

under the chairmanship of Lord Zetland, charged with the task of finding a solution to the whole delicate and difficult problem.

By the time we were appointed, Lord Zetland had become a member of Mr. Baldwin's short-lived first Government. I was asked to take the chair, but I felt that since I was a party to the dispute and the chief spokesman of the Indian viewpoint, it would be unfortunate for me to be Chairman of the Committee. We therefore had as our Chairman Mr. J. Hope Simpson, M.P.; the other members, besides myself, were Sir Benjamin Robertson, a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council who had paid an official visit to Kenya in 1920, Diwan Bahadur T. Rangachariar, and Mr. K. C. Roy. We began our work in April and finished it in July; and by August of that year, 1924, a Labour Government—Britain's first—was in office, and when our report was presented to the House of Commons, the Minister who presented it was Mr. J. H. Thomas, the new Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Jim Thomas and I became fast friends and remained so to the end of his life. I never believed that, in the unhappy affair which cut short his political career, he acted otherwise than in good faith. His open and genial nature may have landed him in a difficult and distressing situation, from which the only way out—resignation—was the one which he took unhesitatingly. Jim Thomas was a great-hearted man, of fine and generous feelings, whom I always admired and respected.

Though we had spent many weeks of that summer in committee rooms in the India Office and in long discussions with the Colonial Office, our discussions did not receive the seal or hallmark of any Act of Parliament embodying our suggestions and recommendations. Yet they had, I think, as a compromise, their own genuine value; true, they were only half-measures, but they were all that we had either the power or the authority to recommend.

Of one fact my years in public life have convinced me; that the value of a compromise is that it can supply a bridge across a difficult period, and later having employed that bridge it is often possible to bring into effect the full-scale measures of reform which, originally, would have been rejected out of hand.

On the questions of electoral equality and of unrestricted settlement in the highlands there was no change; Delamere and his

friends held their position. But on immigration we secured the abandonment of an offensive Ordinance which the Kenya Government had already adopted and which would virtually have put an end to Indian immigration into East Africa; the Secretary of State, however, retained the right to enact any measure at any time should African interests appear to be threatened by the influx of immigrants from abroad. Mr. Thomas announced that certain districts in the coastal lowlands were to be reserved for agricultural immigrants from India. These were to some extent gains. But it was obvious then, and it is obvious now, that logicity and permanence are impossible of attainment in the whole difficult and complex racial situation which, because of half-measures and compromises, has been allowed to develop in East Africa. In some measure, I think, we may claim that we did create a better atmosphere and a wider understanding of the Indian viewpoint, and that the fairly practicable *modus vivendi* which subsisted in Kenya for many years, and also in Uganda and Tanganyika, was the result of our committee work and of the detailed recommendations which we made.

One fact was apparent then, and still deserves emphasis thirty years later: East Africa's problems must not be allowed to become a matter of contention between opposing political parties in Britain. I cannot be disinterested in this issue, for my own followers of purely Indian origin number in East Africa nowadays some 50,000—17,000 in Kenya, 27,000 in Tanganyika, and 6,000 in Uganda. As recently as July 1953 I contributed a turnover article to *The Times* in which I set out my views, in principle unchanged by all that had happened in the years between. I wrote:

For as long as we can foresee the British people are the trustees of the population of East Africa, irrespective of race and colour. That trusteeship can never be adequately exercised unless there is a firm bi-partisan understanding and interpretation of that duty between the two main political parties and informed public opinion among all classes in Great Britain. There can be no real union in East Africa among the races if any portion of them believes that the trustees are divided or that they have particular favourite wards. The trusteeship of the African colonies is a great responsibility, a touchstone of success or failure for the British race in one of the greatest challenges placed before it by destiny.

Time alone will show how that responsibility is discharged. As a tailpiece to my account of these happenings in East Africa, however, it may be agreeable to mention that Sir Evelyn Baring, the Governor of Kenya, issued a statement on the occasion of the sixty-eighth anniversary of my inheriting the Imamate of the Ismailis, which was of the greatest warmth, kindness, and courtesy.

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1924 marked the conclusion of a phase of my public life, of five or six years of strenuous and varied activity. Thereafter, until 1929 or thereabouts, I entered a period devoted almost exclusively to my own personal and private life.

I think, however, that I should make it clear that in public affairs I have always been in a sense an amateur. My public life, as I have shown, has moved in successive, fairly clearly defined phases. But the duties and the responsibilities which are mine by inheritance have never for an instant abated. My normal work as Imam of the Ismailis consists of a constitutional leadership and supervision of the various councils and institutions of all the numerous and far-scattered Ismaili communities, self-administered as they are in each region. In addition I am in constant communication with thousands of individuals in the community, on all sorts of diverse matters about which they seek guidance, and it is—as I have indicated—a community spread across the globe from the Great Wall of China to South Africa. This is my job, and it has been a regular part of my daily life for nearly seventy years, from childhood into old age. Of it, and of the religious, social, and historical background whence it springs and with which it is fully integrated, I propose in the next chapter to write at some length and in some detail.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE ISLAMIC CONCEPT AND MY ROLE AS IMAM

THE origins of man's religious aspirations are to be found in what we nowadays call science. Those who have studied mythology and primitive psychology know that magic in various forms started various trains of thought in primitive man by which he achieved what seemed to him to be rational accounts of the natural phenomena he saw around him. It seemed to him rational that these phenomena, these events like the rising and the setting of the sun, the passage of the seasons, the flowering of the bud and the ripening of the fruit, the wind and the rain, were caused and controlled by deities or superior beings. Primitive religious experience and primitive scientific reasoning were linked together in magic, in wizardry. Thus, at one and the same time, mankind's experiences in the realm of sensation and his strivings to explain and co-ordinate those experiences in terms of his mind led to the birth of both science and religion. The two remained linked throughout prehistoric and ancient times, and in the life of the early empires of which we have knowledge. It was difficult to separate what I may call proto-religion from proto-science; they made their journey like two streams, sometimes mingling, sometimes separating, but running side by side.

Such is the background to Greek and Roman thought and culture as well as to ancient Iranian and Hindu philosophy before the beginning of the Christian era. Aristotle, however, gave a more scientific turn to this mingling, introducing as he did categories and concepts that were purely reasonable and shedding those vestiges of religious awe and mystery that are visible even in Plato.

With the decline of the Roman Empire and the break-up of the

great and elaborate system of civilization which Roman Law and administration had sustained for so many centuries, the Dark Ages enfolded Europe. In the seventh century of the Christian era there was a rapid and brilliant new flowering of humanity's capacity and desire for adventure and discovery in the realms of both spirit and intellect. That flowering began in Arabia; its origin and impetus were given to it by my Holy ancestor, the Prophet Mohammed, and we know it by the name of Islam. From Arabia the tide of its influence flowed swiftly and strongly to North Africa and thence to Spain.

Ibn-Rushd, the great Muslim philosopher, known to Europe as Averroes, established clearly the great distinction between two kinds of apprehensible human experience; on the one hand, our experience of nature as we recognize it through our senses, whence comes our capacity to measure and to count (and with that capacity all that it brought in the way of new events and new explanations), and, on the other hand, our immediate and immanent experience of something more real, less dependent on thought or on the processes of the mind, but directly given to us, which I believe to be *religious experience*. Naturally, since our brain is material, and its processes and all the consequences of its processes, are material, the moment that we put either thought or spiritual experience into words this material basis of the brain must give a material presentation to even the highest, most transcendent spiritual experience. But men can study objectively the direct and subjective experiences of those who have had spiritual enlightenment without material intervention.

It is said that we live, move, and have our being in God. We find this concept expressed often in the Koran, not in those words of course, but just as beautifully and more tersely. But when we realize the meaning of this saying, we are already preparing ourselves for the gift of the power of direct experience. Rumi and Hafiz, the great Persian poets, have told us, each in his different way, that some men are born with such natural spiritual capacities and possibilities of development, that they have direct experience of that great love, that all-embracing, all-consuming love, which direct contact with reality gives to the human soul. Hafiz, indeed, has said that men like Jesus Christ, and Muslim mystics like Mansour and Bayezid and others, have possessed that spiritual

power of the greater love; that any of us, if the Holy Spirit<sup>1</sup> ever-present grants us that enlightenment, can, being thus blessed, have the power which Christ had, but that to the overwhelming majority of men this greater love is not a practical possibility. We can, however, make up for its absence from our lives by worldly, human love for individual human beings; and this will give us a measure of enlightenment attainable without the intervention of the Holy Spirit. Those who have had the good fortune to know and feel this worldly, human love should respond to it only with gratitude and regard it as a blessing and as, in its own way, a source of pride. I firmly believe that the higher experience can to a certain extent be prepared for, by absolute devotion in the material world to another human being. Thus from the most worldly point of view and with no comprehension of the higher life of the spirit, the lower, more terrestrial spirit makes us aware that all the treasures of this life, all that fame, wealth, and health can bring are nothing beside the happiness which is created and sustained by the love of one human being for another. This great grace we can see in ordinary life as we look about us, among our acquaintances and friends.

But as the joys of human love surpass all that riches and power may bring a man, so does that greater spiritual love and enlightenment, the fruit of that sublime experience of the direct vision of reality which is God's gift and grace, surpass all that the finest, truest human love can offer. For that gift we must ever pray.

Now, I am convinced that through Islam, through the ideal of Allah, as presented by Muslims, man can attain this direct experience which no words can explain but which for him are absolute certainties. I have not discussed experience of this order with non-Muslims, but I have been told that Buddhists, Brahmins, Zoroastrians, and Christians—I have not often heard it of Jews, except perhaps Spinoza—have also attained this direct, mystical vision. I am certain that many Muslims, and I am convinced that I myself, have had moments of enlightenment and of knowledge of a kind which we cannot communicate because it is something given and not something acquired.

To a certain extent I have found that the following verse of the

<sup>1</sup> It must be realized that the Muslim concept of the Holy Spirit differs profoundly from the Christian idea of the Third Person of the Trinity.

Koran, so long as it is understood in a purely non-physical sense, has given assistance and understanding to myself and other Muslims. I must, however, warn all who read it not to allow their material critical outlook to break in with literal, verbal explanations of something that is symbolic and allegorical. I appeal to every reader, whether Muslim or not, to accept the spirit of this verse in its entirety:

Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth; His light is as a niche in which is a lamp, and the lamp is in a glass, the glass is as though it were a glittering star; it is lit from a blessed tree, an Olive neither of east nor of the west, the oil of which would well-nigh give light though no fire touched it,—light upon light;—Allah guides to His light whom He pleases; and Allah strikes our parables for men; and Allah all things doth know.

(Chapter XXIV—Light—35)

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From that brief statement of my own personal beliefs, I move on to as concise and as uncontroversial an exposition as I can give of Islam as it is understood and practised today. The present condition of mankind offers surely, with all its dangers and all its challenges, a chance too—a chance of establishing not just material peace among nations but that better peace of God on earth. In that endeavour Islam can play its valuable constructive part, and the Islamic world can be a strong and stabilizing factor, provided it is really understood and its spiritual and moral power recognized and respected.

I shall try, therefore, to give in a small compass a clear survey of the fundamentals of Islam, by which I mean those principles, those articles of faith, and that way of life, all of which are universally accepted among all Muslim sects. First, therefore, I shall propound those Islamic tenets which are held in common by the larger community of Sunnis, and by Shias as well. Having thus made as clear as I can the faith which binds us all as Muslims, I shall then give a brief sketch of Shia doctrine and of those special tenets held by that subdivision of the Shias known as the Ismailis, the sect of which I am the Imam.

First it must be understood that, though these fundamental ideals are universally accepted by Muslims, there does not exist

in Islam, and there has never existed, any source of absolute authority, we have no Papal Encyclical to propound and sanction a dogma, such as Roman Catholics possess, and no Thirty-Nine Articles like those which state the doctrinal position of the Church of England. The Prophet Mohammed had two sources of authority, one religious which was the essential one of his life, and the other secular which, by the circumstances and accidents of his career, became joined to his essential and Divinely-inspired authority in religion.

According to the Sunni school—the majority of Muslims—the Prophet's religious authority came to an end at his death, and he appointed no successor to his secular authority. According to Sunni teaching, the faithful, the companions of the Prophet, the believers, elected Abu Bakr as his successor and his Caliph; but Abu Bakr assumed only the civil and secular power. No one had the authority to succeed to the religious supremacy, which depended on direct Divine inspiration, because the Prophet Mohammed and the Koran declared definitely that he was the final messenger of God, the Absolute. Thus, say the Sunnis, it was impossible to constitute an authority similar to that of the Papacy; it remained for the Faithful to interpret the Koran, the example and the sayings of the Prophet, not only in order to understand Islam but to ensure its development throughout the centuries. Fortunately the Koran has itself made this task easy, for it contains a number of verses which declare that Allah speaks to man in allegory and parable. Thus the Koran leaves the door open for all kinds of possibilities of interpretation without any one interpreter being able to accuse another of being non-Muslim. A felicitous effect of this fundamental principle of Islam, that the Koran is constantly open to allegorical interpretation, has been that our Holy Book has been able to guide and illuminate the thought of believers, century after century, in accordance with the conditions and limitations of intellectual apperception imposed by external influences in the world. It leads also to a greater charity among Muslims, for since there can be no cut-and-dried interpretation all schools of thought can unite in the prayer that the Almighty in His infinite mercy may forgive any mistaken interpretation of the Faith whose cause is ignorance or misunderstanding.

I am trying to put before my Western readers, not the doctrine of the Ismaili sect to which I belong, not Shia doctrine, nor the teachings of the Sufi school of Islamic mysticism, of men such as Jalaledin Rumi or Bayazid Bostami, nor even the views of certain modern Sunni interpreters who, not unlike certain Christian sects, look for literal guidance in the Koran as Christians of these sects find it in the Old and New Testaments; but the main and central Sunni stream of thought, whose source is in the ideas of the school founded by al-Ghazali, and whose influence and teaching have flowed on from century to century.

First, however, we must ask ourselves why this final and consummate appearance of the Divine will was granted to mankind, and what were its causes. All Islamic schools of thought accept it as a fundamental principle that, for centuries, for thousands of years before the advent of Mohammed, there arose from time to time messengers, illumined by Divine grace, for and amongst those races of the earth which had sufficiently advanced intellectually to comprehend such a message. Thus Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and all the Prophets of Israel are universally accepted by Islam. Muslims indeed know no limitation merely to the Prophets of Israel; they are ready to admit that there were similar Divinely-inspired messengers in other countries—Gautama Buddha, Shri Krishna, and Shri Ram in India, Socrates in Greece, the wise men of China, and many other sages and saints among peoples and civilizations of which we have now lost trace. Thus Man's soul has never been left without a specially inspired messenger from the Soul that sustains, embraces, and is the Universe. Then what need was there for a Divine revelation to Mohammed? The answer of Islam is precise and clear. In spite of its great spiritual strength, Jewish monotheism has retained two characteristics which render it essentially different from Islamic monotheism; God has remained, in spite of all, a national and racial God for the children of Israel, and his personality is entirely separate from its supreme manifestation, the Universe.

In far-distant countries such as India and China, the purity of the Faith in the one God had been so vitiated by polytheism, by idolatry and even by a pantheism which was hardly distinguishable from atheism, that these popular and folk-lore religions bore but little resemblance to that which emanated from the true and

The Aga Khan being weighed against diamonds during his Diamond Jubilee celebrations at Bombay in 1946



With the Begum Aga Khan and Prince Sadruddin at the Diamond Jubilee celebrations





H.H. The Prince Aga Khan leading 'My Love' the Derby Winner 1948

The Aga Khan leads in 'My Love', winner of the 1948 Derby

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pure God-head. Christianity lost its strength and meaning for Muslims in that it saw its great and glorious founder not as a man but as God incarnate in man, as God made Flesh. Thus there was an absolute need for the Divine Word's revelation, to Mohammed himself, a man like the others, of God's person and of his relations to the Universe which he had created. Once man has thus comprehended the essence of existence there remains for him the duty, since he knows the absolute value of his own soul, of making for himself a direct path which will constantly lead his individual soul to and bind it with the universal Soul of which the Universe, as much of it as we perceive with our limited vision, is one of the infinite manifestations. Thus Islam's basic principle can only be defined as monorealism and not as monotheism. Consider for example the opening declaration of every Islamic prayer: "Allah-o-Akbar." What does that mean? There can be no doubt that the second word of the declaration likens the character of Allah to a matrix which contains all and gives existence to the infinite, to space, to time, to the Universe, to all active and passive forces imaginable, to life and to the soul. Imam Hassan has explained the Islamic doctrine of God and the Universe by analogy with the sun and its reflection in the pool of a fountain; there is certainly a reflection or image of the sun, but with what poverty and with what little reality, how small and pale is the likeness between this impalpable image and the immense, blazing, white-hot glory of the celestial sphere itself. Allah is the sun; and the Universe as we know it in all its magnitude, and time, with its power, are nothing more than the reflection of the Absolute in the mirror of the fountain.

There is a fundamental difference between the Jewish idea of creation and that of Islam. The creation according to Islam is not a unique act in a given time, but a perpetual and constant event; and God supports and sustains all existence at every moment by His will and His thought. Outside His will, outside His thought, all is nothing, even the things which seem to us absolutely self-evident such as space and time. Allah alone wishes: the Universe exists; and all manifestations are as a witness of the Divine will. I think that I have sufficiently explained the difference between the Islamic doctrine of the unity of God and on one side the theistic ideas, founded upon the Old Testament, and on the other the

pantheistic and dualistic ideas of the Indian religions and that of Zoroaster. But having known the real, the Absolute, having understood the Universe as an infinite succession of events, intended by God, we need an ethic, a code of conduct in order to be able to elevate ourselves towards the ideal demanded by God.

Let us then study the duties of man, as the great majority interpret them, according to the verses of the Koran and the Traditions of the Prophet. First of all, the relations of man to God: there are no priests and no monks. There is no confession of sins, except directly to God.

A man who does not marry, who refuses to shoulder the responsibilities of fatherhood, of building up a home and raising a family through marriage, is severely condemned. In Islam, there are no extreme renunciations, no asceticism, no maceration, above all no flagellations to subjugate the body. The healthy human body is the temple in which the flame of the Holy Spirit burns, and thus it deserves the respect of scrupulous cleanliness and personal hygiene. Prayer is a daily necessity, a direct communication of the spark with the universal flame. Reasonable fasting for a month in every year, provided a man's health is not impaired thereby, is an essential part of the body's discipline, through which the body learns to renounce all impure desires. Adultery, alcoholism, slander, and thinking evil of one's neighbour are specifically and severely condemned. All men, rich and poor, must aid one another materially and personally. The rules vary in detail, but they all maintain the principle of universal mutual aid in the Muslim fraternity. This fraternity is absolute and comprises men of all colours and of all races: black, white, yellow, tawny; all are the sons of Adam in the flesh and all carry in them a spark of the Divine light. Everyone should strive his best to see that this spark be not extinguished but rather developed to that full "Companionship-on-High" which was the vision expressed in the last words of the Prophet on his deathbed, the vision of that blessed state which he saw clearly awaiting him. In Islam the Faithful believe in Divine justice and are convinced that the solution of the great problem of predestination and free will is to be found in the compromise that God knows what man is going to do, but that man is free to do it or not.

Wars are condemned. Peace ought to be universal. Islam means peace, God's peace with man and the peace of men one to another. Usury is condemned, but free and honest trade and agriculture—in all its forms—are encouraged, since they manifest a Divine service, and the welfare of mankind depends upon the continuation and the intensification of these legitimate labours. Politically a republican form of government seems to be the most rightful; for in Islamic countries, which have witnessed the development of absolute monarchs with a great concentration of power within them, the election of the monarch has always remained a lifeless formula which has simply legitimized the usurpation of power.

After death Divine justice will take into consideration the faith, the prayers, and the deeds of man. For the chosen, there is eternal life and the spiritual felicity of the Divine vision. For the condemned, there is hell where they will be consumed with regret for not having known how to merit the grace and the blessing of Divine mercy.

Islamic doctrine goes farther than the other great religions for it proclaims the presence of the soul, perhaps minute but nevertheless existing in an embryonic state in all existence in matter, in animals, trees, and space itself. Every individual, every molecule, every atom has its own spiritual relationship with the All-Powerful Soul of God. But men and women, being more highly developed, are immensely more advanced than the infinite number of other beings known to us. Islam acknowledges the existence of angels, of great souls who have developed themselves to the highest possible planes of the human soul and higher, and who are centres of the forces which are scattered throughout the Universe. Without going as far as Christianity, Islam recognizes the existence of evil spirits which seek by means of their secret suggestions to turn us from good, from that strait way traced by God's finger for the eternal happiness of the humblest as of the greatest—Abraham, Jesus, Mohammed.

Thus far, I have described those tenets of Islam which are professed and held in common by all Muslims of any and every sect or sub-sect. I now come to the divergence of the streams of thought. The Sunnis are the people of the *Sonna* or tradition. Their *Kalama*, or profession of faith, is: "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the Apostle of God." To this the Shias add:

"And Ali, the companion of Mohammed, is the Vicar of God." Etymologically the word "Shia" means either a stream or a section.

The Prophet died without appointing a Caliph or successor. The Shia school of thought maintains that while direct Divine inspiration ceased at the Prophet's death, the need of Divine guidance continued and this could not be left merely to millions of mortal men, subject to the whims and gusts of passion and material necessity, capable of being momentarily but tragically misled by greed, by oratory, or by the sudden desire for material advantage. These dangers were manifest in the period immediately following our Holy Prophet's death. Mohammed had been, as I have shown, both a temporal and a spiritual sovereign. The Caliph or successor of the Prophet was to succeed him in both these capacities; he was to be both *Emir-al-Momenin* or "commander of the true believers" and *Imam-al-Muslimin* or "spiritual chief of the devout". Perhaps an analogy from the Latin Western world will make this clearer: he would be "Supreme Pontiff 'as well as' Emperor or temporal ruler".

Ali, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, the husband of his beloved and only surviving child, Fatima, his first convert, his bold champion in many a war, whom the Prophet in his lifetime said would be to him as Aaron was to Moses, his brother and right-hand man, in the veins of whose descendants the Prophet's own blood would flow, appeared destined to be that true successor; and such had been the general expectation of Islam. The Shias have therefore always held that after the Prophet's death, Divine power, guidance, and leadership manifested themselves in Hazrat Ali as the first Imam or spiritual chief of the devout. The Sunnis, however, consider him the fourth in the succession of Caliphs to temporal power.

The Imam is thus the successor of the Prophet in his religious capacity; he is the man who must be obeyed and who dwells among those from whom he commands spiritual obedience. The Sunnis have always held that this authority is temporal merely and secular, and is exerted only in the political sphere; they believe therefore that it appertains to any lawfully constituted political head of a State, to a Governor or to the President of a republic. The Shias say that this authority is all-pervading and is concerned

with spiritual matters also, that it is transferred by inherited right to the Prophet's successors of his blood.

How this came about is best described in the words of Mr. Justice Arnold in his judgment delivered in the High Court of Bombay on 12th November 1866, in the great lawsuit brought against my grandfather to which I refer elsewhere.

The influence of Ayesha, the young and favourite wife of Mohammed, a rancorous enemy of Fatima and of Ali, procured the election of her own father Abu Bakr; to Abu Bakr succeeded Omar, and to him Osman, upon whose death, in the year 655 of the Christian era, Ali was at last raised to the Caliphate. He was not even then unopposed; aided by Ayesha, Moawiyah of the family of the Umayyads contested the Caliphate with him, and while the strife was still doubtful, in the year A.D. 660, Ali was slain by a Kharegite or Muslim fanatic, in the mosque of Cufa, at that time the principal Muslim city on the right or west bank of the Euphrates—itsself long since a ruin, at no great distance from the ruins of Babylon.

Mr. Justice Arnold's judgment gives a lucid and moving account of the effect on Muslim life and thought of this assassination and of the subsequent murders—nine years and twenty years after their father—of Ali's two sons, Hassan and Hussein, the Prophet's beloved grandchildren whom he himself had publicly hailed as "the foremost among the youths of Paradise"; of the tragic and embittered hostility and misunderstanding that developed between the two main Muslim sects, and all the sorrow and the strife that afflicted succeeding generations.

Of the Shias there are many sub-divisions; some of them believe that this spiritual headship, this Imamate which was Hazrat Ali's, descended through him in the sixth generation to Ismail from whom I myself claim my descent and my Imamate. Others believe that the Imamate is to be traced from Zeid, the grandson of Imam Hussein, the Prophet's grandson martyred at Kerbela. Still others, including the vast majority of the people of Persia, and Indian Shias, believe that the Imamate is now held by a living Imam, the twelfth from Ali, who has never died, who is alive and has lived 1,300 years among us, unseen but seeing; those who profess this doctrine are known as the Asna Asharis. The Ismailis themselves are divided into two parties, a division which stems from the period when my ancestors held the Fatimite Caliphate of Egypt.



One party accepts my ancestor, Nozar, as the rightful successor of the Caliph of Egypt Mustansir, while the other claims as Imam his other son the Caliph Mustalli.

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Thenceforward the story of the Ismailis, of my ancestors and their followers, moves through all the complexities, the ebb and flow, of Islamic history through many centuries. Gibbon, it has been said, abandoned as hopeless the task of clearing up the obscurities of an Asiatic pedigree; there is, however, endless fascination in the study of the web of characters and of events, woven across the ages, which unites us in this present time with all these far-distant glories, tragedies, and mysteries. Often persecuted and oppressed, the faith of my ancestors was never destroyed; at times it flourished as in the epoch of the Fatimite Caliphs, at times it was obscure and little understood.

After the loss of the Fatimite Caliphate in Egypt my ancestors moved first to the highlands of Syria and the Lebanon; thence they journeyed eastwards to the mountains of Iran. They established a stronghold on the craggy peak of Alamut in the Elburz mountains, the range which separates from the rest of Persia the provinces lying immediately to the south of the Caspian. Legend and history intertwine here in the strange tale of the Old Man of the Mountains, and of those hereditary Grand Masters of the Order of the Assassins who held Alamut for nearly two hundred years.

In this period, the Ismaili faith was well-known in Syria, in Iraq, in Arabia itself, and far up into Central Asia. Cities such as Samarkand and Bokhara were then great centres of Muslim learning and thought. A little later in the thirteenth century of the Christian era, Ismaili religious propaganda penetrated into what is now Sinkiang and Chinese Turkestan. There was a time in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when the Ismaili doctrine was the chief and most influential Shi'ite school of thought; but later, with the triumph of the Saffevi Dynasty in Iran (particularly in its north-west province, Azerbaijan), the Asna Ashari, or Twelfth Imam, sect established its predominance. Remnants of the Ismaili faith remained firm and are still to be found in many parts of Asia, North Africa, and Iran. The historical centres of Ismailism indeed are scattered widely all over the Islamic world. In the

mountainous regions of Syria, for example, are to be found the Druzes, in their fastness in the Jebel Druze, who are really Ismailis but who did not originally follow my family in their migration out of Egypt, but remained with the memory of my ancestor, Al Hakem, the Fatimite Caliph of Egypt, who established their doctrines on lines very similar to those of the Syrian Ismailis, who, in present times, are my followers. Similar Ismaili "islands" exist in southern Egypt, in the Yemen, and of course in Iraq. In Iran the centres are around Mahalat, westwards towards Hamadan and to the south of Tehran, others are in Khorassan to the north and east around about Yezd, around Kerman and southwards along the coast of the Persian Gulf from Bandar Abbas to the borders of Pakistan and Sind, and into Baluchistan. Others are in Afghanistan, in Kabul itself; there are many in Russia and Central Asia, around Yarkand, Kashgar, and in many villages and settlements in Sinkiang. In India, certain Hindu tribes were converted by missionaries sent to them by my ancestor, Shah Islam Shah, and took the name of Khojas; a similar process of conversion occurred in Burma as recently as the nineteenth century.

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Now that I have brought this brief record of Ismaili origin, vicissitudes, and wanderings within sight of the contemporary world, it may be timely to give an account in some detail of the life and deeds of my grandfather, the first to be known as the Aga Khan, who emerged into the light of history early in the nineteenth century of the Christian era. His life was (as Mr. Justice Arnold observed) "adventurous and romantic". He was the hereditary chieftain of the important city of Kerman and the son-in-law of the powerful and able Persian monarch, Fatch Ali Shah, holding considerable territorial possessions in addition to his inherited Imamate of the Ismailis.

In 1838 he was involved in conflict with the then ruling Emperor, Mahomed Shah, for reasons of which Mr. Justice Arnold gave the following account:

Hadji Mirza Ahasi, who had been the tutor of Mahomed Shah, was during the whole reign of his royal pupil (from 1834 to 1848) the Prime Minister of Persia. A Persian of very low origin, formerly in the service of the Aga Khan, had become the chief favourite

and minion of the all-powerful minister. This person, through his patron, had the impudence to demand in marriage for his son one of the daughters of the Aga Khan, a granddaughter of the late Shah-in-Shah! This, says the Persian historian, was felt by the Aga Khan to be a great insult; and the request, though strongly pressed by the Prime Minister, was indignantly refused. Having thus made the most powerful man in Persia his deadly enemy, the Aga Khan probably felt that his best chance of safety was to assert himself in arms—a course not uncommon with the great feudatories of disorganized Persia. Making Kerman his headquarters, he appears to have kept up the fight with varying fortunes through the years 1838-9 and part of 1840. In the latter year, overpowered by numbers, he was forced to flight and with difficulty made his escape, attended by a few horsemen, through the deserts of Baluchistan to Sind.

In his wanderings of the next few years my grandfather encountered and rendered stout assistance to the British in their process of military and imperial expansion northwards and westwards from the Punjab. In Sind he raised and maintained a troop of light horse (the descendants of whose survivors were so grave an anxiety to me many years later) and during the latter stages of the first Afghan War, in 1841 and 1842, he and his cavalry were of service to General Nott in Kandahar and to General England when he advanced out of Sind to join Nott. For these services and for others which he rendered to Sir Charles Napier in his conquest of Sind in 1843-4, my grandfather received a pension from the British Government.

In 1845 my grandfather reached Bombay where—as Mr. Justice Arnold expressed it—“he was received by the cordial homage of the whole Khoja population of this city and its neighbourhood”. For a year or two from 1846 onwards he was in Calcutta as a political prisoner, because Mohamed Shah had remonstrated to the British Government about his presence in a port of such ready access to Persia as Bombay. However, in 1848 Mohamed Shah's reign came to an end, and my grandfather settled peaceably in Bombay and there established his *Durkhana*, or headquarters. Not only was this a wise and happy personal decision, but it had an admirable effect on the religious and communal life of the whole Ismaili world. It was as if the heavy load of persecution and fanatical hostility, which they had had to bear for so long, was lifted. Deputations came to Bombay from places as remote as

Kashgar, Bokhara, all parts of Iran, Syria, the Yemen, the African coast and the then narrowly settled hinterland behind it.

Since then there has been no fundamental or violent change in the Ismaili way of life or in the conditions in which my followers can pursue their own religion. At present no deputations come from Russia, but Ismailis in Russia and in Central Asia are not persecuted and are quite free in their religious life; they cannot of course send the tribute, which is merely a token tribute and never has been the sort of mulcting which a few fanatical enemies of the Ismailis have alleged it to be.

With Sinkiang, Kashgar, and Yarkand we have no communication at present, since the frontier is closed—but no more firmly against Ismailis than against anyone else—but we know that they are free to follow their religion and that they are firm and devoted Ismailis with a great deal of self-confidence and the feeling that they constitute by far the most important Ismaili community in the whole world. From Iran, representatives and commissions come and go; from Syria they used to come to India regularly, but now from time to time members of my family go to Syria, or my Syrian followers come and visit me in Egypt. Not long ago I went to Damascus where a great number of my followers came to pay their respects. In nearly all these countries the greater part of the tribute to the Imam is spent on schools, or prayer houses, and on the administration of various religious and social institutions. A considerable measure of local responsibility prevails; questions of marriage and divorce for example are entirely the concern of the local representatives of the Imam. At times, prosperous communities among the Ismailis help less prosperous ones in respect of similar institutions. I issue general instructions and orders; but the actual day-to-day administrative work of each local community is done by the Imam's representative and local chief. Many of these local headships, throughout Central Asia for example, are hereditary. But we have no general regular system. Sometimes a son succeeds, sometimes a grandson. Sometimes he is known as Vizir, or Kamdar (a title which by constant use has degenerated into Kamria). Sometimes he is Rais or Rai. In Syria, the Imam's representatives are known as Amirs. In some parts of Central Asia such as Hunza, the word Amir has been colloquialized and shortened to Mir.

The headship of a religious community spread over a considerable part of the world surface—from Cape Town to Kashgar, from Syria to Singapore—cannot be sustained in accordance with any cut-and-dried system. Moral conditions, material facilities, national aspirations and outlook, and profoundly differing historical backgrounds have to be borne vastly in mind, and the necessary mental adjustments made.

There is therefore great variety and great flexibility of administration. In the British, Portuguese, and French colonies of East Africa, in Uganda, Portuguese East Africa, Madagascar, Natal, and Cape Colony there is a highly developed and civilized administrative system of councils. Educational administrators, property agents, executive and judicial councils all perform an immense amount of day-to-day administrative work, and under my general orders vast financial administration as well. In India and Pakistan there is a similar technique of administration but in a less developed and looser form. In Burma and Malaya the organization closely resembles that of the Ismailis in Africa. Syria, Iran, and the North-west Frontier province of Pakistan are all countries with their strongly-marked individuality, historical background and traditions. These historical variations over centuries, and the accessibility, or lack of it, of many of the more isolated communities, and the development of communications between my family and my followers have all had their effect.

In Central Asia the leadership of the Ismailis is an inheritance in the hands of certain families, and has been handed down in continuous line through centuries. This is true of my followers in Afghanistan, and in Russia and Chinese Turkestan, where certain families have been, since their conversion to Islam, administrators and representatives of the Imam. The local leadership passes down in a close connection of kinship from one generation to another. Sometimes it is the hereditary chieftain and occasionally—as in the case of Hunza—the secular king, himself an Ismaili, who is the administrator of the religious brotherhood.

The correspondence which I maintain with all these far-scattered communities is affected by local circumstances. In Baghdad I have special representatives who deal with Arabian matters; in Iran I have special representatives in every province who deal with Ismaili affairs, who are also generally members of families

that have as a matter of inheritance supplied local Ismaili leaders for probably as long as these people have been linked with my family. In Syria, one such family of representatives has retained an unbroken connection with my family for more than a thousand years.

Ismailism has survived because it has always been fluid. Rigidity is contrary to our whole way of life and outlook. There have really been no cut-and-dried rules, even the set of regulations known as the Holy Laws are directions as to method and procedure and not detailed orders about results to be obtained. In some countries—India and Africa for example—the Ismailis have a council system, under which their local councillors are charged with all internal administrative responsibility, and report to me as to their doings. In Syria, Central Asia, and Iran, leadership, as I have said, is vested in either hereditary or recommended leaders and chiefs, who are the Imam's representatives and who look after the administration of the various Jamats or congregations.

From all parts of the Ismaili world with which regular contact is politically possible a constant flow of communications and reports comes to me. Attending to these, answering them, giving my solutions of specific problems presented to me, discharging my duties as hereditary Imam of this far-scattered religious community and association—such is my working life, and so it has been since I was a boy.

Much of the work of the Ismaili councils and of the Imam's representatives nowadays is purely social, and is concerned with the proper contractual arrangement of matters such as marriage and divorce. On this subject I should perhaps say that nowhere in the world where Ismailis are now settled is there any persecution of them, and no interference with their faith and customs except if and when the general laws of the country are contrary to institutions such as plurality of wives. It is generally overlooked that among Ismailis nobody can take a second wife or divorce his first wife for a whim or—as is sometimes falsely imagined in the West—some frivolous or erratic pretext. There are usually, to our way of thinking, some very good reasons for either action. To beget children is a very proper need and desire in every marriage; if after many years of married life there is still no issue, often a wife herself longs to see her home brightened by the presence of

children with all the laughter, hope, joy, and deep contentment that they bring with them. In other instances there is so profound a difference of character that a divorce is found to be the best solution for the happiness of both parties. But in every case—whether a second wife is taken or a divorce is granted—the various councils or (where there are no councils) the representatives of the Imam have an absolute duty to safeguard the interests of the wife; if a second wife is taken, it is a matter of seeing that full financial protection is assured to the first wife, or if there is a divorce, of seeing that there is a generous, adequate, and seemly monetary settlement.

It is important that it should be realized among non-Muslims that the Islamic view of the institution of marriage—and of all that relates to it, divorce, plurality of wives and so on—is that it is a question solely of contract, of consent, and of definite and mutually accepted responsibilities. The sacramental concept of marriage is not Islam's; therefore except indirectly there is no question of its religious significance at all, and there is no religious ceremony to invest it with the solemnity and the symbolism which appertain to marriage in other religions, like Christianity and Hinduism. It is exactly analogous to—in the West—an entirely civil and secular marriage in a Registry Office or before a Judge. Prayers of course can be offered—prayers for happiness, prosperity, and good health—but there can be no religious ritual beyond these, and they, indeed, are solely a matter of personal choice. There is, therefore, no kind of marriage in Islam, or amongst the Ismailis, except the marriage of mutual consent and mutual understanding. And, as I have indicated, much of the work of the Ismaili councils and of the Imam's representatives in all our Ismaili communities is to see that marriages are properly registered and to ensure that divorce, though not a sin, is so executed that the interests of neither party suffer from it, that as much attention as possible is given to the protection of women, and most of all to safeguarding the maintenance of young children.

The past seventy years have witnessed steady, stable progress on the part of the Ismailis wherever they have settled. Under the Ottoman Empire, in the reign of Abdul Hamid, there was a considerable degree of persecution. Like several other minorities in his empire, they suffered hardship, and many of their leaders

endured imprisonment in the latter years of his despotic rule. With the Young Turk revolution, however, the period of persecution ended. And now, in spite of all the vast political shifts and changes which the world has undergone, I think it may reasonably be claimed that the lot of the Ismailis in general throughout the world is a fairly satisfactory one; wherever they are settled their communities compose a happy, self-respecting, law-abiding, and industrious element in society.

What has been my own policy with my followers? Our religion is our religion, you either believe in it or you do not. You can leave a faith but you cannot, if you do not accept its tenets, remain within it and claim to "reform" it. You can abandon those tenets, but you cannot try to change them and still protest that you belong to the particular sect that holds them. Many people have left the Ismaili faith, just as others have joined it throughout the ages. About a score of people out of many millions—a small group in Karachi and in India—pretended to be Ismailis but called themselves "reformers". The true Ismailis immediately excommunicated them. There has never been any question of changing the Ismaili faith, that faith has remained the same and must remain the same. Those who have not believed in it have rightly left it; we bear them no ill-will and respect them for their sincerity.

What about political guidance? It has been the practice of my ancestors, to which I have strictly adhered, always to advise Ismailis to be absolutely loyal and devoted subjects of the State—whatever its constitution, monarchical or republican—of which they are citizens. Neither my ancestors nor I have ever tried to influence our followers one way or another, but we have told them that the constituted legal authority of any country in which they abide must have their full and absolute loyalty. Similarly, if any government approaches me and asks me for my help and my advice to its subjects, this advice is invariably—as was my father's and my grandfather's—that they must be loyal and law-abiding, and if they have any political grievances they must approach their government as legally constituted, and in loyalty and fidelity to it. All my teaching and my guidance for my followers has been in fulfilment of this principle: render unto God the things which are God's and to Caesar those which are Caesar's.

In matters of social reform I have tried to exert my influence

and authority sensibly and progressively. I have always sought to encourage the emancipation and education of women. In my grandfather's and my father's time the Ismailis were far ahead of any other Muslim sect in the matter of the abolition of the strict veil, even in extremely conservative countries. I have absolutely abolished it; nowadays you will never find an Ismaili woman wearing the veil. Everywhere from the first I have encouraged girls' schools, even in regions where otherwise they were completely unknown. I say with pride that my Ismaili followers are, in this matter of social welfare, far in advance of any other Muslim sect. No doubt it is possible to find individuals equally advanced, but as a body I am convinced that our social conditions—education for both boys and girls, marriage and domestic outlook and customs, the control over divorce, the provision for children in the event of divorce, and so forth—are far ahead. We were pioneers in the introduction of midwifery, and long before any other Muslim community in the Middle East, we had trained nurses for childbirth. With the support and help of Lady Dufferin's nursing association in India, I was able—at a time when normal conditions in these matters were terribly insanitary—to introduce a modern outlook on childbirth, with trained midwives, not only in India and Burma, but in Africa and (so far as general conditions permitted) in Syria and Iraq.

In Africa, where I have been able to give active help as well as advice, we have put the finances of individuals and of the various communities on a thoroughly safe basis. We established an insurance company—the Jubilee Insurance—whose shares have greatly increased in value. We also set up what we called an investment trust, which is really a vast association for receiving money and then putting it out on loan, at a low rate of interest, to Ismaili traders and to people who want to buy or build their own houses.

About my own personal wealth a great deal of nonsense has been written. There must be hundreds of people in the United States with a larger capital wealth than mine; and the same is true of Europe. But perhaps not many people, in view of the incidence of taxation, even in the United States, have the control over an income that I exercise; but this control carries with it—as an unwritten law—the upkeep of all the various communal, social, and religious institutions of my Ismaili following, and in

the end only a small fraction of it—if any—is left for members of my family and myself.

When I read about the "millions of pounds a year" I am supposed to possess, I know only that if I had an income of that size I should be ashamed of myself. There is a great deal of truth in Andrew Carnegie's remark: "The man who dies rich, dies disgraced." I should add: The man who lives rich, lives disgraced. By "lives rich" I mean the man who lives and spends for his own pleasure at a rate and a scale of living in excess of that customary among those called nowadays "the upper income group" in the country of which he is a citizen. I am not a Communist, nor do I believe that a high standard of private life is a sin and an affront to society. I feel no flicker of shame at owning three or four cars; in India by the by, where a great many people from outside come and go, I always have more cars for their use.

Nor am I ashamed of being the owner of a big racing stable, about which I propose to say something in the following chapter. My family have had a long, honourable, and affectionate association with horsemanship in all its forms. Had I to contemplate either giving up having a considerable number of horses in training, or turning it into a paying concern, I have no doubt that by selling a considerable proportion of my stock I could turn it into a paying business any day of the week. Neither my grandfather, my father, nor I have ever looked on our racing as simply a money-making matter, but as a sport which by careful attention and thoughtful administration could become self-supporting and a permanent source of pleasure not only for ourselves, as owners, but for thousands—indeed for millions—who follow our colours on the turf; and we have considered our studs and our training stables as sources of wealth for the countries in which they are maintained, and of practical usefulness from the point of view of preserving and raising the standard of bloodstock.

A specific charge of extravagance against our family related to the period in which, as I have recorded elsewhere, some two thousand people a day were living and feeding at our expense. These two thousand were, after all, descendants and dependants of people who had exiled themselves from Iran with my grandfather and had given up their homes and estates, and in the conditions of the time we, as heads of the Ismaili community, were

responsible for their welfare and maintenance. As soon as I could, and as thoroughly as I could, I dealt with that problem, so that now their descendants are far happier and far more self-reliant than they were, and I have nothing on my conscience about the way in which I dealt with it.

I would have been a profoundly unhappy man if I had possessed one tenth of the fabulous amount of wealth which people say that I have at my disposal, for then indeed I should have felt all my life that I was carrying a dead weight—useless alike to my family and my friends or, for that matter, to my followers. Beyond a certain point, wealth and the material advantages which it brings do more harm than good, to societies as to individuals.

So far as their way of life is concerned I have tried to vary the advice which I have given to my followers, in accordance with the country or State in which they live. Thus in the British colony of East Africa I strongly urge them to make English their first language, to found their family and domestic lives along English lines and in general to adopt British and European customs—except in the matter of alcohol and slavery to tobacco. I am convinced that living as they must in a multi-racial society, the kind of social life and its organization which gives them the greatest opportunities to develop their personalities and is the most practically useful is the one which they ought to follow. On the other hand, to those who live in Burma I have given the same sort of advice—but that they should follow a Burman way of life rather than any other. In Muslim countries like Syria, Egypt, Iraq, and Iran, of course, there are no difficulties at all. My own family's home and social life has always followed an Iranian-Muslim pattern; this has involved no violent or radical readjustment wherever I have lived, so that the European ladies whom I have married, one after the other, have in fact easily and happily acquired an Iranian-Muslim outlook and rhythm of life.

In Africa, however, my followers faced a much more acute problem. They arrived there with Asiatic habits and an Asiatic pattern of existence, but they have encountered a society in process of development which is, if anything, European-African. To have retained an Asiatic outlook in matters of language, habits, and clothing would have been for them a complication and socially a dead weight of archaism in the Africa of the future. In Pakistan

and modern Bharat the Ismailis are likely in the future to assume two totally different patterns of culture. In West Pakistan they will probably speak Urdu or what used to be called Hindustani, and their social habits and customs will be moulded accordingly. In East Pakistan Bengali dress and language will play a major part in Ismaili life. In Bharat the languages which they will speak will probably be Gujarati and Marathi, and their outlook and way of life similarly will take on a Gujarati-Marathi shape. Yet I am certain that so long as they retain their faith the brotherhood of Islam will unite all these people of varying social outlook and patterns of behaviour, and will keep them together in spirit.

## CHAPTER IX

### MY CAREER ON THE TURF

MY interest in horses, their breeding, training, and racing, has been with me all my life and is of course also part of the tradition that I have inherited, the environment in which I was bred. Persian art, in the various exhibitions which have been held in London and elsewhere, has perhaps helped to make the Western public realize the large and important part which sport played in the lives of that old Iranian ruling class whence I am descended. The chase in its many forms was for them not just a distraction; it was a major occupation all their lives through; their hounds, their hawks, their horses were the most beautiful, the swiftest, and the finest that they could breed or procure. My grandfather in his young manhood, at the Court of Fateh Ali Shah, as the favoured son-in-law of that powerful monarch, was as fully absorbed in all the accustomed open-air and athletic sports and pursuits of a sophisticated yet virile society as were any of his contemporaries. After his tribulations and his wanderings ceased and he had settled in Bombay he naturally and happily resumed a way of life not very dissimilar from that which he had known in his youth. And, as I have tried to show earlier in this book, such was the atmosphere in which, from the dawning of conscious experience, I spent my childhood and boyhood.

When my father died he left a large and imposing sporting establishment in being—hawks, hounds, and between eighty and ninety racehorses. A good deal of this establishment my mother naturally pared down, but she kept twenty or thirty of the horses; and throughout my minority these were raced at meetings all over Western India in my name and under my colours. I have earlier given a brief account of some of the successes which I—and with me my cousin and racing partner, Aga Shamsuddin—enjoyed during those years.

One effect of this early and sustained prominence on the Indian turf was that by the time I was in my late teens I had a number of friends who were important and influential in racing circles, two of whom were the brothers Lord William and Lord Marcus Beresford. They were younger sons of the Marquess of Waterford; and Lord William in particular was a powerful and original personality in his own right, and was military secretary to three Viceroys of India in succession, Lord Ripon, Lord Dufferin, and Lord Lansdowne. His long tenure of this key post, in which he had won and maintained the confidence of each of his chiefs, gave him unchallenged influence and authority over a diverse and far-ranging field of affairs—military, social, political, and diplomatic—and in relations with foreign dignitaries and potentates who visited India, and of course with the ruling princes. He was an utterly fearless horseman, of whom it was said that he had broken every bone in his body in falls sustained while hunting, playing polo, or steeplechasing. During his fourteen years as military secretary he became one of India's leading racehorse owners, on his own and in association with two princes, with the Maharajah Darbhanga, an immensely wealthy landlord, and with the Maharajah of Patiala, the leading Sikh prince. The bookmakers, it was always said, lived in fear and trembling of Lord William, for he was a past master in the difficult art of bringing off big betting coups. He was a friend of my family's and of mine from an early age; and whenever he came to Bombay we saw a great deal of him.

When I first went to England in 1898 I discovered therefore—and I was young enough to be agreeably surprised by my discovery—that a good deal was known about my hereditary and personal interest in the breeding of horses and in the turf generally, not merely in exclusively racing circles but in the India Office, at Court, and in the personal entourage of the Prince of Wales. Either Lord William Beresford or his brother Lord Marcus—and I have never been able to find out which of them—had taken steps to have my colours as an owner registered in England. They both knew that in India my family's racing colours had always been green and red; they are also the colours of the Ismaili flag, and when my ancestors were temporal sovereigns—both in Egypt and in Iran—green and red were the colours of their standards.

Some years later I discovered that my colours in England were registered as green and chocolate; I made inquiries from Messrs. Wetherby, who told me that when the registration occurred, green and red were not available; but they could never tell me whether it was Lord William or Lord Marcus—or indeed someone else—who had chosen green and chocolate. Many years later my elder son was able to get a combination of green and red; no doubt by that time I too could have changed, but by then my green and chocolate had become so lucky and so well known that it would have been neither politic nor practicable to change them. In France, I may say, and in Europe generally, my racing colours are and have always been green and red.

I was at once made an honorary member of the Grand Stand at Epsom. My first serious racing, I well remember, was the Epsom Spring Meeting of 1898, when I saw the great Ray Ronald win the City and Suburban. I am proud to think that I told my friends that this was a fine horse who was sure to make his mark in the history of bloodstock breeding—especially proud because this particular win, considering his age and weight, was nothing very wonderful. A few weeks later I went to the Derby; I had a small bet of a sovereign at 66 to 1 on a horse called Jeddah. Though my own bet was at 66 to 1, the horse actually started at 100 to 1, and then to everybody's astonishment won the Derby. My friend the Prince of Wales happened to spot me in the enclosure and called across to me with a laugh that a horse called Jeddah ought certainly to have belonged to me.

At Ascot I have had a Royal Household badge for well over fifty years; I was first given my badge by Queen Victoria, and it has successively been rebestowed on me by King Edward VII, King George V, King George VI, and Queen Elizabeth II.

From the beginning, however, my interest in racing has never been merely idle or transient. From 1898 onwards in England or on the continent of Europe I went to race meetings and I followed the form of the horses very carefully. In India, at Bombay, Poona, or Calcutta, I never, if I could possibly avoid it, missed a meeting.

In France in 1905 I made the acquaintance of Mr. W. K. Vanderbilt, then the leading owner in the country. Although he was a great deal older than I was, he took a special interest in letting me into all the secrets of the administration of his great

racing stables. He introduced me to his trainer, William Duke, to whom he gave strict instructions that I was to be allowed to visit his stables for the trials and training of his horses whenever I wished. Mr. Vanderbilt said to me, "I think you'll get more pleasure out of a free run of my stables than out of a free run of my house."

Whenever I was in Paris William Duke would send me word if he had any important trials on hand, and often in the early morning I would go out to the stables and watch these trials. During these sixteen years from 1898 to the outbreak of the First World War, while I watched European racing, breeding, and training but took no active part myself, my imagination was stirred by, and I have retained vivid impressions of, a few great horses; there were, of course, many others just as good, great, and successful, but they and their performances have not stayed in my memory in the same way. I say without hesitation that of all the horses which I saw in England, Tetrarch and Spearmint were the two that impressed me most. I saw mares like Sceptre and Pretty Polly and horses like Ardpatrik and Sunstar in England, and Sardana-pale in France. Sceptre and Pretty Polly are the only two mares that I have ever known which, in quality and character, were comparable with the great horses that I have named. They both possessed speed, strength, and soundness of wind and limb on a scale equal to any male horse; so good were they that they were raced until they were five years old, and their descendants have left their mark on bloodstock in England. In general, however, there can be no doubt that the male thoroughbred is greatly superior to the mare. Not one of these mares left on me the durable impression of power that I derived from Spearmint and Tetrarch in England, and one outstanding French horse, Prestige.

I am not at all sure that Prestige was not the most impressive racehorse that I ever saw. Mr. Vanderbilt owned another horse called Maintenon at the same time as Prestige and they were often tried out in gallops together. Maintenon was a good horse and he won the French Derby, but in a real hard gallop he could never get within twenty lengths of Prestige. William Duke, who trained both of them, told me again and again that no weight—not even three stone—could have brought the two horses together. Unfortunately Prestige was never entered in a single important



race; if he had been he would have won in a canter. He was never defeated and he was never out of a gentle gallop, because nobody seemed to realize the reserve power which he had and could have shown if he had ever been called on to do so. It was the same story with his morning gallops. The jockeys who rode him told Duke that they were actually afraid of pushing him, even to a fraction of his best, lest he run away with them. He was a beautiful-tempered horse, and to this day I have never been able to understand why Mr. Vanderbilt sold him very cheaply and kept far less impressive horses as stallions. True, Prestige never got good mares, but still he sired Sardanapale.

When Sardanapale was at the height of his power and his glory, having just won the Grand Prix de Paris and the French Derby, the First World War came. I was then, as I have recorded, in Africa. When I returned to Europe I found that racing for all practical purposes was dead; I myself was busy and intensely pre-occupied with the events and doings which I have described. I did not go to a race course or follow racing form again in the slightest until 1919, when the first post-war Derby was run at Epsom. From then onwards until 1921 I got myself back into the habit of going to any important race meeting, wherever I happened to be, England, France, Belgium, Italy, India, or Egypt. I had long ago made up my mind—far back in the nineties—to have a few horses in Europe, but the death of my dearly beloved cousin, Aga Shamsuddin, with whom I had intended to open a stable in Europe in 1910, had put an end to all my hopes and ideas on this matter.

Then one day in the spring of 1921 at dinner at Mrs. Edwin Montagu's house, I found myself sitting next to Mrs. Asquith, a daughter-in-law of the former Prime Minister, and a sister of Mrs. George Lambton. We talked horses and she urged me as vigorously as she could, to take up breeding bloodstock and racing in England.

"Why don't you," she said, "send for my brother-in-law, George, and ask him to buy a few mares and yearlings for you?"

Back in my room at the Ritz I sat down and wrote a note to George Lambton asking him to call on me. Our conversation bore fruit. He introduced me to Richard Dawson, a well-known Irish sportsman, and recommended him to take up my training for me,

while he himself agreed to buy me a few yearlings. When I went back to Paris I sent for William Duke, whose patron, Mr. Vanderbilt, was dead, and who therefore was free to work for someone else. He began to train and buy yearlings for me in France; in England Mr. Lambton did the buying and Mr. Dawson the training. Then I myself began to study the breeding of the yearlings that came up for sale at Deauville and Doncaster. Among the Doncaster yearlings I chose one in particular that became one of the mares on which I founded my stud, the filly to which I gave the name Teresina. At the same time I picked out another yearling by the same sire Tracery; I wired Lambton and I wrote post-haste to Dawson urging the purchase of this colt. The colt was none other than Papyrus, the Derby winner of 1923. Mr. Lambton did not like him, finding him too small and on the stocky side.

That shows how little we ought to go by the make and the shape of a yearling, so long as his legs are sound and he is neither a giant nor a lilliputian. Apart from the all-important factor of his breeding, I have one rule by which to judge a yearling: is he going to be very tall and heavy or will he never be more than a pony? Do his legs look strong enough to stand the hard leg-exercises, gallops, and so forth of training?

The general public take a great interest in racing; they have their favourites, their likes, and their dislikes, but very few people really understand what is the foundation of the art of training a racehorse. The object is precisely the same as that of training a boxer. Your boxer, your wrestler, your weightlifter, by various muscular exercises and movements undertaken daily, in a carefully thought-out and planned programme, gets his whole body, his nerves, his muscles, his capacity to give and take punishment all brought to their fullest, most perfect pitch of development—for the day of his crucial contest.

With a horse, of course, there is no question of putting him down on his back to do all the scientifically planned and disciplined exercises that a human athlete can be put through. There is only one way of building up a horse's muscles—and the nervous energy that must take charge of those muscles—and that is by walking, running, and, if necessary, a certain amount of jumping. The great trainer is the one who knows how to adjust the pattern

of these exercises so that his horses will attain the height of their physical power, fresh and vigorous and with their nervous energy at its peak, on the most important day of their racing careers, just as the prize fighter who wins is the one who is on the top of his form when he steps into the ring in Madison Square Garden.

My recollections of thirty years of European racing, from 1922, when my colours were first seen on English and French race courses, to 1952, are countless in their variation, both in respect of men and of horses.

Across memory's screen so many great sportsmen come and go—English, American, French, with all their individual characteristics, their quirks of outlook and temperament. I recall immediately, for example, Mr. Joseph Widener, of Philadelphia, one of my closest and kindest friends, among American owners. He had strong opinions about breeding, particularly on the subject of the importance of the dam, as against the sire, in bloodstock. I once said to him that since he was convinced that the maternal was much more important than the paternal, if he applied his theories to human beings, a family would rapidly degenerate unless its young men married Widener girls. Was my joke in good taste? At any rate he was good enough to laugh at it.

My friend the late Lord Wavertree was another who attached little importance to the sire and great importance to the dam. Lord Wavertree, indeed, went further over this than anyone else I have known, holding that if your mares are good it really does not matter what sort of sire you mate them with. My own view is that you must try to secure the best and most suitable breeding through both sire and dam, bring it by both in-breeding and out-crossing as near perfect in the abstract as you can. Success will depend on whether any particular foal takes after his dam and the majority of her maternal ascendants or after his sire and the majority of his paternal ascendants. Thus with two horses which are full brothers, unless they are identical twins, it is not possible to say with certainty whether they will possess similar or dissimilar characteristics. One may display the paternal ascendant qualities of the sire and be a very great horse; the other may have the maternal ascendants of the dam and be a poor horse. On the other hand, both or either may possess the maternal ascendants of sire or dam, and be a failure. Thus after a great deal of study

and careful thought and weighing-up of much experience, I have come to the conclusion that I still must leave it to chance, for it is quite impossible to say in advance that a horse, possessing the best blood in the world, will turn out any good, and this despite anything his own brother or sister may have done.

I advised Mr. Lambton to buy some excellent mares, and he himself picked out some fine ones, like Mumtaz Mahal and Cos; and he picked up a couple of very good colts, Diophon and Salmon Trout. My immediate success, I am convinced, was due to the fact that I began my European racing career with two of the greatest trainers of all time to look after my horses, William Duke and Richard Dawson.

Trainers as capable as Richard Dawson no doubt exist today, but I do not think there is anyone who has his supreme courage—unless it be Madame Tesio of Italy. Dawson's great quality was that he would risk everything in order that his horse should be at his very best, muscled up to perfection, for the most important event of his life. From all I hear today the methods that are fashionable both in England and with the majority of French trainers are far more tender. In general, trainers nowadays spare their horses a great deal more than did men like Dawson and Duke, or, for that matter, the man whom I consider the greatest trainer of all, Frank Butters.

There is far too much coddling at present, far too much cotton-wool. Since nearly all trainers subscribe to the current fashionable views it does not matter greatly, but I think if any of them came up against one of the hard men of the past or Madame Tesio, they would show up badly. The reason given is doubtless that in the old days, many horses were broken down in the process of training. I have been told that Gilpin, one of the greatest of old-time trainers, only a few days before the Derby broke down the filly with which he had expected to win it. Gilpin was not in the slightest bit ruffled; he did not even apologize to the owner. He said, quite rightly, that if he had spared her the gallop in which she broke down she would never have won the Derby, and that it was his job to take every chance for a win rather than by insufficient preparation ensure defeat.

From 1931 onwards I had the great good fortune of having my very dear friend, Mr. Frank Butters, to train for me, for whom

we all in my family have the greatest affection. Mr. Butters, one of the most delightful human beings one could ever hope to meet, with a nature as clean and clear as a diamond but without its harshness, was one of the greatest and most successful trainers in the world. He began his career in Austria and Hungary and rose immediately to the top of his profession. He moved on to Italy and there too in no time he was at the top again. Later he took Lord Derby's stable in hand, and with horses like Fairway and others he was the leading trainer in Britain for several years and made his patron the leading owner. When he left Lord Derby and came to me the tables were quickly turned and I took the front again as leading owner and breeder. For me he trained a succession of magnificent horses like Bahram, Mahmoud, Tehran, and Firdaussi, and a great many splendid two-year-olds. Even more wonderful than his success with great horses was his way with quite moderate ones. He had a wonderful knack of getting out of any horse the very best that that horse could do.

In some ways Butters and Duke were alike, particularly in that neither of them attached the importance that most other trainers attach to the detailed appearance of the yearlings which came to them. Mr. Duke used to go out of his way to pooh-pooh people who chose yearlings on appearance and make and shape; he held that one yearling was as good as another, if it were properly trained and had in it the natural qualities of health and nervous energy, and—most important of all—the capacity to rest and to sleep. When he bought yearlings for me he never bothered to make any elaborate inspection of them; in fact I doubt if he ever gave them a second thought. If while an auction was in progress he failed to buy one yearling for which he had been bidding, he was never disappointed but would laugh it off and say that the next would probably be better still. To him it was almost like putting numbers in a hat and pulling them out—plus, of course, absolute confidence in his own methods of training. He believed in himself, not in his yearlings. Long before they were in general use he employed vitamins and other natural methods of sustaining a horse's health and nervous energies. Duke was a man who had a number of enemies, the source of whose hostility was jealousy. Those whose expensive yearlings had been beaten by ones that Duke had picked up cheaply were apt to hint that he doped his

horses. Nothing could be further from the truth. He would laugh and tell me that his dope was first-class food, a great deal of fresh lucerne grass, fresh vitamins, lots of fresh air in the loose-boxes, and hard work for every horse.

French training grounds were very bad in those days, though I am told that they have much improved of late. Duke therefore had more or less to train his horses on the race course. He had one very honourable rule: that in countries in which the training grounds were impossible, the public had no business judging a horse until he had shown his true form at least once; thereafter any marked inequalities of form were against the public interest, and a good trainer ought not to keep a horse that ran thus but should turn him out of the stable. A horse should be consistent in his form once he had shown it, but the public had no right to expect a trainer or an owner to break his horse on impossible training grounds.

Frank Butters, on the other hand, never needed races as preparation for his horses. If his two-year-olds were ever capable of winning they won the first time they were out. The great Bahram, for example, before his Derby had one race—the Two Thousand Guineas—and he cantered away with that as he did with the Derby. No nonsense about his needing two or three eye-openers.

I have often been asked which I considered to be the greatest horse I ever bred. Until Tulyar came on the scene I would unhesitatingly have said Bahram. But Tulyar has shown a certain capacity for always doing just enough, which makes it difficult to assess his limits as compared with Bahram's. Bahram was probably the most dominating horse I ever saw. From the first he looked and acted the champion. Tulyar running is a greyhound. In my youth I saw the great Flying Fox as a two- and three-year-old—curiously like Tulyar, he ran with his head in line with his body or perhaps even lower; practically every horse runs with his neck carried higher than his body, and some with their heads right up. Tulyar and Flying Fox have been the only two exceptions to this rule that I have ever seen. But the present Lord Rosebery, that great figure in English racing—and how widespread is the regret that he does not take a more leading and active part in its administration—has told me that the famous Eclipse, the ancestor of almost all the good horses in the world, used to gallop with his

head right down, almost as if he were smelling the ground. Tulyar gallops like a bullet, straight as an arrow. We must, however, face the fact that Tulyar—unlike Bahram—is on the small side for a great racehorse. Bahram was the tallest Derby winner of modern times, and Tulyar is probably one of the shortest. And there is no getting away from the old, old saying: "A big good 'un is better than a little good 'un."

I am not sure, however, that there is not another side to this question. Many sound judges—like Mr. Frank Butters and the late Captain Greer—have told me that English breeders have gone too much for size and bone, and that we need a smaller run of stallion to achieve that concentration of vitality which is so often found in small men and animals. I think that there is a great deal in this, and I am glad to think therefore that Tulyar will remain in Ireland to influence new generations and to check this over-emphasis on size and bone. Many of us had hoped that the Derby winner, Manna—also a small horse—would help to bring down size, but Manna unfortunately was a comparative failure. The great Hyperion of course was a small horse, and one of the greatest stallions of all time. But we need more than one Hyperion if we are to prevail against the present tendency to sacrifice vitality and nervous energy to muscle and bone.

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Looking back in this fashion over my memories of owning, breeding, and racing horses, I do not propose to give a detailed account of my wins, my prizes, my bloodstock sales, and so forth. For those who want that sort of record it is admirably supplied by *Ruff's Guide to the Turf*. My own recollections stretch back well over fifty years, to the late nineties, to a generation of jockeys, owners, and trainers long since departed, and to methods of riding entirely forgotten except in old prints and pictures. There was the first Duke of Westminster, for example, gentle and kind in appearance, yet with a strain of irascibility in him. When Mr. Gladstone, who had many years before given him his dukedom, announced his support of Irish Home Rule, the Duke unceremoniously bundled Mr. Gladstone's portrait out of his house and into a public auction. He was small and lightly built and—so I was told—actually rode some of his own best horses at trials. He

had one odd sartorial whim: always, whatever the occasion, he wore, either with a morning coat or a frock coat, a blue shirt, a blue collar, and a blue necktie.

One day the Duke of Westminster went into his stables, and a mare, Vampire, attacked him. He at once ordered Vampire to be destroyed. He was begged to reprieve her and finally agreed. Two or three years later she got him The Bat and later Flying Fox.

There was the Duke of Portland, whom in later years I came to know very well; after the Derby of 1935 he listed for me the points of resemblance between his great St. Simon and my great Bahram.

There was Sir J. B.—"Blundell"—Maple, the father-in-law of my friend Baron Eckardstein, bigly built, loud of voice, self-confident, even perhaps self-satisfied, certainly self-made, but withal a truly kind-hearted and generous person. However, as founder and owner of his furniture store in Tottenham Court Road, he was not popular with the supremely aristocratic little clique which in those days ruled the Jockey Club; time and again they blackballed him. One day it became known that he was dying; there was remorse all round, and he was elected to the Jockey Club post-haste.

There were the brothers Reuben and Arthur Sassoon, two of the kindest old men I ever met, generous and gentle. They had no hint of snobbishness in them, but they were extremely well liked in society at its highest levels, and were both close personal friends of King Edward. I have always understood that they did his modest betting for him at race meetings; his stakes ranged from twenty-five to fifty pounds, but the Sassoons placed them with as much care and trouble and anxious inquiry as if they had been for thousands of pounds.

The great event in racing in the late nineties, of course, was the revolution in riding that came from America. Lord William Beresford brought over Tod Sloan with his American mount. All the leading owners, like the Dukes of Westminster and Portland, pooh-poohed it at first. But it upset every appletart. Race after race was won by Sloan and his American imitators, who invaded both England and France. The old-fashioned champions, if they were too old or too stubborn to move with the times and change, had to give up and retire altogether. Not long after this doping

was introduced—also from across the Atlantic. This also upset everybody, and it took several years to get it finally barred in England and in France and its perpetrators sternly punished. The American mount, however, was a quite different matter. It had come to stay, and nobody thereafter thought of returning to the old cavalry seat in racing, with its erect posture. In its own way this was as big a revolution in racing as was the discovery of gun-powder in warfare. It is undoubtedly true that the results are an immense improvement on those of the past, but aesthetically the old seat, with its dignity and grace in the rider as much as in the horse, is a great loss.

I have often been asked how the best horses of today compare with the best horses of the late nineties and the early years of this century. Are today's best really much superior to their predecessors? I personally have not the least hesitation in saying that great progress has been made in the past fifty years. And why not? If it had not been, racing—with all its countless and elaborate methods of breeding and selection—would be senseless and time-wasting. The whole object of picking and choosing in mating horses is constantly to improve the breed by letting artificial selection assist natural selection. We who breed racehorses firmly believe that the combination of these two, if it is carried out conscientiously and scientifically, can and does produce steady and marked improvement in racial characteristics and qualities. There is a time test not only of record performances but of average races over long but comparable periods of weeks in, let us say, 1914 and the present day. Statistically tested thus, there is no doubt that today's horses do run faster. The exceptional horse apart, the average speed has increased out of all recognition.

We are told that the horses of the past could sustain a gallop twice or three times as long as the ordinary course of today. The veterinary services in India, too, produced a genus of crank of their own who maintained that the ordinary Indian horse—the Katty—is superior to the thoroughbred because he can jog along at a regular pace for miles and miles and miles without stopping. Well, what of it? We have bred for speed, and surely the answer to these croakers and cranks is that the English thoroughbred is not called on to sustain a six- or nine-mile gallop, or to keep going all day; he can sprint a few furlongs and then lie down and sleep—

let the Katty horse amble away—and in that brief sprint he has done all the work that the other horse could have done, without the same long draw on his constitution and vitality. Whatever the distance—long or short—the thoroughbred will defeat the jogger, because he has that extra vitality which will produce the effort needed. The racehorse is bred for a highly specialized purpose, and he fulfils that purpose very well. The sheer facts sustain all the theories about breeding and selection and prove—it seems to me beyond the possibility of contradiction—that there is a steady and continuing improvement in the quality of the English thoroughbred racehorse.

## CHAPTER X

### TOWARDS DOMINION STATUS— THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCES

FOR several years, from the end of 1924 onwards, I took little part in public life. In India the strength of nationalist sentiment grew steadily throughout these years. The personal leadership and authority of Mahatma Gandhi in the Congress Party intensified; the Nehrus, father and son, and Vallabhai Patel were the only leaders approaching him in stature. There were periods of fierce conflict and sullen repression; there were periods of comparative quiescence. The consciousness among Muslims that they must work out their own destiny strengthened steadily. To Lord Chelmsford succeeded Lord Reading; to Lord Reading, Lord Irwin,<sup>1</sup> who, as Edward Wood, had been a Minister in Mr. Baldwin's first Government, a profoundly sincere and serious-minded man of deep religious convictions. Britain's promise of self-government by stages still stood out as the crucial decision in Indo-British relations. Agitation increased, as successive Governments seemed all equally reluctant to take the first steps towards implementing this promise.

Of these events and trends I was an interested observer but little more. A full, active, and eventful private and personal life engrossed me. I went to India every year; my wife was settled in the South of France; my son, Aly, his childish delicacy overcome, lived in England with his tutor, Mr. C. W. Waddington.<sup>2</sup> In the winter of 1923-4 my wife and son came with me to India. My own interest in racing during this period was extremely active; my wife followed my racing in France but not in England.

In 1926 she fell ill, and was an invalid throughout that year. The doctors offered all sorts of diagnoses, ranging from indigestion to "nerves". Later in the year she was in a great deal of pain;

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord Halifax. <sup>2</sup> Formerly Principal of the Mayo College at Ajmer.

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and now at last the doctors paid some attention to her condition, and an operation for appendicitis was suggested. The operation was performed in December. It was discovered that she was not suffering from appendicitis. She seemed to make a steady recovery. But one afternoon I was out driving in the Bois, and when I went back to the hospital I was told that she had died during my absence. A small blood clot had escaped, travelled to her heart, and killed her. She was thirty-seven years old.

More than a year passed. Early in 1928 I proposed marriage to Mlle. Andrée Carron of Chambéry, Aix-les-Bains. I had known Mlle. Carron and her family for twelve or fourteen years, since indeed she was quite a young girl. She was thirty when I proposed to her. She hesitated for a long time before accepting me; and it was not until nearly two years later—December 1929—that we were married at Aix-les-Bains. There arose a ridiculous legend—created and fostered by the newspapers—that I met her serving behind the counter in a chocolate shop whither I had gone to buy sweets. There was never a word of truth in it. What happened was this: when the news of our intended marriage reached the papers, all they knew was that I was going to marry someone called Carron from Chambéry. The reporters descended on Chambéry looking for a Mlle. Carron. At last they found one—selling candy in a sweet shop.

"There she is," they said, and scurried off to telephone their newspapers that they had discovered the Mlle. Carron whom the Aga Khan was going to marry.

The girl in the candy shop had never met me; she did not know me from Adam; my Mlle. Carron was someone quite different, who for several years had had a dressmaking shop in Paris with her sister, and she had never in her life had anything to do with chocolates. But the legend got away to a flying start, and the truth never seemed to catch up with it.

Ours was for many years a happy and well-knit marriage. We had one child, my second son Sadruddin who was born on 17th January, 1933. My wife went everywhere with me. In England in 1930 she was received by their Majesties and was invited to luncheon at Ascot. She shared my social life actively and fully for many years.

Meanwhile, I was being drawn back into political and public life. Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, in a momentous pronouncement, had shown Indians what—in the British view—was to be their ultimate goal in their constitutional evolution, but he had omitted to indicate with any precision the steps or the road to that goal.

“In view of the doubts which have been expressed,” said Lord Irwin, “both in Great Britain and India regarding the interpretation to be placed on the intentions of the British Government in enacting the statute of 1919, I am authorized to state clearly that in their judgment, it is implicit in the Declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India’s constitutional progress as there contemplated is the attainment of Dominion status.”

The two words, “Dominion status”, were to focus and bind Indian ambitions and aspirations for a decade and more, in an ever more forceful and dynamic drive towards independence; and in the end there emerged not one, but two independent and sovereign States—Muslim and Hindu—the latter of which was, almost immediately, to throw away even the vestigial and nominal link of being called a Dominion and proclaim itself (as it had the constitutional right and ability to do) a Republic within the Commonwealth.

In 1928–9, however, all this was to be striven for. Congress met in Calcutta and prepared its own scheme for self-government and Dominion status; but it was marred by the fatal, obsessive flaw of all such Congress schemes to the end, that of underrating—indeed ignoring—Muslim claims to be considered as a nation within a nation. Muslim opinion was therefore alert. A Royal Commission—that classic British instrument for tackling a grave political or constitutional problem, at home or overseas—was by now touring India, taking evidence in impressive quantities and with vast thoroughness; its chairman was Sir John Simon,<sup>1</sup> the great lawyer-politician, then almost at the zenith of his dazzling career; among its members was the pertinacious but personally self-effacing Mr. Clement Attlee, on whose knowledge of India this experience was to have a profound and lasting effect. The Viceroy had announced that after the Simon Commission issued its report it was intended that a conference should be held between

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Viscount Simon.

the Government, the representatives of British India, and the representatives of the Indian States, in order to try to reach agreement on the way in which constitutional progress should be ensured.

It was decided therefore to hold an All-India Muslim Conference in Delhi at the end of 1928, to formulate Muslim views on the way in which Indian independence should evolve. I was asked to preside over this conference. It proved to be, I am convinced, one of the most important in the long series of such assemblies which marked the road towards total and final independence for the whole subcontinent. It was a vast gathering representative of all shades of Muslim opinion. I can claim to be the parent of its important and lasting political decisions. After long, full, and frank discussions we were able to adopt unanimously a series of principles which we set out in a manifesto. They were as follows:

In view of India’s vast extent and its ethnological divisions, the only form of government suitable to Indian conditions is a federal system with complete autonomy and residuary powers vested in the constituent States.

The right of Muslims to elect their representatives in the various Indian legislatures is now the law of the land, and Muslims cannot be deprived of that right without their consent.

In the provinces in which Muslims constitute a minority they shall have a representation in no case less than that enjoyed by them under the existing law (a principle known as weightage).

It is essential that Muslims shall have their due share in the central and provincial Cabinets.

We agreed to concede a similar kind of “weightage” to the Hindu minorities in Sind and other predominantly Muslim provinces, but we insisted that a fair proportion of Muslims should be admitted into the Civil Service and into all statutory self-governing bodies. I myself demanded appropriate safeguards for “the promotion and protection of Muslim education, languages, religion, personal law, and charitable institutions”—all causes for which, over years, I had fought as strenuously as I could. I also thought it right to warn my co-religionists and compatriots of the perils of being too easily taken in by Congress’s protestations of undefined goodwill.

The principles which we had enunciated were to be our guiding lights henceforward in all our encounters with British or Hindu representatives and negotiators, with the Government of India or with the Congress Party, in every discussion of schemes of reform and new projects for the administration of the country. We now had our code-book, and we did not intend to deviate from it.

The unanimity of this conference was especially significant, for it marked the return—long delayed and for the moment private and with no public avowal of his change of mind—of Mr. M. A. Jinnah to agreement with his fellow-Muslims. Mr. Jinnah had attended the Congress Party's meeting in Calcutta shortly before, and had come to the conclusion that for him there was no future in Congress or in any camp—allegedly on an All-India basis—which was in fact Hindu-dominated. We had at last won him over to our view.

If India's political and constitutional evolution could be likened to a protracted and hard-fought chess contest (the analogy is imperfect, I know, for there were always at least three players in this game), then it may be said that the board had now been set for an especially crucial game, the pieces were all in place, and there was a considerable lull while everyone thought out his next move. The Simon Commission set about the task of preparing its report. A General Election in Britain resulted in the resignation of Mr. Baldwin, and the formation by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald of his second Labour Administration; but although the Labour Party were numerically the strongest, they did not command an absolute majority in the House of Commons and were dependent, as five years before, on Liberal support.

The world scene changed rapidly and startlingly during 1929. The Wall Street crash ushered in the years of economic depression, the slump which was to send unemployment figures steadily mounting in practically every Western country, and was to lead desperate men—in Germany and elsewhere—to seek desperate remedies. The brief and deceptively sunlit epoch of the 1920s was over; we were on the threshold of what Sir Winston Churchill has described as "the terrible thirties".

I spent the first three months of 1929 in Egypt, making a close study of Egyptology, having as my guide and instructor Professor Newbury—a most distinguished Egyptologist—who

accompanied me on a tour of all the monuments of the Nile Valley right up to Abu Simbal and back.

The British High Commissioner in Egypt was Lord Lloyd, whom I had known well in India during his highly successful time as Governor of Bombay. A strong-minded imperialist of the school of Cromer and Curzon, George Lloyd was very shortly to come into conflict with his Government at home and resign the post in which he felt that he had lost their confidence. He was a man of remarkable intellectual gifts and great tenacity of purpose. Since he believed so fervently and with so deep and unswerving a passion in the greatness of Britain's imperial destiny, it was perhaps a blessing in disguise that he died early in the Second World War, while still—as statesmen are reckoned—a comparatively young man, for bitter indeed would have been his feelings had he lived to see the final hauling down of the British flag in India and the partition of the subcontinent into the republic of Bharat and—in all probability—the eventual republic of Pakistan.

To me personally he was the kindest and most generous of hosts; but I could not help being uncomfortably aware of his unpopularity with all sections of the Egyptian governing class. King Fuad, whom I had known for more than thirty years and with whom I had been in particularly close contact when the British Government sent me on my mission to Egypt early in the First World War, made a special point of asking me to call and see him. He received me in private at the Abdin Palace. We were alone together for a long time and we had a revealing, if saddening, conversation. The King was already a sick man, though nobody realized the seriousness of his malady. He wept openly at the way in which he himself was rebuffed and neglected, and at the British High Commissioner's relentless refusal to permit him to have any effective say in the governing of his own country.

"Lloyd," he said, "pulls the strings while the marionettes dance. Cromer turned Abbas Hilmi into a puppet. Lloyd is turning me into a corpse!"

At the Mohammed Ali Club, which was the great meeting place of Egypt's leaders, where they could talk, play their beloved cards, and canvass all their countless political and business schemes and plans, I heard—from one friend and acquaintance after another—the same story: Field-Marshal Lord Allenby, for whose