

that it "is the only religion which not only claims to be free from every error and falsehood, but also offers proof of this freedom from error, no other religion on the face of the earth satisfying either of these requisites" (Review of Religions, III, p. 29). Two years later a writer in the Review of Religions commented on some remarks by Rev. E. W. Thompson, M.A., in the London Quarterly Review, to the effect that "in India ...

1 Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892) was the founder of the Persian sect known as the Bahá'ís, an outgrowth of Babism. It claims to be the universal religion of brotherhood and peace.

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... controversy, and, thankfully recognizing the advantages afforded to Islam in India by the presence of the British Government, to seek in every way to advance the cause of education and social reform within their own ranks. In his residential college, at Aligarh, Western arts and sciences were taught by European scholars along with the religious instruction given by Sunnite and Shi'ite maulvis. To the utter abomination of the orthodox, he mingled freely in English society, even dining with English ladies and gentlemen in their homes, and in his periodical, Tahzib'ul Akhlaq ("Reform of Morals"), he urged upon his community the importance of female education and enfranchisement, and of other advanced reforms. In religious matters he was a liberal and a rationalist, going so far as to place the Christian Bible on a par with the Qur'an, as no less, and no more, inspired, holding that the Bible has not been corrupted by the Christians, and that in the Qur'an, as in the Bible, there is a human as well as a divine element. He also wrote part of a commentary on the book of Genesis. One of his watchwords was, "Reason alone is a sufficient guide," and he quoted with approval the remark of a French writer, that Islam, which lays no claim to miraculous powers on the part of the founder, is the truly rationalistic religion.¹ As Goldziher has pointed out² this represents a return to the old Mu'tazilite position,³ and in its universalistic outlook upon other religions is akin to Babism in Persia, which arose at about the same period. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and his followers, then, represent the first development of Indian Islam, under the stimulus of its contact with Western ideas, and it would be difficult to exaggerate the profound influence of this movement on the articulate section of the Muhammadan world of India. In the second stage we pass from what Dr. Farquhar calls "movements favouring vigorous reform," to those in which reform is checked by defence of

1 See Weitbrecht, Indian Islam and Modern Thought, Church Congress, 1905.

2 Vorlesungen uber den Islam, p. 313.

3 Cf. p. 65, Note 3; and p. 123, Note 1.

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the old faiths, from the atmosphere of the theistic Brahma Samaj, of Ram Mohan Roy and Keshub Chandra Sen, to that of the largely reactionary and strongly anti-Christian Arya Samaj of Dayanand Saraswati. Such well-known living Muslims as Syed Amir 'Ali and Maulvi Chiragh 'Ali represent this school of thought, which in its Muhammadanism is as rationalistic as Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, but in its attitude toward other faiths is much more dogmatic and less tolerant. These writers are greatly concerned to prove that the reforms-religious, social, moral and political-which have been forced upon Islam by pressure from without are really in line with the original spirit of Islam, however much Muhammadan tradition, law and present-day practice may actually oppose them. Furthermore, they declare that the real Islam is the universal religion of the future, because it meets sinful man on the lower level of his practical, everyday life, instead of holding up, as does Christianity (sic), ideals impossible of attainment. This probably represents that "side development of Islam" to which Professor Macdonald alludes in *Aspects of Islam*,¹ when he writes: "Or are the wheels of progress to crush out all ideals, and is the future civilization of the world to be woven of philosophic doubt, of common-sense attitudes and of material luxury? There is a curious side development of Islam which looks in that direction, and which sees in the narrowed, utilitarian aims, in the acceptance of the lower facts of life, in the easy ideals which characterize that religion, the promise that it will be the future in the common-sense world to come, and holds that, even as the world is, Islam must be the religion of all sensible men." Syed Amir 'Ah seems to hold that view of Islam, in its essence, only insisting that Muhammad's practical rules assist morality more than do general precepts; and yet admitting that in order to the wide acceptance of Islam in the West certain modifications of its requirements are essential. In *The Spirit of Islam* he has written: "The Islam of Muhammad, with its stern discipline and its severe morality, has proved itself the only practical religion for low ...

¹ pp. 256, 257.

... A further powerful element of attractiveness in the Ahmadiya movement is its appeal to the age-long eschatological hopes of Muslims, held to some extent in common with earnest adherents of most of the great religious communions of the world. It is on this side that it is distantly related to the Babi and Bahá'í movements from which it differs essentially, as we have already seen, in the matter of its exclusiveness and intolerance, insisting, as it does, not on the oneness of all religions, but rather on the unique supremacy of Islam as interpreted by Ahmad. The late Dr. S. G. Wilson, author of *Bahá'ism and Its Claims*, thirty-two years a missionary in Persia, traces the parallelism between the two movements, in eschatological and other directions, in part as follows:

In this effort to propagate itself in Christendom, it is like Baháism. In not a

few points there is a striking resemblance between these offshoots from Mohammedanism. Some of these may be accounted for by their springing up in a similar soil, a Mohammedan soil impregnated with Sufiism and Mahdiism, and in which some elements of nineteenth-century Christian thought had found lodgment. Both claim that a new revelation is needed because Christianity is dead and Islam needs reforming. Both claim to be in some sense divine manifestations, in another sense the "return" of Jesus, of Mohammed, and of Krishna. Both propose to unite all religions. Both do away with the jihad and advocate peace principles. Both, after the example of Mohammed, sent letters to kings announcing their coming and inviting them to faith. Both practised polygamy and praised Mohammed and the Koran. Both belittled Jesus Christ, denying his miracles, his resurrection, his ascension and literal Second Coming. Both have some followers in foreign lands even among Christians. Both failed to bring about moral reformation in the conduct of their disciples, who have divided into sects on the death of the founders. Both claimed as signs of their mission their eloquence in the Arabic tongue, the writing of spontaneous verses, fulfilled predictions, their success in winning converts, and the good effects as seen in the conduct of their followers. Both made large use of the press; Baha Ullah sent his books to Bombay to be published owing to lack of liberty in Turkey and Persia; Gulam Ahmad had a press of his own at Qadian. The teachings of Ahmad are free from some extravagances and inanities of Bahaism. Neither sect appears to have any great future before it. Their chief usefulness has been to help towards the breaking down of scholastic Islam — the one among the Shiahs, the other among the Sunnis of India. Bahaism has definitely broken with Islam, while the Ahmadiya movement continues within its fold. [From Modern Movements among Moslems. (-J.W., 2013)]

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