

down from our dark and solitary position above them on the blaze of light and colour below. After going three times round the Holy Sepulchre, the Bishop of Petra entered the Holy Sepulchre, the banners, fans, and crosses being arranged on both sides of the entrance. Suddenly the bells clashed out, and the banners, crosses, and fans were twirled round and round by their bearers as fast as possible; three times they did this, and then the seven Bishops sat down on their chairs as on Good Friday, and began repeating psalms in the same way. We left them at 1 a.m., still singing. What struck us in all these ceremonies was the extraordinary enthusiasm and devotion of the people, and the carelessness of the Greek priests while performing their services.

On Monday we rode back to Gaza, and continued our Survey.

H. H. KITCHENER,  
*Lt., R.E.*

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## OCCASIONAL PAPERS ON THE MODERN INHABITANTS OF PALESTINE.

By Dr. E. W. G. MASTERMAN and Prof. R. A. S. MACALISTER.

(Continued from *Q.S.*, 1916, p. 178.)

### *The story of Sheikh 'Abd of the Desert Tribes.*

It has been mentioned before that Sheikh 'Abd was from the desert, and that he arrived in Jerusalem riding on a wild beast of the desert.

On arrival at the city he dismounted, and said to the wild beast: "O, blessed one, return to thy place," and the beast went off. The sheikh remained standing where he was, looking at the people; in his hand there was the horn of a *wa'al* (وعل), "mountain goat."<sup>1</sup> Then the sheikh began to walk about in the markets at Jerusalem, and in the shops, and helped himself to what he liked,

<sup>1</sup> "The Arabs call the roe deer both '*ayyāl* and *wa'l*. *Wa'l* is the proper name of the Persian wild goat, but is also often used for the Arabic or Sin Ibea, though only by those who do not live within its range."—Art. "Deer," in *The International Standard Bible Dictionary*.

no one daring to hinder him. One day some women were coming in from the country, with jugs full of *laban* (sour milk) on their heads. The sheikh followed them, and when they arrived at the market, Sheikh 'Abd beat one of them on her head with his stick, and broke her jar. When it fell to the ground there was a snake in the middle of the *laban*. When the bystanders saw it they were astonished, and said: "the sheikh must have 'a secret' and must be in close relation with God, because he knew that the jar contained a venomous snake which would have poisoned anyone who took the *laban*." The sheikh still continued to go round in the market in his rags, until one day he fell ill. He went to the nuns to get some medicine, and received an emetic. He drank it, and when he reached the Damascus Gate he began to vomit, and fell on the road and lay there in the sun in the sight of all that passed. One man, 'Aisa el-Akhras, took compassion on him, and going to the police he said: "Is it lawful in the sight of God, that a man, a stranger, and a Muslim, should be left in the road, with no one to look after him?" The policeman said: "What are we to do with him? Are we obliged to look after people who drink and who throw themselves down in the road and go to sleep?" Said 'Aisa: "I beg you kindly to find someone to carry him to my house, and I will look after this Sheikh 'Abd. He is no drunkard; perhaps he has got epilepsy" (الجنون). The policeman said: "I have no one here to carry him." So Sheikh 'Aisa returned to Sheikh 'Abd and finding him foaming at the mouth like a camel, he seized hold of some people and said: "For the sake of the Prophet carry this derwish with me to my house," and they did so.

Sheikh 'Abd remained in that state until the second day when he recovered. When Sheikh 'Aisa told him that the policeman had said that he was drunk and had refused to help him, Sheikh 'Abd remained quiet and began to mutter to himself over and over again: "Allah, Muhammad," and he continued in this state some days and would not speak to any one. Then one day he said: "Ya, 'Aisa, look! here is gold, here is gold," and he put his hand on a paving stone (*balāta*); then, after being quiet a few minutes, he commenced again saying the same words. Sheikh 'Aisa thought that perhaps there was some hidden treasure there, belonging to the owner of the house; so one night he assembled his wives and brought a *fas* (hoe), and lifting the paving stone he began to dig, while his harīm removed the earth. He continued thus till dawn but

found nothing. It then occurred to him that his neighbour, who lived below, might notice this, and might be aroused from his sleep, because the hole reached to the house below. As nothing had been found, he thought it would be better to close up the hole again, which he did. When Sheikh 'Abd saw what they had been doing he said nothing, nor would he eat, but kept crying: "Allah, Muḥammad." One day 'Aisa said: "It is better for us to come outside the house," and they went out of the room and sat on a verandah near a corner. Then Sheikh 'Abd said: "Come near to me, O, 'Aisa"; so he came near to him. Then Sheikh 'Abd said: "By the will of God you will have a good end, and will do much good to others, and the government will not take your son to be a soldier, but he will be free from military service, and God will bestow good on you and on your house and will save you from any troubles." Then he embraced him and began to kiss him on both cheeks, and almost at once he died. Then Sheikh 'Aisa said to his harīm (wives): "Sheikh 'Abd has died and is now in the corner, and we cannot sleep this night. It is better to leave him here because the sheikh's body is very heavy, and I am unable to carry him outside the house myself. I will go to the H̄aram and bring a man to read over him" (the Koran). Then 'Aisa went to the mosque and found Sheikh Risha (ريشا) and asked him kindly to return with him to his house and pray over the body of Sheikh 'Abd. Sheikh Risha said: "God have mercy on you and on Sheikh 'Abd," and he arose and went. When they arrived at the house, Sheikh Risha found that the place where Sheikh 'Abd's body lay was very narrow. So Sheikh Risha said: "'Aisa, Sheikh 'Abd is close to the wall, and he is not turned to the K̄iblah" (towards Mecca). 'Aisa said: "My brother, the Sheikh 'Abd is very heavy, and I am an old man, and I have no one with me to turn him to the right side; leave him as he is now, and in the morning we will bring people to lift him." Then Sheikh Risha replied: "I can turn him alone with one hand, now see what I do"; so the Sheikh put his hand on the navel (سرة) of Sheikh 'Abd and said: "B'ism Allah er-Rahmān er-Rahīm. My brother, Sheikh 'Abd, I beg you to listen to me; we are of one sect, and now I tell you to come away from the wall, and turn to the K̄iblah of God," and immediately Sheikh 'Abd moved from his place into the middle of the house. Then Sheikh Risha, while his hand was still on the navel, said:

“No, this is not right, you moved too much, move back a little,” and he moved as he was directed, as though people were carrying him. While the sheikh was reading to him he saw on Sheikh ‘Abd’s finger a brass ring, and he put out his hand to take it. As he took hold of the hand of Sheikh ‘Abd, it closed so that it could not be opened. Then Sheikh Risha said: “My brother, Sheikh ‘Abd, we are brothers and of one sect, give me your ring.” But all his efforts to open the hand were of no use. Then ‘Aisa said: “It is better to leave him alone; it seems he does not wish it; perhaps he promised the ring to someone else.” So he desisted and went on reading over him until the morning. In the morning ‘Aisa went and ordered the sheikh called el-Walāyeh (الولايه) to wash the body; and this man, as he was washing him, saw the ring on the hand and wished to take it. But Sheikh ‘Abd shut his hand as before and refused to part with the ring. When Sheikh ‘Aisa and Sheikh Risha saw this they said to the man: “This is what he did before. He does not want to give the ring; perhaps he promised it to someone else.” After the washing four men began to carry the body to the mosque for prayer. When they reached the gate of the H̄aram he flew up with the coffin with the four bearers hanging on to it, and he continued to fly until they reached the gate es-Sakhrāh, where he and the men descended. Now it was Friday, and the H̄aram was crowded with people, and the Mutesarrif, and the Mufti, and Salim Efendi el-Hassainy, and other members of the government, were there and saw it all. When they had prayed for him at es-Sakhrāh, Sheikh Risha drew near and said: “Where is the pledge of Sheikh ‘Abd?” And Sheikh ‘Abd lifted his hand from the coffin and held it up until he took the ring, after which the hand fell back. Then he flew up from es-Sakhrāh and descended at the place called el-Kās between es-Sakhrāh and el-Aksa, and they prayed over him again there. Then he flew up from there and came down by the place Saidna Suleiman, and they prayed again over him there. Then they began to carry the body to the cemetery near the H̄aram, because they had made a grave for him there; but when they reached the gate of the H̄aram he flew, with a great continuous flight, until he reached another burying ground Mak̄hbarat el-Yūsifiyeh (اليوسفية), and he descended there, upon the makām of Sheikh Hassan Abu el-Halāweh. The people followed him all the way and when he arrived there the Mufti and Salim

Efendi al-Hassaini directed the people to dig a grave for him there. They sent a man to bring some paving stones and cement, and as they were digging they found a hole, roofed in, which they thought must be someone's grave. When, however, they removed the cover they found that it was a new grave, in which no one had been buried; so they buried him there. The Mutesarrif made an order that a lantern should be lighted at the grave, in his honour, every Friday night.

*A story of Sheikh 'Aisa.*

We mentioned before a man called Sheikh 'Abd from the desert and 'Aisa el-Akhras in whose house the sheikh died. It is narrated that, after the death of Sheikh 'Abd, 'Aisa got sheep and goats and started a dairy. One night, when he was sleeping with his flock, he saw, standing among his sheep, a man clothed in green with a green *jibbeh* and green turban, and who said to him: "Why don't you go to prayer? To-morrow, Friday, go down to the market and sell your flock and go to prayer." So 'Aisa rose from his sleep, trembling with fear, but saw no one; and he exclaimed: "Who can be the man who speaks such words? It is perhaps only a dream." So he continued his business of selling milk; and whenever the thought of his dream recurred to his mind he would say to himself: "I make three napoleons profit: by Allah, I cannot sell the goats." After a week, on the following Friday, he went to the Haram, and entered with the congregation. He sat close to the door which is opposite the makām of el-Khidr (Peace be to him!). The Hatib was giving lessons because it was not yet the time of prayer. 'Aisa made his devotions, and put his head between his hands, and began to listen to what the Hatib was saying. While he was engaged in this a derwish came and knelt close to him, but 'Aisa took no notice of him, and remained silent, listening to the Hatib. He heard him say: "My Lord, increase in exaltation, and rank, and nobility, and greatness, and honour." When 'Aisa heard this he exclaimed: "Oh, God, grant to me to visit him"; and he lifted up his head and looked through the door, and saw a man like the one he had seen in his dream coming to him from the makām el-Khidr. He reached the door and came close to 'Aisa and slowly whispered in his ear words without meaning. Then they went to the mosque. But the Hatib uttered the same prayer which he had said before, and, 'Aisa, when he heard it, was afraid,

and his *ṭarbūsh* began to rise from his head. When the man had passed him, 'Aisa began to tremble and weep, and he felt himself unable to sit, and became utterly exhausted from weeping. And he saw a hand which led him out of the mosque before the prayer, and he left the *Haram* in haste, and fled away without guidance by way of el-Wād until he arrived at the *makām* of 'Allameh ed-din el-Budīre. There he encountered a man who took him and beat him and turned him back the way he had come. So he fled away and remained running until he arrived at the door of his own house, weeping and trembling, and when he entered his house he exclaimed to his *ḥarīm*: "Fetch me a barber to bleed me, for I am ill." When the barber came and saw in what condition he was, he refused to bleed him, but he said: "I will send you some medicine to cool your blood, it is better than bleeding you." When he had drunk the medicine he became more at ease, and the trembling and weeping left him, but he was unable to leave his house; when he wished to come out his feet would not carry him. They began to bring doctors and *sheikhs* of many kinds to him, but none that did him any good. They even brought him Jewish doctors and Christian monks, but it was of no good.

The people about him saw that he was able to walk well enough, and would not believe that he had anything the matter with him: they said he looked stronger than a young man. But when 'Aisa saw that he could get no benefit from doctors he remained at home in prayer and devotional exercises. It was noticed that when he was alone he talked to himself, as though a crowd were about him, and that he was in the habit of ejaculating: "Thank God, I need nothing, only depart from me." He remained in this state a whole year, until one day a man called Sheikh 'Aziri (عزري) came from Damascus. This man was gifted (مكاشف) and experienced in affairs of this kind. He was well used to the treatment of people and to the manufacture of amulets, and could bind and loose men and animals, even wild beasts. So the friends of 'Aisa went to him and brought him to see him, and 'Aisa welcomed him, saying: "Welcome, my lord, O *sheikh*." He ordered coffee, but the *sheikh* said: "I drink no coffee nor do I smoke water-pipes or cigarettes, but have come only to visit you. Tell me what has happened to you." 'Aisa told him all his experiences. The *sheikh* said: "From what direction does the trouble come to you?" And 'Aisa replied:

“The trouble comes to me from every direction.” The sheikh said : “What is the name of your mother” ? And he replied : “Her name is Na‘ameh.” The sheikh was silent a little and then said : “Aisa, this affair is a very serious one ; no one is competent to deal with it. But now, bring me a hen’s egg.” And they brought it to him. He broke the egg and took the shell, and tied it with a thread, and said to ‘Aisa : “Put this round your neck.” Then he read something in the white of the egg, and he said to him : “Take this egg, and give it to a black dog to eat ;” and ‘Aisa did what he was told. Then the sheikh said : “Now come with me to the town.” And ‘Aisa got up and went out with the sheikh. While they were walking along, the sheikh said to him : “‘Aisa, your affair is a very difficult one ; no one is competent to deal with it ; for this that has happened to you comes from holy ones. The man who touched you in the Haram and whispered in your ear was el-Khidr (On him be peace!) ; he is the same who came to you in your sleep, and it is he who has now bound you in your house. But the sheikh, the derwish who was sitting close to you in the Haram, is the very Sheikh ‘Abd who died in your house, and it is he who brought you out from the Haram and back to your own house. He came to your assistance, fearing that you could not bear the burden, and he is the sheikh who gave you the ‘power’” (عهد). Said ‘Aisa : “I did not know that he gave me ‘power.’” The sheikh replied : “Lie not to me ; he gave you the ‘power’ before he died. Do you not remember that he took hold of you and drew you to his bosom and kissed you on both cheeks ? That is the ‘power’ he gave you. Do you not remember, when he flew into the Haram, that he went to the throne of Solomon ? That was to charge the jinns of Solomon that they should obey you. Those who come to you when you are alone in your house, are all from el-Khidr as I have told you. This you must always keep secret (مكشفت), and you are empowered to know about all kinds of matters (الامور). I was desirous of living in Jerusalem, but I am unable to live in the same town where you are. I command you, however, beware of being covetous with people. When they come to you to ask for anything which might bring harm or trouble to someone else, do not use your power to bring harm on anyone, however much money they may offer you ; very many shall come to you with many requests, and whenever they come to you be content with what

they give you so that no one may miss your generosity (كرم); and speak no secret to anyone, especially any that you hear from women. If you do all this you will enjoy your position in quietness, and the supply of your needs will never cease, and you will die in honour." Then they entered the coffee shop and the sheikh asked for coffee, and 'Aisa said: "Why did you not drink coffee in my house?" And the sheikh said: "Because you are now poor, and all you had has been taken from you by sheikhs and false doctors" (حكوما). So, after a little final advice, they arose and departed on their several ways.

'Aisa returned to his house and never went out. After he had been eighteen years in his house, one night, robbers broke in and took all they could find and went off; as they were going out 'Aisa saw them and ran after them as far as the door of the house; but they escaped, because he himself was unable to go out of the house to recapture what they had stolen. He has, however, a busy life. He reveals to people what they enquire about; many times women come in to consult him and have to return without seeing him because he is so fully occupied; others have to wait his promise to see them from week to week; fellahin sometimes sleep in his house because their villages are far away, and many of them bring him presents from these distant villages, such as sheep, goats, chickens, and corn. Sometimes the people pass the night with him in order that he may assemble together the jinns (جان) and hear from them what his visitors seek to know and how they are to obtain what they may happen to desire. He also makes amulets (حجین) to induce affection between a man and his wife, and other amulets to ensure success in business. The sheep and goats which he owned before all these events are now looked after by his son, and 'Aisa dedicated five of them to the name of el-Khidr. The milk of these must not be sold; the rest of the milk he sells. These five sheep multiplied in time and became fifty; but one year there was snow and severe cold, and very little food could be found for the goats and sheep. Many of them died in other districts, and at this time all the goats dedicated to el-Khidr, except five, died.

One day 'Aisa's son was summoned to military service. His family sent petitions to the government to say that the father was incapable of work (عكيلة) and unable to leave the house, and that



it was not lawful to take the son under these circumstances. The government asked that the father should come that the doctors might examine him, but he sent word: "If I were able to come to the doctors I should not ask the government to leave my son with me," and he sent a testimonial from the neighbours and from the *mukhātir* (مخاتير) to bear witness that he was unable to go out. Then the Dābet (الدابة) "officer" ordered them to bring him in a carriage or on an ass; but 'Aisa replied: "I am unable to come out of the door of my house." The officer became very angry and said: "If he does not come out we shall certainly enter his son's name as a soldier." At last 'Aisa got four men to carry him, and as he went out of the door his legs became as though dead. When they reached the Serai they laid him down; the doctor came and examined him, and found nothing wrong with him. The officer exclaimed: "You are a malingerer (Turkish انصاجي): you have done this to save your son." 'Aisa replied: "God cause you to die of paralysis! Take the boy as a soldier, and God will provide for me, only command someone to bring four men to carry me home." Then the officer said: "Are you really unable to walk?" And he ordered four soldiers to lay him in the road. While the doctor was watching him lying there, a carriage passed and nearly ran over him, as he was unable to move out of the way. And when they had carried him to his house, 'Aisa requested the commandant to send the doctor to him that he might pay him his fees, and he prepared a letter from the chief men of the city (اكابر البلد) stating that he was incompetent (عكيلة), and he sent and sold the five goats that belonged to el-Khidr. When the doctor came he gave him the letter and the price<sup>1</sup> of the goats: so the doctor returned and handed in the letter, after he had testified to having seen the man nearly run over, and the commandant gave orders to release the boy of all military service.

And this is the reason why the five goats had been preserved by el-Khidr; it was to save the son from becoming a soldier.

<sup>1</sup> Evidently a bribe.

(To be continued.)