HEIRS OF THE PROPHETS

by Samuel M. Zwemer

Samuel Zwemer's study of Islamic scholarship and the concept of ulema as heirs of the prophets, examining their role as authorized interpreters within Muslim religious tradition.

17 Chapters

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00.5-PREFACE

PREFACE

This brief study introduces the reader to the most important and most influential class in the world of Islam. There are nearly 300,000,000 Moslems between Morocco and China and from Warsaw to Capetown. In India alone they number ninety millions, and in Africa over fifty millions.

On the occasion of the dedication of a new site for a cathedral mosque, the London Times (Nov. 22, 1944) wrote:

“His Majesty indeed has more Moslems than Christians among his subjects; and his capital, appropriately enough, holds a larger Moslem community than any other western metropolis. But while there are already two small mosques in London and a larger institution in Woking, as well as other mosques in those British cities where Moslems mainly congregate, there is nowhere in Britain a ’cathedral mosque’ worthy of the heart of an Empire within whose bounds the culture and traditions of Islam flourish so mightily.”

There is also a proposal on foot to build a mosque in Washington.

The post-war world will bring America and Europe in closer touch with Islam than ever before. Men of the consular service, orientalists, merchants, tourists, and missionaries will find that it is supremely important to understand the soul of a people and their popular religion and folk-traditions.

To achieve this, we must know their spiritual leaders. My conviction, after forty years of experience in Arabia and Egypt (including visits to North Africa, India, China, Iran, and Java) is that the key to understanding of the masses lies in personal friendship with their clergy, the so-called imams, mullahs, and sheikhs.

Since the abolition of the caliphate, the political power of Islam has waned. But the soul of Islam lives on in the village school-teacher, the clergy, the professors of canon-law, and the popular saints of the darwish-orders.

The following pages are an introduction to these “clergy”; their origin, organization, functions, faith, zeal, and present-day influence and power.

If the words of Mohammed himself, “the learned of my people are as the prophets of Israel,” can be taken as prophetic, then these ’ulema (learned) are the one spiritual factor in Islam which we must try to understand if we desire to know and help the common people, and this is supremely important to those who preach the gospel.

New York City Samuel M. Zwemer.

00.6-FOREWORD

FOREWORD

“The ’ULEMA are the heirs of the prophets” - thus Mohammed is supposed to have spoken. To them falls the mission of binding and loosing . . . They are regarded as the authorized interpreters of the consensus. It is to them that the Faithful turn when in doubt, for the solution of cases of conscience or points of doctrine . . . The quadi is chosen from among the ’ulema. His Tribunal admits oral testimony alone; that of a non-Muslim is excluded. The supreme council of ’ulema is at the University of Al Azhar, Cairo.

- H. Lammens S. J. in Islam, pp. 101,102, 110.

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01-INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

ACCORDING to the Century Dictionary, a priest is primarily “one who is duly authorized to be a minister of sacred things; one whose stated duty it is to perform on behalf of the community certain public religious acts, particularly religious sacrifices.” And, in a secondary sense, “a priest is one who is ordained to a pastoral or sacerdotal office; a presbyter; an elder” (see also the Encyclopaedia Britannica, xiv ed., Art. Priest).

As for the word clergy, it is derived from clerk and although used now, in distinction from the laity, for a body of men set apart for the public worship of the church, its original meaning was a cleric or clerk, a learned man, one who could read (Chaucer). In fact Webster defines clergy, “The priesthood or body of adepts of any religion.” He defines imam as “the priest who performs or leads the regular service in a Mohammedan mosque,” so much for etymology.

Every religion has had its clergy or priesthood by whatever name called; no one denies that there were Jewish priests and Levites, or that there are Hindu priests and Buddhist priests.

In the Old Testament, priestly functions were exercised from the earliest times by the patriarchs. The organization of the Levitical priesthood also indicates their general functions in the Tabernacle and afterwards in the Temple; namely, to minister in the sanctuary, to teach the people the law of God, and to inquire for them the divine will by Urim and Thummim. The priesthood continued after the captivity, and wherever the Jews were dispersed they had special Levites, Rabbis, etc. The Christian church from its earliest organization had apostles, prophets, teachers, bishops, presbyters, and deacons.

Islam had its rise in a Jewish-Christian environment, and where Mohammed borrowed so much, we might expect that he would also borrow much of the organization of his new faith from these sources. Whether he did or not, Islam today undoubtedly has clergy and priesthood although not called by these particular terms. But this has been denied and a curious opinion to the contrary has arisen.

Dr. Zaki Ali, an Egyptian Moslem, writes: “Islam has no clergy nor church organization, and the office of priesthood is rejected altogether. Any Muslim may suffice to conduct the ritual, and none is invested with sacred character. The theologians are merely those who know the Divine Law; they do not compose a clerical caste.” 1

Another, writing of Persia, states: “The mosque is tended by no sacred priesthood as are the temples farther east, and to a less extent, the churches of the west.” 2

Still more definite is the recent statement of Dr. William Thomson: “Unlike Christianity, then, Islam did not found a church with an independent constitution and a recognized relationship to the state .

. . And it devised no interpretative authority . . . Like [modern] Judaism, if for a different reason, Islam has no priesthood. A class of religious officials arose, indeed, as a result of a felt need, preaching sheikhs, Koran reciters, imams, or leaders in prayer, and muezzins. But these officials do not form a closed profession. They have no especial obligations. They are not guides and keepers of the public conscience. They are seldom teachers of the young. Their functions can be performed by any other Muslim just as well, and they themselves are free to adopt any other business or profession; for there is no bond of consecration, no ordination that joins them with the founder of their faith in a spiritual union. All believers are equally priests, or there are none." 3

Dr. Thomson's statement is true only in the sense that Islam has no priests "who have authority to administer sacraments or pronounce absolution" (Oxford Dictionary).

The clergy in Islam and its priesthood are Protestant rather than Roman Catholic in their authority and function. But it is the clergy who are "the guides and keepers of the public conscience," who "teach the young" everywhere from the village mosque to the great theological universities in Fez, Cairo, Constantinople, Kerbela, and Qum. The proof is given in what follows.

Indeed there is even sacrifice in Islam, but since the Koran denies the Crucifixion and the Atonement there is no altar nor mass, although the mihrab in every mosque is an imitation of the altar niche in churches (Becker, Islam Studien, p. 493), and is the place toward which all worshippers prostrate themselves, led by the Imam. Becker states that even as the moslem pulpit (mimbar) is an imitation of the Christian pulpit, and the minaret dates back to the church-tower, so the niche (mihrab) in the direction of Mecca dates back to the apse. "Es wird also mit dem Mihrab nicht nur eine neutrale Bauform übernommen, sondern eine kultische Institution!"

Now it is generally admitted that Islam is totalitarian, as was pointed out by Dr. Charles R. Watson and Dr. E. E. Calverley. 4

But how can a system in church or state be totalitarian without an organization to enforce its will? How and when, did Islam become such? Writing of the caliphs of Baghdad; Osborn remarks:

"Church and state are so completely identified that the religious life is made subject to the supervision of the courts of law; and the constitution of society and the government is supposed to be the result of a series of divine enactments. All spiritual development is treated as a crime against society and punished accordingly."5

In fact, part one of his study of early Islam is even entitled The Church of Islam, and he devotes two chapters to an account of "this inflexible theocracy." But a totalitarian system needs authoritative power to enforce its claims. We hold that from the days of Omar at Medina to those of the sheikhs of Al Azhar in modern Cairo, it is the clergy, the priesthood of Islam, that have been the legislative, judicial, and executive departments of this church-state which some have even called the democracy of Islam.

Let us go back to the beginnings of this "inflexible theocracy."

~ end of chapter 1 ~

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02-PRE-ISLAMIC PRIESTHOOD IN ARABIA

CHAPTER TWO PRE-ISLAMIC PRIESTHOOD IN ARABIA

AMONG the nomadic Semites there was no developed priesthood.

With the beginning of a settled state, however, the local sanctuaries (bethels) rose in importance and at these shrines there was not only sacrifice but an oracle and a priest. The Canaanite-Phoenician name for priest is, in fact, identical with the Arabic kahin, a soothsayer (Hebrew, priest).

According to Wellhausen, the early Arabian kahins, or priests, not only were custodians of the sanctuaries, e.g., at Mecca, but gave out oracles in rhymed prose similar to the short chapters of the Koran.

- The kahins were soothsayers;

- They gave imprecations and benedictions;

- They alone offered special prayers for rain (istisqa) with peculiar ritual;

- Their garments and saliva had healing power;

- Their hair was sacred and potent.

In all these respects Mohammed, even during his lifetime, was a kahin (priest) as well as prophet. It was he who took the pagan-sacrificial ritual of Mecca and made it the central feast of Islam. This was the act of a kahin. After giving a list of these pre-Islamic kahins (priests), Wellhausen goes on to show at some length that Mohammed himself unwillingly followed in their footsteps: “Muhammad wollte zwar sein Kahin sein konnte aber doch nicht von ihrer Art lassen.” 6

He would not be a kahin but could not forsake their art.

The Kaa’ba at Mecca was a very ancient Arab shrine - a bethel. It was in fact called Bait Allah, God’s house, before Mohammed’s day, even as Mohammed’s father bore the name of Abd-Allah.

And this shrine, although it contained idols and had pagan worship, was the center of pilgrimage for distant tribes. It had its guardians; it was covered with a curtain or robe, kiswah, like the Tabernacle in the wilderness long before Mohammed’s time.

The Dutch scholar, R. Dozy, discovered a Hebrew inscription in the interior of the Kaa’ba and wrote a thesis on “the Jews at Mecca from the clays of the Captivity” (Leyden 1864) (cf. Hughes’ Dictionary of Islam articles on Kaa’ba and Kiswah).

So we cannot help concluding that Mohammed knew pagan priests (Rabins), Jewish priests or rabbis, and Christian monks and clergy. It would be strange if his own mind and his religion did not take some color from these three sources when he proclaimed himself the Apostle of Allah. That

apostleship included many elements common to the religious leaders of the pagan Arabs and of his Jewish and Christian neighbors. *

* Dr. Aubrey R. Johnson, in his book The Cubic Prophet in Ancient Israel, discusses the place and function of the prophet (nabi) as a cultic specialist in Old Israel, and contrasts his functions with those of other cultic specialists, the priest (kohen), the seer (both the ro'eh and the chozeh). He says, "The prophets were part of the personnel of the shrine, whether local or at Jerusalem. They took their part in divination, and were consulted, even as late as the time of Jeremiah, for the sake of securing the welfare of individuals and of nations alike." So far as "the idea of priesthood being abhorrent to Islam," Mohammed met Christian monks and priests (ruhban, kissis, ahbar) and received from them directly or indirectly some of his "revelations" (Tor Andrae and Margoliouth).

In the Koran there is a beautiful tribute to them and it is the only reference to the Christian clergy of his day: "Thou wilt find the nearest in love to those who believe to be those who say, We are Christians; that is because there are among them priests and monks, and because they are not proud" (Surah 5:85; and compare the comment of Zamakhshari, Vol. I, p. 262).

Wensinck says that the title rahib was given to various pious individuals in the earliest history of Islam, and Goldziher tells of one, Abu Bekr al-Mahzumi, who had the title, rahib-Quraish - the Quraishite monk - because of his constant devotions (11:394).

The pre-Islamic poets refer to the rahibs' hospitality and tell of their candlelight which guides the wayfarer by night. There is, it is true, a late and unorthodox tradition, "La rahbaniya fi'l Islam" - There is no monasticism in Islam. But this does not occur in the canonical collections. And Surah 57:27, which speaks of monasticism, should read, according to the older exegesis and context: "We put in the hearts of those who followed Jesus, compassion and mercy and the monastic state. They instituted the same only out of a desire to please God, etc." (So Massignon, in the article Rahbaniya, Ency. of Islam.) "This older exegesis calls monasticism a divine institution; the younger one expresses a feeling hostile to monasticism and coined the tradition, no rahbaniya in Islam" (idem). And it is the older exegesis of tradition and the Koran itself which reflects Mohammed's attitude toward priests and monks.

Early Christianity was far stronger in Arabia when Mohammed appeared on the scene than is realized. Wellhausen states "that had not Islam entered, in a brief period all of northern Arabia from the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf would have become nominally Christian."

There were Arab Christian poets even in Mecca. "There was a superficial knowledge of Christian institutions, rites, and dogma as well as of legends and biblical stories. These were brought to Mecca by Christian traders from Abyssinia, Yemen, Syria, and Iraq." 7

Now in such an environment and under such conditions the borrower is servant to the lender.

Mohammed himself borrowed Koran material from his Christian and Jewish neighbors. The researches of Goldziher, Caetani, and Lammens only emphasize the fact pointed out by Horowitz that "The prophet had to enter into the heritage of his predecessors and wrap himself round with their mantle of saintship. His erstwhile heathen countrymen transferred to him the powers which they had formerly ascribed to their kahins; the new converts from the old (Christian) civilizations assigned to him the attributes of their former saints" (The Moslem World, Vol. 12:312).

Such were the swaddling-clothes of the new religion. As for Mohammed himself, Michel d'Herbigny has thrown new light on his career in a remarkable study, L'Islam Naissant; Notes Psychologiques (Rome, 1929).

How even the doctrine of vicarious sacrifice, rejected in the Koran, became the chief corner-stone of popular Islam in Persia is told by William A. Shedd and S. G. Wilson. 8

The blood of Hussain at Kerbela took the place of the ancient Kaa'ba blood of sheep and camels, to atone for sin, at the annual festival. And we shall see later that there are various sacrifices and blood-covenants in Islam which have Jewish and Christian features although they may go back to Arabian pagan sacrifices as primary source. Here again Islam is "a threefold cord not easily broken" into its diversely colored strands.

~ end of chapter 2 ~

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03-PRIESTHOOD OF MOHAMMED AND THE EARLY CALIPHS

CHAPTER THREE

PRIESTHOOD OF MOHAMMED AND THE EARLY CALIPHS

NOW where did authority rest when Islam, under the first four caliphs, sprang from its cradle in Medina?

- Who instituted the masjid (mosque) and the minbar (pulpit)?

- Who appointed the first muezzins to call to prayer? khatibs, to preach? imams, and qadhis, to exercise authority?

- What is the origin of the Islamic hierarchy and of its monastic orders of darwishes?

- When did the royal Quraish family first assert its prerogative of hereditary prestige, perpetuated to this very day in ten thousands of seyyids and sherifs?

All of these questions are related to the spiritual functions and claims of Mohammed and the early caliphs. Priesthood is not a matter of etymology (priest, presbyter, sheikh, elder; all have the same significance) but of actual spiritual or temporal power over those who acknowledge its function. The religious and political development in Islam went hand and hand.

In the course of the first century, the Koran readers (qaris) arose, and these were succeeded by the men of tradition (ahl-al-hadith), by canonists (faqihs) and other learned men who held office.

“They laid claim to an interpretative authority concerning the divine law which bordered upon supreme legislative power; their ijma (agreement) was that of the infallible community.” 9

“The four earliest caliphs,” says Macdonald, “were very happily called ein Monchischen lmperium, by Sachau. After this original ’monkish empire’ the first Abbasid Caliph appointed his first vizier or helper; as Aaron, the priest in the Koran is called the vizier of Moses” (Mohammedan Institutions in Ency. Brit., 14th edition).

We have seen that the pre-Islamic kahins had certain prerogatives and functions. Now each of these find place in the life of Mohammed after he had proclaimed his message as the apostle of Allah.

1. The kahin was custodian of the sacred shrine, and when Mohammed entered Mecca as conqueror, the central Arabian shrine was cleansed of idolatry with the exception of the Black-Stone put in place by Mohammed himself in his pagan days. Now as prophet-priest Mohammed directed the ritual of the Islamic pilgrimage for all time by his observance of it as conqueror.

2. The kahin in pagan days gave out oracles in rhymed prose. The earliest chapters of the Koran are very similar in form and content (Wellhausen).

3. The kahin was a soothsayer whose imprecations and benedictions were supernaturally effective. It was Mohammed's curse on an Arab tribe guilty of injuring his camels that was the origin of the qanut or brief imprecatory prayer used by every Moslem at the close of the regular prayer (salat) (Zwemer, Influence of Animism on Islam, p. 57). Margoliouth tells of a late convert to Islam in Mohammed's day "who remembered seeing him on a high place at Taif leaning like a kahin on a staff or bow and reciting Surah 86" in which there are strange oaths of asservation (Mohammed, p. 179).

4. The kahin could offer special prayer for rain and bring it down from heaven in dry and thirsty Arabia. Here again Mohammed exercised his priestly power. He taught a special prayer and ritual for rain-making (istisqa) by turning his garment inside out and lifting his hands, etc. (Wensinck, Handbook of Muhammedan Tradition, pp. 201-202).

5. As in the case of pagan kahins, his garments, hair, saliva and touch had healing power. There are many traditions to this effect. One may also find numerous references to Mohammed as physician in popular books called Tub-an-nabawi. There are many orthodox traditions that tell how he could heal by blowing, by his saliva, by the water he used in ablution and how he healed men and cattle by the stroke of his hand. One man whom he stroked lived one hundred and twenty years (see Wensinck who gives the references to each of these Traditions, pp. 166-168).

But Mohammed and his successors claimed far higher powers and authority than those exercised by the priests and soothsayers of pagan Arabia. Mohammed called himself the Apostle of God, the final messenger in the long line of apostles and prophets.

After Mohammed's flight to Medina, he began to associate his own name with that of deity in a way not used by him in the earlier revelations. He now dares to say "Obey God and his apostle." The actor and the drama change from this time on. The kahin of Mecca who was a preacher and warner, now becomes an autocratic legislator and leader of a band of warriors.

He who suffered persecution at Mecca, now persecutes his Jewish neighbors.

He builds a new mosque with huts for his numerous wives, sends out expeditions, and finally, after two celebrated battles, enters his birthplace, Mecca, as a conqueror. He writes letters to foreign kings and princes inviting them to embrace Islam - that is, to submit to Allah and to Mohammed his apostle.

Margoliouth's Life of Mohammed is based on original Moslem sources, and he describes how the demoralizing of Mohammed's own character by his assumed prophet-priest-apostleship took place.

"When he was at the head of a robber community (in Medina) it is probable that the demoralizing influence began to be felt; it was then that men who had never broken an oath learned that they might evade their obligations, and that men to whom the blood of the clansmen had been as their own began to shed it with impunity in the cause of God; and that lying and treachery, in the cause of Islam, received divine approval, hesitation to perjure oneself in that cause being represented as a weakness. It was then, too, that Moslems became distinguished by the obscenity of their language. It was then, too, that the coveting of goods and wives (possessed by unbelievers) was avowed without discouragement from the prophet." 10

With all his faults, which are not at all concealed or even apologized for in the Moslem sources, Mohammed's genius for leadership and his message won their way. Before his death, his word was law in all Arabia and the sword and book of the prophet began their world-conquest.

The four caliphs, who took leadership after Mohammed's death, succeeded to his power in temporal affairs and added to his prestige in the spiritual realm. Slowly but surely his apotheosis began and a new ideal apostle of God became the head of a world-wide theocracy.

In the Koran and in the earliest sources Mohammed is thoroughly human and liable to error.

Later tradition has changed all that, and made him sinless and almost divine. The two hundred and one titles of honor given him proclaim his apotheosis, and orthodox tradition establishes the claim. He is called Light of God, Peace of the World, Glory of the Ages, First of All Creatures and names yet more lofty and blasphemous. Tradition makes him both the sealer and abrogator of all former prophets and revelations, which have not only been succeeded, but also supplanted by Mohammed. No Moslem prays to him, but every Moslem daily prays for him or seeks his intercession in endless repetition. To them he is the only powerful intercessor on the day of judgment.

The inscription that surrounds a Persian portrait of Mohammed with lance and sword and surmounted by a nimbus of cherubs, reads as follows:

"Oh, Allah, bless and prosper the illiterate prophet, the Arabian, the Hashimite, the Quraishite, the man of Mecca and Medina, the Hero in battle of Tihama, the Pearly Star, the Possessor of dignity and gravity, the One buried in the soil of Al Medina, the Servant aided (with miracles), and the rightly guided messenger, and the elect one, the most glorious, the praised, the most praiseworthy, the father of Qasim, Mohammed son of Abdullah, the blessing and peace of God be upon him."

"Mohammed during his lifetime," says Macdonald, "ruled his people as a divinely inspired and guided prophet. He led the public prayers; he acted as judge; he controlled the army. Upon his death a leader was put in his place of similar authority, though without the divine prophetic guidance."

This successor, Abu Bekr, was the first khalijah. He was absolute ruler of the Islamic theocracy, although elected, as were Arab chiefs at that time.

What were the prerogatives and duties of the caliphs? Let Macdonald tell us.

"They were to maintain the divine ordinance; to enforce legal decisions; guard the frontiers and equip armies; receive the alms; put down highwaymen; maintain the Friday services and the festivals; decide disputes and receive evidence on legal claims; marry minors, male and female, who have no guardian; divide booty" (Islamic Institutions, Encyc. Brit., Vol. 12, p. 713).

With such a complex of martial, legal, spiritual, and social prerogatives claimed at the outset, it is no wonder that the caliphate became a powerful and mysterious force in the history of Islam.

Is it surprising that this institution which perpetuated and emphasized such prerogatives, grew more and more religiously totalitarian? It was not, as Lord Curzon remarks, "a state-church but a

church-state."

In this church, religious endowments, waqf (mortmain) waxed larger and larger and tended to absorb the greater part of the national wealth. The power of the caliphate went further in its religious control and domination, until even an inquisition (mihnd) existed for nearly two decades under Al Ma'mun in Baghdad, with torture and capital punishment for those who denied the creation of the Koran! (W. M. Patton: Ahmad b. Hanbal and the Mihna. Leyden, 1897).

On the power of the 'ulema (clergy) in general, D. B. Macdonald says, "It is plain that their organization was the solid framework of permanent government behind the changing dynasties (in the history of Islam). They had the ultimate decision on all questions of constitution, law and theology" (Art. 'Ulema in Encyc. of Islam).

Now even as Arabia is the cradle of Islam, the mosque is the cradle of the clergy. It was that in the first century of Islam at Mecca, Medina, and Damascus. It is that today in Cairo, Kerbela, and Bokhara. The first chair of the 'ulema was the minbar or pulpit.

Not only was the mosque the place of prayer but in the old days of Islam the mosque was the fitting scene for all the chief concerns of Arab life. "Here," remarks S. H. Leeder, "an important journey had its start and finish; in those days a man's camel knelt by instinct at the door of the mosque." 11

~ end of chapter 3 ~

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04-THE MOSQUE AND PULPIT

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MOSQUE AND PULPIT

THE mosque is not merely a house of worship; it became from the earliest days an institution of many uses. It always afforded asylum and was a place for community action. Here in early days men mustered for jihad (holy war). It generally was used for school purposes and was shelter for the homeless and the wayfarer. But primarily it had two chief functions - the place for the daily prayers (salat) and the place for the Friday gathering of the faithful to hear the khutbah or sermon. For all these reasons the mosque is the focus, the unifying element of the Moslem community.

Among the essentials of a mosque in the world of Islam even from the earliest days is the minbar or pulpit. The public proclamation of the truths of religion from a raised chair or platform, or the reading of God's revelation from a special place in public worship, is common to Jews, Christians and Moslems. It is not strange, therefore, that in the technical word for this chair, desk or rostrum and in the use to which it is put, we find that Islam has both borrowed and bequeathed. The common word used for desk or pulpit in the synagogue today is almemar; 12 the word is a legacy from Islam.

Rabbi Dr. Kaufman Kohler, writing in the Jewish Encyclopedia, says that the pulpit in the synagogue, which in the Talmud goes by the name of bema (from the Greek), is now called almemar. This word refers to the elevated platform in the synagogue on which the desk stands for reading the lessons. The word is undoubtedly a corruption of the Arabic al-minbar (pronounced mimbar).

The earliest reference to a wooden pulpit is that mentioned in Nehemiah 8:4 from which Ezra read the law. The proper place for the pulpit in a Jewish synagogue is in the center of the area. The Alexandrian synagogues used a pulpit which went by the name of katheder. This was also known as "the-seat-of-Moses" (compare Matthew 23:2). And in one of the oldest Jewish synagogues extant, at Kai-fung in China, there was a simple desk with the sides extended by a railing and the whole placed on a circular platform which went by the name of the chair of Moses.

The illustration accompanying the article by Dr. Kohler bears a striking resemblance to some of the primitive pulpits in Moslem lands. In the Encyclopedia Judaica there is a photographic reproduction of the stone almemar of the synagogue at Aleppo, dating from the sixth century. It has three steps leading to a small square platform supported in the rear by basalt columns. This, too, bears close resemblance to the earliest traditional mosque-pulpits, although, as we shall see, these were made of wood.

The Arabic word minbar (pulpit) comes, we are told, from the root nbr, which signifies, "he raised or elevated a thing . . . or to raise the voice, to speak in a high tone"; or, according to another authority, the pulpit was "so-called because of its height." 13

Schwally, however, believes that the word has an Ethiopian derivation, where it has the significance of throne, seat, or tribunal. Most probably the word came into the Arabic language through Yemen before Islam (Aghani 13:165). 14

Becker prefers the derivation from the Arabic root.

The pulpit in the early days of Christianity was called bema and ambo. The deacon preached from the ambo, the bishop from his cathedra. The former word was also used of the synagogue pulpit. Jesus Christ and the apostles gave their message from these “seats of Moses” (Matthew 23:2; Luke 4:20).

The Jewish bema (from the Greek for a speaker’s tribune) is the counterpart of Ezra’s wooden pulpit (Nehemiah 8:4) and is so rendered in the Septuagint. Ambo, plural ambones, is also a Greek word said to be related to that of mountain or elevation (Isaiah 40:9; Matthew 5:1). The ambo was introduced into the churches about the fourth century and became universal in the tenth. Chrysostom was in the habit of preaching sitting in the ambo. Bunsen thinks it was originally a movable pulpit or chair. At St. Sophia in Constantinople the ambo stood nearly in the middle of the church, but a little eastward. It was ascended by two flights of stairs, one from the west and one from the east. A picture of the ambo of St. Apollinare Nuovo at Ravenna, built between 493 and 525 A.D., in some respects resembles the minbar in the Sultan Hassan Mosque of Cairo. 15

The typical ambo consisted of a square or circular platform resting on columns or plinth, railed in front, with access by a flight of steps and occasionally surmounted by a canopy. The gospel was read from a higher step than the epistle. 16 All of which is of interest when we study the evolution of the minbar in Islam.

In his monumental work, Leone Caetani has collected the data regarding the gradual growth of early Islamic public worship, and has conclusively shown that tradition alone is not a safe guide on the pathway to historic conclusion. 17

C. H. Becker’s two studies on the pulpit in primitive Islam and on the history of the Cultus in Islam are most important. 18

Wensinck gives a list of traditions relating to the pulpit in Islam, with references to all of the six standard collections. If we could rely on these sources, we would learn that the pulpit took the place of the palm trunk against which Mohammed used to lean, and which lamented when he abandoned it; that between Mohammed’s house or the tomb in which he was buried and his pulpit there is an (invisible) garden of paradise; the pulpit, in fact, as well as Mohammed’s house acquired a special sacred character.

A false oath at Mohammed’s pulpit brings severe condemnation because of the sanctity of this environment. Tradition also tells in detail when and by whom the first pulpit was made for Mohammed; and finally speaks of al-udani, the two bits of wood, that is, the pulpit and the staff of the prophet. 19

The first pulpit is described for us in Bukhari. The prophet commanded one of his slaves, a carpenter, that he should make a wooden seat to be used when he addressed the people. It was made out of acacia wood found at Al-Ghaba. Before he used the pulpit, the prophet was accustomed to lean against a palm-stump.

We read in Tabari (Vol. I: 591) “In this year, A. H. 7, the prophet made his minbar, on which he was accustomed to preach. It had two steps and a seat.”

Others say the pulpit was made in the year A. H. 8.

When ‘Amr built a mosque at Fustat, Egypt, he also erected a pulpit, but by the command of the Caliph ‘Umar it was immediately ordered to be destroyed, because ‘Umar wrote to him rebuking him for attempting to sit when God’s people were standing for prayer (The reference in Becker is to Ibn Tagribirdi, Vol. 1:76). The rule seems to have been in early Islam that the preacher sat on the pulpit in giving his address. The standing was a later innovation. According to a tradition current in India, the earliest pulpit had three steps. Mohammed in addressing the congregation stood on the uppermost step, Abu Bekr on the second, and ‘Umar on the third or lowest. ‘Uthman fixed upon the middle step, and since then it has been the custom to preach from that step. 20

The place of the pulpit in the mosque seems to be identical with that of the ambo in the Oriental churches, namely, to the right of the altar or the mihrab. The preacher sits in the minbar, and stands only for the delivery of the sermon. He must have a staff or a sword in his hand.

Becker discusses the question why the preacher carries a staff or a sword. Some hold it was for his protection against unexpected attack from enemies. Al-Ghazali in the Ihya (Vol. 1:130) says that the preacher holds the staff to prevent his gesticulating with his hand!

There seems to be no question that the staff or sword was a necessary adjunct of the preacher from the earliest times.

Jahiz is quoted as saying, “As far as I am concerned, the preacher can mount the pulpit naked, but he must have a turban and a staff.” 21

The earliest pulpits were portable, that is, they were made of wood in such a fashion that they could be carried about. Becker infers that the pulpit originally was a chair of the judge, the throne of authority where pronouncements and judgments were made by the prophet, and only later did it become a place of public address. The sacredness of pulpits from the earliest times is evident from the fact that they were hung about with coverings in the same way as the kiswa covering the Ka’aba - (Tabari 11:292). In later days relics were kept under the pulpit; visitors received blessing by stroking the pulpit covering. According to Becker, it was not until the time of the Abbasids that the pulpit became what it is today.

Becker traces a parallel in the history of the Christian pulpit and that of Islam.

“The Christian pulpit originated in the bishop’s throne, which stood in the earliest Christian basilica in the apse, exactly where, under paganism, the judge’s chair stood.”

Therefore, he concluded, the Christian pulpit also has its origin in the seat of the judge. In Christianity, however, both chair and pulpit remained side by side, while in Islam the chair of the judge became itself the pulpit of today - the minbar of the mosque. On the other hand, and not without reason, Dr. Margoliouth believes that the Moslem pulpit was a conscious imitation of what was seen by the refugees in the old Abyssinian churches. Peculiar sanctity attached to the pulpit of Mohammed, which is said to have lasted until 654 A. H., when the mosque was burned.

In his article on Minbar in the Encyclopedia of Islam, E. Diez says:

“Becker refers to the earliest historical statement, which says that the prophet in the year 7 A. H. made his minbar, on which he used to preach to the people; it had two steps and a seat (maq’ad). The minbar was therefore originally a raised seat or throne. On the morning after the death of the prophet, after stormy disputes, Abu Bakr took his seat on the prophet’s minbar in a solemn assembly and received the general homage here. The later caliphs followed this tradition, as did the governors, who ascended the pulpit on their accession to office and on their resignation. The minbar in the early period was therefore not at all specially associated with worship but was the seat of the ruler in the council. The pulpit only gradually grew out of it with the development of public worship. According to Becker, the date of the change from the ruler’s or judge’s seat to the simple pulpit coincides with the end of the Umayyad dynasty. By the year 132 A. H. all the mosques in the provinces of Egypt were provided with minbars, and at the same period probably in the other lands of Islam. At the beginning of the Abbasid period the minbar was already a pulpit exclusively. The first tendency to its use as a pulpit is seen by Becker in the introduction of the minbar into the divine service at the musalla, the outdoor place of prayer in Medina; this innovation is ascribed to Mu’awiya or to his governor. The prophet did not have a minbar at the musalla, and nothing but divine service could have been held there.”

The architectural development of the Moslem pulpit is one of the most interesting chapters in the history of mosque architecture. 22

The most famous of all in the history of Moslem art is the great pulpit in the mosque of Kairawan. It was built of carved wood brought from Baghdad, with a staircase of seventeen steps leading to the preacher’s platform. The minbar attained its finest workmanship in Cairo under the second Mamluk dynasty in the fifteenth century. Most of the minbars of early date have no canopy. This seems to have been introduced from India; and is customary in China.

“In India,” E. Diez writes, “pulpits were built almost exclusively of stone. Many, some of them richly carved, still exist in the Muslim provinces and towns of India. The pavilion on four pillars, common and popular in India, which gives a charm to buildings for Muslim worship as a decorative finish to the roof, was also used here for the stone minbar. Indeed, one might even wonder whether this originally Indian structure was carried by the Eastern Turks to Central Asian lands and adopted by them for the minbar. Minbars with such canopies are frequently found in the mosques of the province of Gujarat and in Ahmedabad.”

The architectural development of the pulpit met with opposition from the Puritans in Islam. When Amr, the ruler of Egypt, built a costly pulpit, it was considered an indication of his pride, and he was forbidden by the Caliph ‘Umar to complete it.

Only in the first half of the second century of Islam did the minbar become universal. Even in the time of the Umayyads the question was raised whether the khatib was allowed to sit on the minbar, or whether he should deliver his sermon standing. The result of the controversy was the present regulation that the preacher must give the first and second parts of his discourse standing and is allowed to sit only during the pause. 23

Wensinck agrees that one of the conditions for the validity of the Friday service is that it must be preceded by two sermons. The preacher must pronounce these two brief homilies standing, and

sit down between them. It is commendable, we are told, that the pulpit be an elevated place, and that the preacher lean on a bow, a sword, or a staff. He must direct himself to his audience and offer a prayer on behalf of all Moslems. The khutba must be short.

He goes on to say: “Regarding the khutbas of the service during an eclipse, al-Shirazi remarks that the preacher must admonish his audience to be afraid; and in the service in times of drought he must ask Allah’s pardon, in the opening of the first khutba nine times, in the second seven times; further, he must repeat several times the salat on Muhammed as well as istighfar, recite Sura lxvi:9, elevate his hands and say Muhammad’s du’a. He must direct himself towards the kibla in the middle of the second khutba and change his shirt, putting the right side to the left, the left to the right, the upper part beneath and keep it on till he puts off all his other garments.”

These prescriptions surely indicate that a preacher is not an ordinary layman! They also point to the relation between the Mohammedan pulpit and the judge’s seat in early Arabia; explain why the khatib must sit down between the two khutbas; and also why he must lean on a staff, sword or bow, for these were the attributes of the old Arabian judge (Becker).

In his study on the history of Moslem worship, C. H. Becker has endeavored to establish a close connection between the services on Friday and the Christian mass.

He believes that the first khutba corresponds to the first part of the mass. The second khutba, with the call to prayer, is an echo of the responses between the deacon and the priest who administered the mass. The recitation of the Koran corresponds to that of the Scriptures in the Oriental churches. The second khutba corresponds to the sermon and the general prayer.

Mittwoch, however, combats this view, and finds rather in the Jewish liturgy features corresponding to those used in the mosque. He believes that the recitation from the Torah corresponds to the first khutba and that from the prophets to the second. 24

The khatib is the preacher of the Friday sermon. Frequently in smaller mosques he is the same as the imam. But, as Pedersen points out, his office is higher. The prophet himself had a khatib, namely, ‘Utarid b. Hajib.

He preaches and pronounces a prayer for the temporal ruler or khalifa. He has high honors, often high emoluments. In Mecca he was once a very imposing figure, ascending the pulpit in black robe trimmed with gold and a tasseled turban; and accompanied by two servants who carried banners, and one who walked before him cracking a whip. After he had kissed the Black Stone, the chief muezzin went quickly in front of him with the sword with which he girded him on the minbar. 25

A preacher with whip and sword and a pulpit at Mecca and yet - “there is no priesthood in Islam!”

It is not generally known that in every mosque, according to orthodox tradition, from West Africa to Western China, a sword, or staff, is kept near or in the minbar, and it is required that the khatib hold it when preaching the Friday sermon. In some cases it is made of wood - but the symbol is always present. Baladhuri explains its use in a short but weighty sentence: “Every land or district was conquered by the sword except Medina, which was won by preaching.” 26

What was the character of the earliest preaching in Islam? We have, fortunately, the text of Mohammed’s first sermon as a specimen. The prophet’s first and second khutba in Medina are

given in Ibn Ishak's Sira (ed. Wüstenfeld, p. 340). Margoliouth gives a translation, not because of its being considered by Western critics as genuine, but as a specimen admired by all Moslems and which later preachers followed:

"The Apostle of Allah praised Allah and said: Amma ba'du (after this) Oh people, provide for yourselves (by good works), accept instruction. By Allah you will be thunderstricken and every one of you will leave his cattle without shepherd. Then his Lord will say to him, speaking without a dragoman and without a screen: 'Has not my Apostle come to you? He preached to you, and I provided you with money and gave you abundance. What have you provided for yourself?' Then you will look to the right and to the left, without perceiving anything (which can aid you); you will then look before you, but not perceive anything besides hell, even though it were on account of a piece of a date (given as alms), he should do it, or on account of a good word, if he should not possess a date. For good deeds are rewarded ten, nay even seven hundred times. May peace and God's mercy and blessing be upon you."

E. W. Lane gives examples of the mosque preaching current in Egypt in his day. He translates a new year sermon preached in the great mosque of al-Azhar. This sermon, which consisted of an exhortation on the brevity of life and the certainty of death, was followed by the second khutba called the khutba of praise.

In it we have the following reference to unbelievers:

"O God, assist the forces of the Moslems, and the armies of the Unitarians. O God, frustrate the infidels and polytheists, thine enemies, the enemies of the religion. O God, invert their banners, and ruin their habitations, and give them and their wealth as booty to the Moslems." 27

Other typical sermons are given by Sell. 28

The fact is that the Friday sermon in Islam soon became stereotyped: The exordium and the conclusion are always practically the same. A few sentences in the middle refer to the special subject of the sermon. The second of the two sermons consists of an invocation of blessings on the leaders and heroes of Islam, and sometimes includes a malediction on unbelievers, as in the example given by Lane. Except as an innovation in modern Turkey, both sermons are always given in Arabic throughout the world of Islam. What would answer to our idea of a sermon, such as an explanation of doctrine or an exposition of some passage in the Koran, is not a part of public worship in the mosque. This is done either in an ordinary assembly or by a learned man in one of the mosque-schools.

Sermons are delivered before the mid-day prayer on Fridays and after the prayer on feast days. They are also given at important weddings and on public occasions.

Orthodox jurists state that the elements of a sermon must be five: praise to God, a blessing on the prophet, an admonition to piety, a blessing on the believers, and comment on or quotation from the Koran. A prayer for the reigning sovereign is also common, although not universal.

Margoliouth says that the practice was introduced in Baghdad about 367 A. H. "If the introduction of a prayer for the sovereign was late, the practice of cursing public enemies from the pulpit was early; the second Khalifah is said to have so cursed a man who was guilty of what was thought an immoral practice; and in the first civil war 'Ali and Mu'awiyah introduced imprecations on each

other into their sermons. The cursing of ‘Ali in the Friday discourse was continued till the end of the first Islamic century, when the pious ‘Umar II put an end to it; as late as 321 A. H. there was a question of re-introducing the cursing of Mu’awiyah” (E. R. E. art. Muslim Preaching).

The list of influential preachers in the history of Islam is not great. Some of them are mentioned by Margoliouth, such as Abd al-Qadir al-Iilani (561 A. H.), who claimed to have made five hundred converts to Islam and to have reformed more than 100,000 criminals, although his own personal character appears to have left something to be desired. Some of these preachers amassed great fortunes and maintained harims of colossal size.

Margoliouth quotes, with comment, an account from the traveler Ibn Jubair who visited Baghdad in 580 A. H.:

“‘Scarcely a Friday passes without a discourse by a preacher, and those among the inhabitants who are specially favored pass their whole time in meetings where such are delivered.’ He describes a Friday service at the Nizamiyyah College where after the midday prayer the shaikh Qazwini ascended the pulpit; chairs were placed in front of him for the Koran-readers, who chanted elaborately, after which the shaikh delivered a powerful discourse; questions were then addressed to him on strips of paper and he replied forthwith to every one. The historian Jamal al-din Ibn al-Jauzi held services of this kind every Saturday, and his eloquence also greatly impressed the traveler. The results were similar to the phenomena at times seen at revivalist meetings; many in the congregation sobbed and fainted, and crowds of penitents thronged to touch the preacher. ‘It would have been worthwhile to cross the sea to hear one of these sermons.’ On Thursdays this preacher’s gatherings were held in a private court of the palace, from which the khalifah and his family could hear them. The text was a verse of the Qur’an which ended in nãs, and the preacher maintained this rhyme throughout his discourse. Into the sermon he introduced compliments to the khalifah and his mother, and prayers for them; he further recited many verses, some encomia on the sovereign, others of the Sufi erotic style, which affected the audience powerfully.” 29

Mosque pulpits were intended for seats of authority, not primarily for preaching; for judgment, where the Imam sat and exercised rule. The pulpit and the staff went together. From the year 7 A. H. to the present day, the minbar of every great mosque in the world of Islam is “the seat of the mighty.” From such minbars the khatib has exercised the power of eloquence, roused the multitudes to new fervor, or even jihad, and pulled down princes from their thrones.

The history of the Azhar University in Cairo for a thousand years offers many examples. Lord Cromer knew the power of the Moslem clergy in his day; and the mosques of Achin in Sumatra or of Turkey, even in the days of Abd-ul-Hamid, could tell the same story of the enormous power of the ‘ulema (clergy) in Islam. They are indeed a “royal priesthood, a peculiar people.”

In his history of the propagation of the Moslem faith, T. W. Arnold emphasizes a fact often forgotten; that Islam is at heart a missionary religion and that not only by conquest but by preachers it has won adherents. He notes that although laymen and merchants did their part, the outstanding preachers belonged to the ‘ulema. He mentions as typical examples “Mawlana Ibrahim, the apostle of Java, Mu’in-ud-Din Chisti of India and countless others who won converts by peaceful means alone.”

When the Imam Ibn Hanbal, the great theologian, died, Ibn Khallikan relates that twenty thousand Jews and Christians became Moslems!

In the present century the Wahhabi revival sent mullah-preachers into North Africa and Bengal. While Sheikh Ismail, a Sayyid of Bukhara who came to Lahore in 1005 A.D., gathered crowds of Hindus “and it is said no unbeliever ever came into personal contact with him without being converted to Islam.” 30

The present-day efforts of Ahmadiah “clergy” are well known. They publish their propaganda magazines in Chicago, London, and Berlin as well as from India at the two centers of Lahore and Qadian.

From the pulpit in the world of Islam there has sounded forth again and again the call to jihad or holy war against infidels. On the other hand there have been instances to my own knowledge when the Friday sermon commended Christian missionaries, or where public prayer was offered for world peace. 30

Governments have made use of the Moslem pulpit to broadcast useful information to the illiterate masses. A sermon on the boll-weevil, calling for a jihad to destroy it, lest cotton crops be ruined, was preached in the mosques of Egypt in 1925 on request of the Ministry of Agriculture!

It begins: “Praise be to God who exceedingly prefers the diligent to the lazy and has ordained labor as the best worship” . . . and after describing the plague and its remedy closes thus: “Therefore, let nobody refrain himself from fighting and destroying this insect; and let nobody say that this is God’s visitation, for God created both the disease and the remedy; and He ordered us to ply and labor. The person neglecting the precautions against the plague which afflicts his crop is no doubt a transgressor. Likewise the person who carelessly leaves his cotton to be eaten up by the insect is also the transgressor. ‘God helps man so long as man labors to help himself.’ O, God’s servants, preserve the means of your living and fight this injurious insect. If you take these steps you will need nobody’s aid. God said, ‘Seek to attain by means of which God hath given you the future mansion, and forget not your portion in this world; but be ye bounteous, as God hath been bounteous to you, and seek not to act corruptly, for God loveth not the corrupt doers.’ (Koran, Chap. 28, vs. 77 and 78).” 31

This surely is modernism in the pulpit, but in the best sense of the word. It would be of interest to learn from various Moslem lands what the character of the Friday sermon is today, and in how far it has freed itself from the old stereotyped form and content. The Christian pulpit, at least in Persia and in Egypt, is already exerting some indirect influence. In the former country a missionary was even invited a few years ago to preach on the minbar, and his sermons gave satisfaction.

We now pass from the pulpit to the colonnades and central area of the mosque where lustrations, prayers, and meditation find their home and where we meet the other personnel of the mosque.

~ end of chapter 4 ~

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05-THE PERSONNEL OF THE MOSQUE

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PERSONNEL OF THE MOSQUE IN addition to the khatib who occupies the pulpit in Islam, there are other “clergy” who belong to the mosque. A very able and extensive article on the Masdjid (Mosque) in the Encyclopaedia of Islam, by John Pedersen devotes an entire section to the personnel of the mosque. This alone would be a perfect reply to those who say there is “no priesthood in Islam”; for the list of mosque personnel is a regular hierarchy.

The special Friday service when the khatib preaches has already been mentioned. But on every day in the year mosques are open and prayers are said five times daily.

Each mosque throughout the vast world of Islam has its Imam. 32

The word goes back to the Koran itself, where it signifies a pattern or leader in religion (Surah 2:118; 17: 73; 25: 74). It was used in early days for the Imam or Khalifah of the Moslem people. Later it was used of a patron saint or theologian, e.g., Abu Hanifa and the other three Imams of orthodox Islam. The Shiahs speak of their twelve Imams - a hierarchy of religious leaders that are far more sacred to them than the twelve apostles of the early church were to Christendom.

But here we speak of the ordinary imam. In the earliest days he was imam in holy war as well as in prayer. The Friday service could take place only under those qualified to conduct it; who could punish and impose duties (Makrizi iv, p. 7). He was appointed and paid by the local governor out of the mosque-treasury (Bayt-al-mal). He had to maintain order and was in charge of the divine services daily, but especially on Fridays (Pedersen).

In India, we are told that sometimes the maulawi who possesses the mosque pays the imam as his curate (Hughes, Dict, of Islam, p. 329). Hughes goes on to say, “The Imam or priest of the mosque is supported by endowments (waqf). In towns or villages there is a parish allotted to each mosque, and the people within the section can claim the services of their imam at marriages and funerals.”

It is true that a religious ceremony is not obligatory for marriage, but it is usual in Arabia, Egypt, and India. It consists of a confession (istighfãr) by the imam, repetition of the creed, the joining of hands and a closing prayer (L. Bevan Jones, Woman in Islam, p. 82; Hughes, Dict., p. 318). What more does a Christian priest do at a marriage ceremony?

Those who doubt the existence of clergy or priesthood in Islam should read Westermarck’s two volumes on Ritual and Belief in Morocco. A reference to the index alone would show that even the Moslem school master (faqih) stands apart from the laity, receives the first-fruits, washes the dead, presides at funerals, performs the first sacrifice at the Great Feast, and inculcates the principles of Islam. All education is in his hands and all education is religious. Secular education came only after the French occupation. It is from such an exhaustive study as Westermarck’s (see index for Scribes and Shereefs) that we learn how priest-ridden Morocco was, and still is.

While the imam conducts the marriage ceremony, it is the qadhi who leads prayers at funerals (Hughes Dict., p. 58). The offices of imam and qadhi are not necessarily hereditary, but it is usual in Mohammedan countries for them to pass from father to son (idem). In China, where there are some ten million Moslems, the imam is called ahung, i.e., religious teacher.

In Dabry de Thiersant's standard work on Le Ma-hometisme en Chine et dans Le Turkestan Oriental (pp. 330-348), there is an entire chapter on the ministers of religion and servants of the mosque. While those interested in the Dutch East Indies, with over fifty million Moslems, will find details of the names given and functions assigned to the personnel of the mosque in Cabaton's article, Vol. I Revue du Monde Musulmane.

The importance and special functions of the imam in every Moslem community are indicated in scores of traditions. He must be the best Koran reader, an elder or presbyter (sheikh), must not assume office against the will of the people (parish); but, once chosen, his authority is clear. People must not even leave the mosque before he does. 33

The imam has the power not only to receive converts into Islam and welcome them, as is the case in Arabia and Egypt today, but also exercises the power of excommunication. As in Judaism, the apostate is "cast out of the synagogue" and it is the priesthood which cast him out. Klein, who resided in Egypt for many years, writes: "A Muslim who apostatizes is to be brought before the imam and called upon by him to give up his unbelief and return to Islam. If he does not recant he is to be killed." 34

Few are aware of the wide influence and power of the law of apostasy in Islam even today. Those who are interested will find sufficient detail in a monograph mentioned in the footnote.

At the two great religious festivals of Islam, the imam or qadhi presides at the public services and initiates the sacrifice and the proper prayer ritual (Juyn-boll, Islamisches Gesetz, p. 127; Herklot's Qanoon-e-Islam, pp. 261-269).

The ceremony of the Haji at Mecca opens with a sermon at the great mosque, by the imam, which all pilgrims must attend.

In how many ways the laity are instructed and led through the perplexing ritual of the Haji by the Moslem clergy (muqaddam), one may learn from Hurgronje's Mekka or Burton's story of his pilgrimage.

In fact every pilgrim or small company of pilgrims engages a muqaddam or guide on entering Mecca, not as a tourist might, to show the sights, but as religious prompter to teach proper conduct to the pilgrim.

In Morocco and elsewhere, at the 'aqiqa sacrifice for the newborn child, it is the faqih (mullah) who presides, slays the victim, offers an extraordinary vicarious prayer and receives his fee (Ritual and Belief in Morocco, Vol. II, pp. 391-397). We enlarge on this priestly function of the Moslem clergy later.

At circumcision, the imam has an important place in Turkey, Egypt, and among the Achinese (Encyclopaedia of Islam, Khitan, p. 958). He offers prayers and takes part in the procession and the family feast because the rite of circumcision is considered the act of reception into the religious

community (Lane's Modern Egyptians).

The qadhi (or judge) holds a religious-political office and often exercises the functions of imam as well. In some Moslem lands he is appointed by the secular power even as is the case in some state churches of Europe. He alone is competent to give decisions in matters of fiqh (canon-law). He also determines the punishment in every case. 35

Every Moslem village from Morocco to China offers abundant illustration.

The local qadhi is the court of appeal, even for non-Moslems, in case of trouble. Because of a friendly qadhi, many a Jew and Christian in the Near East has escaped mob fanaticism. Those who say there is no priesthood in Islam should read Doughty, or go out as pioneer missionaries or travelers to Arabia, Morocco, or Central Asia. There they would soon experience the power of the priesthood.

Let a paragraph from Doughty suffice:

"The imam's mind was somewhat wasted by the desolate Koran reading. I heard in his school discourse, no word which sounded to moral edification! He said finally - looking towards me! - 'And to speak of Aysa bin Miriam, - Jesu was of a truth a Messenger of Ullah; but the Nasara walk not in the way of Jesu, - they be gone aside, in the perversity of their minds, unto idolatry!' And so rising mildly, all the people rose; and every one went to take his sandals. The townspeople tolerated me hitherto - it was Zamil's will. But the Muttowwa, or public ministers of the religion, from the first, stood contrary; and this imam (a hale and venerable elder of threescore years and ten) had stirred the people, in his Friday noon preaching in the great mesjid, against the nasrany. 'It was, he said, of evil example, that certain principal persons favored a misbelieving stranger: might they not in so doing provoke the Lord to anger, and see that the seasonable rain was withheld?" (Vol. II, p. 369, Doughty, Arabia Deserta).

Dr. Duncan B. Macdonald gives the duties of the qadhi as follows:

"He examines into disputes brought before him and enforces his judgments; he names administrators of the estates of minors, the insane, etc.; he supervises the waqf property of mosques and schools in his district and inspects highways and public buildings; he watches over the executions of wills; he inflicts the due legal penalties for apostasy, neglect of religious duties, refusal to pay taxes, theft, adultery, outrages, murder; he can inflict the penalties of imprisonment, fines, corporal punishment, and death." (Encyc. Brit., Islamic Institutions, Vol. 12, p. 713).

For ten years, from 1892-1902 in Bahrein, East Arabia, my friend and neighbor, the qadhi, Sheikh Jasim, exercised each and all of the above functions. I witnessed the amputation of hands for theft, the public execution of a murderer, corporal punishment for adultery, imprisonments, and high-handed appropriation of property at his behest.

The qadhi of every Arabian village and city is feared above all other men because of his religious authority.

It is true that when the ordinary, illiterate Moslem stands before God he is conscious of a personal relationship. For him, as for the average Protestant, "there is no priesthood" to intercede or offer sacrifice. But in his daily life and relation to society - a totalitarian society of Islam - he knows the

power of the qadhi to make life intolerable, because of his learning, his multitudinous functions, and his popular religious prestige.

Even as the Roman Catholic priest in the confessional, so the qadhi in his daily majlis learns the secrets of the common people.

He has the power of attorney over orphans and imbeciles; he confirms or forbids marriage and divorce. For details one may consult L. Bevan Jones, Woman in Islam (1941) where we learn how the mulla, the pir and the qadhi dominate women's life in India (pp. 56, 82, 83, 96, 155). And speaking, not of India but of Islam in general, Hendrik Kraemer states: "Just as in Hinduism, the mullah or sheikh is the director of the souls and minds of untold thousands. It is extraordinarily instructive to read in this respect the youthful reminiscences of Taha Hussein the brilliant Egyptian scholar." 36

Dr. J. Christy Wilson, who spent many years in Persia, writes:

"In Iran, the mullahs are known by the white turban they wear. The size of this increased according to their rank until a mujtahid of high rank wears a turban that makes him stoop shouldered. These men are educated in certain schools and when they complete their education and are inducted into the office they have the white turban placed upon their head. I think it is quite the same as the special clothing worn by a priest."

One may witness, in nearly every Moslem center from Morocco to China, that special dress for the Moslem clergy is not the exception but the rule; not of yesterday but of today.

Dr. Wilson goes on to say:

"The number of priests who are allowed to wear the white turban, the old abba or cloak, and the distinctive dress of this office was recently limited by government order and the number was very largely reduced, others were forced to conform to the new European dress. The priests who were acknowledged for a certain district or village were allowed to continue to wear the tunic, or long inner garment, the abba or outside cloak, and the white turban. Others not acknowledged by the government as holders of this office were not allowed to wear this dress and these men like doctors were required to show proof of where they had been educated and how they could claim the office of mullah."

"Furthermore the government maintains a school of theology in Teheran which has been visited by the Shah and which prepares men for the priesthood. It is a regular part of the government educational system and is called a College of Theology 'Ilm Ilahi.' As to preparation, distinctive dress and functions it seems to me the Shiah clerics of Iran are quite as much priests or clerics as those of the various forms of Christianity."

One distinctive mark of those who pose as clergy or religious leaders we must note in this connection.

The sacred color of Islam is undoubtedly green. The Moslem hajji, proud of his journey to Mecca, and the seyyids and sherifs who claim descent from the prophet, wear green turbans. Some darwish orders wear green robes. Mohammed himself used to wear a green burdah, upper garment (see references in Wensinck's Handbook to Tradition, p. 46). This burdah became

famous and was preserved for many centuries as one of the relics of the prophet (Relics of the Prophet Mohammed by Margoliouth, Moslem World, Vol. xxvii, p. 20 ff).

According to tradition (Koelle's Mohammed, p. 383) Mohammed preferred white and green. He greatly admired green. His celebrated green mantle was four ells long. The poem called Al Burda, The Mantel, was composed because a miracle wrought by this mantle extols the prophet with almost divine attributes. The banner raised for the Holy War in Islam is generally green, as by tradition was that of Mohammed. The curtains of the Kaaba, now black, were once green. The flags of Egypt, Persia and other Moslem lands have green as a predominant color.

We had looked in vain for the reason of all this, until a reference of Van Arendonk to the green robes of honor worn by sharifs (Encyc. of Islam) gave us the key. He says they wore green in imitation or anticipation of the green robes of Moslem saints in paradise. These are mentioned in the Koran. The root khadra (green) occurs only eight times.

It is used of trees and herbs, especially the reviving-green of springtime, thrice (22:63; 6:99 and 38:80). Twice it refers to the seven green ears of corn in Pharaoh's dream (12:43, 46). But it is remarkable that all of the other references are to the color of the garments and the couches of delight in paradise (18:30; 76:21 and 55:76).

They read as follows:

"For them are gardens of Eden, beneath them rivers flow; they shall be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and shall wear green robes of silk and of brocade, reclining on thrones - pleasant is the reward and goodly the couch."

And again:

"On them shall be garments of green embroidered with satin and brocade, and they shall be adorned with bracelets of silver, and their Lord shall give them pure drink."

The last passage is even more explicit. It is taken from the close of Surah 55, which gives the fullest description of the Moslem paradise:

"In them maidens best and fairest . . . bright and large-eyed maids kept in their tents, whom no man nor jinn has deflowered . . . reclining on green cushions and beautiful carpets."

To return from this excursus on the robes of the "clergy" to their various classes, we come to the qass and qãri. These also belong to the personnel of the mosque.

Sermons were not only delivered on Fridays by the khatib, but there were Koran-readers who chanted and had special seats in the mosques. In Baghdad, we are told, one mosque had twenty (Ibn Djubair, pp. 219-222). There were also clerics "lay-preachers" (Qussas); these were appointed to deliver edifying addresses or tell popular religious stories both in mosques and elsewhere (Goldziher, Muh. Studien, II: 161).

Macdonald gives a lengthy account of their origin and their religious influence:

"The Qussas gave to Islam its permanent type as one knows it today. Their spontaneous movement, preaching to the populace directly in rhymed prose, pointed with religious legend, was

the first apologetic and catechetic of Islam" . . . "In Ramadhan the daily preaching in the mosques is still of this character" (Art. Kissa, Encyc. of Islam, pp. 1043-1044).

The qãris or Koran readers, used a special desk, kursi, shaped like a large camp-stool, sometimes with a seat. Those without seats were kept in a small circular cabinet. There are beautiful examples of these kursis in the Cairo museum and in some of the large Cairo mosques they are still used. They are portable, and at public readings of the Koran function exactly as a reading-desk does in churches at the left of the pulpit. Is this also borrowed from Christian usage? For there we have a reading-desk as well as a pulpit. The Muezzin. This office was instituted by the prophet in the second year of the Hegira when Bilal, a Negro believer, was appointed to call Moslems to prayer. His apostolic succession covers three continents and thirteen centuries! About the year 1900, there were in the Mosque of the Prophet at Medina fifty muezzins and twenty-six assistants (Pedersen).

In the earliest period they were assistants of the ruler. Their function was threefold:

- The assembling of the people,

- The summons to the imam for prayer,

- The iqamah or announcement that prayer was about to begin.

The mosque in the early centuries was also the training ground for jihad warriors (Margoliouth, Mohammedanism, p. 76). Those who refused to hear the muezzin's call were whipped (Al Madkhal 111:4); as was still the case at Zubair, Arabia, 1902. This special whip, kept by the muezzin or other servant of the mosque, is called dirrah, also saut or jaldah. Hughes' Dictionary (p. 85) gives an illustration of the one used at Peshawar. There is a specimen of one I found used in a mosque at Hankow in 1933, in the Princeton Museum. 37

One is not surprised to learn, therefore, that from very early days the muezzin was also the muhtasib or public censor of morals (Pedersen). Dr. M. T. Titus specifies his duties in the organization of Sunni Islam. "He was clothed with authority to put down heretical teaching and to punish Muslims who neglected the five daily prayers or the fast of Ramadhan" (Indian Islam, pp. 69, 70).

The muezzins also summoned to night-prayers and special litanies (Zikr). They repeated the words of the imam from raised platforms, called dikkas, in all the large mosques of Syria and Egypt. "In other ways also," says Pedersen, "the muezzins could be compared to deacons at the service. The khatib, on his progress to the minbar at Mecca, was accompanied by them and girded by them with the sword."

The office was sometimes hereditary. They had guilds and received their regular pay from the religious treasury (waqf). The position they still occupy can be seen from the part they play in public processions (Hurgronje's Mekka II: 322, and Lane's Modern Egyptians).

Most astonishing of all is that these "deacons" in the church of Islam were at the outset acolytes to carry incense! The prophet had incense burned in the mosque at Medina (Lammens' Mo'awiya, p. 367, note 8).

‘Omar followed his example, and his client ‘Abdullah carried the censer to the mosque in the month of fasting. In Fustat, Egypt, incense was used in consecration of the Sakhrah mosque. The consumption of incense in the mosques became very large, especially at festivals (Pedersen).

There were artistic brass vessels used as incense burners. In Java and China such incense-pots with Arabic inscriptions are still a part of the regular mosque furniture, and are in charge of the muezzins. I have specimens from China dating from the Ming dynasty (1490). So much for the personnel and the religious furniture of the mosque.

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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06-THE SHEIKH-AL-ISLAM and MUFTI

CHAPTER SIX

THE SHEIKH-AL-ISLAM and MUFTI

THESE religious officials do not strictly belong to the personnel of the mosque. They are of higher grade. The former honorific title for a spiritual office appears in the second half of the fourth century A.H.

Other honorific titles compounded with Islam are many, but often relate to secular offices; this has always been reserved for the ‘ulema and mystics (Encyc. of Islam). It was given in Syria and Egypt to canon-lawyers of the highest rank that had attained fame or the approval of other jurists.

In Egypt and Russia, to the present day, muftis (canon-lawyers) of importance may be given the title. It gained most glory, however, when applied to the mufti of Constantinople, a religious and political importance without parallel.

In the reign of Suleiman, the Sheikh-al-Islam acquired undisputed authority over all the ‘ulema of the empire.

This was possibly in imitation of the Christian hierarchy under the ecumenical patriarch (Kramers). His high position was indicated by special ceremonials of installation, dress and the exercise of political as well as of spiritual functions. It was the Sheikh-al-Islam who authorized the drinking of coffee in Turkey by fatwa, and also the establishment of a printing press in 1727. Coffee as beverage had been under suspicion for a long time (see Kahwah, Encyc. of Islam).

In Cairo in 1912 the Nestle Milk Co. of Switzerland secured a fatwa to certify that their brand was ritually pure! 38

And Dr. Snouck Hurgronje wrote a very interesting paper on the fatwas issued in the lively controversy regarding the transcription of the Koran on the gramophone. On the functions and prerogatives of all muftis, see Juynboll, Islamischen Gesetzes, Vol. I, pp. 54-56.

It is evident from such modern instances of the issuance of fatwas that the religious power of the mufti is enormous. In a totalitarian religion, canon law is supreme. The mufti’s voice is the voice of the Koran and of orthodox tradition, both of which are of divine authority.

During my years in Cairo, the press sometimes criticized the verdict of the mufti, yet between the lines one could read the power which they had over the masses.

Here is an instance.

The Wady-el-Nil newspaper, writing of a fatwa regarding economy in sacrificing sheep for the annual feast of sacrifice, said: "As the government has acknowledged this particular privilege of the ulemas, by resorting to them this season to advise the community to reduce its courban

sacrifices, and asked them on a previous occasion to give a fetwah justifying the suspension of the pilgrimage, the ulemas themselves should appreciate these privileges and cease to imagine that the government would fight them if they busied themselves with such theological affairs as to straighten the morals of the community and call people to advocate sound character and virtues which conform with the teachings of Islam . . . Why should not the chiefs of the four sects of Islam give a fetwah prohibiting immoderate toilette of ladies which is becoming indecent? Why should they not give a fetwah forbidding extravagance which has corrupted people's character? Why not a fetwah to teach the fellah to employ strict economy for a part of the year in order to save himself from usurers afterwards?"

To which another Moslem paper replied defending the muftis:

"With reference to the sheria' fetwah advising people to be more economical in sacrificing sheep on the occasion of the Courban Bairam, we may observe that while prudence requires that every Egyptian should give special attention to economical matters under the present circumstances, we cannot help remarking that the present state of things is of a nature to enforce the fetwah and prevent people from making big sacrifices. The remarkable shortage of meat and the lack of imports of livestock from the Sudan make it necessary for the majority of people, rich and poor, to be more economical in this respect."

In Cairo as in Mecca there are four official muftis to represent each of the four schools of Moslem law. They alone are officially recognized.

Not everyone can aspire to the office or hold it. As for the office of Sheikh-al-Islam, the caliphs themselves have been deposed by them and successors appointed. These jurists (for example, Mawardi who died 1058) wrote treatises on the theory and practice of the caliphate, and the qualifications for election to this high office. They were in fact like cardinals who elected the pope! Although the caliph was never a pope in the Roman sense, yet when we read the history of the Sheikhs-al-Islam in Constantinople (the biographies of 124 are carefully recorded), it is no wonder that western travelers of the sixteenth century (Ricaut, Volney and other writers) compare them to the popes as representatives of the spiritual power of the whole Moslem world (Kramers in the Encyc. of Islam, p. 277). 39

A full description of the powers granted this high official in the world of Islam is found in the 'Ilmiye Salnamesi, published in 1916 at Constantinople. They included even the superintendence of the printing of the Koran and religious books, the department of religious education, of archives, and of religious endowments. The office was eliminated about the time when the caliphate was abolished, March 3, 1924. But the history of the office is a striking witness to the absolute power of the Moslem clergy over the laity in a totalitarian religion through many centuries. It was the nihil obstat of this official that first permitted the free circulation of the Bible in Turkey; and such statement appeared on the title page of every copy sent from the Beirut press before the Turkish Revolution.

The mufti, even in our day, has power to confirm or deny the death sentence in an Egyptian court. In 1910 in Cairo, the sentence of death for the murder of the Prime Minister, Butrus Pasha, the Copt, was submitted to the mufti for confirmation.

He solemnly put it upon record that his sanction of the death sentence was impossible for three reasons:

- The first was that as Mohammed had not foreseen and provided against the case of murder by a revolver, no legal sentence was possible;

- Secondly, “the murder of a non-Moslem by a Moslem is not a murder within the eye of the law and not punishable by death”;

- Thirdly, the relatives of Butrus Pasha and not the government should bring charge against the culprit.

“The Egyptian Prime Minister has been brutally and aimlessly murdered, and to complete the picture, the principal religious official in the country has openly called upon the fanaticism of his Mohammedan compatriots in an attempt to save the murderer from punishment” (London Daily Telegraph, June 11, 1910).

And in the New York Times (Jan. 19, 1945) we read that the death sentence pronounced after a long and fair trial, on the two Jewish Palestinian youths who murdered the British statesman, Sir Moyne, in Cairo, was deferred. The reason, says the newspaper correspondent is that,

“In actual fact, the official sentence of death has not been pronounced. At noon today the presiding justice, Mahmoud Mansur Bey, announced briefly in Arabic that the documents in the case would be sent to the mufti of Egypt. This would be done only in case of a death sentence. Egyptian courts have no power to take a man’s life, but the mufti, who combines legal and religious functions, can approve such a sentence in the name of God. Egyptian legal experts say it is difficult to recall an instance when documents were forwarded to the mufti and the death sentence was not approved.”

The personnel of the mosque all receive their training in Moslem religious legal practice and theology, and the oldest and most celebrated of all theological schools is at Cairo.

~ end of chapter 6 ~

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07-THE OLDEST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE OLDEST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY FOR many centuries the world of Islam has had three capitals and three centers of religious life.

- Cairo is its literary capital,

- Mecca the center of religious pilgrimage, and at

- Constantinople political ambitions and aspirations once concentrated.

But the influence of Constantinople is no longer what it was in the days when the caliphate existed and had political power; the influence of Mecca is felt only with the coming and going of the pilgrims once a year, while Cairo for twelve months in the year is still the real center of Mohammedan propaganda through books, newspapers, pamphlets, and graduate-preachers from every nation in the East.

The center of Moslem thought in Cairo is the old Mohammedan University in the “Jamia’-Al-Azhar” or “The Splendid Mosque.” This university, so-called, was founded the same year as the city of Cairo, in 969 A.D. by the Fatimite Jowhar. It has, therefore, lasted over one thousand years, endowed by succeeding caliphs, sultans and khedives until now it contains some ten thousand students with two hundred and fifty professors on its staff.

During the early years of its existence it never had more than one thousand students within its walls, but since the Mohammedan revival and the British occupation of Egypt the number of students has largely increased so that the maximum number during the years I spent in Cairo was given as 11,000 pupils and 325 professors not all resident.

This celebrated “University” is really in its origin, history, and influence the most important school in the Moslem world for the training of theological teachers, and the whole gamut of Islamic clergy, muftis, and qadhis. It became the cynosure of orthodoxy and the mother of similar schools from Morocco to India and Central Asia. Lord Cromer in his Modern Egypt refers to the enormous power of this institution and its clergy. His long experience lends weight to this opinion:

“The ‘Ulema - the learned men - of the El-Azhar Mosque constitute a distinct religious corporation, which is divided into grades, and which is officially recognized by the Government. A University is attached to the Mosque. The number of ‘ulema is limited; in order to qualify for the rank of ‘Alim’ which carries with it the right to wear a pelisse conferred by the Khedive, a candidate must have studied at the University, and have passed certain examinations to test his knowledge of the Koran, the Traditions (Hadith), and the Sacred Law of Islam. Many a Moslem may be learned in the ordinary acceptation of the term; he may, for instance be a ‘Hafiz’, who can repeat the whole Koran by heart, or, at all events is supposed to be able to do so; but unless he has undergone the necessary examination at the El-Azhar University, he is not, technically speaking, considered an

‘Alim.’ He may officiate at religious services but he will not have acquired the right to expound either the tenets or the Sacred Law at any other of the principal mosques.”

“The three chief ‘Ulema are the Grand Mufti, the head of the El-Azhar University and the Grand Qadi. The last named takes what is the equivalent of his degree, not at Cairo but at Constantinople. The head of the famous El Azhar University exercises a certain degree of control in temporal matters over those of the ‘Ulema’ who lecture in the mosques, and must himself be, par excellence, an ‘Alim.’ The incumbent of this office during the first years of my residence in Egypt was a worthy old man, with whom I entertained excellent personal relations, although, as has been already mentioned, our views as to the movements of the planets were not identical.”

In this connection he quotes a saying of Stanley Lane-Poole that “an educated upper-class Moslem must necessarily be a religious fanatic or a concealed infidel,” because anyone “who recognizes the difference between the seventh and twentieth centuries is, in the eyes of the orthodox, on the high road to perdition.” 40

The story of Al Azhar deserves a book and not a chapter. Its history of a thousand years, the storm and stress of its politics, its buildings, libraries and relics, its endowments, its character together with the right of asylum, its courses of study, its great rectors and theologians, the romance of its battles for the faith, its brawls and rivalries, the attempts to reform - all these are recorded in many books and pamphlets.

There is no monograph in English on this oldest Mohammedan University of Islam.

Here I can only give impressions and observations of what Al Azhar was during my seventeen years in Cairo. There have been many reforms and changes since 1929. I first saw it in 1890, then again in 1906 and later made very frequent visits and gained the friendship of many sheikhs both within its precincts and at our home.

On a first visit one’s impression is confusing.

The Azhar is a very extensive building, not very pretentious on the outside, nor beautiful in architecture, but surrounding a huge square court. It has spacious porticoes on three sides divided into apartments, each of which is intended for the natives of some particular country.

One can judge of the importance of the school of Mohammedan faith from the fact that in a single year one met students coming from as far north as Omsk in Siberia, and as far south as Zanzibar; as far east as Calcutta, and as far west as Fulah Town in Siera Leone and the oasis of Tuat. During the recent Russo-Japanese war quite a number came from the Moslem colony in Kazan and from near Moscow. There were always a fair number of Javanese students and also a representation from China. It is an international school.

Owing to the enormous courtyard and its colonnades, all crowded with groups of students, one gets the impression like that of knocking the top off an anthill and looking at myriads swarming in confusion.

Sydney Low described it as he say it,

“There is no place like it anywhere and nothing in Cairo better worth seeing . . . Men and boys were in heaps and knots and circles all over the ground. After passing through the outer quadrangles you come upon the liwan, or great hall of lectures. It is an immense covered shed, with a low roof supported by a forest of columns of every shape and size. There are nearly four hundred of them, all robbed from old churches and temples. The classes and teachers are scattered over the floor, packed so close together that it often is difficult to make your way between two of the groups. Here and there the professor has a wooden chair and a table; but as a rule teachers and pupils are alike sitting or squatting on the ground, with their robes gathered under their bare feet and their shoes laid out in front of them. The walls and pillars and planking are fairly clean, but not all the students are; some are even filthy and ragged, and a reek of promiscuous humanity fills the air. The din, too, is bewildering; for all the teachers are talking to their classes at the same time and half the classes are repeating or reciting something, or droning verses from the Koran or the service-books, bending their bodies up and down in unison with the monotonous cadence.” 41

Of Al Azhar before the recent reforms and as it had been for centuries I wrote:

“There is no regular organization worthy of a university. All a student has to do after he comes to Cairo is to give his name and address at headquarters, select a professor, who is squatted on the floor at the base of some particular column, with whom he talks for an hour or two every morning with or without taking notes. A professorial chair is also easily obtained, in fact any Mohammedan with some ideas of Koran interpretation or a pet theory of grammatical science could go there, find some unoccupied place and discourse according to his own pleasure on his pet subject. The regular subjects of study, which have not changed since the Middle Ages, are the following: grammar, syntax, rhetoric, versification, theology, the exegesis of the Koran, the traditions of Mohammed and jurisprudence (fiqh). The latter subject stands at the apex of the curriculum and occupies the attention of at least three-fourths of the students who come to the university. Lectures are also given on arithmetic, algebra, and the calculation of the Mohammedan calendar, but pure science has no place in the Mohammedan University. Recently an attempt was made to add geography and history, but the jealousy, prejudice and personal antipathy toward the liberal-minded mufti who advocated this change thwarted all his best efforts, and the old order remains unchanged.”

The floor of the huge area is covered with palm matting - not too clean - the walls are dingy and the whole appearance of the courtyard is untidy.

Only the place of public prayer on the southeast side and the library look respectable. Tourists are told (and it is a fact) that Al Azhar is the oldest university in the world. But they are not informed that only within a decade the condition for matriculation and the curriculum were very primitive not to say primary-school.

Pierre Crabites wrote in 1925: “To enter this temple of learning the requirements are of the most elementary character.

“A khedivial decree, dated May 13, 1911, and still in force in 1925, reads as follows (Article 60):

All candidates for admission to the University of the Mosque of Al Azhar must fulfill the following conditions: They must - “(1) Have attained the age of ten and be not more than seventeen;

“(2) Know how to read and write sufficiently to study books;

“(3) Have memorized at least one half of the Koran;

“(4) Be of sound health and free of bodily ailments; and “(5) Present a certificate of character if the applicant be fourteen years of age.

“These regulations give the key to the whole problem of education as understood at Al Azhar. They show that mathematics is treated with disdain; they indicate that even the two ‘R’s’ play but a secondary part; they prove that a good memory and a verbatim knowledge of the Koran are considered to be matters of primary importance.” 42

The graduate of Al Azhar is therefore a Moslem theologian, a candidate for imam, qadi, or mufti in any part of the wide world of Islam. For if the institution is a fossil of the thirteenth century it is true to type. If the ‘ulema of Islam have so much power and are presumed to be so erudite it must not be forgotten that they are specialists. They consider all culture that does not directly appertain to their vocation as being unworthy of consideration; their scholastic vision is astigmatic; they see clearly everything that relates to Islam. Nothing else comes within their focus.

Christian theological schools have been criticized for not making the Bible itself the main subject of study. Islam has never erred in this respect. Islamic theology is a vast ellipse with only two foci, the Koran and the teaching of Mohammed as enshrined in Hadith.

The mullahs are therefore the living depositaries and custodians of the treasure of Islam, they represent its moral authority. In their own domain they are supreme. Within their province their fiat is law. As Pierre Crabites remarks:

“No one may validly impinge upon their preserves. No Haroun al Raschid may lawfully curtail their monopolistic rights. Their authority, however, does not spring from the purity or austerity of their lives. On the contrary, while the overwhelming majority of them are men of exemplary morals, their dictatorial attributes, within the limits of their jurisdiction, flow solely from the fact that the essence of Islamic life is concentrated in their profound knowledge of Muslim lore.” 43

In his erudite work on the Mohammedan universities of Egypt, M. Arminjon, a French professor at the Cairo School of Law, reproduces an account given to him by an El Azhar student, of the way in which his days were spent. (Quoted in Valentine Chirol’s The Egyptian Problem):

“I rise at dawn, and having made my ablutions and said my early prayers, I hurry off to El Azhar to attend the course on Traditions of the Prophet, which lasts until after sunrise. As soon as that is over, the same teacher hears us on the Law and its philosophy for another two hours or more. I then go back to breakfast on the bread or rice and beans and lentils of which my family send me a provision every month. My repast finished, I return to El Azhar to study calligraphy until the hour of mid-day prayer, and then a course of grammar keeps me busy for another two hours, after which I retire to a corner of the courtyard with my roommate Ahmed, and whilst we have a snack we rehearse the morning’s lesson in law and prepare for the next day’s. By that time it is the hour of afternoon prayer, and I go off to a neighboring mosque where, for the last year, a professor teaches us arithmetic in European fashion with a blackboard. Then back to El Azhar to prepare for a lesson in logic which a venerable sheikh, too infirm to move, gives us in his own house between the hours of sunset and evening prayer. Having said the last prayer for the day at El Azhar, I and

my room-mates rush back to our house to eat our supper, sit for a long while talking and then retire to sleep."

One of many theological schools in India is on the outskirts of Jullundur City. Its course of study and the daily life of its pupils is based on the Al-Azhar model in every detail. (See The Moslem World, Vol. xxxi, 1941, p. 416).

The Cairo university of Islamic theology has had a long and chequered history. It began as one of the largest mosques in Cairo for prayer. Five years later Makrizi tells of its inauguration as a school of the prophets, with great pomp and a large concourse of people. 43

Thus from the outset it had prestige. The Caliph Aziz-Billahi endowed it with a large library and he is called the founder. His son added largely to the endowments by his generosity. By the year 1000 A.D. it was known in all the world of Islam.

Pierre Crabites summarizes its later history.

"When Saladin dethroned the Fatimites and led Egypt into the ranks of orthodoxy, Al Azhar suffered a long eclipse. For practically an entire century no prayers were said there on Fridays. The Mosque of Hakim, situated at the other extremity of Cairo, became the favorite Madrassa of the official world.

"It was not until A.D. 1268 that Al Azhar re-entered upon its mission as a collegiate mosque. But its curriculum was no longer that of yore. It had ceased to be a Fatimite citadel. It was converted into an orthodox stronghold. Each of the four Sunnite rites sent their very best professors to make of 'the flourishing mosque' once again a pillar of Islam. Thus re-established in favour, Al Azhar had long years of prosperity. It grew in riches. Its sheiks became factors in government circles. They constituted a solid block. They were able to evolve a program and, what is more important, to act in unison in making it effective. It was they who in A.D. 1501 formed the nucleus of the movement which made Kanso-al-Ghoury Sultan of Egypt.

"When Bonaparte entered Cairo, July 22, 1798, he dealt with the Grand Sheikh of Al Azhar. The constituted authorities of the land had vanished. The Corsican therefore turned towards the head of the University as towards one whose standing made of him a mandatory of the people of the conquered city. In May, 1805, Al Azhar applied the lesson thus learned. It deposed Omar Makram and made Muhammad Aly pasha of Egypt." 44

The Egyptians have never forgotten the invasion of the sacred precincts of Al Azhar by Napoleon when he conquered Egypt. A Moslem wrote in 1924:

"The leading sheikhs of El Azhar went to the general of the French Army complaining and imploring him to stop the attack. He agreed to an armistice. Immediately afterwards, the Army was quartered throughout the city which they systematically plundered. They entered El Azhar mounted on their horses, assembled there in the large court, tied their horses to 'El Kiblah', destroyed lamps and chests, threw down the books and the holy Koran and trod on them. In short, they reduced the holy place to the level of a common barrack and generally wounded the religious susceptibilities of the people."

This “holy place,” however, has seen desecration of other sort by warring factions and immoral practices down the centuries. The sacredness of the mosque explains the fact that even in the Middle ages it is often mentioned as an asylum for refugees. Further we hear that extracts from the Koran or Bukhari were publicly recited from its pulpits to remove plague and famine.

In the year 1758, the students begged their professor to lecture on Bukhari’s Traditions to avert a raging plague! In spite of its sacred courts and sacred lore and learned theologians, we know that:

“The chronicles of the Azhar are full of brawls and revolts among the students; sometimes the quarrels arose from differences of nationality and sect, sometimes over the grants in food and other gifts which an avaricious and unscrupulous administration kept back from them. In accounts of the brawls among the students themselves, the most frequently mentioned are the boorish Upper Egyptian, the restless Syrians and the fanatic Magharba and lastly the occupants of the chapel for the blind.” 45

“When on June 7, 1896, the Egyptian police commanded by Europeans attempted to enter the Azhar during the cholera epidemic, to carry out most necessary sanitary measures, they were bombarded with stones, beams, vessels, etc. by the students and had to retreat. Those young people for whose spiritual guidance their teachers were responsible lived in the belief that dirt was inseparable from holiness and that the inviolability of even the closets of the Azhar was a part of ‘holding fast to their religion’ (altamassuk bi’l-Din). Incidents of this kind explain the situation better than the mere letter of the statutes, or semi- or official explanations. A great students’ revolt took place in 1909.” 46

For nearly nine hundred years this center of Moslem lore and theological learning has propagated its ideals and methods not only in Egypt but in the Near East and India.

The Azhar has branches today in Alexandria, Tanta, Dusuk, and Damietta, all supported by the funds (waqf) of the mother university. The theological centers of orthodox Islam in India (Deoband and many others) and in all Central Asia (Bokhara) are conducted by the same methods, use the same textbooks, teach the same rigid theology, and have a similar attitude toward other faiths than Islam. Only very recently has a course on comparative religion been begun at Al Azhar! What it amounts to is polemic of the old school. 47

As Vollers remarks:

“The object of education here is not research, proof, comparison or correction, but the true transmission of what their ancestors have left them. Each generation is supposed to be inferior to the preceding; from the prophet there is a decline to his companions and their successors; the independent inquirers and authorities (al-Mudjta-hidun) lie far behind us in the dim and distant past. The history of the lands of Islam is regarded from this point of view of continued decline, in this case not unjustly.” 48

In spite of efforts at reform made by successive rulers in Egypt, Al Azhar stands even today among the educational institutions, native and foreign, of Cairo like an island in the turbulent waters of progress. There have been many attempts at reform under Ismail, Tawfik Pasha, Abbas II, and more recently under the rulers of independent Egypt King Fuad and King Furuk, as well as by enlightened leaders of the educational department, but passive, latent resistance has

continued. How many of the proposed reforms have suffered shipwreck on the rocks of conservatism cannot be easily told. Many noble projects and resolutions have remained dead letters. The zeal and goodwill of the reformers is not to be doubted but force of circumstances proved stronger than they.

This chapter is intended only as a description of the theological training and environment of “the clergy and priesthood” as it was in the beginning, is now, and still continues among the orthodox masses and majority of Islam.

~ end of chapter 7 ~

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08-RELIGIOUS FUNDS AND ENDOWMENTS

CHAPTER EIGHT

RELIGIOUS FUNDS AND ENDOWMENTS THE support of religion is a primary duty in Islam as in other religions. The giving of legal alms, called zakat, is one of the five pillars of the faith. It rests rather upon tradition than upon a precept of the Koran (Surah 2:77) since every detail of its observance is borrowed from the example of the prophet. In its primary sense the word zakat means purification, since the gift of a portion of one's gain or property would purify the remainder. These compulsory alms were in the early days of Islam collected by the religious tax-gatherer, as they still are in some countries. Where Moslems are under foreign rule the rate is paid by every believer according to his own conscience.

The usual amount is from one-tenth to one-fortieth of one's income; but charitable offerings are also praise-worthy. There are seven classes to whom legal alms may be given, viz. the poor, the homeless, the tax-collector, slaves, debtors, religious war, and travelers. 49

Payment of zakat gives admission to paradise and those who withhold it merit punishment in this world and the next. It is to be paid by every adult Moslem from land-produce, cows, sheep, camels, gold and silver, and regular income of money. The rich are commended for paying the zakat for the poor. The collector of zakat has equal merit as he who takes part in the Holy War.

All of the above details and many besides are listed in orthodox tradition and recorded in the canon-law of Islam (Cf. Juynboll and also Wensinck's Handbook of Moh. Tradition, pp. 264-267).

The channel through which these legal alms are paid was at first the caliph or imam, but is today the personnel of the mosque as the religious and social center of the Moslem community. The power of the "clergy" is never more real than in the handling and disbursement of religious funds. And in the history of all religions this power was open to abuse.

A recent illustration is found in the regulation of zakat, found necessary by the Netherlands government in its colonial possessions in Indonesia, so largely Moslem.

A high government official states:

"In the case of zakat, religious taxation, which bears a mark of charity, the government wants to maintain this freedom, the completely voluntary paying of this tax. Any pressure on the collection of the zakat had to be avoided, although it might be done with the best of intentions. Native officials are never allowed to receive any benefit from these voluntary contributions. In those districts where, as in the Sunda Lands, the old ãdat law prescribes that the taxes shall be collected more or less centrally and where the revenue thus becomes the most important source of income of the personnel of the mosques in the various capitals of the districts and the divisions, there the officials have to guard against malversation during the administration and distribution of the tax proceeds. In cases where part of the tax proceeds is, according to the ãdat, put into the treasury of the mosque, then the administration has to see to it that this money shall be used only for public

worship and that not more than is necessary for local needs shall be put into the treasury. For this part is really a reduction of the income of the so-called “clergy” who serve the government in various functions and whose financial position is already far from satisfactory.” 50 But from the earliest times (when Mohammed was still alive) until our own day, the legal obligatory alms (zakat) led to quarrels, extortion, and other abuses. The tax-collectors were not beloved. They were like the publicans in the gospel record and for similar reasons. (Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol. IV:1204).

“Throughout the Moslem world the regulations about the special zakat at the end of the fast month are observed with particular scrupulousness; the people feel that it is part of the duties of ramadan and will serve to atone for any involuntary negligence during this month.”

And as it is preferable and customary to give these alms through the collector (‘amil) their proper distribution falls to the personnel of the mosque. And they, from the earliest days until the present, have recognized the power of this office. Alms were used to win and retain converts.

Margoliouth generalizes perhaps too bluntly:

“The skill of both Abu Bekr and the prophet was displayed in retaining their hold on this slowly growing company. In the case of the poor it was done by subsidies . . . and we need not doubt that from the first the wealth which he controlled proved useful.” 51

There is a famous verse in the Koran which justifies this practice (Surah 9:60). The Arabic dictionary by Fairozabadi commenting on the phrase “those whose hearts are inclined” to Islam, gives a list of thirty-two chiefs who received presents from Mohammed to make them believers (Vol. Ill, p. 118).

And there is evidence that the custom of winning over converts to Islam by gifts of money or property continued for many centuries. The chronicles of Islam contain records of many cases of Christians and Jews accepting Islam by the sovereign’s promise of emolument and honors (Margoliouth). 52

In fact, as Juynboll remarks, the very Arabic word used in this Koran passage (muallaf), “whose hearts are inclined” has become the common word for convert! Any Christian or Jew could easily pass from the tribute-paying class to the zakat receiving class by turning Moslem in the early centuries.

Also the public-treasury was primarily a religious fund for holy war and propaganda. We must emphasize again that this money was received and controlled for long centuries by the personnel of the mosque - whatever the particular name they bore. In addition to zakat there were sadaka or freewill offerings made to “the priesthood of Islam,” the imam, the mullah, the qadhi. These gifts or fees were for circumcision, at feasts, for writing amulets, funeral prayers, weddings, etc. Instances are given in detail by Westermarck for Morocco which would also apply to the Near East and India. He lists charms, casting out jinn, circumcision festivals, the ‘aqiqa sacrifice, etc. 53 The most important source of religious revenue, however, is not legal alms nor voluntary gifts but the institution of waqf. Since the time of the prophet, waqf, or religious endowment, has become without exception one of the most important economic questions in every part of the world of Islam. It strikes at the root of all schemes for modern development. In 1869 a Turkish historian wrote that “three-fourths of the real estate in the Ottoman Empire was waqf, to the great loss of the

treasury of the collateral heirs and of the creditors of the holder." 54

In Tunis, one-third of the land and in Algeria fifty per cent was held by the religious authorities as waqf, i.e. inalienable; thus creating an economic problem of the greatest importance at the time of French occupation. If real estate in Moslem countries could only be freed from the shackles of waqf, great advantage would follow both for agriculture and public credit. Drastic remedies have been necessary and have been applied by the governments of India, Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Turkey, and Russia. But the problem is one that touches Islam to the quick because the greater part of waqf-land and other real estate is religious endowment and controlled by the mosque-personnel, call them what you please. The term waqf in Moslem law signifies the dedication or assignment of property (real estate generally) to charitable uses, in other words endowment. 55

In no respect is the actual power of the clergy in any religion more evident than in the control of money or land. The mosque as we have already seen is the religious center of the community, and from earliest times pious bequests (waqf, plural auqaf) were donated to the mosques to be perpetually administered. The administrator was often appointed by the donor but in most cases he belonged to the personnel of the mosque. 56

As developed by the Moslem jurists this institution differs from all other forms of deed, will or endowment. It is possible that the laws enacted from the time of Abu Bekr were influenced by the Roman Law with which Islam came in touch in its conquests. "The aedes sacrae," says Gatteschi, "were exactly similar to the mosques which are the most strictly legal form of waqf."

But according to the laws of Islam the gift is irrevocable and inalienable beyond all question, if it was in favor of a lawful, religious purpose. It becomes the property of Allah. The administrator may not divert the revenues to any other object, nor may the land be sold. If the administrator fails in his duty he may be removed by the qadhi. It is usual for the founder of a waqf to fix a salary for the administrator, from the revenue of the gift. The position of muta-wally is therefore a lucrative one. 57

He, therefore appoints his children or relatives successors. In 1840 the Imperial Administration of Waqfs in Turkey, had 2000 officials whose salaries were paid out of these revenues; the abuses, anomalies and anachronisms led to attempts at reform. 58

In Egypt in 1910, the administration controlled 14,886 of these endowments of which the larger part were for religious purposes. For many centuries it was the sphere of the sharia', canon-law, and canon-lawyers, of Islam to hold and administer these enormous properties and endowments. With British occupation, French conquest, and colonial administration in India and the Dutch East Indies, remarkable changes took place. Many knotty points of law were involved. In India, for many years judges of alien faith have decided cases of Mohammedan law, and not the least important of these have related to waqf. In 1924 it was estimated that the Ministry of Waqfs in Egypt appointed by the government from the Sheikhs of Al Azhar disbursed a total sum of not less than 750,000 pounds sterling per annum. 59

In a letter to the Westminister Gazette, Edward Atkin of Alexandria, Egypt, called attention to the effect of British rule on the administration of waqf. Before the days of Kitchener, these huge foundations were often laxly and dishonestly administered; now they are under a regular department of the government. The correspondent wrote as follows:

“Sir, as German agents in Moslem countries have, for many years past, carried on a mendacious campaign against British rule in Egypt, alleging the robbery of religious trusts by Britain ‘as the enemy of Islam,’ I have taken the opportunity, whilst here on a short visit, to acertain by the kindness of Ahmed Zaki Pasha, Minister of Waqfs, the figures from the records of the ministry showing the material benefits which have accrued to religious trusts by the more efficient management of estates. For brevity I have selected twenty years as sufficient for comparison. The period is 1895 to 1915. As in India so in Egypt, the trusts of Islam are scrupulously devoted to the uses of mosques, schools, etc., as ordered by decree of the high court or designated in the wills of pious founders: 60

REVENUE from estates administered by the Ministry of Wakfs, Cairo, for religious, etc., uses…… REVENUE from family Wakfs…… EXPENDITURE on Mosques, El-Azhar University, hos-pitals, schools of theology and law, orphanages, tombs of venerated men, farm improvements, house property, repairs and building, payments to beneficiaries under wills……. ESTABLISHMENT: Imams, Professors, Readers, Muez-zins, teachers, guardians of tombs, sextons, lamp trimmers, etc. ……

1895. £ E.

229,719 142,377 339,273

893

1900. £ . 237,301 153,579 371,876

7,426

1905. £ . 361,376 165,142 501,625

8,286

1910. £ . 524,151 325,779 814,161

9,618

1915 £ . 536,759 432,661 839,597

9,967

The Statesmen’s Year Book lists among the ministers of the Egyptian Government, the Minister of Waqfs and states that today the main centers of higher Islamic learning under the supervision of the Council and the University of El-Azhar are: The Faculty of Theology, The Faculty of Mohammedan Law, The Faculty of Arabic Language, The Higher Section of El Azhar University together with the following institutions of El Azhar, at Cairo, at Alexandria, at Tanta, at Asyut, at Disuk, at Damietta, at Zagazig, at Shebin-El-Kom, and at Kena. 61

So we see that the principal seat of Koranic learning is still the mosque and University of El-Azhar, founded one thousand years ago, and that its influence extends over all Egypt and, through its endowments, its graduates and its press to every corner of the world of Islam. The mosque from the outset became an endowed institution not only in Cairo but in every metropolitan center.

~ end of chapter 8 ~

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09-SACRIFICE AND BLOOD-COVENANTS

CHAPTER NINE

SACRIFICE AND BLOOD-COVENANTS IT has been stated that

“Islam has no sacraments, no body of specially trained or consecrated men set aside for sacerdotal functions. There is no ecumenical head of Islam, there are no holy orders, no intermediaries.” 62

Such generalizations are, however, as we have already seen, inaccurate.

The sacerdotal function par excellence in all religions is that of blood-sacrifice. Abraham was a priest to his household and sacrificed. Melchisedec was a priest of the most High without special consecration. So among the Semites the patriarch was priest. Among the Arabs we also find blood-sacrifice as a household rite before Islam and in Islam; and the great festival, the Feast-of-Sacrifice was consecrated and perpetuated by Mohammed at Mecca when he acted as priest-prophet for his followers.

There are six words used in the Mohammedan religion to express the idea of sacrifice.

Zabh, used in the Koran (5:4) for Abraham’s sacrifice of his son.

Qurban, this word occurs three times in the Koran. In two places (3:179; 5:30) it obviously means an offering or sacrifice; in the third passage (46:27) the meaning is obscure. In Christian-Arabic the word signifies the Eucharist. The Lisan dictionary gives two striking traditions: “The characteristics of the Moslem community lie in the fact that their qurban is their blood,” i.e., those who died in jihad as martyrs. And the other: “The daily prayer is the qurban of every pious man.” This same word, however, is used in Persia and India for the sacrifice at the great festival, ‘Id-i-Qurban.

Nahr, to cut the jugular vein, is used in the Koran (108:1-2) in a command to the prophet to sacrifice a camel.

Udhiya, is the word used in Moslem tradition for the annual sacrifice at Mecca (Mishkat Bk. IV, ch. 19).

Hady occurs four times in the Koran for animal victims sent to Mecca when the pilgrim is not able to be in time himself for the sacrifice, (2:193 and 5:2, 96, 98). It signifies a present.

Finally, is the word mansahji (Koran 22: 35). “We have appointed to every nation a rite!’ “Show us our rites.” The commentator, Baidhawi, explains this as sacrifice (Tajsir, p. 91).

There are two main occasions when Islam enjoins a blood-sacrifice, namely, at the birth of a child (‘aqiqa), and at the annual feast in Mecca and also in every Moslem community. The first is a sacrament of initiation, like Christian baptism. The second is commemorative like the Eucharist is in part. Yet both have features and prayers which seem both expiatory and vicarious.

Elsewhere I have given a full account of the ‘aqiqa sacrifice. 63

It will suffice here to say that it consists in shaving the head of the new-born child, killing a sheep or goat as sacrifice no bone of which may be broken, and offering this prayer: “O God, here is the ‘aqiqa for my son (giving the name), its blood for his blood, its flesh for his flesh, its hair for his hair and save my son from the fire, etc.”

The full prayer is given by Westermarck. 64

Doughty states that this sacrifice is the most common of Islamic religious ceremonies in the Arabian Desert. It may be derived from Arabian paganism but it has Jewish features and, in parts of the Moslem world, the sacrificer is not the father of the child but the mullah or imam. This is especially true in Morocco.

The great Feast of Sacrifice in the world of Islam is annually celebrated to commemorate Abraham’s faith in willingness to sacrifice his son. That was Mohammed’s explanation of the ancient pagan ritual which he perpetuated. The details of this annual celebration at Mecca have been described by Burckhardt, Burton, and later travelers.

The whole ceremony is based on the injunction of the Koran (22:33-38). It includes prayers, a brief exhortation, the killing of the sheep, goat, camel, or other clean animal, a feast on the sacrifice, ablution, and shaving of the hair. Although the sacrifice can be made by any male Moslem, the religious part of the festival is always in charge of an imam and is conducted in a mussala or special area set apart for prayer on this occasion (Wensinck on Festival, Victims, and Mussala). Everywhere the head of the sacrificial victim must be turned toward the Ka’ba.

Edmond Doutte and Westermarck have written extensively on this feast of sacrifice and other blood-sacrifices common among Moslems of North Africa and in Islam generally. There are such sacrifices at laying foundations of a house, launching a ship, in time of epidemic, to fulfill a vow or to atone for some omission in the ritual of Islam. The idea of expiation and the sanctity of the sacrificer when he officiates are so evident that Doutte, a Roman Catholic, closes his chapter with this observation:

“With us the sacrifice of the Mass renews every day this expiation and the Church defines justification as the application of the merits of the sufferings of Jesus Christ to the sinner. Moslems have not reached that far. The idea of redemption has not penetrated their thought as it has Christian thought. But we have told enough to show the great importance of the idea of sacrifice in the development of their dogma in this respect.” (Magie et Religion, p. 495).

Westermarck tells of blood-sacrifices made at the tombs of saints to secure their intercession; to the sea for a safe voyage; at the eclipse of the sun or moon; on the threshing-floor to bless the harvest; on taking a solemn oath; or even to consecrate a new market place in a village. 65

He also gives traditions and practices regarding the expiatory value of the blood shed at the annual animal-sacrifice feast.

In Egypt it is common among the peasants to make votive sacrifices at the tombs of sheikhs. For instance, a man makes a vow (nedr) that, if he recovers from a sickness, or obtain a son, or any other specific object of desire, he will give to a certain sheikh (deceased) a goat or a lamb; if he

attain his object, he sacrifices the animal which he has vowed at the tomb of the sheikh and makes a feast with its meat for any persons who may choose to attend. Having given the animal to the saint, he thus gives to the latter the expiatory merit of feeding the poor. Little kids are often vowed as future sacrifices; and have the right ear slit, or are marked in some other way for this purpose. 66

In North Africa at Andjra, Westermarck relates that while the faqih (priest-mullah) is performing the sacrifice a scribe carries a pot of benzoin incense around the sheep to keep off evil spirits during the rite. It is only after the imam of the village has cut the throat of his victim that the congregation can follow his example and sacrifice. This is also the order of procedure in other lands where a gun is fired as signal that the imam has done so. 67

Yet we are told that there is no “priesthood” and no expiatory sacrifice in Islam!

The priest, as in patriarchal days, is the father of the household. But in the prayer-service, the circumcision-rite, at the annual feast, it is the imam or faqih who “stands before” (imam) and does all these things first, as head of the household of true believers. A woman never sacrifices in Islam on these occasions.

~ end of chapter 9 ~

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10-MYSTICISM AND THE DARWISH ORDERS

CHAPTER TEN

MYSTICISM AND THE DARWISH ORDERS The mystics in Islam are called sufis from suf, wool, because the early mystics used it for their outer garment. The system itself is known as Sufism and goes back, some say, to Mohammed and the Koran.

“Islam is essentially the lengthened shadow of one man,” says Professor Archer. “Mohammed founded it and his spirit dominates it.”

He takes up the question of Mohammed’s pathology and finds a mystical element in the man himself, in his idea of God, and in some of his religious experiences and practices. Mohammed was not an ascetic, but he seemed to practice certain methods of self-hypnotism. His ecstasy was the result often of personal effort. 68

According to Nicholson, the Mystics of Islam borrowed not only from Christianity and Neo-Platonism, but from Gnosticism and Buddhism. Many gospel texts and sayings of Jesus, most of them apocryphal, are cited in the oldest Sufi writings. From Christianity they took the use of the woolen dress, the vows of silence, the litanies (Zikr), and other ascetic practices. Their teaching also has many interesting parallels which Nicholson summarizes as follows:

“The same expressions are applied to the founder of Islam which are used by St. John, St. Paul, and later mystical theologians concerning Christ. Thus, Mohammed is called the Light of God, he is said to have existed before the creation of the world, he is adored as the source of all life, actual and possible, he is the Perfect Man in whom all the divine attributes are manifested, and a Sufi tradition ascribes to him the saying, ‘He that hath seen me hath seen Allah.’ In the Moslem scheme, however, the Logos doctrine occupies a subordinate place, as it obviously must when the whole duty of man is believed to consist in realizing the unity of God.” 69

Neoplatonism gave them the doctrine of emanation and ecstasy. The following version of the doctrine of the seventy thousand veils as expounded to Canon Gairdner by a modern darwish, shows clear traces of Gnosticism:

“Seventy Thousand Veils separate Allah, the One reality, from the world of matter and of sense. And every soul passes before his birth through these seventy thousand. The inner half of these are veils of light; the outer half, veils of darkness. For every one of the veils of light passed through, in this journey towards birth, the soul puts off a divine quality; and for every one of the dark veils, it puts on an earthly quality. Thus the child is born weeping, for the soul knows its separation from Allah, the one Reality. And when the child cries in its sleep, it is because the soul remembers something of what it has lost.”

In regard to Buddhist influence, Professor Goldziher has called attention to the fact that in the eleventh century, the teaching of Buddha exerted considerable influence in eastern Persia, especially at Balkh, a city famous for the number of sufis who dwelt in it. From the Buddhists came

the use of the rosary (afterwards adopted by Christians in Europe), and perhaps also the doctrine of fana or absorption into God.

“While fana” says Nicholson, “in its pantheistic form is radically different from nirvana, the terms coincide so closely in other ways that we cannot regard them as being altogether unconnected. Fana has an ethical aspect; it involves the extinction of all passions and desires. The passing away of evil qualities and of the evil actions which they produce is said to be brought about by the continuance of the corresponding good qualities and actions.”

The cultivation of character by the contemplation of God in a mystical sense, was the real goal. To know God was to be like Him, and to be like Him ended in absorption or ecstasy. And this is the spiritual aim and goal of Sufism.

The leading Sufis organized their pupils into orders and each had a special ritual (Zikr) to attain this ecstasy.

“Islam like Christianity,” says Dr. M. T. Titus “has its monastic orders and saints, the underlying basis of which is the mystic interpretation of the religious life known as Sufism. No matter where one goes in India one finds their influence powerful and active.”

These “Confreries Mussulmanes” (Coppolani) are found in every part of the world of Islam. They have their organizations (tariqas), hierarchies, special dress, initiation ceremonies, rituals (zikr), and monasteries (zawiya).

“Their home is the mosque, and there they gather the circles who hang upon their words. In the fourth and fifth centuries of Islam, oratories were built for them. Their sanctity becomes an asset to the community; living or dead, their presence is a protection; whom they bless, prosper; whom they curse, are doomed” (Margoliouth, Mohammedanism, p. 199).

The lives of these saints form a vast, popular library and their miracles before and after death are manifold. To become a Sufi is the Islamic equivalent of entering the monastic life. We are not concerned here, primarily, with their origin, teaching, or mysticism, but with the fact that there are such religious orders in Islam, and of Islam, as powerful and numerous as the various orders of monks in the Roman Catholic Church. 70

Dr. Macdonald says that the parallel between Romanism and Islam in “the way” of salvation “could be worked out” (Religious Life and Attitude in Islam, p. 219).

Different hierarchies belong to different systems; the lowest rank of one of these consists of three hundred “heroes,” while the “Pole of Poles” constitutes the head (Margoliouth, p. 206). The Encyclopaedia of Islam lists over one hundred and fifty orders and sub-orders of these Islamic fraternities, who live in monasteries, wear special dress, and are initiated into the order as brethren. The principal orders number thirty-two. Massignon gives an extensive bibliography on these Religious Orders (Tarifa, Encyc. of Islam), and the curious reader will find in the beautifully illustrated work of Dupont-Coppolani (Algiers, 1897) many parallels to the religious orders of the Roman Catholic Church. If these saints and darwishes are not “clergy and priests,” what are they?

Goldziher devotes one hundred pages to saint-worship in Islam. He traces its origin to the first century, portrays its character, extent, its extravagances, its strange hierarchical nature, in the

“state-church” of Islam, so as to create “a bridge of mediators for intercession” (Muh. Studien, Vol. II, pp. 285 ff). From the seventh century these orders were gathered in monasteries or convents called khanakas, tekkes, or zawiyahs. There were convents even for women in Syria in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Every order included a grand-master or pir who had absolute authority over the other members. They were sworn to be as inert in his hand “as the corpse in the hands of those who wash their dead.” 71

And it is interesting that Louis Rinn in his standard work on the Marabouts et Khouan of Algeria entitled his second chapter, “Clerge investi et categorie, comprend le clerge musulman, investi et salarie au meme titre que celui des autres cultes reconnus par les lois francaises. La seconde categorie, marabouts, exercant les devoirs du sacerdoce . . .” George Swan, writing on Saintship in Islam (The Moslem World, Vol. V., pp. 232 ff.) gave a complete table of the spiritual hierarchy of the Sufi orders, their grades, functions, and spiritual attainments. He is thoroughly acquainted with the whole system in Egypt and has lived close to the people as missionary in the Delta villages. In regard to saint-worship, E. Montet, Professor in the University of Geneva, wrote:

“The worship of saints, often described by the terms marabouts in North Africa, is a generally established practice in Islam.

Wherever this religion exists, there saints are honored and invoked as mediators. Without doubt this form of religious expression is more advanced in North Africa than elsewhere, and the farther one travels toward the west of the continent the greater becomes the number of saints and the more zealous their devotees, until in Morocco we find the most highly developed belief in the power of marabouts” (Moslem World, July, 1913).

And it was from these societies especially that there arose the walis, the “friends of Allah.” That they are chosen of God above their fellow men appears from manifest tokens of a miraculous nature (karamãt). Their prayers can heal the sick; their blessings bring happiness for time and eternity, and their curse, misery. These influences are believed to issue from their graves after their death; hence vows are made at, and presents brought to their holy tombs.

In the popular belief, their mediation with Allah (who is of course too exalted to occupy himself with the small wants of his creatures), is almost indispensable, and the request for their good offices differs little from a prayer (The Achenese, p. 154).

A recent example of the popular belief in the superior virtue of saints comes from Yunnan S. W. China:

“The diagrams I send,” writes Raymond H. Joyce, “are approximate reproductions from those in an Arabic book shown me by a priest in a mosque. They illustrate the relative degrees of sinfulness of the four classes of persons in the four parts of their make-up:

- Prophets

- Sheng Jen, completely clean;

- Saints - Hsien Jen, the virtuous;

- Pious - those who perform all the five duties.

They renounce the world; to whom gold is no different from stone. Sin to them is to forget God but for a moment. The world is not destroyed because of their prayers. Having attained a certain standard, God promotes them to this class; the learned, chih-che - the instructed; such as the ahung, muezzin, imam, etc., or any who study the Koran; The ignorant, yume - the unlearned, stupid" (Illustration and text from "Friends of Chinese Moslems," 1944).

Because prophets, saints, and martyrs have this superior virtue, intercession for ordinary sinners is one of their attributes. All Moslems believe that the Prophet Mohammed intercedes for believers now and at the last day.

The doctrine is stated most fully by the Shiahs although it is not strange to orthodox Islam.

Mullah Mohammed Baqir-i-Majlisi in his chapter on Shafa'a, intercession, in Haq-ul-Yakin states categorically:

"And as for intercession, know that there is no difference of belief among Muslims. It is a fundamental tenet of the religion of Islam that the apostle of God will intercede at the resurrection for his own people and perhaps for all peoples. The controversy which exists is, as to whether intercession is only for the increase of benefits to believers who are worthy of reward, or whether it is also for the decrease of punishment among the sinners of his people. The prevailing belief is that he will intercede for both."

In the Majma'u'l-Bayan, (Collection of Explanation), it is said that

"intercession is proved to us for the Apostle of God and his chosen companions who are in his path, and for the imams of his pure household, and for the just and believers; and God will give-salvation by their intercession to many sinners. Also that is confirmed which they have related in the narratives of our Companions from His Excellency the Apostle who said, I shall intercede on the Day of Resurrection and my intercession will be accepted, and 'Ali will intercede and his intercession will be accepted, and my Household will intercede and be accepted; and the one among believers who will intercede the least will intercede for forty persons among his brethren all of whom were worthy of the fire." 72

The wali, or patron saint, (plural, auliya) is fully treated by Goldziher in Volume II of his Muhammed-anische Studien (pp. 287-295). The word is used in the Koran in the sense of "friend of God." The title was given to the prophet and even to God himself in the list of ninety-nine names. It is almost a synonym of the Hebrew goel, redeemer, so writes Goldziher. Today the word signifies a Moslem saint.

Not only, as Hudjwiri says, "has he influence with God, he can bind and loosen, but he also has the gift of miracles (karamat). He can transform himself (tatawtur), transport himself to a distance, speak diverse tongues, revive the dead, exercise levitation." Hudjwiri even goes so far as to say that the auliya govern the universe, bring rain from heaven and influence the tide of battle (Encyc. of Islam, Wali, by Carra de Vaux).

Goldziher mentions instances of all these spiritual powers on the part of the wali, under twenty categories, in such saints as Ahmad-al-Bcdawi of Tanta, Ibrahim-al-Dasuki, and several others in North Africa and the Near East.

“As in Roman Catholic worship, saints are patrons of towns, villages, trades, and corporations.”

While living, the wali blesses, intercedes, heals, and helps. When dead, his grave becomes a shrine that often rivals Mecca in its annual pilgrimage.

Goldziher states (p. 290) that “soon in the circles of saint-worship the walis received higher rank than the prophets.”

The orthodox theologians naturally opposed this teaching but saint-cult waxed stronger down the centuries. Even oaths were sworn by the saints, as by Allah (p. 339); intercession and forgiveness were sought at their shrine (p. 309), the relics of the saints worked miracles (p. 356); and most astonishing of all, this saint-worship, by the dogma of Ijma, finally received the stamp of approval even of Al-Ghazali in orthodox Islam (pp. 368-377).

So everywhere, from Morocco to China, from Turkey to Capetown, it is the wali alive or dead, who exercises such priestly functions between Allah and the Moslem laity; and we recall that of these, ninety per cent are illiterate (Lammens, Islam: Beliefs and Institutions, p. 222). “Every Moslem village has its patron saint; every country has its national saints; every province of life has its own human rulers who are intermediate between the Creator and common mortals” (Hur-gronje, Mohammedanism, p. 79).

But if mysticism is the religion of these leaders of the masses, we must realize that it is Moslem not Christian mysticism. And we also need to bear in mind that mysticism is always a revolt against external authority. As Dr. Benjamin B. Warfield remarked:

“Mysticism is religion, and supplies a refuge for men of religious minds who find it no longer possible for them to rest on ‘external authority.’ Once turn away from revelation and little choice remains to you but the choice between mysticism and rationalism. There is not so much choice between these things, it is true, as enthusiasts on either side are apt to imagine. The difference between them is very much a matter of temperament, or perhaps we may even say of temperature. The mystic blows hot, the rationalist cold. Warm up a rationalist and you find yourself with a mystic on your hands. The history of thought illustrates repeatedly the easy passage from one to the other. Each centers himself in himself, and the human self is not so big that it makes any large difference where within yourself you take your center. Nevertheless, just because mysticism blows hot, its ‘eccentricity’ is the more attractive to men of lively religious feeling.” And this holds true also of the history of mysticism in Islam. It is illustrated by the lives and the theological views of many of the great Sufis including Al-Ghazali.”

~ end of chapter 10 ~

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11-SHARIFS AND SEYYIDS

CHAPTER ELEVEN

SHARIFS AND SEYYIDS

THERE are, we have seen, religious leaders in Islam who became such by education or by sainthood. A third kind need not education nor even sainthood. They inherit class distinction and are, one might say, “hereditary priests.”

From the first century of Islam there arose a special veneration for the descendants of the prophet (Ahl-al-bayt), Surah 33:33. To be able to show kinship with the prophet was an important claim to rank, sharf; and this made one a member of a spiritual aristocracy. 74

The word seyyid was an alternative term for the same genealogical honor. Ali was called “sayyid of this world and the next (Encyc. of Islam, sharif, by Van Arendonk). Later on the terms were applied not only to the descendants of Hasan and Husain, the grandsons of the prophet, but to all who could claim even indirectly to be of the Ahl-al-bayt.

Special religious officials (naqib) were appointed by the Abbasids to keep registers of this nobility. The chief, naqib had other religious duties and honors; this is true even today. The sharifs wore green turbans or badges and distinctive dress, because green was the color of the garments of paradise (Koran 18:30; 76:21).

In Persia and India they also wear distinctive dress. “The sharing in the sadaqa is forbidden them.” That is, they are immune from payment. A sharif should marry only a sharifa.

None of the descendants of the prophet will suffer the punishment of hell; they all are included in the ãl-Mohammed who receive a benediction in daily prayer; and it is expressly laid down that one should treat them with the same distinction as a governor, and give them anything they wish, even a daughter in marriage without dowry (Van Arendonk, quoting from al-Sha’rani).

It is simply impossible to read of the religious prestige of this class of hereditary saints and deny that they are “priests” among the common people.

Hurgronje traces their origin and growth (Mohammedanism, pp. 93, 94). They ruled Morocco for nearly a thousand years, and Mecca for centuries.

“In practice it may be said that the Achenese fear the sayyid more than the Creator. This is due to his believing that Allah reserves His punishments for the hereafter and is inimitably merciful in the enforcement of His law against the faithful, whereas the curse of the sayyids takes effect here below without any hope of mercy. No Achenese will readily so much as lift a finger against a sayyid; one who would dare to take a sayyid’s life would not hesitate to cut his father’s throat.” 75

Because genealogical tables can be manipulated and extended, there are now tens of thousands of sharifs and seyyids in the world of Islam. A perfect, up-to-date illustration is given (1943) by

Major R. A. B. Hamilton from Aden, Arabia:

“We next come to the holy classes. The first of these are the sharifs and seyyids, the descendants of the Prophet Mohammed. They live in settlements and elect among themselves in each family a headman. They have great influence in the community which varies of course, with the amount of their riches. Most seyyids - the only sharifs are those in Beihan - do not bear arms and take no part in tribal warfare. They are peacemakers, and derive considerable income as such, and as dispensers of the sharia or holy law of Islam. They are treated with veneration and respect and, after death, are frequently treated as saints. They marry tribeswomen and the daughters of chiefs, and many own land and are given tithes of other land by ancient right.”

The other holy class is that of the descendants of the saints, for so they claim to be. Almost every village in the territory has its saints’ tomb, a white rectangular building with one or more domes. Each shrine is maintained by public subscription, in the form of tolls on travelers and gifts to reinforce prayers. Many shrines also own land or receive tithes from land. They are guarded by families who use the title sheikh and who claim descent from the original saint. The best description for these families is that of ‘holy sheikh’! In most cases the saint is considered a miracle worker, and this power may descend upon the holy sheikhs as well. This fact in itself is sufficient to give the holy sheikhs considerable influence, and they inspire respect and fear. I would stress the question of fear, for it is important. The buried saint, and, to a certain degree, his supposed descendants, are credited with the power of doing bodily and personal harm, such as depriving of sanity, striking with blindness, destruction of crops and the like. They are, in effect, witch-doctors, and are feared more than are the seyyids, since they are considered to be dangerous men.

Are such pedigreed-saints in Sumatra and Arabia and everywhere, who are so holy that they inspire fear, and so powerful that they exact tithes (Melchisedec), not “priests” in every ordinary sense of the word? (Cf. Genesis 14:18; Hebrews 7:1).

And Harold Ingrams remarks (Arabia and the Isles, London, 1943, p. 177): “Before the seyyids came into Hadhramaut the sheikhs were the principal ecclesiastical influence, and they probably took the place of an earlier hierarchy formed by the priesthood of the old religion. Nowadays they take precedence after the seyyids, but they have much the same privileges.”

The italics are ours to call attention to the use of such terms by one who knows Arabia and Islam thoroughly and practically.

In every Moslem land there are these saints, walis, and seyyids, with shrines and tombs.

“In Persia a visitor to a shrine will kiss the lock of the door and put his forehead to other parts of the building,” wrote Miss Holliday. “He gives salaams to the saint and speaks of him as if he were alive. Tablets containing prayers to the saint are hung on the walls; if the pilgrim can read, he reads these audibly; if not, someone else will read them to him. They burn votive lights. They ask permission to enter or leave the shrine of the saint. In common life they are always calling on the saints for help and blessing. Akin to this are the superstitions connected with their holy living men and their families of which I have seen most among the ‘Ali Illahis who consider their sheikhs as mediators between them and God, and of a race set apart.”

~ end of chapter 11 ~

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12-THE MAHDIS AND NEW MESSIAHS

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE MAHDIS AND NEW MESSIAHS

TOO complete this brief account of the religious leaders in Islam, we cannot omit mention of the strange periodic appearance in its history of those who arrogated or inherited still greater powers in things spiritual than any of the classes already mentioned.

The mahdis, common to both Shiah and Sunni Islam, are striking examples. So also are the new messiahs and soi-disant prophets who arose in more recent times from the ranks of the ‘ulema, to form new Moslem sects or dominate groups by their personalities and prestige. We will continue with them in order.

The literature on the mahdi in Islam is very voluminous. In 1885 James Darmesteter wrote Le Mahdi depuis les origines de I’Islam jusqua nos jours. While Goldziher, Margoliouth and Snouck Hurgronje have also written since that date. Their investigations are summarized by Dr. Macdonald in the Encyclopedia of Islam. The subject is of great importance because the doctrine of the mahdi and his appearance on the scene has produced political events of no small importance to Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands in their several colonial possessions and interests for more than a century.

Literally mahdi means a divinely guided one. The title is used of certain individuals in the past and also of an eschatological personage yet to come. The first four caliphs had the title and there are other instances where it was assumed by the pious and learned in the long history of Islam, Ali, Hussain, ‘Umar II and others were called by that title even by Sunni historians. 77

But it is as an eschatological figure that the appearance of a mahdi brings disturbance in the world of thought and politics.

As Dr. Macdonald says:

“Islam takes a very pessimistic view of human nature. Men always fall away from the faith. This will be so especially toward the end of the world . . . the ka’ba will vanish and copies of the Koran will become blank paper, and its words will vanish also from the memories of men. Then the end will come.” 78

It is with such a gloomy prospect of the latter days that some theologians have asserted “There is no mahdi but ‘Isaiah.” When he, Jesus, returns from heaven, Islam will triumph and Jesus will rule according to Moslem law; will marry, beget children, and finally die, and be buried at Medina. 79

But the masses were not satisfied in times of political, social or moral darkness, with an eschatological Messiah of the distant future. They looked for a little millennium before the end. This is expressed in later traditions. Some one would arise of the family of Mohammed who would rule the Moslem world and ‘Isa would be his imam (Macdonald).

The later we go the more popular are the sources and the more extravagant is the picture of the new day introduced by the mahdi. When Moslems felt oppressed or humiliated by European rule, mahdis arose with banner and sword in hand. The mahdi of the Sudan, Muhammed Ahmed, born 1843, whose khalifa, successor fought the British and Egyptian troops with fire and sword, all the world knows. 80

During the last war a mahdi of Somali-land raised a similar fanatic revolt which cost much in life and money to suppress. Both of these mahdis and others like them in Sumatra, northwest India, and North Africa (see Goldziher) were politico-religious leaders who assumed large spiritual as well as temporal power. The mahdi of the Sudan, for example, even changed the call to prayer, substituted jihad (holy war) for the pilgrimage to Mecca, exercised totalitarian powers as military leader, and demanded absolute obedience (Dietrich, Muhammed Ahmad, in Encyc. of Islam).

The hidden imam of the Twelver Shiah sect is also called, Al-mahdi but his status is entirely different from the mahdis of the Sunnis described above. The spiritual station and prestige of these twelve imams is another story which belongs to Persian history.

One illustration is the eighth imam, Ali Ridha (765-818). He is one of the great saints of Shiah Islam and his mausoleum at Meshed has become a place of pilgrimage. 81

Many stupendous miracles are attributed to him and the third hour of the day is still sacred to his memory.

Of others in the list of eleven imams, similar stories and glories are related.

It is the theory of the hidden imam that gave birth in the nineteenth century to the Babi-Behai movement in Persia. Seyyid Ali Mohammed of Shiraz in June, 1844, proclaimed that he was the gateway (bab) to the knowledge of all truth. Born in 1821 he devoted himself to study and to ascetic practices at Kerbela. He went to Mecca on pilgrimage and on his return promulgated his new doctrine and revelation. He was imprisoned and afterwards released but on account of new opposition by the orthodox, executed by order of the government at Tabriz. His influence spread and his teaching was sponsored by ‘Alt Nuri, who called himself Bahã-Allah.

After an attempt on the life of the Shah, he too was imprisoned, exiled and died at Acre, 1892.

Abd-al-Baha succeeded him and under the name of Bahãism, this new offshoot of Shiah Islam spread across the seas to America. Bahã-Allah signifies “the Splendor of God,” and his followers have made the most of this title to exalt his merits and glory. Abd-al-Baha, his excellent son, inherited his spiritual authority. But there have been bitter quarrels for leadership.

Again the Ahmadiya movement in India with its new prophet-messiahs both at Qadian, where it started, and at Lahore, where it suffered division of an acute nature, is based not upon the parity of all believers before Allah, but upon soi-disant high priests and prophets of a new Islamic dispensation. All of these spiritual leaders came from Islam and claim to be Moslems.

In conclusion, we note, as another example, the spiritual headship and enormous power exercised on the part of H. H. the Agha Khan, G.C.S.I., G.C.V.O., G.C.I.E., high-priest of the Khoja community in India.

Born in 1877, he is perhaps the most remarkable figure in Moslem India today. There are only about 33,000 Khojas of the Ismaili sect who recognize him as their imam to the point of calling him also an avatar, incarnation of deity. But the American press at times absurdly states that “he is head of all the Mohammedans of India.”

The British Who’s Who tells of his honorary degrees, his success in winning the Derby, and his writings in popular magazines. But to his followers he is a prince without the inconvenience of a kingdom, a descendant of the hidden imam, indeed the forty-seventh legitimate imam and in direct descent from Ali the son-in-law of Mohammed. His person is so sacred that once a year he is weighed on the scales and an equivalent in gold paid him as tribute! His followers yield him almost divine honors and his word is law to all his Khoja disciples. 82

When I traveled with him up the Persian Gulf some thirty years ago I was the incredible witness to certain abject superstitions regarding his healing powers.

No chasm between clergy and laity even in the middle ages, was ever more deep than that which exists between the ordinary Moslem believer and such high religious functionaries as described above, whether their office is hereditary or due to a new supposed revelation from Allah.

~ end of chapter 12 ~

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13-THE POWER AND INFLUENCE OF THE CLERGY TODAY

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE POWER AND INFLUENCE OF THE CLERGY TODAY

WE have seen in this brief study that historically these khalifs, mahdis, seyyids, ‘auliya, sharifs, imams, faqirs, ahungs, mullahs, etc., by whatever name called, exercise a ministry of prestige, education, intercession, or authority as regards other believers. They do constitute a special class functionally and are known by their dress and manner.

Webster’s definition of priest applies to most if not to all of them:

“One set apart or authorized to perform religious or sacred duties or functions such as rites, ceremonies or teaching; one who officiates at the altar or performs the rites of sacrifice; one who acts as a mediator between men and divinity or the gods of any religion” (New International Dictionary).

Such “priests” there are in Islam. This is not a strife about words, but a correction of a too common and widespread misunderstanding, sometimes due to an attempt at idealizing Islam.

As we have seen, Islam was from the outset a military, totalitarian church-state.

“In the main, then,” says Margoliouth, “the original Moslem system was to make its adherents soldier-priests, i.e., to combine the sacerdotal with the warrior caste.” 83

An Indian missionary, Dr. M. T. Titus writes in a letter:

“While it is true that Islam’s priests and clergy have not been consecrated or ordained in the spiritual succession of the founder, nonetheless they are authorized, appointed or set apart to perform the same or similar functions in a way or manner peculiar to Islam. Since, therefore, these recognized religious functionaries perform the same duties as the priests and clergy of the church, we may well hold that the old formula that things equal to the same thing are equal to each other holds here as well as in mathematics!”

His able monograph on Indian Islam has chapters on the present day religious orders of Islam, on present day saint-worship and its persistence; he also tells of the reactionary movements in spite of the progress in education and reform. 84

In Turkey, Iran and Egypt there have been various reform movements, some almost revolutionary in character. Education has greatly changed manners and customs. The Caliphate has been abolished. The old Moslem laws were in many cases superseded by new western codes. But in no Moslem land so far have the clergy (‘ulema) been abolished, although their prestige may have suffered. What is their present influence and authority?

Although Islam never developed any institution entirely similar to the clergy of Christianity, it had from early days and has now three religious classes quite comparable to “priests” and “clergy.”

- The one class, as we saw, are appointed for public worship and preaching.

- The second are theologians and masters of canon-law.

- The third class are hereditary saints and holy-men.

They together still form a very large percent of the population. All have prestige, receive honors, and their emoluments are from alms or the religious treasury. No priest or clergyman in Christendom is more duly “authorized to be a minister of sacred things or perform on behalf of the community certain public religious acts,” or has more power over the laity.

Therefore, to understand the mind of the masses, their inertia or their fanaticism, their attitude to life and their ethics, one must become acquainted at first hand with these three classes of spiritual leaders.

In the last analysis, they control the pulpit, the popular press, the education of youth and womanhood in so far as it is illiterate and still religious. The rise of nationalism, constitutional government, and the impact of secularism, has not altogether destroyed Islam as religion of the heart.

The fall of the Caliphate was a severe blow but it was not the end of Islam even in Turkey. Hurgronje believes that Islam never regarded the caliph as its spiritual head.

“The spiritual authority in Catholic Islam reposes in the legists, who in this respect are called in a tradition, ‘the heirs of the prophets.’ Since they could no longer regard the caliphs as their leaders, because they walked in worldly ways, they have constituted themselves independently beside, and even above them.” 85

Therefore, the political decay of Islam in our day, the increasing number of Moslems under foreign rule, the rise of a secular nationalism and modernism only serve to emphasize the fact that “the clergy and priesthood” are the custodians of whatever remains of the spiritual heritage of Islam.

They exercise this power of custody first of all in the realm of dogma. The theological schools are the defenders of the faith, the centers of Islamic propaganda and unity. This is not only notoriously the case of Al Azhar in Cairo but is true elsewhere. In India, Dr. Titus tells us, the religious colleges control the thinking of the masses and the ‘ulema, never before organized, have now a central organization, Jamiyat-ul-’Ulema-i-Hind. It has annual conferences and headquarters at Delhi.

“Today the ‘ulema are better organized and consequently it is becoming possible for them to make their influence felt more widely than in the past.”

They have enormous influence, also, in education from the mosque primary school to the best Moslem colleges. 86

And we must remember that in Islam secular education of youth is to the orthodox an offence. The short final chapters of the Koran are still used as primer for youth in 90 per cent of the Moslem world, where the village schoolmaster teaches. The most recent testimony to the power of the

‘ulema comes from India, with a Moslem population of ninety million.

Wilfred C. Smith speaks of the gulf between the ‘ulema and the modern educated Moslem but says, “The mosques and those that attend them are still under the feudal ‘ulema.” Such Moslem seminaries as Deoband have an enormous influence throughout India through the large number of mawlawis (teachers) they send out everywhere.

Next to Al Azhar in Cairo, this school is the most important in the world of Islam.

It stands “for rigid orthodoxy and unmitigated scholasticism.” Yet its “implacable enmity to bourgeois society and to its depredations” has made it an important ally of anti-British politics. The ‘ulema everywhere also exercise power through the religious and secular press. 87

Both in defence of the old and in reform for the new, the ‘ulema are those who everywhere wield the pen. It is therefore increasingly important to cultivate friendly relations with the large and influential body of editors and journalists in the great centers of the world of Islam.

“Fleet Street may well envy the young Afghan editors,” said The Times of London some years ago, “it is the golden age of journalism when a nation is beginning to think and truth is as fresh as dew, and there is no bugbear of banality.”

The printing presses are active and alert. And the press is at once a proof of the unity and solidarity of Islam in every crisis, as it is also an infallible index to the surging currents of thought in a sea of unrest.

In post-war days, as before, the press of Cairo, Damascus, Constantinople, Calcutta, and Kazan will be a thermometer and barometer for the careful observer, to indicate rising temperature or approaching storm of political or social unrest.

There too, we may read the “set fair” of mutual tolerance and diplomatic adjustment.

To know the press is to know the people. For the people of Islam still follow religious rather than secular leadership. Even their national extremists must wear the robe of Islam to obtain a strong following. This has been true in the past and is now.

As Dr. Kingsley Birge writes:

“In the early days of the Turkish national state, the leader, then called Gazi Mustafa Kemal, defended his reforms in terms of religious precedents and Islamic principles. The pictures of the National Assembly in those days showed a sprinkling of white turbans, indicating that religious leaders were prominent among the political crusaders for the new era.”

This remarkable statement occurs in an article on Secularism in Turkey and its meaning. 88

And the writer after sketching the account of all the reforms and the drastic changes in the new republic, economic, social, and religious - most of which led to a “weakening of ecclesiastical authority” - states that “secularism has gone farther than in any country of the modern world except pre-war Soviet Russia.”

Nevertheless no people can live without religion and “today the Office of Religious Affairs is seeking ways and means of reviving a trained Islamic ministry.”

Social pressure is still brought to bear on people to adopt Islam even though it be of a syncretistic variety. This new trained Islamic religious “ministry” will still be “clergy” to the laity and will doubtless have functional authority.

Add to all this the undoubted fact that the darwish orders, although suppressed in Turkey, are not defunct. Elsewhere they are still widely prevalent and that saint-worship, hero-worship and miraculous cures on the part of popular saints are not a thing of the past even in the New Republic of Turkey.

It is for all these reasons that the clergy and priesthood of Islam demand the respect of those who desire to help the masses or have dealings with them. This applies to tourists, orientalists, political officials, and merchants no less than it does to missionaries.

It applies most of all to the latter because it is from among the clergy of Islam that opposition often arises, and also some of the strongest and most distinguished Christian converts have come from this very class both in the Near East and in India ever since the days of Henry Martyn.

~ end of chapter 13 ~

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14-CONVERTS FROM THE CLERGY

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

CONVERTS FROM THE CLERGY

HERE are some examples which could easily be multiplied. Dr. Imad-ud-Din was a leading sufi and theologian in the Punjaub. He was appointed to preach against Dr. Pfander in the royal mosque at Agra; he read the Scriptures, believed and was baptized, and with another great theologian and sufi, Safdar Ali, became a missionary to his people. Afterwards he received a doctorate from Oxford University. His baptism took place New Year's Day, 1868, together with his aged father and brother. Other distinguished converts in the Punjaub, such as Imam Shah, were also from the clergy. 89

Mullah Said of Sena, Kurdistan, came from a line of noted theologians. "For seven generations his forefathers held ecclesiastical positions." At the age of six he could read the Koran. At the age of fourteen he wore the turban of a mystic order. Through reading the Scriptures and the friendship of a Persian pastor he was converted. "He became the noblest Kurd and was destined to be a John the Baptist for his race." One may read the story of how he suffered persecution and afterward became a leading Christian physician. 90

In Turkey there are also outstanding examples of conversions from the "clergy." Karl Gottlieb Pfander's life gives instances even in the days of the old regime. 91

A more recent instance is that of Johannes Aveteranian, originally Mehmed Shukri. His father was a Mohammedan mullah in the vicinity of Erzerum, and was a man who could not be classed as ordinary, either in his everyday life or as a mullah. He was of a type found among Christians, Mohammedans and Jews: namely a seeker after God, and as such followed the Dervish order (the Joltashi), believing that in searching always he would find God.

After his son had completed his course of Mohammedan theology, the father set out to cross Armenia and Mesopotamia, resting at times in caves, and inquiring here and there of Moslem leaders, where he could find peace with God. His journey proved fruitless, and he returned more unhappy than he started. During this time his son had become a Moslem preacher in a village not far from Erzerum.

The father left home again to seek a well-known sheikh, but broke down as a result of the efforts of these long journeys. His son was sent for, and on his deathbed the father related all the tragic experience of his life. Mehmed Schukri listened to and took very much to heart the sad story of his father.

Armenian Christians gave him a New Testament, which he read, and the more he read, the more he was drawn to Christianity. Thus at his father's death his faith in Christianity became stronger, as he realized the failure of Mohammedanism in his father's life. Then he began to introduce Christian principles into his Friday sermons, but this did not last long, as people began to realize

that he was half-Christian!

He was obliged to escape as his life was in danger. He stayed for some time in different places in the heart of the mountains, between the two sources of the Euphrates, and the towns of Erzingan and Harput. When he felt unsafe even there, he fled as far as Persia, and thence to Tiflis in the Transcaucasia. Once safe here, he wanted to be baptized, in order to show openly that he was a Christian.

He met here for the first time his great colleague in missionary work, Pastor Amir-ghanjanz, who was at the height of his work in Tiflis. He realized the sincerity of Mehmed, and baptized him with great joy, giving him the name of Johannes Avetaranian (Son of the Gospel). After that, Avetaranian attended a Swedish Mission School, from which he was sent by the Swedish Mission to its mission in Turkestan, Persia and Asiatic Russia. His principal work was done in that part of Turkestan which now belongs to China.

Here he carried on preaching and writing for ten fruitful years. For many years he published a weekly religious journal for Turks under a German Mission in Bulgaria and also a large collection of spiritual letters “Witness to the Truth.” He died during the last World War and was buried at Wiesbaden. 92

Both of these outstanding defenders of the faith addressed their messages and devoted their lives primarily to winning the religious leaders of Islam. Nor was their effort fruitless.

Among the many thousands of converts from Islam in the Netherlands East Indies, a goodly portion came from the clergy-class and from the mystic orders. The same is true in Bengal and China when one scans the roll of the Church of Christ. A number of these suffered persecution and some martyrdom for their faith. One Egyptian wrote from prison in Cairo, “hour by hour the conviction grew upon me that Christ was being glorified by my small sufferings."

Here is the story of Mirza Ibrahim of Iran told by Dr. J. Christy Wilson (Moslem World, July, 1944):

“He lived in Khoy, a city northwest of Lake Urumia, and was finally taken to Urumia and there put in jail. Later he was removed to a prison in Tabriz. His case gained some notoriety and one day the Crown Prince, who lived in Tabriz at the time, called him out of prison. He was hastily cleaned up and ushered into the royal presence.

“The Crown Prince said, ‘Mirza Ibrahim, I have heard your story and, though I think you are very foolish for declaring yourself a Christian, I do admire your courage. So today I intend to give you a great opportunity. If you will kneel here and do the namaz (the stated Moslem prayer) you may go, you are a free man.’

“Mirza Ibrahim took a Gospel from his coat and replied in a beautiful way, ‘Your Royal Highness, I know that you have the power of life and death over me, but here in the gospel I have found my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and new life in Him. Nothing that you could do, sir, could take away from me the life that I have found in Him. But as to doing the namaz, I regret that I cannot perform the Mohammedan prayer because I am not a Mohammedan.’

“He was put back in jail and several days later was strangled by the other prisoners because he would not deny his Lord.

“He was taken out and buried in a little cemetery in the middle of the great city. Some of us knew where his grave was located and used to visit the resting place of this Christian martyr. A few years ago the whole cemetery was leveled off and a great municipal building was constructed on the spot. Today it is the highest edifice in Tabriz, with a great clock up in the tower that chimes the hours to be heard by the whole city. To many of us who know that this building stands on the exact spot where Mirza Ibrahim, the Christian martyr, was buried, it is like a great monument to him.”

But his real monument is the evangelical Church of Tabriz and of all Iran.

The Rev. Paul Erdman of Syria writes:

“In 1943 there died in Beirut in a Home for the old and incapacitated, a dear friend, Sheikh ‘Asia A - whom I knew intimately for years and visited often. He was of the descendants of the Prophet and of a prominent family in Jerusalem where he was the hereditary head of the Awhaj (Religious Foundation) of one of the mosques. He had given up absolutely everything one would hold dear for the sake of following the Lord Jesus Christ - his comfortable home and income, his family, his position of influence and honor and respect, for he knew it would mean certain death for him to remain in his own city and country and become an open follower of Christ, and he was not satisfied to do otherwise. He attained this strong and fearless faith solely through his study of the Bible, taught of the Holy Spirit, without even any converse with a Christian. An American missionary lady living in a house belonging to the Awkaf one day gave him a copy of the gospel. He placed it in his pocket and went each day for a walk outside the city walls, lest the attention of others be drawn to him, and he would read . . . He continued this custom for about eight months. He would take time to read carefully in order to understand as fully as possible the meaning and to meditate deeply on the sayings of Christ.”

Another outstanding example was the conversion of a Sufi Moslem in Calcutta born in 1897, the child of a skilled worker in gold embroidery. He was called Fazl-ur-Rahman, “the Grace of the Merciful,” but his parents gave him an additional name by which they always called him - Abd-us-Subhan, “the servant of the Holy One.”

He was brought up along simple and puritanical lines “under the tender care of a very affectionate mother, . . . a loving father and a good elder brother,” and Islamic principles moulded his life; as a child he was indeed fanatically devoted to his own religion.

He has himself described the change that came in his life in How a Sufi Found His Lord, published by the Lucknow Publishing House. He tells that the aspiration for a higher knowledge of God was rooted in something deeper than any outward circumstance. “It was, in fact, God’s search for His lost child which found a response in the depth of my soul and took the form of a quest for something unknown.”

He traces its origin to the study of the Koran itself, in its testimony to the books of Moses, David, and Jesus, and the desire to know what their teachings could be. This desire was but one among other vague but eager longings which led the lad to an intensive study of mysticism.

“But one of the most memorable landmarks in the outstanding events of my life came when a copy of the gospel was given to me by a Moslem friend who himself had received it from a preacher or a colporteur. On a previous occasion I had torn it into pieces, for when, attracted by its title ‘Injil,’ a

term with which I was familiarized by the study of the Koran, I had taken it to my teacher, I was warned in all seriousness not to read it, because it was not a true Injil of which the Koran testifies, but a corrupted form of it, and consequently containing blasphemous teachings; the very act of pronouncing its words pollute the mind and soul of a believer."

However, on this occasion Subhan read it, and, though alert to detect anything wrong, "I did not find a single sentence or a clause which in any sense could be interpreted as blasphemous or satanic," nor anything that could be regarded as an interpolation or corruption of the original revelation.

He was impressed with the high ethical teachings of the gospel, and in the story of the crucifixion found a narrative which "completely contradicted the idea of the gospel being corrupted; it is no matter of pride to be a follower of one who was shamefully put to death. Yet how plainly the story of the crucifixion refuted the Christians' claim for Jesus to be the Son of God!"

He read the gospel through again; "it spoke to me in my own mother tongue, whispering to me the secrets of God. Its reading was comforting to my soul, every sentence touched it to its very depth and it roused the slumbering faculties of my soul to a new state of consciousness."

After his baptism and grievous persecution, he became a teacher in a mission-school, then a preacher and only recently was consecrated as bishop of the Methodist Church. His brief autobiography is an illustration of the grace of God and is an inspiration to all who read it. 93

Today his life's ambition

"is the evangelization of Moslems. Conscious of my limitations to realize the vision I am confident that He who has begun the good work in me will finish it. At every peak of new experience I find myself exclaiming O unsearchable riches of Christ."

The first convert baptized in the north-west frontier province of India was Hajji Yahya Baqir, a seyyid from Central Asia. He was a learned mullah, descendant of the prophet and a man of culture. Warned of God in a dream at Medina that he must follow Christ, he traveled to Peshawar and learned the truth from Dr. Pfander in 1855. He made a bold confession with joy. A few days afterwards he was murderously assaulted in the Church Missionary Society compound, received severe wounds but recovered to return to his home in Central Asia where he held fast to his faith and witnessed for Christ "as a wandering medical missionary who prayed over his patients and they all got well." 94

As in India so in Iran, the conversion of "priests" led others to Christ.

This very year a missionary reports from one of the sacred shrines of Islam in Iran:

"At Qum we had a wonderful time. A shop-keeper whose shop faces the Mohammedan shrine came and asked to be baptized. He was once a bookseller and while going through some books came across a Bible and by reading it was interested in the Christian faith. He saw us last year and we had conversation and this year I had the joy of baptizing him, the first convert in the shrine city of Qum."

Makhail Mansur and Kamil Mansur were brothers from a village in upper Egypt, and both studied in the great school of theology, Al Azhar, the former for twelve long years, until he became an expert Sheikh in all the learning of Islam.

Through providential contact with one who gave him the Gospel of John, he became eager for truth and light which was not in the Koran. Like Saul of Tarsus he was blinded by the light of the glory of Christ's face in the New Testament. At the home of Dr. Andrew Watson in Cairo he heard the call and was baptized and became an able evangelist in Cairo. How well I remember the weekly meetings (1919-1928) crowded with Moslem shiekhs and students where he lectured on the Integrity of the Scriptures, the Marks of a True Prophet, and especially a remarkable series on Incidental Evidences for the Deity of Christ.

He often received threatening letters but never lost his boldness as an apostle of the truth. His mantle fell on his brother, Kamil Mansur, also an Azhar Sheikh and baptized with his spirit. On his deathbed he charged this brother, after his own eighteen years of faithful service, to take up the same ministry. He is a leader in the Egyptian Church today. 95

Such converts by their life and death challenge the Church - and Islam. Even as Stephen's martyrdom brought Saul to reflection and finally to conversion on the road to Damascus - where he saw Another Face that shone like an angel (Acts 6:15; Acts 9:3), so we may yet see the day in Moslem lands when as in the days of the apostles, the word of God will increase, the disciples multiply, and a great company of the priests become obedient to the faith (Acts 6:7).

This book was not primarily intended as a missionary study. But it is addressed to missionaries as well as to the general reader for obvious reasons, and we may say as Dr. James Thayer Addison did in his recent historical study of The Christian Approach to the Moslem:

"This book is written to help us approach with more realism, more intelligence, and more enthusiasm one of the great tasks which God has set before His Church for the generation to come - the conversion of the Moslem World." 96

And that conversion, or better, evangelization of the wide world of Islam will doubtless be best accomplished in God's time when He raises up, as today in Iran and India, many "heirs of the Prophets" as Christian evangelists. For God is choosing those that are "poor as to the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom which He promised to them that love Him."

These converts are not merely heirs of Islamic learning but "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" if so be that they fill up the measure of His suffering in the fearless proclamation of the eternal Gospel.

It is for this very reason that we dedicated our volume to them and their successors in admiration of their faith and courage.

15-ENDNOTES

ENDNOTES

1. Islam in the World, p. 21. So also the Sheikh-al-Islam to Dr. Dwight, Constantinople and Its Problems, p. 59.

2. Elgin Grosedose in The Persian Journey of Rev. Ashley Wishard, p. 118.

3. The Moslem World, Vol. 33, pp. 100 and 101.

4. The Moslem World, Vol. XXIX, pp. 325-364ff.

5. Osborn, Islam under the Caliphs of Baghdad, p. 71. So also Lammcns in Islam:Beliefs and Institutions, p. 94. “The ‘Ulema are the heirs of the prophets.” They decide spiritual issues. “The masses have nothing to do with these questions.”

6. Reste Arabischcn Heidentums. Berlin, 1897, pp. 137-140. Cf. also Ignaz Goldziher, Muhummcdanischc Studien, Vol. I, pp. 237-260. The facts he cites are a remarkable commentary on this statement of Wellhausen. At any rate priest (kahin) and (nabi) prophet were closely related. One is reminded of the lines in Milton’s sonnet:“New presbyter is but old priest writ large.”

7. Wellhausen, pp. 230-235.

8. Islam and the Oriental Churches, by W. A. Shedd, pp. 75, 76, and The Atoning Saviour of the Shiahs, by S. G. Wilson in the Presbyterian and Reformed Review, XIII, 51ff.

9. Hurgronje. Mohammedanism, p. 97.

10. D. S. Margoliouth, Mohammed and the Rise of Islam. New York and London, 1905, p. 149.

11. The Veiled Mysteries of Egypt, p. 36.

12. Encyclopedia Judaica (Berlin, 1928). Pulpit is from the Latin pulpitum, the foremost point of the Roman stage where the actor stood. In the French and the Dutch, chaire and preekstoel, we have the notion of cathedra or seat of honor. The German Kanzel (chancel) comes from the Italian cancelli, a screen.

13. Lane’s Arabic Dict., Part viii, p. 2757.

14. Z. D. M. G. Vol. lii, pp. 146-148. The earliest pulpit was a seat o£ authority. In early times the Arabic word majlis seems to have been occasionally employed for minbar. (Margoliouth, E. R. E.).

15. Smith and Cheetham - Dict. of Christian Antiquities, Vol. I, p. 56. M. Fernand Cabrol (Dict, d’archaelogie Chretienne, Vol. Ill, p. 39) gives an account and a picture of the ancient (pulpit) chaire a Torcello, Italy, to which the Cairo minbars bear still closer resemblance.

16. Schaff-Hertzog Encyclopedia. Article, Ambo.

17. Annali dell' Islam, Vol. I, pp. 432-457.

18. Islamstudien, pp. 450-500.

19. Becker, Islamstudien, p. 456. Cf. article on "The Sword of Mohammed," (The Moslem World, April, 1931).

20. The preacher in the great mosque at Mecca today stands on the third step from the top of the pulpit. Cf. photographs in Ibrahim Rifa'at Pasha's Mira't al-Haramain, Vol. I, p. 253.

21. Among the Shiahs it is ordained that the preacher shall wear a turban and the striped Yemen cloak. The Umayyads used to robe the preacher in white, but in Abbasid times he wore black.

22. Cf. G. Migeon, Manuel d'Art Musulman, Vol. II, pp. 103-106.

23. T. W.]uyaboll - Handbuch des Islamischen Gesetzes, pp. 85-87. Further details in regard to the duties of the imam when ascending the minbar, and on the innovations which are to be avoided, are given in Al-Madkhal by Ibn al Hajj, Vol. II, pp. 123-125; and on the right height of the minbar and its construction, Vol. II, pp. 78-79, Cairo edition.

24. E. Mittwoch, Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Islamischen Gebets und Kultus, in Abh. Pr. Ahad. d. Wissenschaft, 1918, No. 2.

25. "Quoted from Ibn Battuta by Pedersen, Encyc. of Islam, p. 372.

26. Futuh-al-Buldan - Opening chapter.

27. Lane's "Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians," p. 91.

28. Sell, "The Faith of Islam," p. 311-312.

29. Margoliouth on Preaching in Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.

30. The Preaching of Islam, pp. 7, 65, 232-234.

31. The Moslem World, Vol. V, 305.

32. The Moslem World, Vol. XV, p. 197, where the sermon is given in full.

32. Hughes, Dictionary of Islam, p. 204. Cf. for example, South Africa. "As the outcome of the Cape Malay Association Conference, recently held at Cape Town, one of the resolutions agreed to was that the general executive be instructed to approach the Minister of the Interior with a view to getting his recognition to the appointment of a Chief and a Deputy Chief Priest for the Union. A deputation waited on Dr. Malan, who said that he was prepared to recognize such appointments if the names of the priests appointed were submitted to him. In order to get the opinion of the Emaums on this question, the general executive summoned a meeting of all the Emaums in the Peninsula last Sunday in the Trades Hall, Pleinstreet, Cape Town. Forty-one Emaums attended." - Cape Times, July 29, 1925.

33. Wensinck, Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition, pp. 109, 110.

34. Klein, Religion of Islam, p. 181. Cf. Zwemer's Law of Apostasy, ch. II and VI, where a full account of this law, its origin, and application is given.

35. Doughty, Arabia Deserta, Vol. I, p. 145. For a most illuminating picture of the Qadhi one must read Al Hariri's famous poem translated by Dr. I. Steingass, especially the 32d Assembly, pp. 37-58, where the great poet satirizes the skill of Canon-lawyers.

36. Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, p. 282.

37. The later Jewish law prescribed scourging for ecclesiastical offences in which a whip was employed consisting of three thongs, one of ox-hide and two of ass's hide. The one used in the old Hankow mosque is of similar texture.

38. See the complete text in Moslem World, Vol. XI, p. 422. Also Vol. X, 407.

39. Cf. "Is the Caliph a Pope?" by George Stewart. Moslem World, Vol. xxi, p. 185 ff.

40. Modern Egypt, pp. 173, 175, 179.

41. Egypt in Transition, pp. 202-205.

42. "Al-Azhar University" in "The Nineteenth Century." Oct., 1925

43. Al Makrizi Boulac edition, Vol. I, p. 455.

44. Nineteenth Century. Oct., 1925

45. Voller's article in the Encyclopedia of Islam.

46. Ibid.

47. C. C. Adams, Comparitive Religion in Al Azhar. The Moslem World, April, 1945.

48. Encyc. Of Islam.

49. Zwemer's Islam, p. 108; Dictionary of Islam, p. 769.

50. Government and Islam in the Indies, The Moslem World, Vol. 35:1, 1945, p. 17.

51. Margoliouth's Mohammed, pp. 97, 113. Cf. the chapter "Alms to Win Converts" in Zwemer's The Cross Above the Crescent, pp. 89-100.

52. Juynball Islamische Gesetzes, p. 106.

53 See Index Vol. II, Ritual and Belief in Morocco.

54 For this and subsequent references see article by "Jurist" on Waqf. Moslem World, Vol. 4, pp. 173-186.

55. Hamilton's Hidayah, Vol. II, p. 334. Encyclopedia of Islam, Art. Waqf.

56. Ibid.

57. Article by "Jurist," Moslem World, Vol. IV, pp. 183, 184.

58. Ibid, pg. 185.

59. Moh. Abu Bekr Ibrahim, The Azhar University, p. 23.

60. The Moslem World, Vol. VIII, p. 420.

61. Statesmen's Year Book, 1941, p. 852.

62. George Stewart, "Is the Caliph a Pope?" Moslem World, Vol. xxi, p. 187. So also others as quoted in Chapter 1.

63. The Influence of Animism on Islam, pp. 87-103.

64. Westermarck, Ritual and Belief in Morocco, Vol. II, pp. 387-397. Whoever it be that pronounces such a prayer, father imam or mullah, is ipso facto a priest. The exact words of this prayer are also given in Herklot's Qanoon-i-Islam, London, 1832, p. 30.

65 Ritual and Belief in Morocco, Vol. I, pp.70-90; 554-559, 568, etc. Similar sacrifices are common in Arabia and in Lower Egypt.

66. Lane's Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, p. 245.

67. Ritual and Belief in Morocco, Vol. II, pp. 117-127.

68. Archer, Mystical Elements in Mohammed. Yale, 1924.

69. The Mystics of Islam.

70. M. T. Titus, Indian Islam, pp. 110-130.

71. Henri Massé, Islam, pp. 212, 213, and L. M. J. Garrett, Mysticism and Magic in Turkey, ch. Vi and viii. According to Westermarck (Vol. II, p. 57) it is at the shrines of these saints that istikhara, divination, is asked by dream or rosary. Like the Urim and Thummim of the Jewish priest in ancient Israel.

72. Translated in Moslem World, Vol. XXXI, p. 280 ff.

73. Cf. Zwemer - A Moslem Seeker after God. Life of Al-Ghazali, Chapters VIII and IX.

74. Cf. George Percy Badger, History of the Imams and Seyyids of Oman by Salih Ibn Razik from A. D. 661-1856. Translation with introduction and notes.

75. Hurgronje, The Achenese, p. 158. There are over three score references to the functions and spiritual powers (buraka) of the Sharifs in Westermarck's Ritual and Belief in Morocco.

76. The Social Organization of the Tribes of the Aden Protectorate in the Royal Asiatic Society Journal, May, 1943.

77. Goldziher, Vorlesungen wher den Islam, pp. 201-231; 268-269.

78. Encyc. of Islam, Mahdi by Macdonald.

79. Richard Hartmann, Eine Islamische Apocalypse atts der Kreuzzugzeit. 1924. It has a translation of an Arabic text on eschatology, Cairo, 1906. See also Zwemer, The Moslem Christ, pp. 107-109.

80. Slatin Pasha, Fire and Sword in the Sudan, 1896.

81. Encyc. of Islam ‘Ali Ridha.

82. Moslem World, Vol. XX, p. 407. For further details see M. T. Titus, Islam in India, pp. 102ff.

83. Mohammedanism, pp. 76-79.

84. Indian Islam, 1930. Oxford Press, pp. 110-144.

85. Hurgronje’s Mohammedanism, pp. 113-116.

86. Indian Islam, pp. 75 ff

87. For India, see Islam in India, pp. 203-206, 243-247. Cf. Zwemer, Present Day Journalism in the World of Islam in John R. Mott’s Moslem World of Today.

88. International Review of Missions, Oct., 1944, pp. 426-432.

89. History of the Church Missionary Society, Vol. II, pp. 561-572.

90. The Beloved Physician of Teheran, by Isaac Yonan.

91. Moslem World, Vol. XXXI; 217-226.

92. The Moslem World, Vol. XVII; 375 ff.

93. How a Sufi Found His Lord, Lucknow Publishing Co., 1942.

94. History of the Church Missionary Society, Vol. II, p. 12.

95. For an account of his life and work by James G. Hunt, see The Moslem World, Vol. IX, pp. 19-24.

96. P. 7

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