BOOK REVIEWS


These five volumes under review were presented to the public in January 1973 at an ecumenical and interreligious meeting in Beirut (see Al-Montada, Christian News Bulletin, January-February, 1973, pp. 24-27, 32, 33). As such the publication of this 'pentalogy' (five volume book) marked at that time a moment in the history of Muslim-Christian relations which seemed to be promising for the future. These volumes reached the reviewer, however, in September 1975, at a time when the very presuppositions underlying the effort of its Maronite author seem to have been seriously impaired by recent events. Moubarac had premonitions about an impending disaster (V, pp. 256, 257) which gives the whole work a slightly pessimistic, melancholic tone. The reviewer is therefore faced with a predicament which reflects the deadlock of the extremely complicated situation in Lebanon for which nobody has yet found a solution. We can only hope and pray that God will lead both Muslims and Christians on new ways of trust and understanding. Until that time Moubarac's plea for reconciliation and understanding will probably sound as a voice in the wilderness of mutual alienation and bitterness. Only those who do not believe that the painful experiences of the present are final and decisive, will read these five volumes as a very important basis for a new realistic start together.

The unity of these five volumes is not formed by a common theme, unless the Abrahamitic theme be considered as such, but by the personality of the author himself. Each volume witnesses a struggle in which Moubarac has involved himself as a pupil of Louis Massignon, (Vol. I), as a Christian student of the Holy Qur'ân (Vol. II), as a Christian scholar confronted by the theological challenge of Islam (Vol. III), as a Christian Arab (language, culture, literature) (Vol. IV), and finally, as a man with deep political convictions who is concerned about the solution of the Palestinian problem (Vol. V).

The best way to discover the unity and the deeper motive in these five volumes is to read first the retrospective view in Vol. V (pp. 227-269). There he calls his 'pentalogy' a work of penitence while sharing with his readers in a very open and honest way retractions (like St. Augustine) of certain views in all his publications, including the five under review. This disarming self-critique saves him from the accusation of being from time to time rather an opinionated writer.

The main thrust of these volumes seems to me to be a concern and love for Christianity and Islam in the Middle East. This concern is supported by a new theological,
Christian view of Islam. This new view of Islam has been developed by Louis Massignon and his disciples of whom Y. Moubarac is one of the most important. This view is characterized by seeing in Islam a religious movement in God's plan of salvation and in the history of religions which corrects the exclusivistic Jewish and Christian claims of having a monopoly of the truth by reminding the world that the God of Abraham is the God of all believers. The focal point of the three monotheistic religions is Abraham. Louis Massignon himself considered the Qur'an to be inspired [see L. Massignon, Opera Minora, ed. by Y. Moubarac (Beirut: Dâr al-Ma'ârif, 1963), III, 116] and spoke of Muhammad in his relation to Christianity as a "negative" prophet in the sense that he denied deformations of Christian doctrine [see J.F. Six, ed., Louis Massignon, (Paris: L'Hermé, 1970) p. 132]. Muhammad, according to Massignon, was not a false prophet because he did not positively present false teaching. Moubarac further developed several thoughts of Massignon notably in L'Islam, (Paris: Casterman, 1962) pp. 154-169. Moubarac culminates from time to time against a Christian view of Islam which is based on Ishmael and which he calls "Ismaelology" (cf. Gal. 4). This so-called Christian view, which cannot be associated with the thoughts of Massignon, has according to Moubarac no Biblical or Qur'anic basis. It limits Islam, against historical evidence, to the Arabs as the descendants of Ishmael. (This view has a parallel in a Muslim view which limits the mission of Jesus to Israel.)

Because this and similar views face the reader throughout these five volumes, the usefulness of this 'pentalogy' would have been greatly increased by a general index. It is also regrettable that throughout the 'pentality' often references, some praising, some criticizing, to persons and their opinions are found without proper annotation, even sometimes without mentioning their names.

In Volume I The Work of Louis Massignon, Moubarac brings up-to-date his bibliography of publications of and about the late Louis Massignon (d. 1962). Moubarac's first bibliography was published in 1956 in the first of three volumes Mélanges [see Institut Francais de Damas, Mélanges Louis Massignon, (Damas: Institut Francais, pp. 1-56.] to celebrate Massignon's seventieth birthday. Moubarac also published in three volumes: Massignon's Opera Minora, which however do not contain a complete collection of Massignon's smaller publications. Besides this bibliography, Moubarac presents a short but rich essay about Louis Massignon (1883-1962) in which he, however, omits to mention the full bibliographical data of H. Masson's translation of the Passion of Al-Hallâj. Moubarac also overlooked R.A. Butler, (translator) "Louis Massignon's Notes on Kitâb al Tawasin", Iqbal Review, (April, 1970,) pp. 1-58, (Oct. 1970,) pp. 28-57. On pages 100 and 101 Moubarac attacks Le Cahier de L'Hermé, no. 13, 1970, because its editors had included a contribution of a Zionist to honour L. Massignon. Moubarac does not even mention the name of this man: Andre Chouraqui, though Massignon obviously had had contacts with him. I wonder how Moubarac wants to solve the Palestinian problem (Vol. V) if he refuses to have any dealings with nationalist Jews.

The only English section in the 'pentalogy' is a poem (with French translation) of Thomas Merton. The title of the poem is The Night of Destiny (Lailat al-Qadr) (pp. 204-207).
Volume II deals with the Koran and Western Criticism. Under this heading Moubarac takes up again the subject of his thesis: “Abraham in the Koran.” In this volume he adds studies about “Abraham in Islam”, “Abraham the friend of God in Bible and Koran,” “Ismail driven into the desert”, “Bible and Koran” and critical reviews of his thesis by ten prominent scholars such as Anawati, Blachère and Montgomery Watt. The second part of this volume is devoted to studies of Moses and Elijah as representatives of Qur’anic monotheism. The third section deals with the Arabic environment of Islam.

In connection with Vol. II Moubarac presents some retractions in Vol. V, pp. 251-259. There he refers to the “worst detractors of Islam and its Prophet” and “the hypercritical stand of international orientalism.” Those living in the Muslim world are used to such general accusations. On these pages only the name of H. Lammens is mentioned. However Johann Fueck, Die Arabischen Studien in Europa (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1955), p. 292, had already remarked while dealing with H. Lammens (1862-1937) that in the beginning of this century islamology went through a phase of radical scepticism and hypercriticism, as also other historical disciplines had experienced. In Fueck’s book Lammens is an exception! It seems utterly unfair that in 1973 Moubarac who himself used to apply the critical tools of orientalism makes such an issue out of this. Two Dutch scholars are referred to. Their names are not mentioned, but they can easily be identified (II, 6; V, 44) as C. Snouck Hurgronje and A.J. Wensinck. I doubt whether these two men deserve the labels “hypercritical” and “detractors”. For this I refer to L. Massignon, “A. J. Wensinck”, in Opera Minora, III, 389, 390. Disagreement with Hurgronje’s view leads Moubarac even to associate Hurgronje with a colonial organization which had been dissolved in 1798, 59 years before Hurgronje was born. One cannot settle an argument by putting labels on people. With orientalists two things can be wrong: 1. their scientific methodology and 2. their attitude. The wrong attitude may influence the methodology but does not discard it, as we see in Moubarac’s own case. I for myself did not discover any basic difference in the methodology of the authors who study the Jewish or Christian environment of early Islam on the one hand and those who study the Arab setting on the other hand (see Moubarac’s study on the divine names in South-Semitic epigraphy, II, 179-195). When, however, Moubarac claims that scholars who trace Christian and Jewish “sources” of the Qur’an do this to disqualify the Qur’an as a holy book, he does not attack their methodology but their attitude. Moubarac overlooks the fact that belief in the inspired nature of Qur’an or Bible is not based on scientific proofs. When, however, a scholar uses his critical tools without awareness of his own psychological presuppositions and without respect for the fact that some people consider these books to have a divine, metaphysical dimension, he has a wrong attitude which may influence his historical critical approach and the results of his work. I have to take issue with Dr. Moubarac because he bypasses the fundamental issue that non-Muslim and many Muslim scholars honestly disagree about the way the holy book came into existence. One cannot dismiss this issue by simply stating that the non-Muslim orientalist is wrong without giving any reasons for it. Moubarac as a Christian theologian misses in his concern for dialogue with Muslims the opportunity of humbly offering his help to his Muslim partner in the latter’s apologetic predicament.

By referring to the solution of similar problems in Biblical exegesis he could
have shown his Muslim friends how historical-critical exegesis far from weakening or undermining the authority of the Qur'ān for the believer can strengthen it. Muslim theology was also strengthened by the absorption of Greek thought. He could have shown how historical-critical exegesis should be used not as a weapon to threaten the truth but as a means to understand better complicated historical realities. By an appeal to divine intervention and revelation these realities do not become less complicated. It is the task of any historian to explain these realities as human events and the task of the Muslim theologian to study the relation between what is believed to be revelation and the historical situation and processes. That the orientalist method can be combined with the right scientific attitude can also be shown by the work of the Japanese non-Muslim scholar T. Izutu on the Qur'ān. In the context of his 'pentalogy' and its main concern for Muslim-Christian relations it would have been more appropriate if Moubarac had warned against such Muslim and Christian scholars, who for apologetic reasons apply historical-critical methods with an hypercritical disrespectful attitude to all sacred books but their own.


The second part of this volume starts with an essay about the question: Is there a new Christian vision of Islam as a basis for dialogue? In this essay Moubarac seems only to be aware of Christian Study Centres founded by Roman Catholic scholars. Instead of mentioning an already longtime defunct Jesuit centre in Calcutta he should have mentioned Loyola Hall in Lahore, and the centre in Hyderabad, India, founded in 1930. The other important contribution in this volume is a constructive critique of a publication by the Secretariatus pro Non-Christians in Rome: Guidelines for a Dialogue Between Muslims and Christians. The last edition (1971) of these Guidelines has not yet taken notice of this important review. Moubarac also printed in this volume a contribution he wrote for a dialogue-meeting of the World Council of Churches and a paper presented at the international orientalist congress in Canberra in 1971. From the fact that Moubarac published the last chapter of his thesis in 1969 about “Christian thought about Islam from the beginning until the fall of Constantinople” in this volume, I conclude that this thesis of which a sequel was made in 1972, will unfortunately not be printed in its entirety. The list of names on p. 244 became meaningless in this context.

An interesting and important application of Moubarac’s view on religious dialogue can be found in a work he prepared with seven Muslims: Les Musulmans - Consultation Islamo-chrétienne, (Paris: Beauchesne, 1971).

Volume IV “Christians and the Arab World” contains important data and insights especially about the cultural and literary roles of the Christian communities in the Middle East. One cannot read the letter to his Lebanese fellow citizens (235-246) without being
deeply moved. Pages 135-152 contain the outline for a projected Arabic Encyclopaedia of Christian Knowledge in 100 volumes. The information contained in this fourth volume left me unsatisfied. Statistics about the numbers of Christians in the Middle East are less meaningful without a sociological analysis of Christian practices and commitments because the figures do not indicate active church membership but only to which community people belong. One wonders whether the basic problems in the Middle East can be solved by a better understanding between Muslims and Christians as followers of their respective religions. Are we not expecting too much from religions which have lost much of their impact on their followers? Dupre La Tour aptly remarked on the occasion of the presentation of this 'pentalogy': "Lebanon's milieu is slowly penetrated by an atheistic materialism which would impose itself on both intellectuals and the masses as the faith and mystique of modern times."

Volume V, *Palestine and the Arab Genius* (Arabî) was for its greater part written in 1967 after the six days' war. Because it was written with much political passion and contains challenges for thought and action on every page it is the most difficult volume to review fairly. This volume starts with a serious (some may say: idealistic, naive, utopian) nine point proposal to solve the Palestinian problem. *Condîtio sine qua non* is that the Zionist state be demolished, though the Jews are not to be sent back to their respective countries of origin. They should be invited to enjoy on the basis of full equality as citizens, the hospitality of the Arabs which they previously enjoyed for so many centuries. In order to fulfil this mission of solving the Jewish problem, also on behalf of the West, where Jews were subject to pogroms and persecution, a change of heart is needed of Jews, Christians and Muslims, so that all the children of Abraham will be reunited, without exclusivism, in one common destiny. An interesting study about Jerusalem supports this proposal.

No reviewer can be asked to present a brief and fair evaluation of more than 1300 pages in less than the space available for five normal sized book reviews. Those interested in a concise epitome in French I refer to a review article by Norman Daniel in *M.I. D.E.O.* (1974) Vol. XII, pp. 203-210, or to the critique by Maurice Borrmans in *Bulletin, Secretariatus pro Non—Christianis*, IX, (1974), 186-203.

These five volumes are presented as the five fingers of the hand of Fatima in honour of the five holy persons of the *Mubâhala [A.H. 10]* during the meeting of the Prophet Muhammad with the delegation from Najrân. This work is incomplete but we are thankful to Dr. Y. Moubarac that he decided to present his personal, but very stimulating ideas in mid-course to those readers who share his struggle and concern for better relations between Islam and Christianity, Muslims and Christians.

Rawalpindi

— Jan Slomp

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BOOK REVIEW

**BĀGHĪ HINDUSTĀN** by Mawlānā Faḍl-i Ḥaqq Khayrābādī, 2nd edition 1974, Lahore, Maktaba-i Qādirīyya, pp. 359, price Rs. 13.50.

This is a reprint of the Urdu translation (Bijnor 1947) by ‘Abd al-Shāhid Khān Shirwānī of the Arabic “Risāla Ghadriyya” (christened Al-Thawra al-Hindiyya by M. Abū’l Kalam Aẓād) which Mawlānā Faḍl-i Ḥaqq Khayrābādī wrote during his imprisonment in the Andaman Islands (1859-61) where he was exiled on his conviction on charges of complicity in the military uprising of 1857 now rightly described as the first War of Independence by the Indo-Pakistani historians. The book comprising a tract in Arabic and two long poems, also in Arabic, gives a doleful but vivid description of the tribulations and sufferings to which the author as well as hundreds of those freedom-fighters who took part in the so-called ‘Mutiny’ of 1857, confined in the dreaded Andaman Islands, were subjected by the bloated British. As one reads through the mournful account of what the author went through, the extremely humiliating treatment and the insults which were heaped upon him by his captors, one cannot help recall the inhuman atrocities which the Nazis perpetrated on their victims during World War-II in the infamous concentration camps.

The book was published in its Arabic text with excellent and highly readable Urdu translation by ‘Abd al-Shāhid Khān Shirwānī, almost after a century of its compilation, in 1947 for fear of the British authorities and their repressive law with which they governed their former colonial possession—the Dominion of (undivided) India. The language employed by the author both in prose and poetry shows what wonderful mastery he had over the Arabic language and how vast was his vocabulary justifying most appropriately the honorific of ‘Allāma conferred on him by his contemporaries and litterateurs. It is a pity that the book although a slender volume yet fit to rank with such famous classics as the Maqāmāt Ḥarīrī, Maqāmāt Bādī’ al Zamān al-Hamadhānī and the Ḥamāsā, could not be widely circulated in the Arab world so that the Arabs, now engaged in a life and death struggle against the Western powers and their stooges, could know how the British treated a century back, their co-religionists in India who like them were struggling to liberate their home-land from the foreign usurpers. The atrocities and excesses committed by the victors and harsh punishment which they meted out to the helpless and ill-starred “rebels” were extremely hideous.

Mawlānā Faḍl-i Ḥaqq says that:

“When the British occupied Delhi in 1858, they started executing the élite of the city and the suburbs and looted their property, residential buildings, cattle, chattels, elephants, horses, camels, arms and household effects. Not only that they mercilessly put to the sword the women and children, outraged the modesty of thous-
ands of highborn ladies, although they had all of them submitted to the victors and had accepted them as their over-lords. Guards and pickets were placed at all points of exit to apprehend those who were running away for their lives. They were all captured, deprived of all they possessed—jewellery, gold and silver, loin cloths, chaddars, pyjamas and even the unsewn sheets which menfolk wear round their waists. After these inhuman acts of despoliation, men, women and children, young and old were all indiscriminately hanged and gibbeted. Thousands met their death in this fashion and most of them were Muslims—the Hindūs were generally spared". (pp. 269-270).

As already stated the book is a first hand source for the happenings in Delhi during and after the rising against the British by the native troops, both Hindūs and Muslīms, and gives a vivid description of the untold sufferings of the freedom fighters while undergoing their life sentence in the Andamans popularly called the kālāpānti. However, certain statements made by the writer of the foreword to the edition under review and the lengthy preface by 'Abd al Shāhid Khān Shīrwānī, the Urdu translator, have been criticized in certain circles. For instance it has been contended that the Mawlānā displayed exemplary courage and fortitude when he heard the sentence pronounced by the military court of transportation for life for his alleged complicity in the so-called 'Mutiny'. Mālik Rām in his lengthy article published in the monthly Takrit, Delhi [June 1960], has forcefully contradicted this statement and has said that Mawlānā Faḍl-i Ḥaqq did no such thing as he was deeply convinced that he had committed no such crime as high treason. As the most he was guilty of acting as an advisory to the mutineers, especially the queen-mother Begum Ḥaḍrat Maḥall of Awadh, was also a member of the Court of Administration set up by the last Mughal emperor of Delhi — Bahādurshāh Ṣafar. He had also contended that in view of his old age (he was 62 years old), minority of his children, straitened circumstances and extreme poverty to which he had been reduced he might be shown mercy and consequently released on compassionate grounds.

According to Mawlānā Imtiyāz 'Ali 'Arshi', the Librarian, Raza (sic) State Library, Rāmpūr (India) Mawlānā Faḍl-i Ḥaqq had also addressed three letters to the then pro-British Nawāb of Rāmpūr, Yūsuf 'Ali Khān (who had been his pupil in Delhi and with whom he had been earlier employed in various capacities), while he was facing the trial for high treason at Lucknow, in which he had implored the Nawāb to intercede on his behalf with the British and help secure his release. One of these letters has been preserved in the archives of the former Rāmpūr State while the other two are lost; either they had been forwarded by the Nawāb to the British Governor-General or most probably destroyed as these were from a "rebel" and could be a source of trouble for the loyal native ruler at a later stage.

This letter was also published in the monthly Takrit [August 1957]. Its authenticity has been challenged only recently, although feeble doubts had been earlier expressed in certain circles, belonging to a particular school of religious thought, that this letter might not be a genuine document. As against this the question has been posed: who invented this forgery and why, and how it came to be deposited in a princely State library whose ruler was kindly disposed towards the Mawlānā and who had also employed him in his State and where his illustrious son, Mawlānā 'Abd al- Ḥaqq, had sought employment and taught long after the 'Mutiny' and the death in exile of his celebrated father. It is easy to say that a certain document is a forgery but it is difficult to prove it. Neither
external nor internal evidence goes to show that the document published by Mawlānā 'Arshi is historically not genuine. The contents of the letter are also supported by two or three appeals of mercy, as averred by Mālik Rām, which Mawlānā Faḍl-i Ḥaqq filed with the British authorities against his conviction. Unfortunately these appeals were all rejected.

Commenting on the efforts made by the Mawlānā to prove that he was innocent and that he had not done any thing which could prove him guilty of the charges laid against him and his general conduct during his trial Ḥakīm Māḥmūd Aḥmad Bārakātī, a grandson of Sayyid Bārakāt Aḥmad of Tonk, says in his Urdu book Faḍl-i Ḥaqq Khayrābādī (Karachi 1975): “Whatever Mawlānā Faḍl-i Ḥaqq stated in the court in respect of his innocence and whatever he did to secure his release I say openly that this was not an act of fortitude and chivalry. Would that this page in the biography of Faḍl-i Ḥaqq had been blotted with ink” (p. 17).

During his employment as a sarishtadār with the British Resident of Delhi Mawlānā Faḍl-i Ḥaqq was not treated with the honour and respect which he richly deserved as has been stated by Mīrzā Ghālib in his Kulliyāt-i Nāth or if Mīrzā Ḥyarat Dihlawī is to be believed, he was suspended from service for deliberately sitting on certain orders passed by the Resident on an application submitted by Mawlānā Ismā‘īl Shahīd against the gag on his sermons in the Jāmi‘ Masjid, he had to resign his post and seek employment with the native chief of Jhajhjhar (who was also hanged for his complicity in the ‘Mutiny’). This insulting behaviour of the Resident and the circumstances in which Faḍl-i Ḥaqq tendered his resignation must have rankled in his heart. It should be remembered that he was held in very high esteem both as a scholar and a nobleman whose father Mawlānā Faḍl-i Imām had been Ṣadr al-Ṣudūr of Delhi, whose uncle Mūḥammad Šālīḥ was also in the employ of the East India Company as an official news-writer, whose brother Faḍl al-Raḥmān held a high administrative appointment in the Patiala State and whose another brother Faḍl-i ‘Aẓīm was Deputy Collector of Sahāranpūr.

It may not be unsafe to conjecture that out of rancour or just to satisfy his ire against the British Mawlānā Faḍl-i Ḥaqq, after watching the progress of events for sometime, decided to lend his support to the freedom struggle only in August 1857 while the ‘Mutiny’ had actually erupted in May of the same year. His presence in Delhi in early May is, however, a disputed point. It still remains a fact that he was considered a terribly dangerous person by the British who were bent on punishing him for his various acts of omission and commission during his employment with them and especially his determination not to bow submissively before them, and not necessarily for his activities during the course of the ‘Mutiny’ which were considered not so dangerous as to imperil the very foundations of the British rule in India, as had been contested by the Mawlānā himself during his trial through his British lawyers. There is every reason to believe that the horrible punishment awarded to the Mawlānā was the result of malice that the British bore against him because, as he himself says in the Rīsāla under review, he was one of the leading ‘Ulamā’ of India, had been brought up in affluent circumstances, had lived a life of ease and luxury (he was gainfully employed by the British in a post which carried besides a handsome salary, social prestige and power). The British were particularly
hard on all those who had once been in their employ but had turned against them when the 'Mutiny' broke out. By punishing him the British wanted to set an example for those who were still employed with them in case they were also found guilty of gross misconduct.

In fact, the role played by the Mawlānā in the freedom struggle of 1857 needs to be thoroughly investigated before a judgement could be passed on him one way or the other. This should form the subject-matter of a doctoral dissertation in one of our universities. The books and articles so far published on Mawlānā Faḍl-i Ḥaqq are so much conflicting in nature and content, are so much one-sided and prejudiced in their treatment that the average reader finds himself confused and perplexed and is consequently unable to reach a definite conclusion.

The two articles by 'Arshi and Mālik Rām paint the career of the Mawlānā in lurid colours while the booklet by the late Mufti Intīṣāmullah Shihābī (Badaun, n.d.), the one under review by 'Abd al-Shāhīd Khān Shirwānī and the third by Maḥmūd Aḥmad Barakātī are more or less of an apologetic nature written with the sole aim of exonerating Mawlānā Faḍl-i Ḥaqq from the charge of passivity during the freedom struggle. The Mawlānā, however, himself pleads guilty to the charge when he says:

"I continued goading the unwilling and weak-willed while on the outbreak of hostilities I myself sat back... I kept aloof due to lethargy and indetermination. In fact I committed a big crime; when godly persons called upon me to lay down my life in the path of God I did not respond; I was unlucky to achieve martyrdom while the lucky ones attained it."

His remorse is justified. In spite of his vast learning and erudition his services to the country or his nation were practically negligible. In fact all his activities centred on his own self rather than the community to which he belonged. While he delighted to indulge in polemics others plunged themselves in active politics which ultimately cost them their lives. We of the posterity have nothing but profound respect for both for all that they did in their own way for the freedom of their motherland.

Karachi

— A.S. Bazme Anṣārī