

Nasrany, neither wouldst thou thine if thou be'st a worthy man.' But as he yet held the knife above my breast, I said to him, 'What dagger is that? and tell these who are present whether thy meaning be to do me a mischief?' Then he put it down as if he were ashamed to be seen by the company savagely threatening his coffee guest." (II: 39)

Their hospitality was friendly in their camps but on the road the same Arabs often behave as enemies. "I alighted as they were ready to depart again, and would bathe my head in a little water which remained in a waterer's leather after the cattle drinking; but the savage wretch forbade me, saying, 'Nay!—he feared Ullah;' and taking up his gear, he cast out the water, crying with the dreary eyes of his ignorant fanaticism fastened upon me, 'Should he draw for a Nasrany, one that was accursed of Ullah? was the sun hot today, and I fainted? he would God that I died also.' We were not come far in the wilderness, when the peevish tongues of two light young Beduin women in the company, screeched to the men about me, 'Look there, lads, is not that the *kafir* riding? will ye not cut the wezand of him in the way?' I bestowed, in my haste, a Beduin curse upon them, but it needed not; the men marching nigh me answered gravely, 'He is the son of our brother,' because I had been a guest of some of their tribesmen." (I: 376).

Even the town-children in Doughty's day made life miserable for him. "One of these forenoons, when I returned to my house, I saw filth cast before the threshold; and some knavish children had flung stones as I passed by the lonely street. Whilst I sat within, the little knaves came to batter the door; there was a Babel of cries: the boldest climbed by the side walls to the house terrace; and hurled down stones and clay bricks by the stair head. In this uproar I heard a skritch of fanatical women, 'Ya Nasrany! thou shalt be dead!—they are in the way that will do it!' I sat on an hour whilst the hurly-burly lasted: my door held, and for all their hooting the knaves had no courage to come down where they must meet with the *kafir*. At this hour the respectable citizens were reposing at home, or drinking coffee in their

friends' houses; and it was a desolate quarter where I lodged." (II: 402).

And here is an experience similar to my daily life in Bahrain in the early years of our mission. "A fanatic sometimes threatened me as I returned by the narrow and lonely ways, near my house: 'O *kafir!* if it please the Lord, thou wilt be slain this afternoon or night, or else to-morrow's day. Ha! son of mischief, how long dost thou refuse the religion of Islam? We gave thee indeed a time to repent, with long sufferance and kindness!—now die in thy blind way, for the Moslemîn are weary of thee. Except thou say the testimony, thou wilt be slain to-day: thou gettest no more grace, for many have determined to kill thee.' Such deadly kind of arguments were become, as they say, familiar evils, in this long tribulation of Arabian travels." (II: 395-6).

And there are a score of other passages which portray the fanatic devotion to a creed which divides all humanity into believers and *Kafirs*. (Vol. I: 376, 377, 403, 486, 502, 549. II: 134, 321, 326, etc.)

III. *The Arabian Prophet*. In the second volume Doughty gives a character-sketch of the Great Arabian: "The most venerable image in their minds is the personage of Mohammed; which to us is less tolerable: for the household and sheykhly virtues that were in him—mildness and comity and simplicity and good faith, in things indifferent of the daily life—cannot amend our opinion of the Arabian man's barbaric ignorance, his sleight and murderous cruelty in the institution of his religious faction; or sweeten our contempt of an hysterical prophetism and polygamous living.—Mohammed who persuaded others, lived confident in himself; and died persuaded by the good success of his own doctrine. What was the child Mohammed?—a pensive orphan, a herding lad: the young man was sometime a caravan trader,—wherein he discovered his ambitious meaning, when he would not enter Damascus! His was a soaring and wounded (because infirm) spirit, a musing solitary conscience; and his youth was full of dim vaticination of himself, and of re-

ligious aspiration. A soul so cast will pursue the dream of those her inexpert and self-loving years: and how long soever, difficult, ay, and perilous be the circuit which lies before him it were lighter for such an one to endure all things than fail of his presumption and (finally) to fall short of his own soul.—Mohammed, the preacher, found no purer worshippers and witnesses of the God of Abraham than an idolatrous Christianity, and the Yahud, 'a seed of evil-doers.' He calls them in the Koran 'The people of the (former) Scriptures, which were sent down from on high': but as his faction increased he came to account them—since they were not with him—adverse factions; and afterward his enemies." (II: 378)

To the Bedouin Arabs of Doughty's day, Mohammed was the First before every creature (Vol. I: 474), the seal of the prophets, foretold in the gospels (II: 10). His name is so sacred that one uses it carelessly of anyone who bears it, at his own peril (II: 172). At Mohammed's grave in Medina miracles take place (II: 160). "There are sherifs and posterity of the blood of the *Neby* in all great towns of Islam and even in the desert tribes." "The sons of Fatimah and Ali are grown in less than fifty generations to a multitude." (II: 522).

IV. *Beliefs and Practices*. Doughty's book is perhaps best of all in its careful record of the popular-Islam that prevailed among the Arabs. One does not turn in vain to the index for such customs as blood-covenant, *aqiqa*, circumcision, sacrifice, Ramadhan-fasting, the *Hajj*, etc. To the latter alone there are over fifty references that illuminate the subject. Hospitality, "the virtue that imitates Heavenly Providence", finds a large place in the Arab heart and in Doughty. Incense is used as perfume, in sacrifices, and to ward off evil spirits. Tree-worship and stone-worship are common (*menahil*), (I: 449, II: 109, etc). Women and marriage are depicted in unforgettable passages. Women are "like flowers in our houses to enjoy and one day be cast out". "The female is of all animals the better save only in mankind"—such is their

proverb (I: 238). And all these beliefs and practices go back to what Mohammed taught and practised.

The Arabs, indeed, have their creed condensed into one word, *ALLAH*. Palgrave's famous description of Allah in his book of travel still stands as a compendium of Moslem Theology. Every chapter in Doughty confirms this delineation.⁷

T. E. Lawrence also knew Islam from experience with the Arabs. He writes: "This single God is to the Arab not anthropomorphic, not tangible or moral or ethical, not concerned particularly with the world or with him. He alone is great, and yet there is a homeliness, an every-day-ness of this Arab God who rules their eating, their fighting and their lusting; and is their commonest thought, and companion, in a way impossible to those whose God is tediously veiled from them by the decorum of formal worship. They feel no incongruity in bringing God into their weaknesses and appetites. He is the commonest of their words."⁸

"The desert", says Lawrence, "is made a spiritual ice-house, in which is preserved intact but unimproved for all ages an idea of the unity of God."⁹ And this idea is so dominant in Islam everywhere that Dr. Hendrik Kraemer characterized Islamic theism as super-heated. "Allah in Islam becomes white-hot Majesty, white-hot Omnipotence, white-hot Uniqueness. His personality evaporates and vanishes in the burning heat of his aspects."¹⁰ It is this ice-cold, white-hot Allah who stands out on the pages of Doughty. We shall never understand Islam, its strength and its weakness, until we penetrate to the heart of this religion in such close spiritual and social contacts as Doughty, the Christian, did in his long and lonely wanderings in Arabia Deserta. And he never denied Christ.

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⁷ W. G. Palgrave—Narrative of a Year's Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia, 1862. Vol. I: pp. 365-367.

⁸ Introduction to *Arabia Deserta* p. XXII.

⁹ *Idem* p. XXIII.

¹⁰ *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, p. 221.

PRESENT-DAY MOVEMENTS IN ISLAM*

There is one serious initial weakness inherent in any discussion of the Dominant Ideas in Islamic Culture of today which makes such discussion to that extent unsatisfactory. That weakness is the very scrappy nature of the evidence at our disposal, which means that we are often forced to generalizations on the basis of very inadequate evidence. In our modern world, Islamic communities extend from Morocco all along North Africa and Egypt to Arabia, bringing in Albania, Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Turkestan and Persia; from Arabia through India and Indonesia to the Philippines and China; and from Russia in the North as far south in Africa as the Cape. These communities include some highly cultivated, literary peoples, but also millions of adherents in Africa, southern Asia and Indonesia, who are little removed from the primitive. Literacy is on the whole at a very low percentage among Islamic peoples. It is highest in the smaller communities domiciled in Europe, but even in so advanced a country as Egypt, the statistical survey shows that only a very small percentage of the Muslim population over the age of five years is literate. Since our evidence for dominant ideas comes almost entirely from this very thin literary fringe, and for the most part comes from only a very few specially favoured areas, it is obvious that we are discussing, not Dominant Ideas in Islamic Culture, but dominant ideas among a few select groups of Muslims. To some extent it is true that these literate few give the lead to the illiterate masses, and to some extent it is true that strong movements of thought and feeling among the masses will be reflected in the writing, particularly in the Press, published by and for the literate few. But the extent to which these points are true is very limited, for anyone who has lived among Muslim peoples (and perhaps this is true for other Oriental groups also) learns sooner or later with an unpleasant shock of sur-

* A paper read as part of a Symposium on Dominant Ideas in Asiatic Cultures Today at the Centenary Meetings of the American Oriental Society at Boston, Easter, 1942.

prise, that newspaper editors, and the writers for magazines, are often as innocent as babes of what is really stirring the minds and hearts of the common people.

Furthermore there is great diversity among Muslim peoples. Some years ago there came to Cairo a group of Chinese Muslim students, who had been sent by their community to study at the Azhar, the great Muslim Theological School in Cairo. They were completely bewildered; for none of the things that they thought it important to study were considered worthy of attention by the authorities of the Azhar; while the curriculum they found themselves forced to follow seemed to them for the most part utterly irrelevant to the cultural situation of their community in China. Moreover, they could not understand the burning questions which at that moment were agitating the student body of the Azhar, and over which there were constant strikes, demonstrations and uproar, which brought clashes with the police, all over matters which in their country they knew would not have been considered worth a thought. So there are groups of Near Eastern Muslims who feel that Indian Islam has been so affected by Hinduism, and Turkish Islam so penetrated by Western scepticism, as to be hardly the same religion as their own, and who would violently resent movements that are powerful in either of these two regions being considered as legitimate for inclusion among the dominant ideas of present-day Islamic culture.

It has also to be borne in mind that even within the literate groups in the various Islamic countries, there are two entirely different systems of education. There are those who are following the old traditional Islamic system of education, where the emphasis is on the Qur'ān, the Traditions, Muslim Jurisprudence and the mediaeval Islamic civilization. And there are those who have taken their studies in modern schools, where the curriculum is based on that of our Western schools, and the emphasis is on science and contemporary civilization. Students from the former class of schools often know little or nothing of the significance of modern knowledge; and students from the latter type sometimes amaze one

by their appalling ignorance as to their own religion, though they would resent any suggestion that they are not good Muslims. The cultural outlook of the two groups is thus very different, and what we might consider as dominant ideas for the one group, might not stir the other at all.

In view of this situation it may thus be safer for us to discuss a limited number of modern movements to be found within the areas of Islamic culture, and which will illustrate certain dominant ideas, which if not common to Islamic culture as a whole, are yet of great significance to definite groups within that culture, and not unworthy of our attention.

One group of these modern movements has for us the particular interest that it consists of movements started within Islam by the ferments produced by contact with our Western culture. While in general it is true that there never has been a time since the Crusades when contact between Europe and the Islamic world has been altogether cut off, it is also true that Napoleon's adventures in the Near East mark the beginning of a new era of contact between Islam and the West, marked by an awakening of important elements in the Islamic world to the fact that they had a lot to learn from the West, and a growing disposition to start learning it. From Napoleon's time on into our twentieth century that process of learning from the West has been going on by fits and starts, sometimes being more in evidence in one area, and sometimes in another; sometimes being more actively pursued and sometimes less; in some areas being affected more particularly by France and Italy, and in others by England and America, and in two special areas particularly by Russia and Holland respectively. German influence in this respect has for the most part been indirect. This contact inevitably introduced ferments within Islam which have produced a number of movements which roughly fall into two groups—those which look favourably on the new knowledge and wish to accept it into Islam; and those which react against it and seek to erect a defense within Islam against the encroachments of modern ideas.

The most powerful, as well as the most spectacular, of

these latter movements is that associated with the name of the Wahhābis, who have been forced on our attention by their spectacular rise to power in Central Arabia at the conclusion of the last War, under that remarkable leader Ibn Sa'ūd. He himself is not altogether characteristic of the movement, for he was quick to see the value to himself and his people of a number of the technical advances of Western civilization, and has endeavoured to make the best use in Arabia of the motor car, the radio, electricity and modern weapons of offense and defense. He has also been willing, for the sake of his country, to enter into alliances with Western powers, and to take advantage of some at least of the benefits of modern medicine and agricultural research. It is no secret, however, that in this he has had continual opposition from his theologians and some of his theologically minded followers. This was inevitable, for the Wahhābi revival, which fired Arabia and made no small impression on the rest of the Islamic world, had as its cry—Back to the Qur'ān, the Word of Allah, and to the primitive ways of the Prophet's time. Its mission was to get rid of *bid'a*—innovation, i.e., all things that had come to be considered usual in Islamic belief and practice, but which had been introduced since the time of the Prophet, and which therefore 'Abd al-Wahhāb and his followers considered as reprehensible excrescences which had overgrown the primitive teaching and primitive practice, and which must therefore be removed, so as to recover once again the pure, unsullied beauty of original Islam. In their enthusiasm, they destroyed domes and cupolas, high minarets and ornamented shrines, paintings and artistic decoration, instruments of music, garments and textures of silk and satin and brocade and embroidered work, tobacco pipes and the paraphernalia of games of all sorts. Most forms of indulgence and amusement were frowned upon, many absolutely forbidden, and those who continued to practise them often severely punished, for all must return to the simplicity, the unadorned simplicity, of things as they were in the Prophet's day. It thus goes without question that all introductions from the West were in their eyes anathema, and