

the Qurʾān.

Iqbal's conversations with Nasr deal with a wide range of theoretical and practical issues under four broad headings: (i) Islam, science, and Muslims; (ii) Islam, Muslims, and modern technology; (iii) On the environmental crisis; and (iv) On biological origins. All of these general themes are of immense importance and their treatment is a matter of urgency, not only for Islamic life and thought and the global Muslim *Ummah* but also for humanity as a whole. Looking at the content of the conversations, with Nasr giving greater clarity to his intellectual position on modern science and technology than he has ever done before, I am inclined to think that this new book could very well inspire a new positive and fruitful debate among Muslims on the issues in question. Both Nasr and Iqbal are to be congratulated for making available this much needed book to Muslims everywhere, particularly the younger generation of Muslim scholars, scientists, and technologists.

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BRILL'S CLASSICS IN ISLAM: VOLUME 1

C. Snouck Hurgronje: *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century*

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The subtitles of this first volume in the newly launched "Brill's Classics in Islam" series are as important for understanding the content and nature of this book as its title: "Daily Life, Customs and Learning. The Moslems of the East-Indian Archipelago." More revealing, however, are the colorful details of the life of its author, Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936), variously known as an imposter, a Dutch spy, an opportunist of the worst kind who used the ambitions of a flagging Dutch colonizing empire for personal gains, and a respected Orientalist. Perhaps he was all of these at once. He was certainly one of the few Europeans who have actually resided in Makkah—the Sacred City of Islam forbidden to non-Muslims—prior to the twentieth century. His fortunes were aided by the times in which he lived, an era during which it was possible for any adventurous European

to single-handedly direct the course of history—at least in that part of the world where the European's presence struck awe, even terror, in the hearts of the natives, as Marshall Hodgson once remarked.

When the twenty-seven-year old Hurgronje landed in Jeddah on August 28, 1884, he had multiple agendas. Four years prior to his arrival in Jeddah, he had successfully defended his thesis, *Het Mekkaansche festival* (*The Makkan Feast*), and earned a doctorate with honors. “In [this thesis] he not only described the pilgrimage and its rituals in a historical perspective,” writes Jan Just Witkam in his informative introduction (which does not seem to have been proofed by the copy editors),

but in it he also addressed the question of how and why Prophet Muḥammad had incorporated this pre-Islamic, basically pagan, ritual of the pilgrimage into his new religion. Snouck Hurgronje came up with the answer that this had mainly been for reasons of political expediency. How he debunks the Abrahamic legend in Islam is a telling example of his non-religious perspective. The Pilgrimage, the re-enactment of some dramatic episodes in Ibrāhīm's life and divine mission (Hagar's despair, the sacrifice of Ismā'īl), being what is (*sic*) was, irrespective of the question whether it was true or false, needed study as a social, and political, phenomenon. (xiv)

We cannot comment here on Witkam's own orientalist views of the sacredness of the rites of Ḥajj, but it is noteworthy that Hurgronje's book does not describe the pilgrimage as a first-hand account. He did not attend the Ḥajj, since he was ordered by the Ottoman Governor to leave Arabia before the Ḥajj season. Hurgronje had arrived in Jeddah at a time when European colonial powers were becoming increasingly anxious about the role of Makkan Muslims in supporting liberation movements in the colonies through the flow of ideas and money. They considered Makkah to have become the safe haven for “Muslim fanatics”—as today's “fundamentalists” were called in the late nineteenth century. From 1873 onwards, the Netherlands was facing a war of attrition in the then-independent Sultanate of Aceh, on the northern tip of the island of Sumatra, and it had become important for the Dutch government of the time to acquire accurate and up-to-date information about the role the Javanese community in Makkah and its environs was playing in this war. Hurgronje offered his services for this espionage mission and his expedition was partly funded by the Dutch government for this specific purpose. Hurgronje no doubt had personal academic interests as well, for after all he was a well-trained orientalist whose ideas had been influenced by none other than Michael Jan de Goeje (1836-1907), the grand old master of the Leiden School of Oriental Philology.

The Ḥajj commenced on the first of October 1884, just four weeks after Hurgronje's arrival in Jeddah. By the time he was settled in the residence provided by the Dutch Consulate, pilgrims had started to return from Makkah. Hurgronje set to work immediately. He had by then made his way into several social groups in Jeddah. These ranged from the locals involved in the pilgrimage business to the Javanese community that lived in Jeddah and from the Western diplomats to the Turkish officials and owners of boats at Jeddah harbor. In this he was aided by his fluency in vernacular Arabic and the photographic equipment he had brought along; the latter was particularly helpful in penetrating the elite circles where photographic portraits were much sought after.

Even with all these connections, however, he could not go to Makkah yet; he needed to publicly become a Muslim. Though this was not a problem for him, he wanted to do it tactfully, in order to gain the confidence of officials so that he would not be suspected. He proceeded systematically. First he searched for and found a companion who could assist him in penetrating religious and official circles. The choice fell on one Raden Aboe Bakar Djajadinginrat (1854-1914), a man from Java who had already lived in Jeddah for five years and who served as an informant for the Dutch Consul there. Next, he moved out of the residence provided by the Dutch Consulate, thus distancing himself from his paymasters.

The physical move from the premises of the Dutch Consulate on the first of January 1885 was followed by the (at least putative) transition from Christianity to Islam. He took on the name of 'Abd al-Ghaffār, meaning the Servant of the Much-Forgiving One—a name not without deeper symbolic meaning. The three weeks prior to January 21, 1885, the unforgettable day he finally set foot in the Sacred City after a full day's journey, were filled with intense social activity. He met with the *qāḍī* of Jeddah, both to express his fidelity to Islam and to gain access to 'Uthmān Pasha, the Ottoman Governor of the Ḥijāz who was in Jeddah at the time. He must have impressed the *qāḍī* with his command over intricacies of Islamic law as much as with his skills in photography, for he was given easy access to the Governor, who enjoyed his conversation as well as the production of several sitting and standing photographic portraits.

The seven month period between his arrival in Makkah and his departure in the August of the same year is the period of observation and experiences that furnishes much of the material for *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century*, although it also contains second-hand accounts. The first volume of the original work, not included in the present edition, was devoted to a history of Makkah.

Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century is not a dairy or journal but an overall record of routines of daily life in Makkah, from the com-

plex perspective of both a spy sent there to gather information about the Javanese community in Makkah, as well as that of an orientalist seriously interested in Islam. During these seven intensely-lived months, he made a series of photographic portraits of a cross-section of Makkan society, some of which are included in the present edition. He met prominent religious scholars, *muftis* and shaykhs. He joined *dhikr* sessions, attended public and private meals, gathered information about the Javanese community, participated in the religious rites, joined congregations in mosques, made his rounds of the Sacred House of Allah, made hasty and often incorrect judgments about social and political structures and relationships, and wrote detailed notes which would furnish raw material for his two volume work on Makkah that would earn for him a brief period of fame and a job.

Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century is divided into four sections: "Daily life in Mekkah"; "Family Life in Mekka"; "Learning in Mekka"; and "The Jāwah." Each part attempts to construct a comprehensive picture of that particular aspect of life in Makkah. In spite of the advantages available to a first hand observer, the conclusions drawn by Hurgronje remain superficial. His account of family life in Makkah, for instance, reads as if the Sacred City is immersed in an unending orgy of trading and changing wives, a conclusion he states in so many words after a lengthy description of the family life of various classes:

So the man is glad to be continually changing his wife as he ever seeks for something better, while the woman knows how to make herself tolerably comfortable in most situations. Let it be here expressly stated that also more favourable instances are not wanting, but the characteristic note of the usual Mekkan marriage is the seamy-sidedness that we have above depicted. (106)

His authoritative opinions about legal aspects of Islam are, likewise, colored with his own orientalist views and training:

The Shafi'ite Law, though confined by Turkish influence to the sphere of family life in most of the lands in which it used to rule, has still held its own in the lecture halls, and has remained a spiritual power. Its wide diffusion in the earlier centuries was due to the protection of the Abbaside Khalifs. At that time its only local competitor in Mekka was Shi'ism, which counts many adherents in West and South Arabia.

The Sherifs of Mekka were opportunists in questions of rite, and exchanged their Zeidite (Shi'ite) confession for the Shafi'ite, which was the rite of the great majority of their subjects. Since that time the mass of the population of Western Arabia have remained Shafi'i.

They have not followed their rulers in adopting the Hanafi rite. In the environs of Mekka there are still strong remains of that Shi'itism which once contributed to the conquest of Western Arabia by the Sherifs, and is now for its reward despised by them. There are also in the environs of Mekka some Harb tribes adhering to Wahhabism. Both Shi'ites and Wahhabis are now simply remains of no importance as compared with the dominating Shaf'ism. (199-200)

When he received his deportation order, Hurgronje's first task was to safeguard his notes and his photographic equipment. He was helped in this by his Javanese companion as well as by the Dutch honorary Vice-Consul and shipping agent, P. N. van der Chijs, who is dubbed by Witkam as a "wise man" with whom "[Hurgronje] had already concluded a close friendship before he went from Jeddah to Mecca" (xix). Thus, with the connivance of the "wise man", Hurgronje received a steady stream of shipments from Mekkah, via Jeddah, to Leiden between 1885 and 1889, containing "all sorts of information, photographs and ethnographical objects" (xix-xx).¹

Back in Leiden, Hurgronje immediately set himself to produce a stream of articles on Makkan topics and was soon considered an authority on the subject. When his two-volume German work finally made appear-

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1. For a description of the Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje Collection, now part of the Leiden University Library's Special Collections, see <<http://dpc.uba.uva.nl/cgi/f/findaid/findaid-idx?c=ubleideninv;cc=ubleideninv;view=text;lang=en;didno=ubl085;sid=b99da2db2ba09bd580f8f041ed292544;byte=1358315; focusrgn=beforeddsc;rgn=main>>, accessed on November 7, 2007. In addition to photographs and papers, there were some sound recordings made on wax cylinders by the staff of the Dutch Consulate at Jeddah between 1906 and 1909 at the request of Hurgronje with the equipment provided by him, and these have a dramatic episode: on October 14, 1970, a bomb planted by Vietnam War protesters in the Harvard Semitic Museum, which then also housed the Center for International Affairs, literally blew the roof off the building. The explosion resulted in a fateful "moment of light," as Dr. Carney Gavin, curator of the museum later said: it uncovered more than 27,000 old photographs of the Middle East (see Paul Lunde, "The Lure Of Mecca," *Saudi Aramco World*, November/December 1974, 14-21). These nineteenth-century photographs, known as the Bonfils Collection, had been acquired by the museum in the 1890s, stored neatly in boxes up in the attic, and forgotten for almost 80 years. To see the details of how this discovery led to the discovery of the wax cylinders containing sounds recorded by the Dutch Consulate at Jeddah, see Piney Kesting, "A Doorway in Time," *Saudi Aramco World*, September/October 1993, 32-39.

ance in 1888, he was immediately rewarded by the political authorities. The Minister of Colonial Affairs “rightly interpreted the final pages of the last chapter of *Mekka* as a job application” (xx) and created for Hurgronje a position in the Dutch occupied East Indies, where he would stay for the next seventeen years as governmental advisor on indigenous, Arab and Islamic affairs. His penetration into Javanese circles in Jeddah and Makkah would be especially useful given the intense political work aimed at undermining resistance against the Dutch occupation.

“[Then] in 1906, when he may have sensed that he had outstayed his welcome in the colony or that his career had reached a cul-de-sac, he grasped the opportunity to succeed his teacher, De Goeje, and he enjoyed the Leiden professorship with great gusto” (xx). During his years at Leiden, he had

informants write down all sorts of texts, from geographical surveys, to *fatwā's* (*sic*) on early sound recording of the Qur'ān, to texts of popular songs, to lists of manuscripts in Ḥiǧāzī libraries, etc., etc. In the end, however, nothing much came from it. University life (and old age for that matter) had requirements of its own, and he may have underestimated these. The appearance of the English translation in 1931 of his second volume of *Mekka* was a last and final act of interest and of recollection to that period which had meant so much to him in his late twenties. (xx-xxi)

Disregarding certain gross misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the “Muhammedan religion” that he took Islam to be, *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century*, with some of the old and rare photographs that accompanied the original work, is certainly a treasure house of information about Makkah of an era that still had the fragrance of the centuries past. What Hurgronje’s witnessed in Makkah was at the verge of disappearance. Within two decades of his departure, the Great Game would start. In 1908, Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī (1856–1931) would become the Grand Sharīf of Makkah. Hurgronje would be replaced by Thomas Edward Lawrence (1888–1935), the British adventurer, espionage expert, soldier, and scholar, known as Lawrence of Arabia, who would successfully help to foster a revolt against the Ottomans by making promises on behalf of the from the British government which were never meant to be kept. Sharīf would, in turn, be replaced by ‘Abd al-Azīz ibn Saūd (*ca.* 1880–1953), the ruler of Najd, who would change the name of the region under his control to Saudi Arabia and grant oil concessions to American companies in 1936. The discovery of the world’s largest reserves of oil would, in turn, destroy Makkah and daily life in the Sacred City as it had

been for centuries.² Hurgronje's book provides a lens, albeit a tainted one, through which one can peer into the daily life of an era now lost forever.

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BRILL'S CLASSICS IN ISLAM: VOLUME 2:

Franz Rosenthal: *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam*

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He was the most brilliant representative of the heroic and final stage of classical orientalism, notes Dimitri Gutas in his glowing tribute to Franz Rosenthal (1914-2003), whose *Knowledge Triumphant* (first published by Brill in 1970) is the second volume in Brill's new series, "Classics in Islam". "[His] precocity matched the exacting standards of his renowned professors" (xi). Trained in an age "when oriental studies had not developed narrow specialization in the various disciplines", Rosenthal was "a consummate philologist in a number of languages, especially in Arabic and Aramaic" (xiii). Born and educated in Berlin, Rosenthal moved to the United States in 1940, where he first taught at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati and then at the University of Pennsylvania. In 1956, he moved to Yale where he remained until his retirement in 1985.

"Significant authors may write many and valuable works," Gutas theorizes in his short introduction, "but as a rule there is one among them in which there is such harmonious blend of profound and original insight, industry, and their own unique voice that it is exceptional. Franz Rosenthal's *Knowledge Triumphant* easily falls into this category, even when one considers the author's remarkable career and prodigious scholarly output (xi)." If *Knowledge Triumphant* is really that significant book, then

2. For details on a recent workshop on Hurgronje's life and works, "Views on Life and Work of Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936)", held on February 16, 2007 at Leiden, visit <<http://www.ias.nl/portal/index.php?q=event/2007/02/16>>, accessed on November 7, 2007.