

REVOLT AGAINST REASON

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THE VOICE OF ISLAM

Vol 8, No. 3

December 1956

PROF. KHURSHID AHMAD



## REVOLT AGAINST REASON

By Professor Khurshid Ahmad

ARNOLD LUNN is a famous controversialist. I was first introduced to him through his controversy with Prof. J. B. S. Haldane on "Science and the Supernatural". Lunn has crossed swords with many leading writers of our time—Dr Joad, Prof. Haldane, Father Knox, Dr. Coulton, etc.—and has very ably defended the Christian creed. He is witty and learned and knows how to deal with the throbbing controversies of the time.

Lunn's basic contribution to religio-philosophical literature was his thought-provoking book: "The Flight from Reason". It was written in the chaotic period of 'between the wars.' The book met a very resounding response and in our own country, even Mawlana Mawdoodi spoke highly of it. Now Lunn has revised the book, rather he has entirely rewritten it and has called it "The Revolt against Reason" because when the flight was written the "attack upon reason was still camouflaged" but now with the advent of behaviourists, existentialists, logical positivists and a host of other "ists" the flight has become an open revolt. Hence the new theme: "The Revolt against Reason".

We had heard a lot about conflict between science and religion. Mr. Lunn has explored new vistas of conflict.—The theme of his book is the conflict between science and atheism. He shows that the dominant creed of nineteenth century was absolute faith in the miraculous powers and the omnipotence of science. He christens this creed as "Scientism". Scientism envisaged the dogma that reality is conterminous with the physical universe, and that faith in science is inconsistent with belief in the reality of a supernatural order. This belief created a mental climate which abhorred religion and refused to admit religious dogmas. Mr. Lunn shows that Scientism offers no evidence for its basic dogmas and accepts with unscientific and, therefore, uncritical faith that the belief in the supernatural is an illusion. He claims that scientism is unscientific. It is not preservation of science; it is a perversion of it.

He argues that revolt against God (itself a manifestation of irrationalism) results in revolt against reason which leads to revolt against beauty and revolt against morals. His book is an authenticated record of these expressions of irrationalism. In science this irrationalism assumes the shape of scientism whose greatest manifestation is Darwinism. In politics it leads to Marxism and Anarchism; in philosophy it assumes the form of behaviorism and logical positivism. Lunn discusses all these illusions of the modern age and convincingly exposes their hollowness.

### **Materialism and Marxism**

Materialism became the philosophy of the nineteenth century. It was said that matter alone was real and eternal and even mind was a derivation of it. Lunn criticises this creed and shows how new evidences in the sciences of psychology have derived the bottom off this claim. He says, "The dominant superstition of the nineteenth century was the belief that materialism was the only creed consistent with the scientific outlook. Only a minority of old fashioned scientists remain loyal to this outlook. The change of climate is largely due to the cumulative results of psychical research in many fields, from materialisations to telepathy, it is becoming increasingly difficult to reconcile the assured results of psychical research with the materialistic creed" He offers some of the new evidences in his support.

He also offers the interesting; argument that if materialism be true, it deprives materialists with every claim to truth, "if materialism be true, one's thoughts are the mere byproducts of material processes uninfluenced by reason. Hence, if materialism be right, one's thoughts are determined by irrational process and therefore the thoughts which lead to the conclusions that materialism is right have no relation to reason."

Marx has also been subjected to the same scathing criticism. "Now," writes Mr. Lunn, "if philosophy is the by-product of economics, it is clear that no philosophy can give us a true picture of objective reality. Marxism, which was a by-product of the industrial revolution has therefore 110 more claim to permanent validity than the Summa Theologies which the Marxists no doubt regard as a product of medieval economics. If, then, the Marxist is correct, no philosophy can be true. If Marx was right, Marx must be wrong." (P. 186).

### **Evolution**

Most interesting and most edifying is Arnold Lunn's discussion on Darwinism and evolution. He devotes nearly one-fourth of the book to a thorough scrutiny of this dogma of modern science. Even a superficial introduction of the argument will require a few pages. So I postpone its discussion for some future occasion. For the moment, suffice it to say that one full chapter has been devoted to the historical evolution of modern science and the theory of evolution. The theory has been separately expounded in simple but exact manner and none can accuse Lunn of any kind of travesty. After an exposition of the theory he shows why this theory was presented and how far it is true to say that evolution is proved. He holds that it is not. And in support of his contention extensively refers to leading contemporaries who have spoken clearly on the subject. The views of some of the leading scientists whom he has quoted have come to me as a pleasant shock. He quotes Draesich as saying that "For man of clear intellect Darwinism has long been dead". "Dictionnari Encyclopedique Das Sciences" declares that : Darwinism is a fiction. a poetical accumulation of probabilities without proof and of attractive explanations without demonstrations." And most startling is the verdict of the editor of the French Encyclopedia. Encyclopedia Francaise's fifth volume is devoted to Les Ethes Vivants. The verdict is that:

"The Theory of evolution is impossible. In reality in spite of appearances nobody believes in it any more. Evolution is a sort of dogma in which the priests no longer believe- but which they maintain for their people..... It is necessary to say this in order that future generations may orientate their researches in another fashion."

The book discusses a host of other allied topics and the tone is nowhere apologetic. It has been penned with a confidence in the supremacy of religion and the religious approach and with the conviction that religion alone can save the world from catastrophe and doom. It ends with the significant words that:

"in the final analysis Europe cannot be saved by material factors alone. Europe must recover her soul and not only her soul but her mind. If the anti-rationalists are not dethroned Europe will be lost. Europe must return to the Logos or perish, and the return to reason implies a return to God; for as Pascal insists, there are only two sorts of people whom one can call reasonable: those who serve Cod with all their heart because they know Him, and those who search Him with all their heart because they know him not."

Sovereignty in Islam (Contd. From page 553)

and from them to the Turkish Amirs and Sultans, it had already been questioned by the Kharajites as antimonarchists in Islam, and hence the form of the peoples, consent had to be maintained as baiat at every succession.

We would now give a brief account of the Umay-yad Caliphate as also of the Fatimide Caliphate so that we may know how one Khilafat had come to be divided into several Khilafats and how, therefore, like the Christian Commonwealth, the Commonwealth of Islam had also come to be divided into independent kingdoms (not only in Egypt and Spain; but also in India where the Sultanate of Delhi and the Mughal Empire had come to be founded. In the beginning Sultans like Iltutmish, Balban and Muhammad Tughlaq did receive investiture from the Sultan Khalifah, but the Mughals entirely gave up the practice, and became independently the Padshahs and Shahinshahs of Hindustan.

Again, the same author says on pp. 300-801:

"The caliphate thus outlined embodies the political programme or the orthodox school of jurists, the 'prophetic caliphate' as it is termed—the only legitimate form of Sovereignty, To them it seemed to coincide with the golden age of Islam, under' the first four successors of the Prophet, the 'well-directed', as they are called. After that time the jurists point to a progressive decline, growing more rapid in proportion as Islam departs from its origins. The true Caliphate is succeeded by the kingship, viz., power ' pure and simple, 'the rule of the sword', which has nothing to do with the religious law. A tradition, referred to the Prophet, in different versions, says: 'After me there will be amirs (commanders) and after these kings and after these, tyrants. These traditions gave an outline of the history of the Caliphate from the orthodox point of view, and are on the whole confirmed by history. "

In another passage, he observes even more clearly thus : "But hardly had the first Muslim generation died away when the practical needs of a great polity and the unruly temper of the Arabs, combined to transform the Caliphate first into personal rule under the Uiaayyads ; then, under the Abbaeides, into a monarchy on the Persian pattern, whose apparent orthodoxy but ill concealed the despotism, the violence and the administrative mismanagement which were pushing the empire to its ruin.

In the third century of the Hijrah the Sultanate suspended the Caliphate which was reduced henceforth to a purely decorative function. The military chieftains who ross on the ruins of the empire imposed their rule as de facto authorities, the Caliph Baghdad had to be satisfied with investing them with a show of legitimacy—p. 301.

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