LAHORE AS A MOSLEM CENTRE

For one who would know Islam in India a period of residence in Lahore is of the first importance. Lahore can fairly claim the distinction of being the chief Moslem centre in India, historically, geographically, politically and religiously. Only Delhi might dispute its title of distinction as the seat of a vanished Moslem splendour that lives today only in monuments of marble and in the devoted memories of the faithful; but Delhi was nearer the circumference of a circle of which Lahore was the inevitable centre. Each successive wave of invasion which poured through the narrow Khaibar Pass, and spread out on the plains below found Lahore blocking the path to plunder-laden kingdoms to the South and East. It was ever the key to Hindustan, the hilt of the sword of conquest.

Held to be one of the oldest cities in the world, because of the antiquity of the documents in which it is mentioned, it has been through its long history the chief city of the Land of the Five Rivers,* which has been the melting-pot of the races of India, from the distant time of the first Aryan migrations across the Indus down to the present day, when, in the justly celebrated Kashmiri bazaar, one encounters stray Afghans, Kashmiris and Pathans, Afridis, Mohmans and Mahsuds, rubbing elbows with their Moslem brothers from the southern Panjab and from the regions to the south and east.

The Mohammedan history of Lahore begins with its conquest by Mahmud of Ghazni in the beginning of the eleventh century when all the ancient Hindu temples and landmarks appear to have been razed to the ground. This unworthy achievement is attributed to the first Mohammedan governor of Lahore, Aiyaz, considered by Moslems to be the real founder. By them his tomb is still pointed out with veneration.

* The word "Panjab" means "Five Rivers."

It was under the Moguls that Lahore, together with Delhi and Agra, attained its greatest glory. Babar constructed splendid roads and planted fruit-trees. Akbar rebuilt the city walls, to a height of thirty feet, and erected the palace, whose foundations still remain, within the fort which occupies the north-east corner of the old walled city. Jahangir built a magnificent mosque and the Tripolia Bazaar, both afterward demolished by the Sikhs, and the white mausoleum of the beautiful Anarkali of tragic memory. Shah Jahan, "the builder," erected the mausoleum for Jahangir at Shahdara, dug the Ravi canal and laid out the famous Shalimar gardens for the use of the ladies of his harem, of whom the chief was Arjumand Banu Begum whose mausoleum at Agra, the incomparable Taj Mahal, is renowned the world over. Aarangzeb's principal contribution to the artistic glory of Lahore was the Jama Masjid, called the Badshahi Masjid, patterned after the Masjid of Ali Walid in Mecca. Under Aarangzeb the decline of Lahore began, and it continued under the Sikhs who stripped the ornaments from Mohammedan tombs and temples in order to adorn therewith their glittering Golden Temple at Amritsar. Today under the British government costly efforts are being made to restore and preserve the greatest of these monuments of a halcyon past.

The importance of Lahore as a Moslem centre, from the geographical standpoint, lies in the fact that it is the capital of the most thickly populated Mohammedan province in British India. More than one-half of the population of the Panjab (to be exact 12,275,477 out of 24,186,750, according to the 1911 census) is Moslem, but the proportion would be much higher if the Kangra and Simla districts, only about five per cent Moslem, were excluded. In the western half of the Panjab the percentage of Mohammedans is above eighty per cent and in the centre, where Lahore is situated, it runs from sixty to seventy-five per cent. Of the total population of Lahore itself (228,489) the number of Moslems (129,301) is greater than the total of Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and Jains, which follow in the order named. In

Peshawar and in Lahore there are flourishing Moham-medan colleges, affiliated to the University of the Panjab, not to mention the Mohammedan students in the several Christian colleges—in Peshawar, Sialkot, Rawalpindi, Delhi and Lahore, of whom no less than 180 are studying in the Forman Christian College, Lahore.

Politically the influence of Lahore is of great importance. Aligarh is still the head-quarters of the dwindling party that clings to the Syed Ahmad Khan tradition of non-interference in politics and emphasis on education united with a rationalistic type of religion. Even there, however, there are evidences of divided counsels, as shown, for instance, in the controversy over the projected Moslem university. Lucknow is the chief centre of the Moslem league party which at the present time has made common cause with the Indian National Congress in demanding of the British Government a larger measure of home rule for India. Several prominent members of this party have, on account of their political activities, been interned since early in the war, and at present the league is urging on Government the desirability of their release. Neither Aligarh nor Lucknow, however, are centres of large and important Moslem districts. Lahore is the headquarters of no national party, but it reflects the sentiments and influences the opinions of the great Moslem province of which it is the capital. Hence in Lahore one moves in a political atmosphere in which all parties are clashing, and new parties are frequently forming. Today there are two important parties, one conservative, another radical, and a third, of growing influence, which is less cautious than the Aligarh group and less extreme than the Moslem League party. The conservative body is the Panjab Moslem Association whose secretary, Mian Mohammed Shafi, is also general secretary of the recently formed All-India Moslem Association which, in sympathy with the Aligarh position, "aims to devote itself to the traditional Moslem policy of safeguarding and advancing Moslem interest." Lahore may soon become the all-India headquarters of this Association. The radical

society is the provincial branch of the All-India Moslem League and has as its secretary Fazl-i-Husain who, like Mian Mohammed Shafi, is a leading Lahore barrister. The influence of this group is rapidly increasing while that of Mian Mohammed Shafi's party is waning. Both of these leagues have branches in several cities of the province.

A fourth society, in part political, the *Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam*, the political and rationalistic branch of the Almadiyas since the split described in a previous issue of *THE MOSLEM WORLD*,* has its head-quarters in Lahore and has recently established a residential high school and a "Senior Cambridge Local College", at which regular instruction in the Christian Scriptures is being given by a Christian missionary. At present the newspapers are not allowed to discuss the political issues arising out of the war, and the *Sitara Subah*, the successor of the defunct *Zemindar*, edited by the brilliant writer of Urdu, Maulvi Zafar Ali Khan, (who with the editor of the late *Conrade* of Delhi, represented and expressed the extreme of pro-Turkish sentiment three years ago), is now engaged in no less violent religious controversy. At this time it is launching its invectives against the Ahmadiya sect. There are about half a dozen important Moslem periodicals in Lahore, representing various political and religious views, of which one, *The Observer*, is in English.

Coming to the more strictly religious phase of the Mohammedanism of Lahore we find two *Anjumans* of long standing in addition to the more recent *Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam* of the reformed Ahmadiyas, to which reference has just been made. The older of these, the *Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam*, has been the orthodox religious society of Islam in India for more than a quarter of a century, and is the influential first parent of many such societies in India, as well as possessing numerous branches in the Panjab. The growingly successful Islamia College and the two Islamia High Schools, in Lahore, are under its aegis and it is seeking in many

* *The Ahmadiyah Movement Today*, by H. A. Walter, *Moslem World* VI p. 66.

ways to promote education and humanitarian and religious ideals among Indian Moslems. Members of this *anjuman* are agitating the foundation of a new Anjuman *Ishaat-i-Islam* for the propagation of Moslem missionary work in the Panjab.

The present missionary activity of the *anjuman* centres in the "Mohammedan Tract and Book Depot," some of whose English books have been described in Mr. McNeile's article in *THE MOSLEM WORLD*.^{*} There have been no later additions to the sixty-seven books in the list which Mr. McNeile saw in 1914, and when we visited the head-quarters recently we noted a large stock of these books in hand. The books first named on the list are those written by western apologists for Islam, J. Davenport, Mohammed Alexander Webb, S. Urban Hamid Snow and W. H. Quilliam. Mr. Snow's "*Prayer Book for Moslems*," although repudiated by reputable Moslems, we understand is still for sale. It is a weird and intolerable jumble of the Koran, the Church of England Prayer Book and Revised Christian hymnody, with a woeful admixture of Mr. Snow's own handiwork, of which this is a sample:

"How many Lord of late are grown,
The troubles of our peace;
In Liverpool† they hourly rise,
So does their rage increase,
Insulting us our souls upbraid;
And Him whom we adore;
For Ahmed, Koran and Islam
They say we'll have no more,
But victory to the Lord belongs,
He only can defend,
His blessing he extends to all
That on His power depend."

The following two verses of another hymn illustrate both the spirit of the author and the character of his verse:

"If God the Moslems whom He loves,
For trial does correct,
What must the Christians and the Jews,
Whom He abhors, expect?"

^{*}A Mohammedan Tract Society. Vol. IV. p. 185.

[†]Referring to Mr. Quilliam's mission at Liverpool. See Dr. Weitbrecht's article. *THE MOSLEM WORLD*, Vol. V, p. 195.

Snares, fire and brimstone on their heads,
 Shall in one tempest shower;
 This dreadful mixture his revenge,
 Into their cup shall pour."

We have never been partial to "Greenland's icy mountains," with its unfortunate reference to a non-existent "coral strand," but we prefer it to Mr. Snow's version:

"From England's wintry climate,
 From China's picturesque land,
 And Africa's sun-burnt brunettes
 Look up and hold their hand.
 From Transvaal and from Burma
 Comes forth an earnest strain,
 They call us to deliver
 Their lands from error's chain."

We have quoted these verses because they illustrate so well the *reductio ad absurdum* to which those western religious adventurers are driven who attempt to fuse their poorly assimilated Christian inheritance with a Mohammedanism which they glorify without understanding.

The secretary of the Tract Society, which prints books in Arabic, Persian and the various North India vernaculars, as well as in English, is Maulvi Karam Baksh, and the secretary of the *anjuman* is Haji Shams ud Din. This is the premier Moslem religious book society of India and sends its output to all parts of the Indian Empire although a few of its books are sent out of the country.

The *Anjuman Islamia*, the third Mohammedan religious body in Lahore, represents the old school divines, and corresponds on to the *Nadwat ul Ulama* with headquarters in Lucknow. In its theological Seminary religious instruction in Arabic and Mohammedan law, traditions and Koranic commentary, on the old lines, is imparted. The Society also has oversight of the principal mosques of the city. The secretary of this body for many years has been Qazi Salim Ullah. Its influence seems to be waning to-day. Mention should also be made of the Intercollegiate Muslim Association, composed of college students and recent graduates, the limited

activities of which are patterned after the Students' Christian Association.

All that has been written thus far relates to the Sunni wing of Islam. Lahore is only second to Lucknow as a center of Shiah Mohammedanism, as anyone who has spent a Muharram season in the city can testify. It is the home of the very influential Qazl Baksh family, which includes several Shiah leaders of nation-wide prominence.

These are momentous days for Islam in India, on whom many problems are pressing—of whom many questions are demanding an answer. Is Pan-Islamism a wholly dead issue? Shall Islam in India join hands with its age-long rival, Hinduism, in a political program which puts India before Islam, even as the Young Turks placed Turkey first and Islam second in their hearts? Is rationalism to win the day over against belief in Islam as a revealed religion, as the split in the Ahmadiya movement and the trend in the Working Mission in England might seem to indicate? Is Mohammed to be defended, or glorified, or offered to mankind as the practical leader whom this war-stained, matter-of-fact world needs? And just emerging over the horizon, suspected at present by only a few of the leaders, are the problems raised by the higher critical labors of scholars like Lammens and Caetani, in the West, which threaten seriously to undermine not now the moral character but the very historic personality, in any full and real sense, of the Prophet of Islam. The influence of the Moslems of Lahore in answering these urgent questions for Indian Islam generally is certain to be of increasing importance in the years to come.

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India.

* A Moslem Mission to England by H. V. W. Stanton. *THE MOSLEM WORLD*, Vol. IV, p. 195.