

This aspect of the Indian character has worked unfortunately for him, impugning his veracity and placing him in an unenviable light. Here is the reason why missionaries of long experience among both groups sometimes confess to an ethical stringency and to "more conscience" in their Moslem than in their Hindu students in our schools and colleges.

Again. A rising tide of race consciousness with its accompanying nationalistic aspirations is one of the characteristics of our age. Arabia in this respect is hardly to be grouped with Korea, India or the Philippines. Beyond permitting his home-land to fall to the level of "a sphere of influence," the Arab, like the Afghan, has never surrendered his political birthright. Nevertheless, Arabian politics is in the crucible, and Arabian sentiment is in flux, though perhaps not after the fashion of India. The attitude of these two peoples presents interesting parallels and contrasts. The Indian in his struggle is appraising himself anew; the Arab, however, is not, for he has never lost sight of his own worth; but the Arab both of Oman and Hasa, like the Indian, appears to be developing a critical faculty toward the west. Indian nationalism is in reality a patchy affair, unavoidably so with such a vast uninformed village population, to a certain degree co-extensive with, dependent upon, if not proportionate to education. The same sensitiveness in the Gulf Arab, however, has nothing to do with formal training, and is hardly to be interpreted as the birth throes of a new political era. It is merely the normal expression of a proud spirit as natural to him as the salty desert air. The Indian looks back upon an ancient culture, which, during recent generations, has been slipping imperceptibly from him, and which he now realizes he is in danger of losing altogether, and his own soul to boot. It is in an effort to recover that and his self-respect, that he is willing to stake his all. The Arab looks back on no such cultural past, and is less concerned about the recovery of prestige than he is deeply determined to maintain the

status which he has never lost. His notions of freedom were never taught him by a liberty-loving West, nor are his aspirations a matter of imitation, or his love of independence the result of contagion. The world could be slave, but he would be free.

In short, the Arab is an individualist, and his is a virile spirit which the open desert and the hazard of life thereon has done much to develop. It illustrates itself in a thousand ways, from the patient's refusal to take his medicine because he doesn't like the taste, to the dispatch and finality with which a desert *mejlis* will render judgment. His very conversation will betray the trait. Get him talking politics and he'll prove to be no sycophant. Nor will he waste words in circumlocution. He is more likely to surprise one with his frankness. He is straightforward enough to admit his likes and dislikes, though the admission carries in itself his own condemnation, which, however, he does not always suspect. If he has a grievance, and many of them have, against that power which is interfering with his notions of liberty, in an effort to maintain peace and inculcate a respect for law among the lawless, he will not be slow in stating his resentment and the ground thereof. Writing recently of conditions as he found them on the Pirate Coast, that good friend and servant to the Arab, Dr. Louis P. Dame, remarks that "in order to keep the institution of slavery, all foreigners, especially white men, are kept out. . . . With the white men would come the British Consul, and then slaves would be set free." The feeling is widespread, and testimony to it equally outspoken. Echoes of the same complaint come to us across the marshes of Mesopotamia. In that little-known but illuminating book "Haji Rikkan," the author tells of a greeting he received from a *sheikha* (singularly enough in this instance an old woman) on the occasion of one of his official visits to the people of these reed-swamps.

"I dislike the English," she said abruptly after the conventional salutations were over. "Before they came I

had thirteen slaves. Eleven ran away to the English, and I could not get them back. Is that not reason enough?"

And again, another Sheikh elsewhere, execrating the British attempt to inaugurate a better way to right a wrong than the traditional method of reprisal, exclaimed: "By Allah, if it were not for the English our (stolen) sheep and as many more besides to wipe out the insult would be in our hands before to-morrow night!"

It has ever been so. The same inability to appreciate the strange standards of Christ and the same resentment over individual restraint or the curbing of the Islamic spirit were evident a century ago, when an Ashanti king confessed that the cessation of the slave trade puzzled him, and that "he would give his brother in England (George IV) ten thousand slaves if he would let it be resumed." ²

The writer recalls a sociable evening in Bahrein with the Mission doctor and a couple of Arab guests, one of them of a sheikhly family from inner Oman. The political proclivities of the last-named were pronouncedly pro-German. We sat around a table, and as we dipped the hand into a common dish, reaching now for the water-melon, or the walnuts, or the candy, or as we sipped our coffee, the conversation played around Arabian politics and Ibn Saoud. One of the company ventured the hope that in due time the tribes of Hasa now engaged in blood-shedding would grow quiet, and peace once more reign. Immediately the Omanee spoke up: "No! If God wills they'll be always fighting." Then, the match having touched the train of his thoughts, his imagination began to sweep a wider horizon as the slumbering embers of enmity burst into flame. The Sultan of Muscat and the Sheikh of Bahrein alike, he despised. They were slaves to the British, who were "spoiling the country."

"We could take Muscat to-morrow," he boasted, "but what's the use? Britain would make us give it back to Taimur. And Ibn Saoud would take Kuwait and even

² "Sons of Africa" by G. A. Gollock, p. 41.

Iraq, but for the British." Because of British influence his country, in his eyes, was falling from her pinnacle.

"But don't you think that Arabia is quieter and in a sense more prosperous now by reason of British power in these waters?" asked the Doctor.

He confessed that it was.

"But what you want is freedom, freedom, freedom!"

"Yes, that's it," was the ready rejoinder.

"And that is what the African wants when you Arabs enslave him," was the Doctor's gentle thrust.

"Ah, but that's different," retorted the Omanee noble.

And there we touched the root of his Teutonic sympathy. "England is releasing our slaves," he parried, and then rightly or wrongly added, "But Germany doesn't meddle with those things."³

Whether we approve of or deplore a social theory which provides for slavery, or a religion which defends it, is beside the mark. The simple point is that in these cases, as in many others, we are constantly being reminded of the type of man we confront in the Arab—a self-confident fellow who, by virtue of his faith in himself and his ways, will leap with alacrity unabashed to the defense of conduct, which a truer appreciation of human nature and life's values might cause him to deprecate. But has not the Indian in embracing the principle, not of *jihad*, but of *ahimsa*, come closer to life's true way and more faithfully interpreted its inner meaning? Granted—but this rather enhances the contrast between the two peoples. However much we might regret in our hearts the social wrongs involved in Islamic philosophy, it does not affect the fact that traditionally and temperamentally the Arab is a man of singular spirit, of which stuff masters are made. We may not always like him, much less concur in his judgments, but we may understand him, and to understand is to love.

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³ When pressed for the source of this opinion he confessed it came to him from newspapers (probably propaganda sheets) from Egypt and Zanzibar, which drifted his way.

ISLAM IN INDIA TODAY ¹

Islam in India as distinct from other Moslem countries.

It is neither my object nor my duty to give a survey of the history of Islam in India or of the many sections into which this religion is divided in India. It would be extremely interesting to do so, but it is outside my scope and above my ability. The literature available on Indian Islam is very bulky, but nevertheless very unsatisfactory. Mr. Titus' new book is therefore most welcome. I intend only to offer some general considerations bearing on the peculiar position in which Islam in India finds itself.

Since the beginning of its appearance on the stage of the history of the world, Islam has had relations with India. For a couple of centuries it had the character of raiding expeditions and of mercantile settlements. In the seventh century, during the reign of Khalif Omar, Arab pirates attacked the West coast of India; some decades later an army penetrated into Sind and the Panjab, without leaving distinguishable traces. In 711 an army, commanded by Imad ud-din Muhammad ibn Qasim, was sent by the well-known governor of Basra to Sind. From that time Islam began to win adherents. Until 1193, however, when Delhi was conquered by the slave-general Qutb ud-din Ibak of Muhammad Ghori, Islam as a factor in the life of India maintained its character of destructive and bloody incursion, symbolized in the surname of Mahmud of Ghazni (999-1030), the "idolbreaker." In 1193 Islam established itself as a religious and political power in the country, to stay forever. With few exceptions the Moslem conquerors showed themselves either inimical or indifferent to the Hindus and their religion. Some noted exceptions may be mentioned. Abu Raihan al-Biruni's "Ta'rikh al-Hind" (973-1048) is a marvelous, but solitary testimony of deep and intelligent interest in the country and its inhabitants. His purpose was to bring Sanscrit culture and science to the Moslem world and Moslem culture and science to the Hindu world, an exponent of mutual understanding without posterity. The great Moghal emperor Akbar, on account of his syncretistic and eclectic leanings, took great interest in the spiritual life of the country and had the Mahabharata and Ramayana translated into Persian. His friend and helper Faizi wrote a treatise on the philosophy of the Vedanta. Dara Shikuk took refuge in the cosmopolitan regions of mystical religion to prove in his clumsy way the identity of Moslem and Hindu mysticism, in his "Madjma' al bahrain" (i.e., the mingling of the two seas), which, among other things, caused his tragic death through the instrumentality of his younger brother Aurangzeb. Just as monastic mysticism may be called the superdenominational domain of religion, popular religion may be termed its sub-

¹ The substance of a Report after a three months' visit to India and a careful study of the present situation. This report is too valuable to admit any abbreviation, so want of space compelled us to put it in smaller type.—*Editor*.

denominational region. In the course of the ages Islam and Hinduism have met each other there in this way, that Moslem saints had and have Hindu disciples and devotees, and *vice versa*.

Islam has been propagated in India by the sword, by pressure, by intermarriage and to a great extent by preaching, mainly by the zeal and activity of holy men, who received thousands and thousands of Hindus into the fold of Islam without measuring too critically the quality of the confession and practice of Islam in their new converts.

Nowadays the Moslems of India number about seventy millions. As to numbers therefore India is the most important Moslem country in the world, undoubtedly a fact of great significance. Moreover, India always has been one of the most creative countries in the field of religion. Still I doubt very sincerely whether this numerical consideration can give the right clue to estimate the position and significance of Indian Islam. In order to gain a true insight into this matter, we must review the different factors that determine the situation.

The countries of the world in which Islam is represented, either exclusively as a majority, or as a minority, may be divided into two main groups. In the first place those countries in which Islam has been the paramount or most important political power. In the second place those in which this is not the case. This second group comprises Islam in countries such as China, Russia and its Asiatic dependencies, and the many parts of the world nowadays in Africa and Asia where Islam is established and spreading because of the political and economic expansion of European powers, all places where the Moslems are in greater or smaller numbers subject to non-Moslem rule and never have known Moslem rule. This last addition must be taken into account, because nowadays a great many of the countries falling in the first group are politically dependent on non-Moslem rule, but, and that is the point to be kept in view, have known for the greater part of their history Moslem rule. Such is the case with Indian Islam. For about six hundred years the foremost princes of India have been Moslems. Except the parts south of the Kistna, Moslem states have covered the whole of the country. The Moghal empire under Akbar, Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb has been one of the most splendid examples of Moslem domination in the world. That is a very significant fact. Political supremacy in Islam is synonymous with religious supremacy, because Islam is at once a religious, social and political system. Yet, and this it is to which I desire to call attention, India is the only country in the world in which Islam has had for centuries such a strong and predominant political position without conquering it religiously. Political extension and religious extension have always coincided in the history of Islam. That has been the case in the Mediterranean area, Asia Minor, North Africa, Persia, Central Asia. The still-existing minorities which confess other religions in those countries belong to the *ahl al-kitāb*, who, according to the principles of Islam, have a right to remain loyal to their religion. Not so in India. Islam came to meet in India a religious and social polity, entirely different and antagonistic in spirit and outlook, a luxuriant and deep-rooted civilization, one of the subtlest and highest growths in human history. Probably the caste-system and the Brahmanical supremacy are the main factors that have proved successful against the conversion of Hinduism to Islam. To borrow a phrase from the well-