

"In Islam the tree of life is given the name *Sidra* or *Ṭubā*. In the minds of the Muhammadans it grows in the midst of Paradise and thus becomes a fit subject for artistic representation and, consequently, may be found woven into the *mihṛāb* of prayer rugs.

"The early authorities of Islam, when interpreting the *Qur'an*, explained that the *Sidra* stands in the seventh heaven on the right hand of the throne of God, and marks the utmost bounds of Paradise, beyond which the angels themselves must not pass. This is impressively told in *Sūra* liii:16, and reaffirmed as the *Sūra* continues with the statement: 'Near it is the garden of eternal abode.'

"The *Sidret-el muntehā* ('the *Sidra* of the utmost bounds') has its prototype on the earth in the *Sidra* tree, a kind of wild plum tree, *Ziziphus jujuba*, which grows in Arabia and India. It produces small plums. This tree is also sacred to the Muhammadans, as is demonstrated by their custom of throwing its leaves into water which they use to cleanse a corpse during a burial ceremony."

The author, after considering the Tree of Life in early Babylonian culture in Egypt and in Europe, concludes:

"These observations will be a proof of the fact that the Assyrian *asherah* is the sacred tree that symbolizes the course of the year. This may not be surprising. By studying various symbols it may be learned that they have a constant tradition from the Stone Ages to the Middle Ages; for example, the sun wheel, the swastika, the tree of life, the fish, the cross, the so-called anchor, the ship, the ship chariot, the ax, the spiral, and the labyrinth, to mention only those symbols referred to in this paper, continually reoccur. Thus it may be surmised that the Islamic *mihṛāb* is derived from the twig arch or hut. This idea would conform with what has already been said concerning the framework around the Assyrian *asherah*."

The Annual Bibliography is published by the Jerusalem University, covers a wide field, and contains references also to articles that appeared in our own Quarterly. Z.

La Vie de Mohammed. By E. Dinet et El Hadj Sliman ben Ibrahim. G. P. Maisonneuve, Paris, pp. 305.

As a narrative this life of Mohammed is picturesque and vivid, but as history it is altogether lacking in balanced judgment, because panegyric too often takes the place of constructive thought and all is viewed from the romantic rather than the rational standpoint. For instance, Arab culture is represented as the inspiration and source of European civilization (see Chapter x—particularly p. 280), but L. March Phillips in his interesting book "The Works of Man" draws a very different conclusion saying: "What Europe awoke to at the Renaissance was the value of intellectual culture, the value of thought and reason. She went forward on these lines; and the chief characteristic of the civilization which has ensued has been that rational quality in it which, whatever else it may have done, has secured for it coherence and durability. But every step taken in this direction was a step away from the Arabs. Their mental activity was never of this kind. It was not indeed activity of the intellect so much as activity of the fancy and imagination, and altho it blossomed with incredible swiftness into many imposing results, yet

these were all infected from the beginning with the instability of half-fanciful creatures."

This fanciful element is found in Dinot's life of Mohammed, for while discarding the miracles attributed to him the author retains certain legends, claiming (p. 4) that it is "*un incomparable moyen d'expression.*" . . . etc., see p. 27, 33, 108, etc. Whilst on the one hand, therefore, one finds imaginative additions to history, on the other, there are omissions. The home-life of the prophet is glossed over. No mention is made of his marriage with Saïdah so soon after Khadijah's death, or of his disgraceful treatment of Rihanah the Jewess. Nor can I find any mention of attack on pilgrims.

In trying to justify the institution of the Holy War, the authors misinterpret Christ's words (p. 123) and would make the One Who said, "Resist not evil" (Matt. 5:39) and again, "Love your enemies" (Matt. 5:44), to agree with violence and the use of force.

The claim that Islam may yet become the universal religion (P. 295-296) is not supported by the facts today. Missionaries from different parts of the world agree that there are no signs of a resurgence of Islam. X.

The Syrian Desert: Caravans, Travel Exploration. By Christina Phelps Grant. A. C. Black & Co., London; Macmillan Co., New York. pp. 410, 16 plates and 4 maps; 18 sh.

Here is treasure indeed for the increasing number of those who have crossed the Syrian Desert by airplane or motor from Damascus to Baghdad. The author has read exhaustively and spent four years in research on the history of this highway of the nations since the days of the incense-trade when the wealth of Ormuz and Ind passed by the northern route. The result is a fascinating story, documented not with disturbing footnotes but with a very full bibliography carefully annotated for each chapter, and a wealth of maps, illustrations and diagrams.

She makes clear the historical importance of this ancient trade route, its vicissitudes of decay and revival, until the new era of mechanical transport by air and motor and the modern pipelines across the once weary desert waste of the camel-caravan.

There are chapters on every aspect of the subject: the geology of the desert, the character of its inhabitants, the historical background of caravan travel, the story of the early and later explorers, the Hajj to Mecca, the dromedary post, and the establishment of motor-transport when the dream of a Bagdad railway was dissolved in the World War. As the author remarks: "Certain deserts divide countries and civilizations inexorably; others unite them. The Syrian Desert is one of those which unites adjacent lands; and during the last twenty years the uniting of those lands has acquired a new importance." Only in the chapter on the Pilgrim caravans does the writer betray a lack of sufficient background for accurate description. She confounds the Kaaba with the Black Stone (p. 219), speaks of "Hajjet-al-Islam" and of "el-Beit Allah" and of a merchant called "Ali Cogia", etc. But these are minor errors in a very scholarly and most interesting study, a real introduction to all the classics of desert travel in Northern Arabia. Z.

The Arabs: The life-story of a people who have left their deep impress on the world. By Bertram Thomas, O.B.E. (Mil.): Ph.D. (Cantab): D. Litt. (hon.) Bristol: D. Sc. (hon.) Acadia, Nova Scotia: . . . Prime Minister to the Sultan of Muscat and Oman. pp. 372. London: Thornton Butterworth, Ltd. 1937. 21s.

This is an outline of the history, religion, medieval civilization and later-day politics of the Arabs, based on researches made for a series of lectures at the Lowell Institute, Boston. There are twelve chapters dealing with the rise of the Arabs, their civilization, their decline and revival, together with a discussion of the prospects for their future political federation. There is an appendix on the racial origins of the Arabs, a brief bibliography of the sources used and four sketch maps.

The information on the Arabs of antiquity in the first chapter will satisfy the general reader to whom the book is addressed. The account of the Prophet Muhammad is favorable, rather than impartial. It does not mention actions which are recorded in Muslim sources and repeated with serious disapproval in western biographies. So much unwarranted prejudice against Muhammad has been manifested by western writers that favorable consideration is needed to balance the account. Still there is no warrant to promote statements contrary to the facts on either side. Neither the Qur'an, that is to say, Muhammad's own utterances (cf. Surah 33:51), nor the convictions of the Muslims throughout the centuries will confirm the belief that A'isha was "Muhammad's only real wife except the Copt slave-girl Mary" (p. 66). This belief is not said to be shared by the author and perhaps is mentioned only to indicate a modern Muslim feeling about Muhammad.

The exposition of Islam would be more adequate if it were less brief. The author says the English word for the Arab's religion, Muhammadanism or Muhammadan, is really a misnomer (p. 44). But the Muslims themselves use the term *al-din al-muhammadi*, "the Muhammadan religion." In the Qur'an the word "Muslim" refers to Jews, Christians and other "people of the book" and "Islam" refers to the religion of Abraham, Moses and Jesus. In Turkey there is agitation for a return to the original usage of the word "Muslim" so that the adjective "Muhammadan" is not only valid but needed to distinguish the late system of "Islam" that Muhammad founded.

The accounts of the spread of Islam eastward and westward and the description of the Arabic civilization present the scholarly studies of others in popular lecture form. It is a useful service to bring together the first-hand knowledge that experts in particular fields spend their life-time to acquire.

The last chapters have value for all interested in the Near East because the author draws largely upon his special knowledge and experience. He describes Arabia and the Ottoman Empire before, during and after the World War and discusses the Palestinian problem without prejudice and without claiming to know the solution.

Hartford, Conn.

EDWIN E. CALVERLEY.

La Sagesse Coranique éclairée par des versets choisis reflétant la philosophie morale, religieuse et sociale de l'islam. By Mahmoud Mohtar-Katirjoglon. Published by P. Geuthner, Paris, 1935. pp. 261. 22 fr.

This collection, published a few weeks after the death of the author, General Mahmoud Mohtar Pacha, constitutes his spiritual testament and is the fruit of years of meditation on the essential parts of the Koran, namely, those which have a lasting value in the history of religion and philosophy. It gives a new translation of about one-fifth of the whole Koran and is followed by a Synopsis of fifty pages of the Teaching of the Koran. A careful index correlates the Synopsis and the text of the translation, so that the book will serve as a useful introduction to the study of the Koran itself. The point of view of the author is that of a devout Moslem, exposing what he has found in the Koran to keep his soul in the way of righteousness.

E. I. M. BOYD.

Among the Faithful. By Dahrís Martin. Published by Michael Joseph, London, 1937. pp. 288. 12/6. Illustrated.

This is an autobiographical account of a visit paid by two American ladies, the one an artist, the other an authoress, to the Arab quarter of Kairouan. While the artist painted, the writer visited the family connections of a self-constituted Arab guide. She tells of the inside life of the city with much charm and evidently won the confidence of her hosts and hostesses, although she knew no Arabic to speak of. The description of a Djinn party in Chapter V shows how these phantoms exert an influence over the learned and ignorant alike. "Kalipha, who could not read or write his own name, believed implicitly in them, but so did young Ramah, a graduate of the Sarbonne, so did our merchant friend, who made annual trips to the Continent." (p. 71) Miss Martin kept Ramadan, and so strictly as to wear "the face of Ramadan", and won much appreciation by learning to recite "the Adan exactly like a Moslem." Her diary of the long summer is full of details of the inner life of Kairwan. No mention whatever is made of missions, Protestant or Roman Catholic, but the book might well serve as a picture of the desperate spiritual need of North Africa.

E. I. M. BOYD.

Many Days in Morocco. By John Horne. London, 1936. pp. 256.

The great merit of this book is that it describes vividly the author's impressions, undefiled with information drawn from secondary sources or from the experiences of others. In fifteen chapters the Moroccan landscape rises before our eyes, with all its Islamic and non-Islamic features, supported here and there by the explanatory remarks of a typically European observer. One is made aware of the fact that, with Algeria and Tunis, Morocco forms a large geographic unit—the *Jazīrat al-Maghrib* of Arab writers, the Barbary of Europeans, though not enough emphasis is laid on the fact that the bulk of the indigenous population was and remains Berber. Of course it is true that in the plains the Berbers have adopted Arabic and Islam but Morocco on account of its geographical situation, has been less influenced than either Tunisia or Algeria, from the eastern Mediterranean.

The reader is not touched with anything that might be rightly termed "learned" or "profound." Scientific technique is ruthlessly disregarded to the extent that even the value of an index has not occurred to the author. A lengthy array of Arabic words, wrongly reproduced in their colloquial forms, can be corrected in the next edition. The author is apt to indulge in generalities concerning the entire Moslem and Arab worlds, mainly derived from his contacts with society as organized in North Africa. In some cases he is right but often he is led astray, as in the chapter entitled *Drifting* (p. 114 *seq.*). References to Arabic sources appear in the course of the text in a form so confusing that it repels rather than attracts the reader to such sources.

Mistakes abound throughout the volume. *Kazimin* and *fondak* should be *al-Kāzimayn* and *funduq*. The form *mueddin* as such is certainly unfamiliar.

Sixteen beautiful illustrations and a map accompany the text.

The Institute For Advanced Study,
Princeton, N. J.

EDWARD J. JURJI.

India Reveals Herself. By Basil Mathews. Oxford University Press, New York, 1937. pp. vi, 192. 5 shillings net.

In this his latest book, and his first one dealing with the Indian Empire, Mr. Mathews has given to the readers of the West a stirring and very faithful interpretation of the living drama that is being enacted before our very eyes. Fortified with a deep interest in India and her people, which had developed from wide reading over many years, the author came to this land with something of a mystic anticipation, and effervescent expectancy intent on discovering how India was likely to shape her future.

The book is frankly an impressionistic study of India, as it could hardly be anything else on the basis of a three months' stay in the country. But nevertheless Mr. Mathews managed to see so many of the "key" people in the present-day, moving Indian drama, and to get their point of view, that in these pages one rather vividly *sees* the things that are happening here. As the guest of Gandhi and Jawahir Lal Nehru he caught the spirit of Indian nationalism; and his estimate of Nehru and the problem facing Britain is singularly penetrating. He is convinced that the solution of the Indian problem "is only by Britain taking on her shoulders the responsibility of a great gesture of renunciation that this furious emotional complex can be eliminated and co-operation reached."

Mr. Mathews' touch with the Moslems of India was limited to a very few of the outstanding personalities. He was deeply impressed with Begum Shah Nawaz of Lahore who is undoubtedly the outstanding Moslem woman in Indian public life, and in a very real sense the living prophecy of the great transformation that is sooner or later bound to overtake Moslem womanhood here as in Turkey, Persia and Egypt. He was charmed by the urbanity of Sir Akbar Hydari the leading statesman of Hyderabad State, and was deeply impressed with the Osmania University there which gives university education in Urdu, with English relegated to a position of secondary importance. But his soul was most moved by the dynamic personality of Sir Muhammad Iqbal, India's most prominent Moslem

poet and philosopher. Nevertheless, even in the presence of Sir Muhammad himself, the author's balanced judgment was on its guard, for he remarks, "I came away glowing with admiration for the penetration, the brilliance, and the warmth of feeling that make Sir Mohammed Iqbal's work so creative. I could not help feeling, however, that when he talked of Islam in relation to Turkey or to modern philosophy, there was some danger of his being like a conjuror who pulls out of a hat the rabbits he has himself put in" Of Islam in India as a problem for Christian missions he has nothing to say.

While Mr. Mathews discusses the great movements and personalities in India in a manner that would give the casual reader the impression that there is nothing left to be said, and no significant movement omitted, one who knows India well is amazed that he has not directly dealt with the uprising of the Depressed Classes, and its significance for Hinduism and Christianity alike. He has not mentioned the great Christian Mass Movement, except very casually; nor did he even take the trouble to see Dr. Ambedkar, who is the leader of the most amazing revolt against orthodox Hinduism that India has ever known. One wonders about this significant omission. If Mr. Mathews failed to sense this situation then India did not reveal herself to him fully. Perhaps his next book on India will make up for this deficiency.

Budawn, India.

M. T. TITUS.

Judaism and Christianity. Vol. I, The Age of Transition, edited by W. O. E. Oesterley. Vol. II, The Contact of Pharisaism with other Cultures, edited by H. Loewe. London, Sheldon Press, 1937. 10/6 and 12/6.

These two volumes, written by a number of authors Jewish and Christian, are of great importance. Students of Islam will naturally wish to compare Islam with the two other great monotheistic religions, and it is noteworthy how many of the great scholars of Islam have also been scholars of the Old Testament and of later Judaism. Beyond giving a very strong recommendation to our readers to study these two volumes I do not wish to review them as a whole. Volumes of essays are notoriously difficult to review, and, while I have read the whole with great interest, I cannot claim to be competent to appraise or criticize the greater number of the essays. I wish however to draw the particular attention of our readers to Chapter IV of Vol. II on "Islam" by Dr. E. Rosenthal. Since the publication of the books of Tor Andrae and Richard Bell on the Christian influence on early Islam we have perhaps paid less attention than is due to the influence of Judaism, though we are not forgetful of Rabbi Geiger's important work of a century ago. Dr. Rosenthal does not marshal his evidence for Jewish influence with the same consciousness of certainty that we find in the works of Andrae and Bell. This should not, however, blind us to the value of his observations. Among the points on which he speaks with conviction we may quote the following: "In general, it may be noted that the laws governing ritual purity and ablutions, etc., were accepted by Islam in the form in which they were practised by the Jews, whereas Muhammad rejected most of the dietary laws, which he

considered as a punishment for the Jews." "In the conception of an all-embracing religious Law, we find not only striking parallelism with Judaism but also actual Jewish influence, both in general principles and in concrete examples." One point may be mentioned where it appears that the author is not quite as careful as usual. Referring to Islam he says, "If we assume a common Semitic attitude to religion." This of course we cannot do, for while Mohammed and the Arabs were Semites, the religion of Islam as we know it developed amongst people of whom the vast majority were non-Semites. In seeking for Jewish parallels to Islamic ideas the author intentionally leaves aside possible Christian influence, and though this method tends to clarity, it leads in some cases to error. For instance, there may be something in Judaism partially corresponding to *ijma'*, but the Christian parallel in the general consensus of opinion, as expressed by Vincent of Lerins and in the creeds, is so exact that we need to seek no further. This point is all the clearer because of the complete absence of creeds in Judaism or of any statements defining orthodoxy and heresy. The distinction between Moslem and Jewish Law is very well put in the following words: "One of the reasons why Muslim Law succumbed to the danger of formalism more easily than Judaism is certainly that the *Shari'a*—caused by the political development of the Islamic state—soon became purely theoretical and ideal; another reason is that the study of Muslim Law was reserved for a class of experts, whereas Judaism makes it a duty for every Jew to engage in the study of the Law as the authoritative manifestation of the Divine Will." The essay does not pretend to be either exhaustive or final, but it serves an extremely useful purpose in drawing attention to possible or probable cases of the influence of Judaism on Islam, and in quoting largely from modern scholars who have written on the subject.

L. E. BROWNE.

Archiv Orientalni: Journal of the Czechoslovak Oriental Institute, Prague.
 Edited by Bedrich Hrozný. Vol. IX: 1 and 2. Apr.-June, 1937, pp. 298.

This Oriental review bears witness each quarter to the sound scholarship and the wide interests of the Southeastern European peoples in the Orient and in the comparative study of religion. The present issue contains several articles of special value to students of Islam. That on "Aramaic and Mandaic Magic Bowls affords close parallels to the well-known magic-bowls used by the Moslems of Egypt and points to the possible origin of this curious superstition. Professor K. Jahn writes on "Früh islamschen Brief-wesen" and gives a full account of epistolography in the first three centuries after the Hegira.

Among the book-reviews there are no less than sixteen that deal with Islamic subjects. Most of the articles are in German or in English. Z.

Unhappy Spain, by Pierre Crabitès; Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1937. \$2.50.

The author of this book seeks to penetrate to the historical antecedents of the conflict now going on in Spain. Special reference is made to the centuries-old cleavage between the "Grand

Orient" Masonry and Spanish Catholicism. But the author does more than give the historical facts of movements and conflicts. He shows how all that has happened, and is now happening, is a characteristic expression of life and thought in the Iberian peninsula and that "the terms Fascist and Communist are convenient tags, rather than true divisions based on historical development."

JESSE R. WILSON.

The Arabian Knight: A Study of Sir Richard Burton. By Seton Dearden. Arthur Barker, London, 1936. pp. 334.

This volume, though it does not pretend to be a complete biography, unfolds a wide range of valuable material illuminating the nineteenth-century life of Burton, the British Orientalist, explorer and consul. Thus the man Burton emerges in all his wild, resentful and essentially vagabond traits, intolerant of convention and restraint, with the gipsy dominating the whole panorama of his otherwise illustrious career.

Yet here is a man who was the first among his countrymen to explore Somaliland, the first to discover the great lakes of central Africa and one of the first to enter Makkah. Before middle age he had compressed into his life "more study, more hardship, and more of successful enterprise and adventure than would have sufficed to fill up the existence of a half-dozen ordinary men."

In the rendition of the "Arabian Nights," his crowning achievement, Burton followed Payne's translation except in the poetical parts and in the particular portions which he tried to improve. The author of the book under review does not fully recognize that this translation is by no means exact in scholarship or faithful to the original text, though it reveals a profound acquaintance with Moslem vocabulary and customs as well as with the foul language that is characteristic of certain medieval producers of literature.

The book is also open to criticism at various points where the author fails to understand Oriental culture; a general tone of self-esteem seems to dominate its pages, which, after all, are an attempt to preserve the remarkable events of a life whose greatest enrichment was derived from the Orient. Aside from this general discrepancy the author abides by no system whatsoever governing the transliteration of Oriental terms and expressions. For instance *Nafud* (p. 44), *Yambu* (p. 47), *El Ayhar* (p. 68) should be *al-Nufud*, *Yanbu'* and *al-Azhar*.

Though deficient in several respects the work offers a delightful account of the daily life of a man whose greatness is beyond question.

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EDWARD J. JURJI.

Moslem Schisms and Sects: (Al-Farq bain al-Firak), being the history of the various philosophic systems developed in Islam by Abu-Mansur 'Abd-al-Kâhir ibn Tahir al-Baghdadi (d. 1037). Part II. By Abraham S. Halkin. Tel-Aviv, Palestine Publishing Co., 1935. xviii+260pp.

The first part of this important source book was translated, although somewhat uncritically, by Mrs. Kate Chambers Seelye in