quotations from their sacred writings—but these are all too brief for the reader to have anything of substance about which he can make up his own mind. Hume is very interested in comparisons between religions; this is of course a worth-while concern, but the issues are always of great complexity. (See William A. Christian: *Oppositions of Religious Doctrines.*) Hume simplifies his task by classifying the religions mainly according to a Christian set of concepts. Sometimes they fit; more often the appearance of fit is illusory; one cannot grasp the point of other religions while remaining within a structure of ideas closely derived from the Christian way of seeing things. Thus the headings of the final chapter of comparisons refer to ‘divine incarnation’, ‘divine revelation’, ‘inspired scripture’, ‘a future life’, ‘miracles’, etc. Other examples of this way of doing things are (p. 10) ‘The teachings of the founder should in each case [i.e. in the case of every religion] furnish an authoritative norm for all his followers’. What kind of ‘should’ is this? And, more strikingly, the unexplained use of the term ‘gross idolatry’ to describe one of the Elements of Weakness in Hinduism (p. 42). In each chapter there are lists of Elements of Weakness, and of Strength, of the religions concerned. Again, one cannot object to Hume’s having and expressing opinions about these matters, nor indeed to his preference for Christianity; but it is an important fact about the book—and one not made sufficiently clear within the book—that the accounts of religions given in it are nowhere near rich or subtle enough to support such judgements.

There is then no reason to prefer this book to its modern competitors. The general reader of today, one may hope, will wish to make his own evaluations, and therefore will be better served by a more demanding introductory book like Zaehner’s *Concise Encyclopaedia of Living Faiths.*

DAVID BASTOW


In 1957 a young Jamaican social anthropologist, Sidney Collins, in a book on *Coloured Minorities in Britain,* devoted over sixty pages to an account of the Muslim community in South Shields. This community had begun early this century with the arrival of Muslim seamen, chiefly Arabs from Aden, the Yemen and other regions, and Somalis, and in the 1950s consisted of these men and their descendants by English wives, together with later arrivals who also included Pakistanis. The remarkable point is that this mixed group was integrated into a real community in the 1930s by a sheikh of the Alawīan order. Knowledgeable people whom Dr Collins consulted failed to identify this order, which was not surprising since at that date there was nothing
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written about the sheikh in English and very little in French. Yet there were also branches of the ‘Alawi order at Cardiff, Liverpool, Hull and Birmingham.

It seems worthwhile to commence with these remarks a review of this book about a man of great holiness belonging to the present century. The facts cited indicate that he was not merely a holy man in the little Algerian coastal town of Mostaganem, but had also impinged on the religious life of Britain—not to speak of the branches of his order in France, the Netherlands, Palestine and Ethiopia. Sheikh al-‘Alawi was a religious teacher, but the important thing about him is not his books and the form of his teaching, but the quality of his own life—the serenity, the spiritual depth, the sense of a supernatural presence which he communicated to those who met him. A spiritually-minded but agnostic French doctor came under his spell and felt there was something Christlike about him—the first twenty pages contain this doctor’s souvenirs. In an autobiographical account (translated in chapter 3) the sheikh tells how he was trained first in the ‘Isawiyya order and then in the Darqawiyya Shadhiliyya tradition. Eventually he made his followers into an independent order, called ‘Alawi after an ancestor ‘Aliwa. He wanted to place more emphasis on the practice of khalwa or spiritual retreat in solitude, and by his methods he was able to bring ordinary manual labourers to an experience of inner peace which changed even the outward form of their lives.

In this second edition two short chapters have been added, one on ‘A Spiritual Affinity’ and another containing translations of his aphorisms. This additional material, though secondary, is useful. The book as a whole is to be commended as presenting a sympathetic picture of one who, in the words of Frithjof Schnom, who had visited him, ‘represents in himself . . . the idea which for hundreds of years has been the very life-blood of (Islamic) civilization’ (p. 116).

W. MONTGOMERY WATT


This is an admirable book which carries out its intention to make available to English speaking students and sociologists of religion much comparative material concerning Western religion published in other languages and thus previously unavailable or unknown. The introduction refers to an unexpected hoard of untranslated research reports almost completely unknown in the English speaking world. Each chapter is devoted to a country and the book covers Europe with the exception of Rumania as well as the United States of America, the Union of South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.