the two swords was put. Probably some more blood would have been shed had not Jesus, on perceiving a great number of men "with swords and staves" and seeing his party in danger in case a struggle ensued, pacified the mob by ordering Peter to sheathe his sword. It is probable that Jesus was at first under the impression that taking him for an ordinary preacher, the authorities would send one or two men for his arrest, and accordingly he had prepared himself to meet the situation. Hence he expressed his wonder when he saw so many well-armed men who could easily overcome any resistance that his disciples could make, and exclaimed: "Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?" (Luk. xxii : 52). Of course it was quite advisable on the part of Jesus to give up his determination at the last moment, but the difficulty is that as a prophet his word regarding the sufficiency of two swords did not prove true. How is this difficulty to be solved? I hope some of our Christian friends would try to solve it. I may however mention here that history presents another instance of a great victory having been won with two swords. It was the victory won at the field of Badr by the Holy Prophet with 313 companions only who are said to have possessed only two swords. The enemy numbered over a thousand strong and they had among them Arab warriors of great renown. The Muslim society was in danger of utter destruction, for among the 313 the majority had never seen the field of battle before. But since it was a question of life and death for the Muslim society, therefore they had come into the field to defend themselves and their Holy Prophet trusting in God only for their victory. But though two swords did not prove sufficient for Jesus and his apostles, they wrought wonderful deeds in the case of our Holy Prophet and his companions. Was Jesus prophetically thinking of the two swords of one greater than himself when he said: "It is enough"? Or did it happen that he had a vision in which he saw two swords gaining a complete victory with the



assistance of God ? for the prophets of God are sometimes made to witness events which happen hundreds of years afterwards. Before giving a definite answer to these questions, I wish to see what the Christians have to say as to Jesus' remark that two swords were sufficient.

Let us now consider under what circumstances and for what purpose Islam had to take up the sword. It is a beaten subject and instead of dwelling upon it at any length, I would refer simply to two verses of the Holy Quran which is admittedly the most trustworthy history. "Permission (to fight against the unbelievers) is given to those against whom the sword has been taken up, for verily they have suffered outrages, and God is certainly able to succour them: Those who have been driven forth from their homes wrongfully, only because they say, 'Our Lord is God'. And if God had not repelled some men by others, cloisters and churches and oratories and mosques wherein the name of God is ever commemorated, would surely have been destroyed !" (xxii : 40, 41). And again in a *Sura* of about the same period the Holy Book says: "And fight in the way of God against those only who have taken up the sword against you : and do not go beyond this limit . . . . . But if they desist, then verily God is Gracious, Merciful . . . . . but if they desist, then let there be no hostility save against the wrong-doers" (ii : 186, 188, 189). These two quotations are, I think, sufficient to show under what circumstances and with what object the Muslims were compelled to take up the sword. Their opponents had persecuted them most cruelly so long as they remained at Mecca and had at last driven them from their homes. But the Muslims were not secure even in the place where they had now sought shelter, for the unbelievers pursued them with the sword to deal a destructive blow to the small Muslim society. Thus it was at the most critical moment in the life of Islam that permission was given to the Muslims to fight against those who had taken up the sword against them, but they were clearly told not to attack them first.

It would appear from the above that Islam did not take up the sword to compel the unbelievers to accept its principles but to defend itself. It fought not for its propagation but for its existence. In fact, the Muslims were as a mere drop in the ocean among the unbelievers and idolaters. Numerous other verses of the Holy Quran bear testimony to the fact that Islam was opposed to compulsion in



religion. It is in a chapter revealed at Medina, in a chapter in which permission is given to fight against the unbelievers as already quoted, that the golden principle is mentioned which both Judaism and Christianity failed to give. *La ikráha fid-dín* says the Holy Quran which literally means that "there is to be no compulsion in faith" (ii : 257). With such a principle preached in clear words and that too at the very place where Islam had gained power, it is absurd to say that it took up the sword for its propagation. In another chapter also revealed at Medina and which undoubtedly belongs to the latest period of the Holy Prophet's life, we find the following verses: "God does not forbid you to deal with kindness and fairness towards those who have not made war upon you on account of your religion, or driven you forth from your homes: verily God loves those who act with fairness. Only doth God forbid you to make friends of those who, on account of your religion, have warred against you, and have driven you forth from your homes, and have aided your expulsion: and whoever makes friends of them, these, therefore, are evil-doers" (lx : 8, 9). These verses show clearly that the Muslims were not fighting with the Arabs to force their religion upon them but the contrary was the case. The unbelievers were fighting against the Muslims to compel them to forsake their religion and the Muslims were only compelled to fight for their lives and liberty.

This proof is convincing for anyone who seeks to know Islam with a mind free from prejudice. But the Christian missionary's zeal for the advancement of the religion of Christ does not allow him to see things aright, and accordingly we find the writer in the *Epiphany* rejecting all this evidence, because he thinks that the passages containing these injunctions were abrogated by the ninth chapter. "Whatever Muhammad may have said at other times, this last *Sura* must be taken as the final expression of his mind." Before answering this, however, I beg the reverend gentleman's permission to apply his logic to the sayings of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospels. In the early days of his ministry Jesus laid great stress upon forbearance, and the Sermon on the Mount which marks the beginning of his career as a prophet carries the policy of nonresistance to an extreme and recommends the turning of the left cheek on receiving a slap on the right, and the giving away of the cloak also when the coat is claimed and going two miles when compelled to go



one mile. As disciples gather round him, a departure is made from this policy until at the last moment, immediately before his arrest and crucifixion, we find him directing his disciples to provide themselves with swords though they might have to sell their garments. According to the logic of the *Epiphany*, we can, therefore, say that all the teachings relating to forbearance and non-resistance were abrogated by the injunction to buy swords, and we can be sure to be right if we say that "Whatever Jesus may have said at other times, this last injunction must be taken as the final expression of his mind." Probably the later Christians who unscrupulously used the sword for the advancement of Christianity thus construed the teachings of Jesus as contained in the Gospels.

Coming back to the objection itself, however, we find that there is not the least truth in it. There is no principle which the Holy Quran has contradicted after establishing it once. Now the principle of religious freedom was promulgated throughout the Holy Quran and compulsion in religion Islam hated not only in the days of its weakness at Mecca, but also in the days of its power at Medina. Therefore, having established this principle once it could not have contradicted it afterwards, for it says: "Can they not then consider the Quran? Were it from any other than God, they would assuredly have found in it many contradictions" (iv: 84). Thus the Holy Quran claims to be free from contradictions which it could not if it promulgated contradictory principles.

In the ninth chapter of the Holy Quran there is nothing which contradicts any earlier injunction. In order to understand this clearly the meaning of some words must be explained. The first of these is the root *jahd*, various derivatives of which are used in the Holy Quran. *Jahada* is explained in Lane's *Lexicon* as meaning "he strove, laboured, or toiled; exerted himself or his power, or efforts, or endeavours or ability; employed himself vigorously, strenuously, laboriously, diligently, studiously, sedulously, earnestly, or with energy; was diligent, or studious; took pains or extraordinary pains," and its well known derivative *Jihad* about which the greatest misunderstanding exists is explained in the same work as meaning "the using, or exerting, one's utmost power, efforts, endeavours, or ability, in contending with an object of disapprobation." Nor does the word when used in the Holy Quran, always mean fighting. It



occurs four times in the twenty-ninth *Sura* which was revealed at Mecca and nowhere does it mean fighting. It also occurs in 31 : 14, a Meccan *Sura*. In th *Sura Furqan*, also revealed at Mecca in the early days of Islam, the Holy Prophet is commanded to carry on the most powerful *Jehad* against the unbelievers where it means nothing but striving to the utmost to uproot erroneous doctrines. The words *fi sabil illāh* are also misunderstood. Literally they mean "in the way of God," but they are misconstrued by the *Epiphany* as meaning "for the advancement of God's religion," i.e., the propagation of Islam. It is by this misrepresentation that the Christian writer in the *Epiphany* tries to prove that in the ninth chapter "the principle of persecution for the sake of religion is established, not in a special case, but for all time." These words, *fi sabīl illāh*, do not occur in the ninth chapter only, but they occur in previous *Suras* as well. They occur in passages in which the Muslims are plainly enjoined to fight only against those who took up the sword against them. In ii : 186, already quoted, we have *wa qātilū fi sabīl-illāh-illazīna yugātilūna kum wa lā ta'tadū*, i.e., "And fight in the way of God against those who have taken up the sword against you and do not go beyond this limit." Thus the same words which occur in the ninth chapter also occur in the chapters revealed earlier and passages in which the Muslims are plainly told not to fight against the unbelievers generally, but against those unbelievers only who took up swords to destroy the Muslims. Hence the conclusion that the ninth chapter enjoins the Muslims to persecute other people for the sake of their religion is erroneous because it is based on a wrong translation of the words *fi sabīl-illāh*. Nor does this phrase occur only in connection with fighting for the Holy Quran speaks of spending one's substance in the way of God (*fi sabīl-illāh*) when it means the giving of it away to the poor, as the following verses show :

مِثْلَ الَّذِيْنَ يَنْفَقُوْنَ اَمْوَالَهُمْ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ كَمِثْلِ حَبَّةٍ .....  
 ..... الَّذِيْنَ يَنْفَقُوْنَ اَمْوَالَهُمْ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ لَا يَتَّبِعُوْنَ  
 مَا اَنْفَقَوْا مِنْهَا وَلَا اِذْ يَلْمُوْنَ اَجْرَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ  
 Those who spend their wealth in the way of God . . . . .  
 Those who spend their wealth in the way of God, and do not afterwards follow what they expend with reproaches or injury, shall have their reward with their Lord," (ii : 263, 264). Hence it is clear that *fi sabīl-illāh* does nowhere mean "for the propagation or advance-



ment of God's religion," and this interpretation has been put upon these simple words to misrepresent the Islamic teaching. This phrase, as I have said above, literally means 'in the way of God,' and the only significance it carries is that a deed should be done for the sake of God and not for any personal motive or interest. Hence it is that the Holy Quran says that deeds of charity should be done only in the way of God and not with the motive of laying an obligation upon a man or showing to others such deeds of charity. And when the Muslims are spoken of as fighting in the way of God, all that is meant is that they are fighting for the sake of God, because the unbelievers fought against them to destroy God's religion, *i.e.*, Islam, and it was to defend that religion that the Muslims fought. Therefore, it is clear that neither the use of the word *Jihad* nor that of the phrase *fi sabîl-illâh* is by itself sufficient to show that any verse of the Holy Quran containing this word or phrase inculcated the propagation of Islam by means of the sword.

The verses of the ninth chapter on which the allegation that Islam taught the propagation of religion by the sword is based may now be considered. The first verse pointed out in the *Epiphany* is ix : 41, which Rodwell renders as follows : " March ye forth, light and heavy armed, and contend with your substance and your persons on the way of God. This, if you knew it, will be best for you." This verse relates to the expedition of Tabook as the context shows. The expedition was against Heracleus who had made preparations for an attack with a mighty army. The Muslim expedition was thus only a counter expedition as even Muir admits. It was not, therefore, a case of undertaking an expedition to force any people to accept Islam, but to meet an attack of the Greeks. And when on reaching Tabook the Holy Prophet found that the Greeks had not advanced, he returned to Medina without engaging in a fighting which he would not have done if his object had been to force Islam upon any tribe. He had on this occasion 30,000 brave warriors with him and there were yet many idolatrous tribes in Arabia whom if he desired he could have easily conquered, but he did not do it. The expedition of Tabook was, therefore, simply defensive, and in the verse objected to the Muslims were enjoined only to join the Holy Prophet in this expedition. That this verse with some preceding and subsequent verses was revealed in reference to the Tabook expedition has also been admitted by Muir. Hence the verse



does not establish "the principle of persecution for the sake of religion."

The second verse objected to is ix : 73, which Palmer translates as follows : "O thou Prophet ! strive strenuously against the mis-believers and the hypocrites, and be stern against them ; for their resort is hell, and an ill journey shall it be." The word *Jáhid* which has been translated "strive strenuously" in the above translation is shown as meaning "wage war" in the *Epiphany*. But that this significance is not here true is shown by circumstances, for the Holy Prophet never waged war against the hypocrites although he knew them all very well as this very chapter shows. But as the commandment relates to the hypocrites as well as the unbelievers and no war was waged against the former, no war could be waged against the latter in consequence of this verse. It should also be borne in mind that this verse exactly in the same form occurs also in a previous *Sura*; see lxvi : 9.

The third verse mentioned by the *Epiphany* as leading to the conclusion that Islam should be propagated by the sword has no bearing upon the subject at all. It is the 112th verse of the chapter and all that it says is that the Muslims are fighting in the way of God, which phrase I have already explained. It does not enjoin the Muslims to fight against the unbelievers on account of their religion, but mentions only the fact that they are fighting. What was the nature of these fights has already been explained.

The fourth verse is the 124th verse which says : "O ye who believe ! fight against such of the unbelievers as are near your." The injunction plainly means that as the Muslims were repeatedly put into trouble by the neighbouring idolatrous Arab tribes, therefore they should be fought against. The specification of the tribes that were near the Muslims in fact deals a death-blow to the Christian allegation that the principle of persecution for the sake of religion for all time is established by the ninth chapter of the Holy Quran. In fact, if the reverend gentleman had taken the trouble to read the verses in the commencement of this chapter, he would not have advanced these objections. This I say in spite of his assertion that he has read the ninth chapter carefully. If he had done so, only one verse would have convinced him that the Holy Quran was not estab-



lishing any principle of persecution. I refer to the thirteenth verse which says: "Will you not fight against a people who have broken their covenant and aimed to expel the Apostle and attacked you first." Does not this verse show clearly against whom the Muslims were required to fight? And how clearly does the same chapter make an exception in favour of others: "But this (injunction to fight) does not concern those idolaters with whom you are in league, and who have afterwards in no way failed you, and not yet aided any one against you" (ix : 4).

So far I have answered the objections of the *Epiphany*, but as the space at my disposal does not allow me to finish this article in this number, I am obliged to postpone the discussion of many important and interesting points to the next issue.

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## The Miracle of Muhammad.

"The Miracle of Muhammad" is the subject of a lecture delivered last year in the Pan-Islamic Society at London by M. H. Kidwai of Oudh (India), and with the addition of a short outline of Holy Prophet's life, it has now been printed in the form of book covering some sixty pages. The glorious miracle of Muhammad to which the lecture draws attention is the unique transformation wrought by him in Arabia, and through the Arabs in a great part of the world. The degenerate condition of Arabia before the time of the Holy Prophet is described and then it is shown how both Judaism and Christianity, the latter notwithstanding its temporal power which it did not hesitate to use for its advancement whenever an occasion offered itself, failed to make any impression upon Arab character or any appreciable change in the religion of the Arab. The height of righteousness and civilization to which the Holy Prophet Muhammad raised this fallen people is indeed the greatest of miracles that the world has witnessed. The greater part of the material of the lecture is drawn from quotations from learned Europeans such as Carlyle, Gibbon, Davenport, Bosworth Smith, Sir William Muir, Gilman, Taylor and others. Mr. Amir Ali is also quoted in several places.

In the outline of the Holy Prophet's life by which the lecture is preceded, Mr. Kidwai has made a serious mistake which it is the



reviewer's duty to point out. He thinks that according to the Muslim belief, salvation can be attained without following the Holy Prophet Muhammad. He says: "Muslims it may be added, have always maintained an open door for those outside Islam, for the Kur-an has taught them a catholicity that embraces all men, telling them that not they alone, but whoever, like the Jews, Sabians, and Christians, believe in God, the last everlasting day and act aright, their meed is with their Lord; no fear shall come upon them, nor the touch of woe." Islam is undoubtedly a catholic religion, but it does not recognise that every form of belief and worship whether right or wrong can lead to salvation. Islam is catholic in recognising that prophets were raised among all people and that every religion has germs of truth in it, but it does not ignore the fact that the truth in them has been mixed up with a great deal of error. Salvation implies a perfect knowledge and love of God, but no religion except Islam now gives that true knowledge. Other people too say that they believe in God, but they are unaware of His perfect attributes. Had Mr. Kidwai borne in mind his own words regarding the ideal of God presented by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, he would not have made the mistake that salvation or a true knowledge of God can be attained by following any religion. He says: "As He is really shown in the Kur-an—not as caluminous Christian controversialists say that it represents Him, which is quite a different thing—it is impossible to conceive aught holier, nobler, purer, more sublime, more perfect, more supreme and more worthy of the Godhead than the God, Whom Muhammad worshipped. The Ideal cannot be improved upon: one attribute taken from it would mar its perfection, not one could be added to it that would not be superfluous."

## A Prophecy that all men should know.

The following prophecy has been published by the Promised Messiah in a recent writing:—

"Bear in mind that Almighty God has informed me of earthquakes in general. Know it for certain, then, that as earthquakes have come in America, Europe and Asia in accordance with my



former prophecies, more will yet occur in diverse places, some of which would be so severe that the destruction wrought by them would resemble the destruction of the judgment-day. Death will make such havoc that streams of blood would flow. In fact so great would be the destruction on the earth's surface as the world has not witnessed before. Many places shall be turned upside down and present such scenes of destruction that one would think they had never been inhabited. Other calamities of a terrible nature from earth as well as heaven would come upon men, so that the wise men will be convinced of their extraordinariness. Then will men in great bewilderment begin to ask themselves what was going to happen. Many shall be saved and many shall be destroyed. The days are near, nay they are at the door, when the world shall see an unparalleled scene of devastation. Not only will great earthquakes come, but other calamities from heaven and earth will also visit the earth. All this will be brought about because men have forsaken God and with all their heart and all their soul they are bent upon the world. Had I not come, these calamities would also have been put off for a while, but with my appearance the secret designs of the wrath of God have been made manifest, for He says that "punishment is not sent until a messenger is raised." Those who repent shall be saved and those who show fear before the calamity comes shall be shown mercy. Do you think that you can be saved by your own plans? That cannot be. Do not think that severe earthquakes have come in distant places in America and your country will be safe, for I see that greater distress is in store for you. Thou, O Europe! art not safe, nor thou, O Asia! and ye that dwell in islands! no self-made deity will assist you on that day. I see cities falling down and I find inhabited places in ruin. The Omnipotent God has kept silence for a long time while detestable deeds were done in His sight, but now He will show His face with great awe. Let him who has ears hear that that time is not distant. I strive hard to gather men under the protection of God, but it was necessary that the Writing of Fate should have been fulfilled. I say to you truly that the turn of this country is drawing near. The days of Noah will be before your eyes and the scene of Lot's earth you will see with your own eyes. But God is slow in sending His wrath. Repent that mercy may be shown to you. He who forsakes God is a worm, not a man, and he who does not fear Him is dead, not living."



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## NOTICE.

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Mr. Abu Said Arab, to whose efforts in the interests of the circulation of the Review the paper already owes much, has now kindly consented to undertake a journey to Burma with the sole object of making its circulation wider. He has been authorised by the Sadr Anjuman-i-Ahmadiyya under whose auspices the Review is conducted to collect subscriptions for the paper (including balance due from old subscribers) and receive donations for its free circulation in Europe, America and Japan. All subscribers of the paper in Burma are therefore informed that they may pay the balance due from them to Mr. Abu Said. New subscribers can also pay their subscriptions to him. We also hope that every Muslim who cherishes the dear hope of seeing Islam spread abroad will deem it his duty to assist Mr. Abu Said in the noble object with which he has started upon this long journey. Specially would I entreat Messrs. Mulla Yusaf, Ibrahim Patel, Bar.-at-Law, Israel Khan, B.A., B.L., and E. Abdul Qadir Kutti of Rangoon, Mr. Abdul Aziz, Advocate, Pegu, and Mr. Chanea, Government Advocate, Mandalay, to use their own efforts and influence to assist Mr. Abu Said in his undertaking.

THE SECRETARY,

*Sadr Anjuman-i-Ahmadiyya,*

*Qadian.*

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