

The
ISLAMIC CALIPHATE

By

A. R. DARD

Imam of the London Mosque

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“God does not wish that human beings should be left scattered. But just as He has made the Sun a King over the solar system by gathering together a great number of stars, in the same way, by giving appropriate light to each believer like stars, He has ordained that the Imam of the age should be their sun. This divine scheme is so much in evidence in His creation that a similar system is found even amongst the bees. They also have a leader which is called Yasoob. The same is the intention of God with respect to temporal government also ; a people should have one Amir and king. Cursed are those who love discord and do not obey the Amir” (Ahmad).

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

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THE KHILAFAT.

The Islamic form of government is called the Khilafat. This word is derived from "khalafa" which means "He came after, followed, succeeded or remained after another." Lane further says that "khalafa-hu" means "He was, or became, his khalifa, i.e., successor, or vice-agent, or his substitute." The word also means "One who succeeds, or precedes another," and also "One who puts the laws and the commands of the king into force." (Quran, Part I, Qadian, p. 28.) J. Penrice says "khalifa" is "a successor or lieutenant, vicar, a name given to sovereigns as vicegerents of God."

USE OF THE WORD IN THE QURAN.

The following are a few verses in which this word occurs: Referring to Adam God says, "I am about to place a khalifa in the earth" (2:31). "O David, We have made thee a khalifa in the earth" (38:27). "He it is who made you khalifas in the earth" (35:40). "And We made them khalifas while We drowned those who rejected Our signs" (10:74).

Sir Thomas Arnold says, " Though the word Khalifa and other words with a cognate meaning and derived from the same Arabic root occur constantly, yet in no instance is there any clear and definite anticipation of the technical use of the term so common in late Mohammadan Theological and political literature. . . . Many of the verses in which the term occurs were incapable of any interpretation directly connecting them with the political institution they were to defend, since the reference to Successor (khalifa) or Successors (khalaif, khulafa) was made in general terms, and clearly had no reference to one single exalted individual " (p. 43). But this conclusion is not right. Adam and David have been expressly called khalifas in the Quran. The following verse clearly refers to the institution of khilafat which was established after the passing away of the Holy Prophet: " Allah has promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them khalifas in the earth as He made khalifas those who were before them; and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, that He will surely change their state, after their fear, into peace and security; they will worship Me and they will not associate anything with Me. And whoso disbelieves after that, they it is who are the disobedient " (24:56). Imam Fakhruddin Razi says that the verse cannot refer to " the general mass of believers " entering into the inheritance of their forefathers, as suggested by Sir Thomas; because the words are " who believe and DO GOOD WORKS." So it is not only those who are believers but such of them as work righteousness that are meant here. Then the words " among you " are also a clear indication of the fact that it is not every one of the believers who is referred to here. Again, if we take the verse in a general sense,

then there would remain no distinction which the verse so emphatically seeks to establish; because Non-Muslims too are made inheritors of the earth. Then the word "as He made those who were before them khalifas" also indicate the nature of the institution. Moses definitely appointed his own successor and after that the Israelites had always had a khalifa. Solomon and David were also khalifas. Every one was a single exalted individual. Even if a whole people be called successors, it does not mean that they were all a mere rabble without a leader. In order to be rulers they must have one executive head. Another distinguishing feature of the Islamic Khalifas mentioned in the verse is that their religion will be established, as it actually was after the Holy Prophet.

— The traditions, which are really a commentary of the Quran, definitely speak of the institution; and Sir Thomas admits that they have served as a basis of the systematic treatment of the doctrine of Khilafat. The Holy Prophet surely understood the Word of God and what he taught was just an amplification of the Quran.— Then the practical verdict of his Companions in the election of Hazrat Abu Bakr and Omar cannot be said to have been based upon any spurious traditions that might be "put forward in justification of the political institution that had gained acceptance with the main body of the faithful." It was too early for that. So it is not true to say that "the theory, in the main, grew out of the facts."

To say that Hazrat Abu Bakr "was elected by the Muslims, just as the Arab tribes had always elected their chiefs" (En. Brit) is absolutely wrong. It was not a single tribe. The Aus, the Khazraj and the Quraish and others were all united on this occasion as they had never been before. Then the powers of the Khalifa were entirely different to those of the tribal chief or the sheikh. Referring to the ancient

custom, P. K. Hitti says in his recent book (History of the Arabs, 1937, p. 28) : " In judicial, military and other affairs of common concern the sheikh is not the absolute authority." But of Hazrat Abu Bakr Von Kremer (Khuda Bakhsh's translation, Calcutta, 1920, p. 13) says: " When the Prophet died, many, among whom was even Omar, counselled Abu Bakr to disband the troops. . . . But Abu Bakr refused." Again he says of him: " However unfavourable the position, however dangerous the situation, he held firmly by what he considered right." No sheikh of the old type could have ever done anything like that. The Khalifa was the successor of the Holy Prophet, a conception absolutely unknown, if not opposed, to the warring tribes of Arabia. Sir William Muir says that the one consideration that led to the election of Hazrat Abu Bakr was that " The mantle of the Prophet must fall upon one successor, and on one alone " (Caliphate p. 3). It was certainly not a tribal election. It is curious that even Sir Thos. Arnold, who also refers to the ancient Arab custom when he mentions the election of Hazrat Abu Bakr, admits that " pre-Islamic Arab society had never known any such form of political institution " (p. 48). The institution of Khilafat therefore cannot be called a recrudescence of any ancient Arab custom. It was an action of the Muslims based upon the Quran and the Hadis alone. If it were a mere tribal instinct, then the proposal of the people of Medina " let there be one chief from amongst you and one from amongst us " would have been carried at the election of Hazrat Abu Bakr. But it was put down and " even Sad from beneath his covering muttered that to divide the power would weaken it." It was therefore the spirit of unity that the Holy Prophet had infused into his followers that made the warring tribes of Arabia into one great nation through Khilafat.

THE THEORY.

Muslim historians record the fact that the word "Khalifa" was first used by Hazrat Abu Bakr; and the phrase Khalifatu Rasulillahi meant "assumption of the activities and privileges exercised by Mohamad."

Mawardi (*al Ahkum-al-Sultaniya*, ed. R. Enger, Bonn, 1853; Cairo 1298, 1327; Trans. E. Fagnan, Alger 1915), Baidhawi and Ghazali lay down the following qualifications in a Khalifa:—Membership of the tribe of Kuraish, male sex, full age, good character, freedom from physical or mental defects, competency in legal knowledge, administrative ability, and courage and energy in the defence of the Muslim territory.

The qualifications for electors are (1) spotless integrity, (2) capacity for judging the qualifications for leadership of the state and the conduct of political affairs. Some authorities laid down that "election was only valid when the entire electorate of the Empire had taken part in it—reminding us of a perfect universal suffrage. Others, on the contrary, held that a smaller number would suffice." Von Kremer (p. 263) says "In this the inhabitants of the capital had no pre-eminence over the rest of the people; but practice, not legal theory, had settled that, since the inhabitants of the capital would be informed of the death of the sovereign sooner than others, they could forthwith proceed to the election. Further, it is to be noted also that persons possessing requisite electoral qualifications usually resided in the capital."

The functions of the Khalifa, according to Mawardi who belonged to the Shaf'ite School are: "The defence and maintenance of religion, the decision of legal disputes, the protection of the territory of Islam, the punishment of wrong-doers, the provision of troops

for guarding the frontiers, the organisation and collection of taxes, the payment of salaries and the administration of public funds, and the appointment of competent officials, and lastly, personal attention to the details of government."

COMPLETE OBEDIENCE TO THE KHALIFA.

should The Shia as well as the Sunni jurists all agree that the Imam or the Khalifa ~~must~~ be obeyed. He occupies the seat of the Prophet, therefore implicit obedience is his due. The Quran is clear and emphatic on the point: "Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those who are in authority among you" (4:60). The Holy Prophet has inculcated the same on every occasion. His ordinance regarding obedience to the Imam can be understood if one remembers that even in ordinary daily prayers the congregation is instructed to follow the Imam even if he is wrong. They can draw his attention to his mistake mildly but they must not disobey.

Al Ashari lays down: "We maintain the error of those who hold it right to rise against the Imams whenever there may be apparent in them a falling away from right. We are opposed to armed rebellion against them and civil war (Development of Muslim Theology by D. B. Macdonald p. 298). Kanzul Ummal lays down that the Khalifa 'must receive unhesitating obedience, for whosoever rebels against the Khalifa, rebels against God' (III, 2580, 2999, 3008). The Holy Prophet says 'He who disobeys the Ameer and expels himself from the community and dies in that state, dies an un-Islamic death' (Muslim). In another place, however, he adds that there should be no obedience in sin (Bukhari). Prof. H. A. R. Gibb has made a very good analysis of Al-Mawardi's doctrine in an article published in the Islamic Culture, Hyderabad, Vol. XI, No. 3, July, 1937.

He says that Mawardi's 'position is intermediate between the positive Kharjite doctrine of the duty of insurrection and the negative Sunni doctrine of the duty of Submission.'

Insurrection against a lawful authority must be thoroughly condemned. It is a most dangerous course. It leads to civil war which entails a senseless destruction of life and property. It means disorder, lawlessness and anarchy. Islam means peace; therefore he who disturbs the peace of the community violates the very fundamental essence of the faith. Islam has provided ample means for the redress and removal of legitimate grievances, and if necessary one can make use of them. Even if one has to fight an evil, as did the Holy Prophet himself in the beginning of his ministry, care must be taken that the fight does not itself become unlawful and a bigger evil than the one it seeks to mitigate. Discord and civil war are the biggest evils in the corporate life of a community. Hence there can be no justification for insurrection. The Islamic Khalifas, moreover, are the vicegerents of God, therefore rebellion against them is most surely the work of Satan.

SHIA, KHWARIJ AND MUTAZILA.

“ The Shia theologians made the doctrine of the Imamate a cardinal principle of faith; they laid stress on legitimacy, and confined the office of the Khalifa not merely to the Koraish but still further to the family of Ali; with the exception of Zaidiya they rejected the doctrine of election, and held that Ali was directly nominated by Mohammad as his successor and that Ali's qualifications were inherited by his descendants, who were pre-ordained by God for this high office. . . . Each Imam possesses superhuman qualities which raise him above the level of the rest

of mankind, and he guides the faithful with infallible wisdom, and his decisions are absolute and final.

“ The antithesis of Shia doctrine was taught by the Khawarij, who so far from confining the office of Khalifa or Imam to any one tribe or family, held that any believer was eligible, even though he were a non-Arab or even a slave; they further separated themselves from other Muslims in maintaining that the existence of an Imam is not a matter of religious obligation and that at any particular time the community can fulfil all the obligations imposed upon them by their religion, and have an entirely legitimate form of civil administration, without any Imam being in existence at all; when, under special circumstances, it may be found convenient or necessary to have an Imam, then one may be elected, and if he is found to be in any way unsatisfactory, he may be deposed or put to death ” (al-Shahrastani, p. 85).

Mutazila School believed that “ The office of Imam should not be filled during periods of civil war but only in times of peace; that no one could be Imam except with the unanimous consensus of the whole Muslim Community ” (al-Shahrastani, p. 51).

KHILAFAT OBLIGATORY.

That the Khilafat is obligatory cannot be denied. “ It has been determined by the accord of the Muslims that it is obligatory on their part to elect a caliph who will exercise authority over them all.”

(Syed H. R. Abdul Majid, LL.D., in his book, “ England and the Moslem World,” York, 1912, p. 38.)

The Quranic verse 24:56 emphatically declares it to be so. The same command is embodied in the verse 3:104 which runs as follows: “ Hold fast, all together, by the rope of Allah; and be not divided.” The sayings of the Holy Prophet leave one

in no doubt on the point, and the practice of the Muslims is also a clear proof of its obligatory nature. Sayad Ameer Ali says: "The Khilafat . . . is the vicegerency of the Prophet; it is ordained by Divine Law for the perpetuation of Islam and the continued observance of its laws and rules. For the existence of Islam, therefore, there must always be a Caliph, an actual and direct representative of the Master" (p. 124). Whether this doctrine is based upon revelation or reason does not matter much. Reason and revelation both require that there should be a Khalifa.

In view of this orthodox doctrine it cannot be denied that the present state of affairs is a serious reflection upon the faith of the Sunni Muslims of to-day; otherwise temporal autonomy, or even subjection of the various Muslim peoples need not be a barrier in the way of their spiritual unity.

MUST A KHALIFA BE OF THE QURAISH?

The sayings of the Holy Prophet like "Imams are of the Quraish," have led Muslims to conclude that a Khalifa must always be of the Quraish and that a Non-Quraishite can never be a Khalifa.

"The Motazila and Kharjite schools throw it open to all Muslims, and base their conclusion upon the tradition, 'You must listen and obey even though the Chief be an Abyssinian slave.' Sayad Ameer Ali refers to the opinion of Ibn Khaldun (died 1406 A.C.) as follows: 'He points out that when the Islamic Dispensation was given to the world, the tribe of Quraish was the most advanced and most powerful in Arabia; and in recommending or desiring that the temporal and spiritual guardianship of the Muslims should be confined to a member of his own tribe, the Prophet was thinking of the immediate future rather than of laying down a hard and fast rule of succession. At

that time a qualified and capable ruler of Islam could only be found among the Quraish; hence the recommendation that the Caliph and Imam should be chosen from among them. This view eloquently expressed by one of the most learned of Sunni Juriconsults is universally accepted by the modern doctors (the Mutakherin), that subject to the fulfilment of all other conditions the law imposes no tribal or racial restriction in the choice of an Imam" (Spirit of Islam, p. 127).

Syed H. R. Abdul Majid, LL.D., says, "A faith of which the corner stone is humanity and equality, which breaks through all the shibboleths, and which places Bilal, a negro slave who was being dragged through the streets of Medina, on terms of equality with any of the highest social standing, can hardly be so parochial as to exclude all but those of the House of Mohammad, or so narrow as to shut out all except the Quraishites. To bring one within the pale of Islam, to extend the equality, and then to deny the legitimate fruit of it, seems hardly consistent with Muslim equity." This view seems to be in complete accord with the Quranic verse: "The most honourable of you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most righteous" (49:14). But the point under discussion here is not the universality or the doctrine of equality which characterises the Islamic faith in general. It is a question of fact. Has the Holy Prophet laid down a law that the Khalifa must always be from the Quraish? If so, all we can and should do is to reconcile this law with the spirit of Islam. It is not for us to find fault with it.

But if we cast a glance on all the sayings of the Holy Prophet, it becomes clear that he did not mean to lay down a hard and fast rule which must be observed under all circumstances. His words make

it clear that his saying is more of a prophecy than an obligatory injunction. In one of his traditions are used the words ' la yazalo hazal Amru ' which clearly indicate that it is a prophecy. And as such it found its fulfilment in history. The Caliphs were all of the Quraish.

But apart from that there is a saying which changes the whole situation. He says (Mishkat): "The Khilafat will remain among the Quraish . . . so long as they uphold the religion." And it is true that so long as the Quraish fulfilled this condition they were deserving of this honour, but when they changed, the prophecy also underwent a change.

HOW IS A KHALIFA APPOINTED?

The office of the Khalifa is to be filled by election and not by designation according to Mawardi, Al Baghdadi and all other Sunni authorities. Prof. Gibb says that this conclusion on the part of the Muslim jurists of the Sunni school is "the rationalisation of the history of the Community." But it should be remembered that the institution of the Islamic Khilafat began with the election of Hazrat Abu Bakr, and at that time there were no previous precedents from which speculative deductions could be drawn. Their action was based upon the Word of God. No books were, however, written in those days on such subjects, so later writers had just to note the various precedents and draw their conclusions. Prof. Gibb is right in referring to the Ijma (My Community will never agree upon an error) as being a source of guidance. But I would not go so far as to assert that "all the imposing fabric of interpretation of the sources is MERELY the post eventum justification of the precedents which have been ratified by ijma." It may be true, as I have already indicated, in the

case of the later writers. But the unanimous verdict of the companions of the Holy Prophet immediately after his death in laying the very foundations of the Khilafat on an elective principle cannot by any means be regarded as "the post eventum justification of the precedents."

The very first ijma of the Community must be based upon divine guidance—the Word of God and the sayings of the Holy Prophet, with which the Community was so well equipped at that time. They might not have thought it necessary at that time to formulate a theory by speculative deduction from the original sources but that they should have based their decision upon them cannot be doubted. The principle of Khilafat was established before any reference to the "infallibility" of the ijma could have been made. So it would be wrong to suppose that the principle of the elective institution was based upon the theory of the efficacy of the ijma.

Hence we must look to the Word of God for guidance in the matter: That the Khilafat is obligatory by revelation is already mentioned. Now the Holy Quran says: "Allah commands you to entrust the responsibility of government to those worthy of it; and when ye govern and judge between people, govern with justice" (IV:58). Rulership is here defined as a valuable trust and the people are commanded not to entrust it to a person who is not worthy of the trust.

The words of the Holy Quran make it clear that the appointment of the ruler is in the hands of the people who are sovereign for the purpose. Therefore the office of the Khalifa, the Supreme Head of the Muslims, is to be filled through the people and for this purpose it is necessary to ascertain the "will of

the people " which is the ultimate authority. Hence the question of designation, ordination and consecration by a Superior Authority does not arise. The principle of heredity is also eliminated. The Khalifa must therefore be elected.

The theory of designation adopted by the Shia finds no support in the Quran. And their claim that the Holy Prophet implicitly or explicitly nominated Hazrat Ali to succeed him has no historical evidence behind it. The fact that Hazrat Ali himself acknowledged the first three Khalifas knocks the bottom out of the whole fabric of the Shia-dogma. Sir William Muir says: " There is absolutely nothing in the antecedents of Aly, or his subsequent history, to render it in the least probable that during the first two caliphates, he advanced any claim whatever, or indeed was in a position to do so " (p. 6, Annals of the Early Caliphate, London, 1883). If the appointment of the Khalifa lies with God, it must prevail in actual life. The Khalifa is to rule over people and guide them, and for this it is obviously necessary that they should acknowledge him as such. Hazrats Abu Bakr, Omar, Osman and Ali were acknowledged as Khalifas and they actually performed the function, therefore it can be said that they were all appointed by God. But it is an insult to God to suggest that He should appoint a man as a Khalifa and then let His unworthy creatures usurp all his rights and powers in actual life, so much so that His own representative is compelled to pay homage to the usurpers. I am not saying that the whole world should accept him, but that a number of the believers including himself must openly acknowledge him as such so that the purpose of his appointment may be fulfilled to some extent at least. This can only be done when the office is filled by election.

It should be remembered that the case of a prophet or a mujaddid is quite different. He is directly commissioned by God and it does not matter for this purpose if those who do not believe in Him reject him. But the Khalifa holds no such authority from God; his mission is only to carry on the prophet's work after him on the lines that he has laid down. The prophet establishes a movement and leaves a community behind him. The work of the Khalifa is to look after it and see that it grows, expands and prospers. But if the community does not even recognise the Khalifa, the object of his appointment can never be fulfilled. Therefore the Shia doctrine is quite untenable.

ASCERTAINING THE "WILL OF THE PEOPLE."

The "limited vote," the "cumulative vote," the "transferable vote," the "alternative vote," and the "second ballot" are some of the ways adopted to secure representation of the people. Apart from the fact that under all these systems Corrupt Practices Acts have to be passed to prevent or minimise the dangers of intimidation, bribery and the vicious principle of "to the victors belong the spoils," it is admitted that all these devices "ignore the essential fact that in any case a representative system can only result in a rather arbitrary approximation to correspondence with the opinions of the electorate." It was stated before the British Royal Commission that in Belgium, in spite of "proportional representation," both in 1900 and in 1902 a majority of members was returned by a minority of votes.

Mr. Hugh Chisholm, editor of the 11th edition of the Ency. Britannica, says: "The fact is that no 'representation' can reflect the views of those 'represented' as accurately as 'presentation' by those entitled personally to speak. The result is seen in

the increasing desire in really democratic countries to supplement representative government by some form of Referendum, or direct appeal to the electors for their own personal opinion on a distinct issue . . . a method which involves fundamentally the addition of a 'presentative' element to the representative system."

Islam has preserved this presentative element in the matter of the election of the Khalifa. The people are required to gather together for this purpose. This is a fundamental principle. As a rule they should also personally swear allegiance at the hands of the Khalifa. But as Islam is a practical religion and possesses an elasticity to make it universal, therefore details of the manner of election are left to the people themselves. A few broad principles of election have, however, been established for the guidance of the people. The Holy Prophet says: "It is your duty to follow me and the Caliphs after me who are rightly guided. Stick to it." And they are further specified by the words: "Khilafat will last among my followers for 30 years, then there will be kingship" (Tirmizi). According to these words Sunni Muslims have unanimously accepted the view that the first four caliphs are the ones who are meant here and that it is they whose example is to be followed. Hence the broad principles of election are confined to these four precedents.

Hazrat Abu Bakr was elected in an open meeting where he himself and a large number of the electors were personally present. The meeting was open to every Muslim and everybody could say freely what he wanted to say and it was said. There was more than one proposal and yet Hazrat Abu Bakr was elected to the high office and that too in a meeting of the citizens of Medina who originally wanted

another person from among themselves to be their leader. Neither was the vote "limited," "cumulative," "transferable," "alternative" or "secret." There was no possibility of intimidation, bribery, or any other corrupt and illegal practice which characterises the so-called democratic and civilised elections of to-day. On the other hand there was manifest the keenest spirit of equality, fraternity, honesty and devotion to what is highest in human life. Every one personally swore allegiance at the hands of the leader thus elected. "And so homage was done on all sides to Abu Bakr," says Muir. The next day again he was saluted as Caliph by acclamation immediately before he delivered his inaugural address. How unlike the democratic elections of to-day! No wonder the interest of the electorate is tending nowadays to dwindle; party organisation pushes its nominee to success over the heads of others and the electorate do not even know their representative!

The second precedent is that of Omar's succession to the Caliphate. Hazrat Abu Bakr, before his end, consulted Abdur Rahman and then Othman and then Talha. Then he desired "to obtain the assent of the people," and called out to the citizens assembled in the Great Mosque: "Are ye satisfied with him whom I have appointed over you?" And the people answered with one voice "Yea, we will obey" (Ibid., p. 118).

No one can call it an arbitrary nomination. Omar was no doubt appointed Caliph by Hazrat Abu Bakr, but the appointment took effect only with the final and express assent and approval of the people. So it would not be wrong to call it an election because the "will of the people" was definitely ascertained and it was only then that he was proclaimed as Caliph, though the manner of ascertaining the "will of the

people " was different. It goes to the credit of Hazrat Abu Bakr that he interpreted the " will of the people " correctly and in his confidence appointed Omar, who was no relation of his, as his successor. Call it election or nomination, the event is clear enough to serve as a precedent as it is.

Hazrat Othman's appointment is a third kind of precedent. Hazrat Omar nominated " the six chiefest companions, on one or other of whom he knew that the choice must needs fall, to be the electors of a successor from amongst themselves)' And Abdur Rahman, on whom fell the final choice, had already sounded the views of the people; therefore when he selected Othman it was just the wish of the people as is evident from the fact that when he saluted Othman as Caliph " all the people followed his example." Hazrat Ali was publicly elected.

In all these cases it is clear that it was the " will of the people " which prevailed, though the manner of ascertaining it was different in each case. Hence the office is not hereditary but an elective one.

KHALIFA APPOINTED FOR LIFE.

The next point that emerges clearly from these precedents is that the Khalifa is elected for life. No time limit has ever been, expressly or implicitly, directly or indirectly, set for his term. It has never been thought of.) And it is necessary that it should be so. Frequent elections not only involve a good deal of unnecessary and avoidable trouble and expense, but also dislocate business and violently disturb the normal function of the machinery of government. And then there is less of stability, cohesion and uniformity which are necessary for the progress and development of a community. Then the continued existence of the previous Heads of the

Government introduces an element of awkwardness for all, and in some cases, it leads to all kinds of intrigue, conspiracy and even rebellion. It is therefore in the interest of the Community and the country that its Head be appointed for life and not only for a short period of time.

NO ABDICATION.

Now there arise two important questions at this stage; abdication and deposition. It is obvious that when a person accepts an office for life, he automatically forfeits the right of abdication. It might have been possible if at the time of his election a provision or reservation were made by him to that effect. But there is no trace of anything like that in any of the precedents mentioned above. So it is out of the question. It would really be nothing less than the betrayal of a most sacred trust. The Community needs his services and he is capable of discharging his duty and the people not only want him but expressly and actually appoint him as their leader and he accepts the office for life, and then to think of abdication would either be the height of folly, or cowardice or faithlessness which could not be condoned for any reason. To refer to the case of Imam Hasan in this connection is not of much help. It appears that he retired from the scene with credit. His would have been a proper abdication if the homage paid to him by the Kufans had been endorsed by the rest of the Muslims. All that seems to have happened was a withdrawal of his claim to the Caliphate after his provisional acceptance.

NO DEPOSITION.

Now with regard to deposition it must be remembered that at the time of the election of a man to the high office of the Khalifa there is made no express

provision for the purpose. Even if we take the Khilafat to be a pure contract, which it is not, we do not meet with any clear condition in any of these precedents—the sole basis of the theory—which might require that the contract would be dissolved under such and such circumstances. The very idea is foreign. If there existed any such clause, the man who accepted the office would not leave himself at the mercy or whim of the electorate in this matter. After all he must have some security to hold the office. Every sensible person should insist either on the express specification of the period for which he is expected to run the administration or on the express mention of the things that would dissolve the “contract” and also the procedure to be adopted in such a case. Anyhow, it would be the height of injustice to make a contract with a man without telling him the specific and the essential conditions governing it and then dissolve it in an arbitrary manner imagining the conditions to exist.

On the other hand, the clear understanding that is given to the Khalifa at the time of his election is that he is elected for life. The first assumption therefore should be that deposition is out of the question. Then the office is so high and sacred that it would be an insult to it if the incumbent were to be always liable to deposition. To my mind it would be a disgrace to the faith and the people themselves that they fill their highest office with the best man fitted for it from among themselves and then render him exposed to deposition at the fancy of Tom, Dick and Harry. If the best of them turns out unsatisfactory, what good can be expected of anyone else? Probably the next one would prove worse, so it would be unsafe and unwise to make the change. That is why Mawardi and others definitely lay down that “a duly elected Imam cannot be displaced in favour of a worthier

candidate " (Gibb). So it is not right to say that " the Caliphate is a contract bilateral in its nature," and that " the Caliph is bound to act in conformity with certain principles the non-observance of which deprives him of the right to command obedience." We have seen that Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Omar and Hazrat Ali were not bound in any way at the time of their election. There was no mention of the principles " the non-observance " of which would deprive them of the right to command obedience. There was no one to administer to them any oath of allegiance to any principles. Therefore the conclusion has no foundation at all.

But it might be said that the conditions were understood and implicit in the election itself. If it were so, the question should have been raised during the Caliphate of any of these three Caliphs of Islam. People differed from them and even criticised their actions and some of them even rebelled and openly fought against them, but it is significant that there is not a single instance where this " understood " condition was invoked or even mentioned or referred to. It shows clearly that there exists no such condition in the contract, if it is a contract at all, which can, ipso jure or otherwise, absolve the people from allegiance or deprive the Caliph of his authority.

I admit that the Khilafat is an Islamic institution and that the electors as well as the elected must be Muslims and in theory it is obvious that if the Khalifa or his electors cease to be Muslims they are not to be governed by the law of Islam. If a man says that he is no longer a Muslim, it goes without saying that he will have to be treated as such. He cannot then hold any office at all in the community. (Mawardi and Baghdadi.) But when a Khalifa is sincere in his profession of the faith and claims to defend, maintain

and uphold Islam, how can he be declared a Non-Muslim to deprive him of the seat of the Khilafat? He is by no means infallible and is even liable to commit mistakes; yet, so long as he holds that high office, he is admittedly the final authority in all matters for all practical purposes. To sit, therefore, in judgment upon the head of the church or the state would be a sheer impossibility in actual life.

The same would be the case if we take a social or political defect into consideration. Who is going to be the judge? D. B. Macdonald says in the Enc. Britannica: "Private immorality or even tyranny are not grounds for deposing him." Christian writers have a knack of giving their own twist to the principles of Islam and make insinuations. To talk of private immorality is sheer nonsense. It does not mean that Islam tolerates tyranny or immorality, it only means that the High Officials of the State must enjoy immunity from the vicious attacks of malicious people. If the High office were to be exposed to the attacks of any and every body, a trivial matter involving disaffection or discontent could lead to a formal proposal or a campaign for deposition. Instead of discharging the fundamental obligations attached to his office the Khalifa would probably have to be busy always defending himself against every man in the street. Such a state of affairs would not only be a negation of government, but a public scandal and a disgrace to the whole of the community. It is a different matter if the Khalifa, out of a high sense of duty and righteousness, subjects himself to a tribunal of Justice in a matter concerning his private property. But to make his official rights and powers and his very office, the target of attacks would be the height of injustice and sheer folly. In short, the deposition of an Islamic Khalifa is an impossibility like that of

an unbelieving prophet. That is why there are provided no legal means at all for deposing a Khalifa.

The Islamic Khilafat appears to be "the Commonwealth by Institution" envisaged by Hobbes, "A Commonwealth," he says, "is said to be instituted, when a Multitude of men do Agree and Covenant, everyone, with everyone, that to whatsoever Man or Assembly of Men, shall be given by the major part, the Right to Present the Person of them all (that is to say, to be their Representative); everyone, as well he that voted for it, as he that voted against it, shall Authorise all the Actions and Judgments, of that Man, or Assembly of men, in the same manner, as if they were his own, to the end, to live peaceably amongst themselves, and be protected against other men" (p. 120). Regarding the deposing of such a Sovereign Hobbes says, "If they depose him, they take from him that which is his own, and so again it is injustice."

Regarding the Covenant he lays down: "That he which is made Sovereign maketh no Covenant with his subjects beforehand, is manifest; because either he must make it with the whole multitude, as one party to the Covenant; or he must make a several Covenant with every man. With the whole, as one party, it is impossible; because as yet they are not one Person: and if he make so many several Covenants as there be men, those Covenants after he hath the Sovereignty are void, because what act soever can be pretended by any one of them for breach thereof, is the act both of himself, and of all the rest, because done in the person, and by the Right of every one of them in particular. Besides, if anyone, or more of them, pretend a breach of the Covenant made by the Sovereign at his Institution; and others, or one other of his subjects, or himself alone, pretend there was no such breach, there is in this case, no Judge to decide the controversy" (p. 122).

The fact that in the Islamic oath of allegiance to the Khalifa every member of the Commonwealth binds himself to obey the Khalifa only in things that are good, does not mean that the Khalifa binds himself to the definition of good as understood by the individual concerned. Besides this the oath of allegiance is only a posterior affair and comes into being after the actual institution; therefore it cannot have a retrospective effect. It does not apply and cannot govern what has taken place already. If, however, it must be taken as a condition of the institution, then it would cause a further and worse complication. The same words are used by the believers when they accept a prophet of God. If, therefore, obedience is to be legally limited on the basis of this formula, then we shall have to suppose the same in respect of the Holy Prophet of Islam also viz., A Muslim binds himself to obey the Prophet only in things which the individual regards as good; while this is against the consensus of opinion and against the very spirit as well as the letter of the Word of God Himself. Islam means complete surrender and our belief in the Prophet is not perfect unless and until we obey him in each and every detail, and that too most unreservedly.

To say that an undertaking was taken by Abdul Rahman from Hazrat Othman prior to his appointment does not in the least invalidate the conclusion which I have stated above. In the first place it is only one precedent against the three precedents left by Hazrat Abu Bakr, Hazrat Omar and Hazrat Ali. Then it was just a device of Abdur Rahman himself. The election would have been equally valid if he had not put that question to Hazrat Othman. There is nothing to show that this question was asked on that occasion because it formed an essential feature

of the election. Neither was it asked at the explicit or implicit wish of the people. Hazrat Othman was not technically bound to the people as a result of that; even if he were bound in that manner it could not justify his deposition by the people concerned because they had no such right by stipulation or otherwise. To remove all doubts the situation did actually arise in the case of Hazrat Othman and he created an express precedent to the contrary. The rebels and malcontents did demand abdication from him and then they wanted to depose him. But he resolutely refused and quoted his authority for his refusal: The Holy Prophet had said to Hazrat Othman: "Allah will clothe thee with a garment. If people demand of thee to put it off, thou must not put it off." (Tirmizi.) Hazrat Othman addressed the insurgents in these words: "As to abdication, I am not going to put off the garment that Allah has put on me so that it may not become a precedent after me. Whenever the people dislike their leader, they would depose him" (Iqdul Farid p. 83). Hazrat Ali even did not yield to the demand which was made for his deposition. If the question of Abdur Rahman was a binding clause of the election of Hazrat Othman, the non-observance of which legally justified his deposition, why did not the rebels take advantage of it? The fact that the rebels did not even try to invoke that clause in their favour is a proof positive of the fact that Abdur Rahman's question and Hazrat Othman's answer did not at all provide any legitimate ground for the dissolution of the imaginary contract of the Khilafat.

Now there is one more point which must be settled here before I proceed further; as I feel sure that it must be lurking in the minds of all those who call themselves democratic. If it is the "will of the

ment proceeds directly from God who is the Real Sovereign. Hence the Khalifa, if he is a true one, is not only the leader of the Muslims but also the vicerent of God and the representative of the Prophet whom he succeeds. As such he cannot be deposed; the people have no such power. A true Muslim must not even think of such a course of action. And it is really this aspect which is the most important one.

As it is, and so long as it is, the Law of God that the Khalifa has to administer, it should be the concern of God to see that the right kind of man is appointed as the Khalifa. And the Holy Quran is explicit in laying down that it is God Himself who appoints the Islamic Khalifas. The verse embodying the principle and the prophecy runs as follows:—"God has promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will most surely make them Khalifas in the land, as He made Khalifas those who were before them, and that He will most surely establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, and that after their state of fear He will give them security in its place. They will worship Me and naught will they join with Me. And whoso disbelieves after that they it is who are the disobedient" (24:56). The deposition of the Khalifas whom God appoints is most decidedly out of the power of the people.

It is true that the Khalifa is elected by the people, but it does not mean that they can do what they like with him after the election. There is nothing unusual in this. There are several instances in Nature where men are the apparent means of producing something which they cannot control or unmake afterwards.

Take the case of the birth of a child. A man and a woman agree to live together and thus become the

instruments for the creation of a soul. But when the child is born they have no right to take its life. As a matter of fact even if they killed it, they could not unmake the soul which lives for ever. In the same way people are just the instruments through which a Khalifa is appointed. They are not the real makers thereof; and when the Khalifa is made, they have no power to unmake him in any way.

A man with a grain of common sense would not do a thing to-day and undo it the next day. Even stone structures are not raised to be soon destroyed by the builders themselves. When a whole people erect a structure—say a monument, an embankment, a palace, or a fortress—they certainly do not like that it be destroyed in their lifetime. Why then should a Khalifa be deposed? A Khalifa, elected by the entire Community as the best individual, to perform the highest functions of the State! After all he is not a chaprasi who can be dismissed at any excuse.

A fool indeed is he who builds a house to-day and pulls it down the next day. A nation can, no doubt, if it must be foolish, destroy its own organisation and fortifications, but it must remember that they will only render themselves unsafe and exposed to their enemies from within and from without. If a pack of knaves must rebel against the Khalifa for their selfish and ignoble motives, nay, they might kill him if they want to—Hazrat Othman's murder does not preclude such a possibility; but they must remember that they and their children shall have to pay heavily for this heinous crime of theirs. They shall have to suffer and suffer terribly they must. But that Islam allows deposition is the vilest lie that has ever been fabricated. Sunni jurists all agree on this point; and woe to the man, nay cursed be he who deliberately goes blind and fights his own Creator and the Creator of all the worlds. It were better if he were not born,

and better still if he had died before lighting the match to set such a benevolent institution on fire.

IS THE KHALIFA A DESPOT?

I have shown that the Khalifa is generally elected and that he holds office for life and that he cannot be deposed; but it does not mean that Islam provides nothing to safeguard the rights of the people and that they have no voice at all in any matter. The people are not left at the utter mercy or whim of the Khalifa to be driven by him like dumb cattle. As I have already indicated the Khilafat is a trust; consequently its acceptance involves certain duties. The greatest safeguard provided in the interests of the people is the Divine Law incorporated in the inviolable constitution contained in the Quran and the Hadith. The Khalifa is bound to act upon the Word of God and the sayings of the Holy Prophet; not because it forms an essential condition of any "contract" of Khilafat in express or implicit words to that effect, but because the Khalifa, prior to his election, has shown practically for a long time that he is a true Muslim to the satisfaction of the people so much so that when the services of the best man for the cause of the community are required the choice of the people falls upon him to hold the sacred trust. This in itself should constitute the best safeguard, otherwise verbal contracts can often turn out mere scraps of paper. Then the Khalifa cannot alter or amend the Islamic law and is himself bound by it as much as any other member of the community. It is this that should make Islam to be the most democratic of religions. As a private person the king has no more rights, and this is the sacred constitution of the faith.

Then the Khalifa is instructed to consult the people. The Quran lays down that the affairs of the Muslims should be settled with mutual counsel (42:39). Even the Holy Prophet, from whom the Khalifa inherits all his powers and functions, was instructed as follows: "Consult them in government, but when thou hast made up thy mind then trust in Allah alone" (3:159). "There is no Khilafat without consultation" (Izalatul Khifa). It is clear therefore, that the Khalifa is required to ascertain the "will of the people," which is the essence of democracy. There are however no rigid rules and regulations to determine the precise forms of ascertaining it. It is left to the common sense of the Khalifa to suit the particular requirements of the time. He can consult the people in any way he likes. He may consult some or all of them. He may consult them in this or that matter, whether it be small or great. He may do so whenever and howsoever he pleases. But that he must consult is laid down in the law itself. "Consultation affords a large scope of utilising the skill, experience and knowledge of every member of the community." For the sake of stability and efficiency he will have to discharge his duty in a conscientious manner. So Islam gives ample opportunity to the people to make their voice heard, and according to the practice of the Islamic Khalifas and the Holy Prophet he should attach great weight to the opinion of the people, though it would not be right if he were to yield to every voice that is raised in an indiscriminate manner. It will only lead to confusion and agitation. He is not bound to bow to the majority. He can, if necessary, reject the advice of the people. The people are by no means to be treated as angels; and as the Law which the

Khalifa is to administer is Divine, therefore he must be careful. He is the guardian of the Law which is the real and inviolable safeguard for the truest rights and interests of the people. If it were the mere wish of the people that must be carried out in everything, then the people could never rise higher than themselves, and make any progress; and if they are not rightly educated—which is a rare condition even in our own day—the greater likelihood is that the people would degenerate. The Ecclesia at Athens made Aristotle to restrict the word democracy to bad popular government. Therefore the Khalifa is not only instructed to ascertain the will of the people but he is also required to watch, in the light of the Law, that the will of the people itself does not go astray much to their own detriment. So Islam provides every reasonable protection in its constitution against the violation of the true and legitimate interests and rights of the people.

INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM.

Islam inculcates complete obedience to the Khalifa (Muslim, Mishkat); but it does not mean that the individual is debarred from holding his own opinions. One is free to form and keep one's own views on all questions. In order to be a member of the community it is obvious that he must believe in the fundamental and essential principles of the faith, otherwise he has no right to be considered as such. But apart from that he can have his own individual views on all matters. It is desirable that he should think for himself. But in the case of a difference of opinion with the prevailing view, he is not allowed to propagate his personal views so that there might not be caused any split in the community.

If any member of the Muslim Commonwealth honestly and truly believes that for one reason or another he cannot continue to remain its member, he is at perfect liberty to declare his intention and act accordingly. He can recant, as there is no compulsion in matters of faith. Similarly, if a person thinks that the Khalifa is not a fit and proper person to be his spiritual guide and leader, he can withdraw his allegiance from him. There is complete freedom of conscience in Islam. But it must be pointed out that it is a very serious step. The Khalifa is the vicegerent of God and to disobey him is to deprive oneself of all light and real life. Hence it is necessary that the greatest possible care be taken in making this decision. Care should also be taken that this freedom of conscience is not abused in any way. An apostate must not raise a standard of revolt and poison the minds of others against the faith or the Khalifa or do anything calculated to injure the person or the office of the Khalifa. Such activity will be dealt with only as treason or rebellion. No authority could ever allow such things. Therefore there must be no subversive activities of any kind within the jurisdiction of the Khalifa.

Apart from these extreme cases, Muslims are required to obey the Khalifa under all circumstances. Obada relates from the Holy Prophet that Muslims should obey their Ameer unless they see what is called "Kufri bawwah" (manifest unbelief) in him and even then they should have a clear authority from Allah to decide their course of conduct (Bukhari, Kitabul Fitan).

If a well-wisher of the community finds that a particular Khalifa is not administering the affairs of

the state or the church as he should in accordance with the law and the dignity of the office and is out only to aggrandise himself and oppress the people, he is free, as a matter of fact it is desired, that he should respectfully but courageously tender his word of advice (Mishkat). But if the Khalifa persists in his wrong course and the well-wisher has no legal and legitimate course left for him to put a stop to the mismanagement of affairs, he should keep his peace and not disturb the peace of the country. He can, of course, leave the country and then do what he likes. But the best course probably would be to approach God and pray to Him so that if he is right, God may correct the Khalifa; and if he himself is in the wrong, God may show him the right way in all things and forgive him. Then he should leave the decision in the hands of God if he is a true believer.

CHURCH AND STATE.

Now without going into the details of any of the public duties or functions of the Khalifa, I would just indicate a few broad principles which must not be lost sight of. Sir Thomas Arnold says: "Islam knows of no priesthood, of no body of men set apart for the performance of religious duties which the general body of the faithful are not authorised to perform." This is quite true. But it is a little confusing to assert that "in the Muslim world there is not that separation between Church and State which has been a source of so much controversy in Christendom." The word State expresses the abstract idea of government in general, or the governing authority as opposed to the governed. Herbert Spencer uses it in this sense. The word Church was originally applied to the building used for Christian worship, and was subsequently

extended to the Christian community itself. In their general senses therefore the two words only stand for the governing authority and the people. That this distinction obtains in Islam goes without saying. The governing authority is called ' O lil Amr ' and the church is the whole Muslim Community.

The distinction can be brought out in another way also. The state stands for that which is temporal and the church for that which is spiritual. The former is the relationship between man and man; while the latter between man and God. Islam has taught us our duty to our fellow-beings and also our duty to our Creator.

But it is quite right to say of the Holy Prophet " Head of the State as well as of the Church, he was Caesar and Pope in one " or that he was Christ as well as the Roman Emperor under whom he lived. Therefore his successors had to perform both of his functions. As head of the state the Khalifa had to look after the body, and as head of the Church he had to attend to the soul. The Caliph, says Von Kremer (p. 244), " Commanded expeditions—He organised and conducted military affairs. He administered the state revenue—He, even, exercised judicial functions and administered criminal justice, and finally—this was the most important of his duties—he led the entire Divine Service, and was, so to speak, the Supreme Pontiff of the religious community of the Muslims." The Khalifa, therefore, combined in himself the religious as well as the political or the civil authority. Ibn Khaldun says: " The Caliph is the Vicar and Lieutenant of the Prophet. He is more than a temporal ruler, he is a spiritual chief as well " (p. 319).

Sir William Muir says: " With Mahomet ceased the theocratic power which, as a prophet, he had exercised; but the kingly function, as ruler over all Islam, descended to his successor " (p. 7). It is true that the Khalifa is not a prophet (though in earlier times the Khalifa has sometimes been a prophet and a prophet has also been called a Khalifa. Here I am referring to the two distinct conceptions as such); but it does not mean that the successor of a Prophet should be unable to carry on his manifold work. The Khalifa does not receive any new law from God, but the function of a prophet is not confined to the bringing of a law or the making of prophecies in the abstract. Some prophets do not bring any law at all and yet they are sent by God as prophets. Therefore a prophet has a function which is distinct from that of being a legislator. Even prophesying is not an end in itself. A prophet is pre-eminently and primarily a spiritual reformer. The Quran lays down his function in the following words: " Our Lord, raise up among them a Messenger from among them who may recite thy signs unto them, and teach them the Book, and Wisdom, and purify them; for Thou art the Mighty, the Wise " (2:129). It is this work of the Prophet which his successor, the Khalifa, has to carry on; and it is this purpose for which the prophets are sent. Therefore, Sir Thos. Arnold is quite wrong in asserting that " the Caliph—enjoyed no spiritual functions " (p. 14). He has misunderstood the very fundamental object for which God sends His prophets. In another place (p. 17) he says that the Caliph " is pre-eminently a political functionary " which is far from being the actual case. Referring to the Caliphs of Islam, Von Kremer says (p. 245), " They ruled an unbounded Kingdom and governed a very turbulent

people, like the Arabs, who from time immemorial had been averse from discipline or authority. This power they wielded by virtue of the religious consecration with which as the high-priests of Islam they were invested." There is no priesthood or their formal consecration in Islam, but it is true that the Khalifas were holy men who had dedicated their lives to the service of God and His creatures. A Khalifa, therefore, is pre-eminently a spiritual functionary, even if he has to perform functions which are kingly.

The later Muslim jurists have also fallen into the same error. The Khalifas were kings and emperors just as the Holy Prophet was the king of Kings, but it does not mean that they were merely the heads of the State. They had higher and nobler functions to perform. The social, economic and political development of society is a very important work. But man is a higher being; and even this work requires a spiritual transformation of the people in order to reach perfection. A sound body must have a sound soul, otherwise it would not be man. Hence a Khalifa, even if he is a King, has a far greater and nobler work to do than that of the King. If some of the later functionaries of that institution did not, even themselves, realise their true status and real function, it is they who are to blame and not the doctrine or the faith which they should have represented. The first four Khalifas did certainly understand and perform their work in an admirable manner even when they were overwhelmed with difficulties. That is why we are required to follow their example.

Another point that is worth noting in this connection is the fact that as Christ did not bring any new law, Christians had to evolve a religious and a

secular law of their own to suit their requirements in different lands. But in Islam we have a detailed universal law, religious as well as secular, not only in theory as contained in the Word of God, but also its application in actual life in the very lifetime of the Holy Prophet. No man has the authority to alter or amend that law. Therefore the work of the authorities in Islam consists in finding the relevant law and enforcing it to the best of their ability; and it is for this reason that there has never been any conflict between the two arms of the law in Islam. But in Christendom the nature of ecclesiastical organisation was determined by the force of circumstances and the exigencies of time; and their powers, laws and their jurisdiction followed their own course. In many instances they came in conflict even with their own temporal authority out of which in some cases, they came victorious, and in others they were completely vanquished. In England for instance the King is now the Supreme authority; and theoretically he is the Head of the Church as well as the State, though practically it is the will of the lay House of Commons that prevails in everything. There are no ecclesiastical courts as there used to be and the authority of the church is acknowledged to act only in the sphere of the individual spirit of man and not on the body of the people. The temporal authority seems to be supreme at the moment in every Christian country and it is not bound by any religious law.

But it should be remembered that the law of Islam is not meant only for kings and rulers. We have used the words religious and secular only to make the meaning clear to the Western people; otherwise the Book of God is not divided into any such two parts. It is like the book of nature which is the work of

God. It is open for all. The scientist, the politician, the economist and the religious person can all find guidance in the Quran. In the same way the rulers as well as the ruled, the Sovereign and the Subjects, can find divine laws that apply to them and are meant for them. So if the Muslims happen to be rulers and kings, they should govern according to the Islamic laws. And if they happen to be subjects they should obey the laws that apply to their case. In this respect therefore the church and the State will not be one. They will both be separate. The Indian Muslims for instance nowadays can form a Church of their own, but they have very little share in the State. But that they can live up to Islam if they want to, cannot be denied. The same was the case in the time of Christ when he said, "Give unto God what is God's, and unto Caesar what is Caesar's."

KINGSHIP NOT ESSENTIAL.

The Holy Prophet and his early successors were no doubt kings, but Kingship was not the essential part of their function. The Holy Prophet was a Prophet even before he came to be a king; and there have been so many prophets who were not kings at all. Christ was not a king, though a crown of thorns was put on his head.

Kings or no kings, prophets of God are spiritual authorities. Their kingdom is primarily of heaven. They come to establish the will of God on earth. But they do not derive their power through the sword. The Holy Prophet Mohammad (peace and the blessings of God be upon him) never sought the sword, but the sword came to him, just as it came to Christ, though in his case it came a long time after his death. An earthly king depends upon the sword.

He rules by the simple fact of his might and physical force. But a prophet of God rules over the hearts of the people who bring him everything they possess including the sword.

The Holy Prophet began life as an orphan. He never sought any temporal power for himself, but it came to him as it was in the divine scheme of things that he should demonstrate the practical working of the most perfect Divine Law that he had brought for the whole world and for all ages. His real power and greatness lay in the realm of the spirit, but he showed to the world that spiritual perfection and greatness were by no means incompatible with kingship or power or wealth. Politics were not to be shunned as poison as recommended by Maulvi Barakat Ullah of Bhopal (the Khilafat p. 61). We can live in the world, enjoy and appreciate all gifts of God on earth, and yet we need not be of the world.

It is a pity that a great many of the later writers among the Muslims, and the Christian writers in particular, have failed to see the beauty of these teachings, and they have set their eyes only on what is mundane and material. They look upon Islam only as a political or a military system inculcating the use of force which is wholly foreign to the letter and the spirit of the faith. It is to remove this misconception that God, in His Infinite Wisdom, has now raised Ahmad of Qadian as the Promised Messiah among the Muslims, so that he may again show to the world the original beauty of Islam by heavenly means. He has come in the spirit and power of Christ according to the prophecies of the scriptures of the world. His successors are now

demonstrating the truest spiritual aspect of the institution of Khilafat unaccompanied by temporal authority.

I would, however, like to add here that spiritual authority is not confined to the leading of daily prayers or the performance of other religious rituals and ceremonies. That is a function which others can also perform. The Khalifa is not a Priest or a Mulla, whom the people of the village can dismiss when they please. Nor is he an archbishop of an "established" church playing a second fiddle. Nor is he an ascetic divorced from all practical politics of human life. Spiritual leadership is a much higher and greater force. It requires much more than a mere lip-profession.

The Islamic Khalifa is the leader, nay, Commander of the faithful. He is the successor of the Holy Prophet and thus receives inheritance from him. He may be a prophet of God as was the Promised Messiah who came in his spirit; or he may be an ordinary Khalifa to carry on his work. But as such he is the vicegerent of God. He may not be a king, he may even be an humble and loyal subject like Christ, but he is the one whom Kings and Emperors must obey if they wish to please God. Displeasing him leads to the displeasure of God. Such a Khalifa is no doubt a human being. He is not God or God incarnate. He has the same human frailties as others have. He is liable to commit mistakes if he is not a prophet, and yet he holds an office for which God is extremely jealous; He bears not that any earthly worm, be he a king or an emperor, harm His vicegerent. He is there to establish the will of God, serve His creatures and purify their souls by his precept and example and prayers; therefore one who

opposes him opposes God Himself. Such is the will of God. It might be hard to understand for those who are uninitiated into His secrets, but the world will soon bear witness that it is so and that it ought to be so.

God is the Light of the heavens and the earth, says the Holy Quran. Prophets are the bulbs made of transparent glass which enable the world to see the Light and get benefits by it; while their Khalifas are the reflectors which spread and project the Divine Light and give it direction for the guidance and illumination of mankind (24:36).

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A. R. DARD.