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Mohammedans, and Other Sects
Joseph Wolff
Excerpt
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RESEARCHES
OF THE
REV. JOSEPH WOLFF.

Between the years 1831 and 1834.

I have already given to the public, in three separate volumes, the journals of my Missionary labours among my brethren of the Jewish nation in Palestine, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, Krimea, Georgia, and the Turkish Empire, which I began in 1821 and accomplished in 1826. My labours among my brethren in England, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, and again in the Mediterranean, from the year 1826 to 1830, were published in the "Jewish Expositor." I now communicate to the Church my labours among my brethren in TURKEY, PERSIA, TURKESTAUN, BOKHARA, AFFGHANISTAUN, CASHMEER, HINDOOSTAUN, and the RED SEA, from the year 1831 to 1834, which I have accomplished through divine grace; with the motives also, which induced me to undertake this journey.

In the first place, it was my earnest desire to make known to my brethren of the Jewish nation, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and rightful heir to David's throne; whose kingdom shall extend itself from the rising of the sun, to the going down thereof; and, encouraged by the example of St. Paul, (Rom. xv. 20.) to preach the tidings of Salvation in those places, where the pure light of the Gospel does not yet shine.

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Besides this, I often asked myself, how my brethren fare, whose ancestors were scattered, after the captivity of Babylon: those tribes of Israel, who, according to the sacred oracles, shall be united to the house of Judah; and whose present abode is a matter of speculation among many Christian Divines, and Jewish Rabbies. The latter assign to them a fabulous country, which they call "The land of darkness, beyond the Sabbathical river." Benjamin Tudela, and the Jews of Jerusalem boldly asserted, that they were residing at Halah and Habor, which they state to be the present Balkh and Bokhara. In the year 1829, being then at Jerusalem, I said to my wife, "Bokhara and Balkh are very much in my mind, for I think I shall there find the Ten Tribes." "Well," she replied, "I have no objection to your going there." In consequence of this, I took my wife to Alexandria, and then made an excursion to Salonica, to see the followers of SHABATAY ZEBI, a Jewish sect; and from thence returned to Malta, where I left my family in the circle and care of kind friends; and, furnished with money from one whom I may term a fatherly friend, I left Malta on the 29. December 1830, in the French Brig Triomphante, for Alexandria. We had fine weather and favourable winds.

December 30. 1830. — Preached the gospel of Christ to the captain and sailors. The Captain, although he disbelieved the Bible, abstained from meat on Friday.

January 1. 1831. — I was delighted at observing this day marks of devotion among French sailors, signing themselves with the cross, and reading the Scriptures which I gave them. Religion in any form, is much more consoling and cheering than infidelity! The captain spoke with delight of the discoveries made by Champollion in Hieroglyphics. As long as those Savans communicate their hypothesis with modesty and deference, their exertions are laudable; but as soon as they attempt to invalidate the testimony of the sacred records with

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their A. B. C. inventions, they render themselves liable to be suspected as charlatans. Moses must have understood Hieroglyphics better than Champollion.

ARRIVAL AT ALEXANDRIA.

January 8. 1831.—I arrived at Alexandria in Egypt, for the sixth time; where I met with Captain Lyons, commanding H. M. S. Blonde, in which, on his arrival at Alexandria, Sir John Malcolm was expected to sail for Malta. Having been exiled from Egypt, five months previous to this, by order of Mohammed Ali, on account of my having preached to Mohammedans, I put myself on board the Blonde; where I remained, until Mr. Barker, the British Consul, assured me, I might come on shore. I lived with the family of Mr. Gliddon.

January 10. The power of Mohammed Ali has increased, through the weakness and timidity of the Sultan; and people of discernment believe, that Mohammed Ali is making preparations to dethrone him; it is conjectured, that the Sultan has given him Candia, in order to embroil him with the European powers, who might interfere, if he attempted to subdue the Candiotes by force. *

DAFTAR DAR BEY.

The Daftar Dar Bey, son-in-law to Mohammed Ali, does not live with his wife; both are dissolute characters. He, the Daftar Dar Bey, is a true and genuine Mussulman, for the religion of Islam accords very well with the practice of immorality. The following cruel acts are related of him. When he returned ten years ago from the Sanaar, he brought a lion with him: and his delight was, to see flesh thrown to this animal, and afterwards

* Query. Is not Mohammed Ali, after all, the cruel Lord mentioned in Isaiah, as the predicted Ruler over Egypt? Is. xix. 4.

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drawn out of the lion's mouth by some poor Arab, at the imminent risk of his destruction!

One day, when mounting his favourite horse, he observed it to be lame, and examining into the cause, it appeared that one of the shoe-nails had wounded his foot; whereupon he sent for his chief groom, and asked him, how many years he had been in his service; the groom replied, "Twenty years;" the Daftar Dar Bey rejoined, "And in so many years, you have not learned to shoe a horse? now I will teach you;" and upon this, he ordered two horse-shoes to be nailed on to the poor man's feet! This man is since dead.

January 10. — I proclaimed the gospel to some disciples of Rousseau, and to some Carbonari. It is curious to see those preachers of Pseudo liberty taking refuge with and serving the Egyptian tyrant, and assisting him in oppressing the poor Felah, (peasantry.)

CAVIGLIA.

It is remarkable, that Egypt has been, in several ages, the seat of mystical philosophy: once that of the Essenes, then Philo the Jew, Pythagoras, and now Caviglia, who formerly distinguished himself by his discoveries in the Pyramids, and now devotes his time to the most abstruse researches of mystical antiquity. I found him in possession of a very curious book, entitled "Delle Scuole Sacre, libri due postumi del Conte Palatino Domenico Aulesio." According to this author, (of whom I never heard before) there had been at Theman, an Academy of Science, and another at Debir or Kirjath Sepher, mentioned in Jeremiah xlix. 7, and in Joshua xv. 15, 49.

It is also said by him, I know not upon what ground, that Moses found the genealogy, mentioned in the thirty sixth chapter of Genesis, in the Synagogues of Egypt.

DEPARTURE FOR DAMIAT.

Jan. 19, 1831.— It was my intention at first, to have proceeded by sea from Damiat to Adalyah, called also Sataliah; but when I arrived at Damiat, I found no ship there; I stopt therefore a few days at Damiat, and proclaimed the gospel to Jews and Mohammedans. The Mufti of Damiat made me acquainted with the four Classes of the Mohammedans, who have different rites.

1. Hanefee, to which the Sultan himself, and all the inhabitants of Anatolia belong.
2. Shafae, to which class the Mohammedans in Egypt belong.
3. Malke, which comprises those in Yemen, the Arabs, and the Moors in Barbary.
4. Hambare, this class is not extensive.

VIEWS OF THE MOHAMMEDANS AT DAMIAT
RESPECTING MOHDE.

Of the twelve Imams or followers of Mohammed, the last disappeared when a child; and the Mohammedans believe in his coming again. At Damiat, the following expectation was expressed to me about Mohde. The Mohde shall come from Khorossaun with a black flag, his name shall be Mohammed Mohde, and he shall go to Mecca, where he shall be proclaimed Sovereign; thence he shall go to Damascus, accompanied by Michael, Gabriel, and Seraphiel, and three thousand other angels; there he shall reign thirty or forty years, and shall take Constantinople; and at the end of his government, there shall be a famine, and Antichrist shall make his appearance, who shall make war with Mohde, and Mohde shall be put to flight, and Antichrist shall reign forty days: one day like a year, the second day like a month, the third day like a week, and thirty seven days like other days; and Antichrist shall go round the world, except Mecca,

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Medina, Jerusalem, Mount Sinai and Khorossaun; and he shall feed those who worship him.

After this, Jesus Christ shall come down upon the Mosque Amawe at Damascus; and there, he shall find Muhammed Mohde, and Mohde shall meet Antichrist at Lyt, near Jaffa; and Jesus Christ shall kill Antichrist with a lance; whose army, composed of Jews, shall take to flight. Then Jesus Christ shall reign forty years; then the earth shall be good, and shall bring forth fruit without being sown. At last Gog and Magog* shall appear; the Lord Jesus Christ shall go to meet them at the head of twelve thousand men, and shall go to Mount Sinai, where Gog and Magog shall be killed by birds, who shall carry their bodies into distant lands. Then the Almighty shall send rain to cleanse the earth from their stench; then Christ shall descend from Sinai, and shall remain on earth seven years; then all the just shall die; then Seraphiel shall blow the trumpet, and all the rest shall die.

ORIGIN OF DREAMS.

According to my friend, the Mufti, men have two spirits; the one, at the time of sleep, goes about in the world, to seek news for the other spirit, which remains behind. I thereupon proclaimed to the Mufti, to the native Christians and Jews, my belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, in the power of his blood, his resurrection, and the future glory of his coming, when he shall take possession of the earth, in royal and sacerdotal dignity.

DEPARTURE FROM DAMIAT, AND RETURN
TO ALEXANDRIA.

Not having been able to find at Damiat a boat either for Lattachia or Adalyah, I returned to Alexandria,

* Gog and Magog, according to the Mufti of Damiat, are two nations, that inhabit a part of the world, which was shut up by Alexander the Great.

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with my black servant, whom I had formerly baptized at that place. We arrived there on February 5. I preached the gospel of Christ the same day.

French liberals were preparing to return to their native country. Oh! what a spirit of rebellion is now prevailing in Europe! What an awful “gainsaying” of *Korah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram* is now again prevailing within thy camp, O Lord! The Kings, the anointed of the Lord, are cast down from their thrones by an Atheistical Mob! And the faces of the Priests are not honored!*

DEPARTURE FROM ALEXANDRIA FOR SATTALIAH.

February 12. 1831.—Accompanied by Mr. Gliddon, on board a Turkish vessel, which was bound to Sattaliah, commonly called Adalyah, I left Alexandria with my black servant.

A dervish from Bokhara was on board as a passenger. As he spoke Persian, I was able to converse with him. He had gone from Bokhara to Khorossaun, Sheeras, Busher, Juddah, Mecca and Egypt, and is now returning to Bokhara (“by the help of God,” as he expressed himself) by the way of Erzeroom: and by the help of God, I hope also to arrive at Bokhara, to proclaim His name, His everlasting name, the name of Him, whose going forth was from of old, from days everlasting—the name of Jesus Christ.

CONVERSATION WITH TURKS AND ARABS ON
BOARD THE SHIP.

I shewed to the Turks and Arabs on board, that we have passages in Scripture, that may vie in beauty and sublimity with those passages in the Koran, which they boast of as the most sublime.

* It was at this time, the churches at Paris were wantonly desecrated, the cross pulled down, and the residence of the Archbishop assaulted and sacked.

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The ship was filled with pilgrims and their slaves, returning from Mecca to Constantinople. We arrived safely at Adalyah on

Feb. 21.—I took up my abode with the Greek Archbishop, who has the title of Archbishop of Pisidia; his name is Hierasymus, he was born at Enos. In the time of the Greek revolution, he was exiled from his cathedral. He was formerly married, and has one son, who pursued his medical studies in Italy. Hierasymus, after the death of his wife, entered as a monk in a convent dependant on Mount Sinai, and was then made Archbishop of Adalyah, Castel Oroso, and Buldur, which comprise the province of Pisidia: he is very actively engaged in the study of the Ecclesiastical Law, (Νόμος Βασιλικός) or the Laws of the Greek Emperors, which are contained in a book called *Κωνσταντίνου Ἀρμενοπόλου Κρίτου*. The Greeks of Adalyah always brought their disputes before their Diocesan, whom they likewise call *Κρίτης*, i. e. Judge. Nations oppressed, as are the Jews and Greeks, do not like to bring the disputes they have among themselves, before their oppressors; they prefer having them settled by their spiritual guide; agreeable to 1. Cor. vi. 6. It is edifying to see the confidence placed in him. His whole diocese consists of 11,150 Greeks, who speak the Turkish language, but write it with Greek characters.

One day, this amiable Archbishop became angry with his servants, and exclaimed, “When I had a wife, all things were in order; but now all is in confusion. St. Paul was in the right when he said, a Bishop should be the husband of one wife.”

There are at Adalyah 1500 Greeks, and 150 Armenians. Adalyah is the Attalia mentioned in Acts, xiv. 25, and Pisidia is mentioned Acts, xiv. 24. In the whole province of Pisidia, the greatest ignorance prevails among the Christians. In those places which have not been visited by Roman Catholic missionaries, great barbarity exists;

this may be said of the whole of the provinces of Pisidia and Pamphylia: they are ignorant of their religion, and ignorant of their history. I distributed some Testaments and tracts among those who were able to read them. The plague was raging at this time among the Turks; the cases of plague were rare among the Greeks. On asking them the reason, they replied, "We go twice to church every day to hear the Holy Liturgy, and are sprinkled all over with holy water! It is the Cross that preserves us." Kyrie Eleison! Kyrie Eleison! I heard every day. Though prayer may be made as well in a private room as in the church, it is a holy custom of the Eastern nations, and of Catholics, to go daily to church.

Feb. 27. — I left the house of my kind Archbishop, and arrived on the following day at the place called Bultur or Burdur. A person may travel from Adalyah to this place, unmolested by the Turks: they are kind and hospitable.

March 3. — I called on the Armenian priest here, who was sent from Wan. There are here 500 Armenians, in the greatest ignorance. If you ask an Armenian, "Are you a Christian?" he replies, "No, I am an Armenian: I do not make the sign of the cross in the same manner as the Christians, (i. e. the Greeks) do." For it is to be observed, that the Greeks only call themselves Christians in Anatolia. The Greeks here, though I had letters from their Bishop, shewed me not the least attention, partly from ignorance, and partly from fear of the Turks. An old physician from Cephalonia, Covara by name, was the only person who shewed me any kindness.

INFALLIBILITY OF COUNCILS.

An Aleppine at Bultur endeavoured to prove to me the infallibility of Councils, relating at the same time, the following absurd story. Two Bishops were about to proceed to a general Council, assembled for deciding

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a matter of great moment : one was an old and orthodox Christian, the other was a young man and a heretic. The young Bishop tried to prevent the attendance of the other, by killing the old Bishop's ass, whilst the Bishop was asleep. The ass was a black one; he also killed the ass of the old Bishop's servant, which was white. He then set off for the Council, and on his arrival told the assembled fathers, that the old Bishop could not come on account of illness. The latter on awaking, ordered his servant to saddle the asses; but the servant told him, that their heads had been cut off. The Bishop then said to his servant, "Take both heads, make upon them the sign of the cross, and place each head upon its own carcass, and they shall come to life again!" The servant went, and placed the head of the black ass upon the carcass of the white one; and the head of the white ass upon the carcass of the black one. They then set off for the place where the council was to be held, where they arrived, to the astonishment of all, with two asses who had changed heads.

March 6. — I received by people from Iconium, the following information respecting that place, which is mentioned in Acts xiii. 51, and xvi. 2; also 2. Tim. iii. 11. There are 40 Greek and 280 Armenian houses. The Greeks have one Bishop whose name is Anthymus. To Iconium belong forty villages, inhabited by Greeks, which are called by the Turks, Giaur Koy, (villages of infidels.) At Bultur I met with a Jew from Broosa, to whom I preached the gospel.

IMPERIAL FAST-DAY AMONG THE GREEKS.

It is said that the Emperor Constantine ate meat on the 8th. March, and pieces of it remaining between his teeth, he decreed a fast to be kept on this day. The Greek Priests are very ignorant.

Kurios Saba Seraphim, a Greek from Cesarea, was