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Arabian American Oil Company

DHAIHAN NEW YORK
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BETWEEN OURSELVES

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THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S BIRTHDAY AND OURSELVES

What the Muslims have not done

During this month all over the world of Islam will be celebrated with befitting honour and joy the auspicious occasion of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad. In some Muslim countries, like Egypt and Malaya, the day is kept with great solemnity. Unfortunately, with pomp and circumstance. On this occasion it is customary to recount the life of the Prophet Muhammad and to invoke the blessings of God upon him. But in the midst of joy and thanksgiving to God for the mercy He has shown to mankind by sending the Prophet Muhammad as His messenger to reveal His will to mankind and the invocation of His blessings on Muhammad the man, the Muslims have failed to understand that the loftiness of the stature of the personality of the Prophet Muhammad is hardly realized or even appreciated by the non-Muslim world. To say that the non-Muslim world is biased towards Islam and the Prophet Muhammad because of its historical and traditional legacy of distrust and the Crusades would not be a true reading of the situation. In fact, to us such an approach, if viewed dispassionately, would be tantamount to shirking their duty to Islam and the Prophet Muhammad. Besides, we would not be laying blame where it belongs.

Time has come now that the Muslims are coming into their own and shaking off the last vestiges of colonialism and imperialism, that they, more so their various governments, should realize the duty they owe to the world in the matter of presenting Muhammad the man. No Muslim who has lived or travelled in non-Muslim lands would disagree with us in our contention that the Muslim world as a whole has done nothing to present Muhammad the man to the non-Muslim world, which in the first place knows nothing about him, and if at all it has any picture of him in its mind, it is far from complimentary. Even his good points in the hands of his detractors have become a source of calumnyification of the man. Thus if the modern European has grotesque ideas about Muhammad, one of the greatest benefactors of mankind and whom the Quran describes as "a mercy to all the worlds", it is not as much the non-Muslim world that is to blame for its unsympathetic attitude towards the Prophet Muhammad as the Muslims themselves. It is quite true to say that no effort has been made by the Muslim world to remove the flies from the face of Muhammad the man.

To add to this there have been the bad examples of the various rulers, kings and the rich of the Muslim countries who have helped to deepen the lines of the uncomplimentary picture of Muhammad the man.

Muslims have not produced in English any literature on Muhammad the man

Well, serious books on Muhammad the man have been written by Muslims themselves in English, the most widely read and spoken language in the world today. When we look back at the last twenty-five years during which the world, so to say, has shrunk, we find that to our mind come only four books written by Muslims and printed and published in Great Britain and America. Besides, it must not be forgotten that these books are very elementary and very limited in their scope. As yet a comprehensive biography of the Prophet Muhammad on the lines of Street al-Nahj by Shibl al-Sulaiman Nadvi, A’zamgarh, India, 1919, has not even been contemplated in the English language. It is certain it will be some time before such a book will appear on the shelves of the libraries of the West. A translation of the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad has not, with the exception of wholly inadequate attempts, yet been given to the non-Muslim world, which in its communication with the Muslim world is in sore need of guidance from the sagas of the world in many a problem that faces it today. The thought of the world today is dominated mostly by non-Muslims, who have no access to the views of the Prophet Muhammad, whose words and actions throw a strong flood of light on such problems as race, colour, colonialism, family life, business and the conception of democracy. This task is difficult and involves a heavy expenditure. But is it not a fact that books written by other writers like Karl Marx, Blavatsky, and a score of other well-known figures, have been made available to us by their admirers and protagonists in languages other than those in which they were originally written? The stream of literature that flows continuously from the non-Muslim presses on Islam is all based on second-hand sources, and if the first-hand sources are consulted, they are consulted only by scholars who, more often than not, have an axe of their own to grind, either personally or under the direction of some interested parties. The average man is consequently compelled to depend on their views. Is it then fair for us Muslims to expect the common man in the West speaking English to have a correct view of Muhammad the man?

Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells on Muhammad the man

In this connection it is not out of place to mention of the many obstacles that stand in the way of the understanding of Islam and the value of its contribution towards world culture by the non-Muslim world, Muhammad the man is the most determined. For you would find that in so far as the teachings of the religion of Islam go, an average non-Muslim not only will not join issue with you but also will give a receptive hearing to your views, and will even go so far as to say that they are in many respects far in advance of modern thought. For instance, the late George Bernard Shaw in his letter of 9th February 1945 to Mr. Neji Saig Bodamalaisate, Shakespeare School, Nicosia, Cyprus, a facsimile reproduction of which appears in Mr. G. K. Beal's Freedom of Religion (The Qur'an Versified), Nicosia, Cyprus, 1949, makes the following observations:

"Many thanks for your translation of the Koran (our old attempt at spelling the Arabic) which we would call the Psalms. Do not, however, in your love for these neglect the chapters in which the Prophet tries to educate his disciples on questions like the status of women, the exposure of female children, kindness to animals, on which he was far ahead of Western Christian thought, even of modern thought."

The late Mr. H. G. Wells during his talks with the famous Indian Muslim leader, the late Maulana Muhammad 'Ali Fereid, 1931, has recorded in his Memoirs that Mr. Wells told him that he was a Muslim minus Muhammad. The moral is plain. Mr. Wells could not bring himself to appreciate Muhammad the man.

These two instances illustrate how much the Muslims have to do in presenting Muhammad the man to the non-Muslim and the Western Christian worlds. It is to this that we the Muslims should now turn our attention.

Allahumma salli 'ala Muhammadin wa barik wa salim.
BY THE LIGHT OF THE QUR’ÁN AND THE HADITH

Islam and National Loyalty

By The Shaikh 'Abd al-Majid Salim

We read in the Qur’án: “And hold fast by the covenant of God, all together, and be not disunited” (3:102); “... and dispute not one with another, lest you get weak-hearted and your power depart...” (8:46); “And whoever acts hostilely to the Messenger after guidance has become manifest to him and follows other than the way of the believers, We turn him to that to which he (himself) turns and make him enter hell; and it is an evil resort” (4:115); “O you who believe, be not unfaithful to God and the Messenger, nor be unfaithful to trusts, while the Muslims” (8:27); “O you who believe, take not for intimate friends other than your own people: they spare no pains to cause you loss. They love that which distresses you. Vehement hatred has already appeared from out of their mouths, and that which their hearts conceal is greater still. Indeed We have made the messages clear to you, if you understand” (3:117); “Thou wilt not find a people who believe in God and the latter day loving those who oppose God and His Messenger, even though they be their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kinsfolk” (85:22); “O you who believe, take not your fathers and your brothers for friends if they love disbelief above faith. And whoever of you takes them for friends, such are the wrongdoers. Say: If your fathers and your sons and your brethren and your wives and your kinsfolk and the wealth you have acquired, and trade whose dullness you fear, and dwellings you love, are dearer to you than God and His Messenger and striving in His way, then wait till God brings His command to pass. And God guides not the transgressing people” (9:23, 24).

By these and other verses in the Holy Qur’án, God has imposed upon the believers the duty of holding fast unto His strong covenant and of uniting amongst themselves in order to preserve their religion, enhance its authority and establish its rule. God has also forbidden the Muslims from disagreeing amongst themselves and becoming disunited, and He has warned them of the failure, loss of power and authority attendant upon such disagreement and disunity.

The befriending by some believers of enemies of Islam is a means of causing disharmony amongst the Muslims, of disuniting their ranks and of sowing discord amongst them. For this reason, God enjoins the believers from taking disbelievers as friends on whom to lavish cordiality, and with whom to co-operate in what would assist in realizing the aims of those who wish to weaken their power in the land. The Holy Qur’án judges such behaviour as hostile to God and His Messenger and akin to following in the ways of disbelievers. It is also a disloyalty to God and His Messenger and a betrayal of the trust with which God has charged the Muslims, namely, to hold fast unto the covenant of God. The Holy Qur’án considers such reprehensible behaviour incompatible with the belief in God and the Hereafter, and regards those alleged believers whose call has thus become hostile to their own nation and assists those who have offended against God and His Messenger, as a false call that carries no value in the eyes of God or any authority with the believers as a whole.

Clear verses in the Holy Qur’án indicate that the fostering of solidarity amongst the Muslims is one of the cardinal obligations of faith, while the sowing of discord and disunity amongst them is one of the most heinous things which God has forbidden. The befriending of the enemies of Islam and the co-operation with them in what harms the Muslims and undermines their power are acts of disbelief and apostasy from Islam.

In the light of these provisions of the Holy Qur’án, which are intended to preserve the structure of Islamic society, we can conclude that those persons who, while posing as Arabs and Muslims, act contrary to the legitimate wishes of their own people for deliverance from all foreign influence and the enjoyment of complete freedom and sovereignty; and those persons who express a desire that a foreign imperialist government alien to Arabism and Islam should take over control in their countries, do thereby revolt against Islam. These persons sow discord amongst the Muslims and cause strife, thereby assisting the imperialists in making incursions into Muslim domains to usurp the legitimate rights of the Muslims and turn their glory into humiliation and disgrace and their strength into weakness and dejection.

The Holy Qur’án declares that such persons will not be saved from God’s threat of severe punishment by their pretence that by what they had done they had sought to protect the people from an evil that might have befallen them, or were thereby seeking to further the interests of their people. The Holy Qur’án judges these pretexts as false excuses and deceitful pretences which are the products of a weakness in faith and a pursuit of the base things of life. Of these persons the Holy Qur’án says: “But thou seekest those in whose hearts is a disease, hastening towards them, saying: We fear lest a calamity should befall us. Perhaps God will bring the victory or a commandment from Himself, so they will regret what they did in their souls” (5:52).

This is the judgment of God and of Islam upon such persons. The opinion of the “Azhur Council of Fatwa” in this matter is that Islam imposes on the Muslims generally the duty of combating this class of person, with whom the peoples of Islam have been afflicted. These persons have undermined the sovereignty of the peoples of Islam, encouraged its enemies to usurp Muslim domains and to infiltrate into them from all sides, so that the countries of Islam have become a bait for the greedy and a target for the imperialists.

Had the Muslims become conscious of this duty and combatted this social evil that has grown amongst them, and had they cleansed their countries of the misdeeds of these evil-doers, they would have preserved their dignity and sovereignty, enjoyed their freedom and independence, and preserved that glory which has departed from them as a result of the acts of those sinful traitors.

“...And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. And these are they who are successful” (The Holy Qur’án 3:103).
SUPERNATURALISM OF THE QUR’ĀN

The Qur’ān and some Modern Astronomical Theories and Discoveries

By SYED MAQBOOL AHMAD, B.A.

"Again, if the Bible — in spite of the ridiculous statement in it to the effect that the sun ceased from moving when Joshua was leading the Israelites, an astronomically untenable observation — could be believed to be of divine origin, then any book which has the stamp of antiquity upon it can be considered as revealed. Fortunately, however, no book is ambitious enough to claim this title, although it is true its votaries might consider it to be all their own pious fancy dictated them. The Qur’ān is, however, an exception; it declares its own origin in about a hundred places, and the point at issue about the Qur’ān, then, is not 'Who called the Qur’ān a revealed book?' but only 'Why is it called a revealed book?'"

The Qur’ān differs with contemporaneous knowledge about astronomy

At the very outset I must confess my limitations in the subject I am proposing to deal with. In fact, I am as innocent of this abstruse science as many of my readers might be of Arabic and the Qur’ān. As a layman I can only broadly distinguish between the theories propounded by Kepler and Ptolemy. But what I and every layman are certain of is that the heavens are not made of crystal or parchment, or the earth is not a flat middle storey, with a roof of the heaven above us and a Tartarus down below us, which was believed to be true as late as the fifteenth century in Europe. With the theory of a new heaven came the theory of a new earth; from the roundness of the earth, it developed into a revolving planet in the space. But all this knowledge has been vouchsafed to us very recently. Muhammad or his contemporaries in Arabia or elsewhere cannot be credited with the knowledge of heavens and earth we now possess. It follows, therefore, that the "Koran of Mahomet", if it at all touched the subject of astronomy, ought to have woefully floundered in the slough of ignorance. Such an aspect perhaps, then, could form a very competent acid test for one's belief in the divine origin of every book, although I doubt if a prejudiced mind would not even go to such lengths as to twist the words in very much the same way as the Hindus explain certain mantras of their Vedas to conform them to the latest discoveries.

Again, if the Bible — in spite of the ridiculous statement in it to the effect that the sun ceased from moving when Joshua was leading the Israelites, an astronomically untenable observation — could be believed to be of divine origin, then any book which has the stamp of antiquity upon it can be considered as revealed. Fortunately, however, no book is ambitious enough to claim this title, although it is true its votaries might consider it to be all their own pious fancy dictated them. The Qur’ān is, however, an exception; it declares its own origin in about a hundred places, and the point in issue about the Qur’ān, then, is not "Who called the Qur’ān a revealed book?" but only "Why is it called a revealed book?"

So in place of a rigid heaven of the ancient Greek philosophers, in which stars are studded, we have now a fluidetheric space and our earth and other planets swimming in them. Now read this verse of the Qur’ān:

"Subhāna 'l-lāzi ḍhalaqa 'l-Aswaja Kullaha mimma sunūbi 'l-Årda wa min anfushin wa mimma la ya'llamun. Wa 'l-'ayatu l-lāhummu 'l-Lail, naslakhu minhu 'l-Nabara fā 'l-īza bimma muzaman. Wa 'l-Shamsu ta'īri li Mustaqarrrih labah; zalika Ṭayyīru l-Asīzī 'l-Ālim. Wa 'l-'Qamaru qaddahahu Manāzila bataa 'aada ka 'l-Urijun 'l-Qārim. La 'l-Shamsu yawbaghi labah an tawrika 'l-Qamara wa la 'l-Lailu tabīqa 'l-Nabara; 'Wa Kullun fī Falakin yaa'bahan. Wa 'l-'ayatu l-lāhummu 'l-Lail, naslakhu minhu 'l-Nabara fā 'l-īza 'l-Falaki 'l-mashbahun" (36 : 36-42).

Its literal translation is as follows:

"Glory be to Him Who created pairs of all things, of what the earth grows, and of their kind, and of what they do not know.

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And a sign to them is the night: We draw forth from it the day, then lo! they are in the dark.

And the sun moves on its axis, that is the ordinance of the Mighty, the Knowing.

And the moon, We have ordained for it stages till it becomes again as an old dry palm branch.

Neither is it allowable to the sun that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day, and all float in the sphere. And a sign to them is that we bear their offspring in the laden ship, and We have created for them the like of it what you ride on. (36: 36-42).

The geologist, the chemist, the biologist and the electrician might do well to take note of the first verse, although we are not here concerned with it. If they do not as yet know that there are male and female pairs in all the created beings of the world (we may call them positive and negative in magnetism and electricity), they may consult their greatest theorists; and they will, indeed, find for them some food for reflection in this short and simple verse. Now the Arabs of Muhammad’s time did not know this truth, though they might have known the male and female species in certain plants; but it can be safely said they did not; certainly, know of positive and negative poles of magnetism and electricity. I will have to leave this interesting digression here. The Qur’an says: “The sun moving on its axis”. Note the word Mustaqarr, which means in Arabic a fixed place, and the opposite is Madar, or orbit. The sun moves on its fixed axis. There is a remarkable and very heretical statement indeed for the Arabia of thirteen hundred years ago!

We now come to the sentence “Wa Kullun fi Falakhin ya’badunn” — and all these swimming in the sphere. This pertains to the moon and all other planets. The swimming of any thing in heaven at once changes our conception of the heaven from a solid matter to a fluid substance; but did the Arabs know this Falak of ether of seven layers? Then mark the concluding verse: “And a sign for them is that we bear their children in the laden ship, just as children of this planet carried in the laden ship they have as similar a means of transport as we have”. That planets have offspring of theirs who ride on ships very much like ourselves is a very strange assertion indeed. But let us wait for its confirmation in some distant age, when we might be able to transmit etheric waves to Mars or to Jupiter.

I have not twisted any word to make it suit my ideas. The text is before everyone, and it is quite open to everyone to compare the Arabic text with the translation given above.

The rotundity of the earth and the Qur’an

Now let us turn to our own humble earth.

It is common knowledge that the earth is round, as much as that the world of thirteen centuries ago knew only a flat earth, bounded on its four sides by huge mountains which served as props over which the heaven was spread. With this idea in the minds of the ancients, one will expect that to them the East and the West must be single and not multiple; for a multiplicity of Easts and Wests is only possible when we conceive the earth as round. The Qur’an does not say that the earth is flat or round; it was not particularly interested in teaching geography to the Arabs. But incidentally it mentions something about it which sheds a flood of light. One might ask: “Has not the Qur’an said that the earth is spread and that the mountains serve as pegs to keep the earth in its place?” Yes, it has said so; but who can challenge the correctness of this? Is not the crust of the earth which we see quite flat and level as far as our sight can reach, only a thick layer of some couple of hundred miles or thereabout spread over the molten mass? The rocks do serve to make the crust steady on this molten mass, though they sometimes fail, and then earthquakes cause havoc.

I was talking of the Qur’an having foreseen the discovery of the roundness of the earth, and foretold us of some more Easts.

Read the following verse:

"Inna Ilahukum layahid, Rabhu ‘l-Samawati wa ‘l-Ardi wa ma bainahuma wa Rabbu ‘l-Mahriiq” (The Qur’an, 37: 4-6).

Literally it means:

“Most surely your God is one, the Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, and the Lord of many Easts.”

Yes, the Lord of New York, Greenwich, Calcutta, Peking, Manila and Timbuktoo, whose Easts are different. Then elsewhere in the pages of the Holy Qur’an we read:


Translation:

“Lord of the two Easts and the two Wests. Which then of the bounties of your Lord will you reject?”

We might take these two Easts and Wests as being either the two winter and summer solstices, which is an observation much beyond the power of the ancient Arabs, or as being another East and West just on the other side of the hemisphere.

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The Islamic Economic System and the Process of Change Over

By “ARIEL”

General remarks

Can a religion help in the untangling of the economic mess that the civilized world finds itself in today? No, would say almost every Muslim today. Suggest it to a Westerner and he would scoff at you, as if you wanted him to believe in a miracle. And yet only little study of the economics of Islam would convince you that this religion has all the best economic principles incorporated in its injunctions, or rather, it goes beyond the stage which modern economic theories have yet reached. Despite all the economic “weather bureaux” of the United States, the efficient work of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, the periodical reports of the various governmental agencies all over the world, the study of the changing economic currents by a vast army of observers, correspondents, special correspondents, authors, economists, scientists, etc., the economic problems of today have eluded the grasp of all and whenever you take stock, you rarely fail to get a surprise of one sort or another. Either some industry misbehaved, the consumption fell off more than was expected, a defence programme was launched and sometimes even an unexpected tension upset the prices, and the net result is always that the economic calculations are frighteningly disturbed. There is depression, then inflation, and then again fear of deflation. Inflation brings in its wake as many problems as does deflation. It is as difficult to adjust the economic fabric of a nation to the needs of war as it is again to bring it down to a peace footing. The capitalist system blames the Communist theories and practice for all the evils in the West, and the Communist system blames the capitalist practices for all the ills in the world. The highly developed countries think that the underdeveloped countries are a menace to the world and everything would be all right if only they were developed. The underdeveloped countries, though coveting “development”, reply with simple logic. Have the developed countries been able to solve all their problems by material development? If material development is the only panacea for all the economic troubles, why should the West have any troubles at all, when it is so developed? The result of all this is that the world today finds itself in the whirlpools of a conflicting mass of economic theories and values.

What the American economist thinks and believes is in out and our commercialism, but this is not palatable to his British contemporaries, who prefer a Welfare State. The Union of Socialist Soviet Republics believes in neither, and has forged out yet another economic system, wherein a human being has ceased to be a human being and has been turned into a cog of a vast network of society.

Present-day economic theories

Before this discussion is carried further, it seems necessary to examine briefly the main features of the economic systems before us today. There are essentially two economic systems before us - the Capitalist and the Communist. What are again the fundamentals of an economic system? Obviously a system is to be judged how and with what results it governs and controls the production and distribution of wealth. The capitalist economic system, in theory, does not believe in placing restrictions or controlling any of the phases of the economic life of a community except in so far as it seems necessary to ensure the safety of the system and the coffers of the State. The capitalist economists believe mostly in the policy of laissez faire (literally, let the individual do as he pleases). There is little control on production. You can produce what you can sell. There is no control on consumption. You can buy what you can afford. In distribution, also, the capitalist system favours the retention of capital en bloc. It is, however, within this allegedly free pattern of economic society that all the ills have developed. Producers cannot always sell what they produce. The consumers’ tastes change without warning, the prices are sometimes too high or other producers can afford to give for the same price a better quality of goods, etc. The competition arises between producers themselves, then between groups of producers of one country with the producers of another country. The result is that the economic equilibrium of the world never has been, and can never be, stable. Depressions came, swept the countries, ruined hundreds and thousands, and the world looked on at these economic avalanches as helplessly as it looks at the mounting tension between the East and the West now.

Capital in varied garbs

Experience, however, soon forced the believers of the capitalist theories to modify them to suit their conditions. The capitalism of Britain became essentially different from that of the United States of America. In Britain, a Welfare State has gradually been evolved. This means that in many phases of life, the capitalistic society has allowed itself to behave in a more human way. Take, for example, the provision of medical facilities, which is a basic need of man. Britain believes in providing good medical facilities for all and sundry at considerable expense to the State’s exchequer. In the United States of America, on the other hand, there are no State hospitals. All hospitals are owned and run by private enterprise, just as are the countless cinemas. You have to pay for the facilities of treatment provided for by an institution. The theory is that why should a healthy man pay to maintain or afford good treatment to an unhealthy man. That is, in fact, truly capitalistic. Capital is not ready to part with the services that it has provided without having its pound of flesh.

Going further, we again find that the capitalist system has not been able to hold its own against the force of circumstances, circumstances created by itself. As time passed and as more and more nations came to share the industrial secrets, there has obviously come to exist an eternal race for capturing and creating new world markets. Each capitalist country has, therefore, proceeded to shield itself and its zone of operation and influence from the onslaught of its rivals. Thus grew, for instance, the notorious imperial preferences of the British, and the result was that the whole of the Western world raised trade barriers against each other, and no one knows how and where this story of tariff war will end. The General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (known as GATT) is the latest attempt to devise a workable system of trade tariffs, but the delegates entrusted with this task have at the conference tables for months before their mountains of effort and energy produced a comparatively little mouse of agreements.

Again, the two world wars have hit the capitalist system severely. Gone are the principles of liberty in production and consumption. The society was forced to impose upon itself restrictions of far-reaching importance. Producers are generally no longer free to produce what they like and consumers are no longer free to buy what they can afford. The widespread controls on production and consumption both in Britain and other countries are typical examples of this phase. One of the worst phases of capitalism was that it completely failed to prevent the
plunging of the capitalist world into two fatal world wars and each time these wars have made richer the already rich elements of the society and rendered the poor sections poorer. The result is the gulf between the rich and the poor, and so the struggle between these groups has been greatly intensified in the post-war era.

Effects on Society

The pattern of society which emerged from the practice of capitalistic ideas has also failed to satisfy the inner instincts of human beings in general. Such laws came into existence which helped to make the rich poorer and the poor poorer. The basic debacle lies in the very fundamentals of capitalism. According to these fundamentals, a capitalistic society thrives on three essential elements, viz., a personal gain as the ultimate aim of every individual of the society, competition as a means to achieve it, and freedom to act. Two of these factors — the element of personal gain and the freedom of action — are, however, mostly responsible for all the ills that are found in the capitalistic society of today. All human beings are not by nature alike; they have different capacities and intellects. Their output, their production, their organizational capabilities, cannot, therefore, be alike. It is quite natural that they find that in spite of their best efforts, there are others who beat them at their work, and once beaten, they find themselves nowhere in present-day society. Once out of the game, they feel lost, and they are lost. In view of the fact that the society is based on personal gain, each one has to look after himself, and in view of the personal failings of human nature, this desire of personal gain in most cases turns into a baser desire — greed. And then there is no end to greed; as someone has aptly said, there is enough in the world for all to live, but there is not enough for one man's greed. Taken as a whole, therefore, production in a capitalistic society, for the society, would tend to be restricted always as individuals cannot spend freely for fear of unhappy results. This is a great disadvantage for the poorer sections of the society that they have nothing to fall back upon and a large majority of the society would therefore cling to its small assets as everyone knows only too well that, if once they lose these, they would be thrown to the mercies of a heartless conglomeration of human beings. It is to help against such contingencies that the society has developed such safety values as the institution of insurance (with all the diverse insurance benefits seen and not seen from the market today), but admittedly, they serve only as "soothing agents" of the evil, and are not its cure.

One of the worst shortcomings of the capitalist system is its proved failure to devise adequate safeguards against economic crises and depressions. Everything would seem to be all right if production and employment is full, but it is all wrong when an alarm signal appears on the economic horizon. If it is inflation, there is no end to the spiral of rising prices, and this race between the goods and money proves fatal. When there is depression, there is no end to the disaster. No one knows when and how it will stop. The only known form of remedies for either is some form or other of rigorous control — imposed by the society on itself, and when this happens the fundamentals of personal gain, competition and freedom of action do receive a rough jolt.

Communism steps in

It was to banish the ill-effects of capitalism, the concentration of wealth in the hands of the rich, the miseries of the poorer classes, all resulting from man's uncontrollable greed, that another economic thought — the Communist — came into existence. The prime idea in this system of thought is the complete abolition of private enterprise, or in other words, the abolition of personal greed. Under this system the whole economy of the nation is planned and canalized. There is hardly any initiative left with the individual, who merely becomes a cog in a great machine. In fairness to the capitalist system, it has to be stated that its greatest rival as yet, the Communist system, is too young to face a test of time and circumstances. It definitely seems to have brought much good to society, but personal freedom, to do or not to do a thing, counts a lot in the life of a human being, and its value is only realized when it is not there. In a Communist economic society, the individual loses entity. There is no competition, and production, and consumption, rightly or wrongly, are tied down to a certain pattern. Without the free interplay of these economic standards, it is difficult to say whether the system has, as a whole, been able to prove a cure for all the ills for which it was brought into existence. The practical result of the introduction of the Communist system is that a vast section of the community works in State-owned factories, shops and establishments, and inherently they are little different from the factories, shops and establishments owned by private enterprise. In general, therefore with the production and consumption entirely controlled by the State, affairs can be mismanaged in the same way as can be done in the capitalistic system, but it is easier to cover mistakes up in a gigantic State machinery than in the smaller units of operation owned by private enterprise.

What Islam stands for

We have seen above how the capitalist and the Communist economic systems treat production and consumption. In one there is extreme emphasis on personal gain and greed; in the other it is wiped out completely. Can it, however, be believed that Islam, long before either of these ideologies came into existence, laid down certain principles, which, as we see it now, is the finest possible blending of the two extremely divergent economic thoughts. The Islamic economic system is essentially a capitalistic system, i.e., it recognizes the element of personal gain in all economic transactions conducted by man. This, of course, does not mean that all freedom has been given to man to do whatever he likes (as the capitalist system does), nor does it mean that no freedom whatsoever should exist (as in the Communist economic system). The recognition of the element of personal gain in productive efforts is nothing more than the recognition of human nature and instinct. Man, as man, wants something to crown all his productive efforts, and it is only to satisfy this instinct in the man that Islam, as a truly practical religion, gives due recognition to this human failing. Denial of this basic trait of human character would almost have been the denial of a fact. The recognition of human capabilities as equal is another creation of the Communist economic system, but Islam, on the other hand, recognizes the difference in individual efforts and capabilities, which is again extremely natural, because no two men are by nature alike. Having given this, however, Islam rigorously controls the basic fundamentals of an economic structure — production, consumption and distribution. It will be interesting to see how this socio-religious control works out in actual practice.

Production and consumption of wealth in an Islamic society

First and foremost, therefore, Islam controls production of wealth. There are only certain ways in which wealth can be produced, i.e., ways which are by all counts and measure within the legal and moral code of the society. There is thus a complete ban on the production of wealth by illegal or immoral means. For example, you cannot create wealth by trading in wine (because Muslims cannot take wine, therefore they cannot make their living by trading in it), or by indulging in black market or by lending money on interest. The creation of wealth has therefore, by necessity and law, to be by means which are morally or socially unimpeachable. This is a very important provision in the economic laws of Islam, which incidentally has social repercussions as well. No display of naked legs in cabaret houses and dancing halls means better morals for the society. Then again,
there is a ban on the production of such wealth where you do not have to make any productive effort or which is acquired only by the loss of others. Haves, sweepstakes, etc., are thus vigorously prohibited in that they help continuously in a mal-distribution of wealth and at the same time render vast sections of the society dissatisfied and disgruntled. Incidentally, the prohibition of the creation of wealth by usurious or illegal means or by such means as do not require any effort on your part, helps the fairest competition possible within legal means and at the same time it neither kills private enterprise nor boosts it artificially. It will thus be seen that although the Islamic laws recognize the element of personal gain, they do not let this tendency go unbridled, and care has been taken to see that the productive efforts of humanity are not channelized into ushonal channels. Neither does the Islamic fabric allow freedom of action to the productive genius, so as to allow a photographer to earn his living by selling nude pictures, which in a society governed by capitalist laws is as legal and permissible as say the vocation of a weaver of cloth.

Having examined the Islamic laws vis-à-vis production, let us now see what Islam says about consumption. Does it give the same liberty in consumption which is available in the capitalist system, i.e., spend where you will, when you will and to the extent you will? Not only this, the capitalist system, on many occasions, actually encourages you to spend more than you can really afford. On the false pretext of increasing the standard of living, you can in most Western countries, and especially in the United States, take everything on hire-purchase terms. Such incentives to consumption are extremely artificial and based again on the personal-gain policy. Capital produces such things which it cannot sell ordinarily without these artificial supports. It, therefore, dishes out the bitter pill in a coat of sugar. What happens when by any chance you are unable to pay that installment need hardly be told, but that no doubt brings out the capitalist in his true colours. Again, does Islam severely restrict consumption as does the Communist system by severely restricting production, and such elements as wages, etc.? Islam does not restrict consumption nor gives full liberty. First, in so far as your personal expenses are concerned, Islam teaches moderation. You are told strictly to live within your means as well as not to spend excessively on luxuries, even if you can afford them. The emphasis, therefore, is on moderation and not on prohibition. A rich man, however, according to the laws of Islam, is expected to live like a rich man, not like a stingy miser. Similarly, a man of moderate means is not allowed to live beyond his means and thus court disaster for himself, sooner or later. According to these injunctions, therefore, Islam does not permit you to incur debt in furnishing your house with an expensive refrigerator, if only to keep your meat and vegetables for a longer period. The artificial boosting of consumption is thus not advocated. The laws again lay great stress on the moral and social obligations of the society. You literally cannot take your food if there is a hungry man living within reasonable distance of your house. The society has to spare from its own share of spending power for that hungry man. The Islamic laws therefore tend to create a society which takes responsibility for all the individuals comprising it and this responsibility is not shifted to the individual himself, as is the case in the capitalist country. All these provisions make the spending power of the people more or less constant. Certainly, the market does not fluctuate nor are fortunes made or lost on the whims of the fashionable women of a country. Undoubtedly, these teachings help in the creation of a more or less constant and dependable market. Production is stable if consumption is stable, which in turn leads to stable economic conditions, and this is what most of the manufacturing countries nowadays are fruitlessly trying for. Britain, Canada, Australia, Brazil and the Argentine are some of the countries that have only recently concluded bilateral agreements in one form or another over raw materials, sugar, meat, etc., and these agreements run for a number of years and solely aim at stabilizing the prices of important products both for the producers and for the consumers. Another example is the coal-steel merger plan of the six West-European countries, known as the Schuman Plan. Islam visualized these principles 1,400 years ago, and if we could base our economies on them, much that appears progressive in the West would have been ours long before.

Distribution of wealth in Islam

In this field, Islam combats the accumulation of wealth and its concentration in the hands of a small minority and favours its continuous dispersal in society. The distribution laws achieve this object in the society. The distribution laws achieve this object in a unique way. In Islam, the laws of distribution operate in two conspicuous ways, first, through the institution of zakat, and second, through the laws of inheritance.

Zakat is a sort of annual tax that all members of the society possessing wealth (mind, the tax is on possession of wealth, not on its creation) in any shape or form have to pay. Thus zakat is to be paid on fixed assets, land produce, gold and silver, jewellery, stock-in-trade, etc., and the amount of the tax varies with the "subject" to be taxed, and in general the incidence of zakat is less than the income tax burden in many a modern State today. Another point which differentiates zakat from any other tax today is that it has to be spent for certain specified purposes laid down in the Holy Qur'an, notable amongst which is the expenditure on the poorer sections of the society, expenditure on defence of the State, etc. Similarly, the inheritance laws of Islam are unique. The owner of the property has not been given the absolute right of disposal, as only one-third of the property can be disposed of by the owner at will. The rest of the property is divisible over a wide range of beneficiaries. The laws thus ensure first that property does not pass into one hand only (the eldest son as provided for in the English laws), and secondly, erratic and fantastic wills are not allowed to operate. The main idea behind the inheritance laws is, of course, the splitting up and distribution of wealth over a wide strata of society, thus ensuring that accumulated wealth passes on to lower levels continuously. The modern ways of taxation do concede, in one way or another, this very idea of Islam, either by the introduction of a Welfare State, more and more direct taxation on the rich, or by bringing in Communism, but, unfortunately, all these theories and practices lack the moral base. The rich are not taxed to help in any way the poor, but for the sake of the State, and the ties between the poorer sections of a community and the State are too indirect and impersonal. Nothing passes on to the poor directly as does the zakat. Similarly, the State does tax the estate of the deceased, but whatever is left is not distributed with equity between the beneficiaries, but is left either to the likes or dislikes of the owner or to the legal heir, which is only one individual.

Another important feature of the Islamic economic fabric is that interest is prohibited. A rich man cannot make himself richer by lending out money at exorbitant rates of interest. History has shown that in all backward societies, whether in Europe or in Asia, usury is, and has always been, a major problem. The existence of the practice was almost universal. By eliminating interest from the social pattern of the society, Islam thus foresaw what modern society saw ages afterwards. A society cannot progress unless it is free from parasitical usurers, and this was the chief aim of Islam in banning the giving and taking of interest.

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But can we change over?

So far we have examined the economics of Islam versus modern economic theories and practices. The discussion, however, at once raises the question whether the Islamic economic system can at all be brought into existence, especially in these times, and, if so, how? How is the transition period to Islamism to be arranged so that the change may be brought about without the least dislocation of economic interests in the society? What is to happen to the great banking institutions of today? What is to happen to other financial institutions like the insurance companies, etc.? How, in this interval, is all the external commerce to be conducted and how are private enterprise and large capital undertakings of the Government to be continually fed and financed? Not only is the question of the banks and the insurance companies to be settled, but the gradual introduction of zakat into our budgetary arrangements is also to be achieved in such a way that the present revenue-earning capacity of the State is not jeopardized. These are in fact but a few of the innumerable problems which we will have to face in bringing into existence the economic laws of Islam. And lastly, can the rich be expected to give up their vast incomes merely to bring into existence an Islamic State in the truest sense of the word? Indeed, the problems seem to be colossal when it comes to infusing real life into the "beau-ideal".

Spade work necessary in the cultural and educational fields

Strictly speaking, much of the work, or I should say the spade work, in this connection does not fall within the province of economists. The Islamic economic system, in itself, is only a part of a whole. It is not a whole in itself. It cannot be created in an absolutely un-Islamic society. The first pre-requisite for the introduction of the Islamic system is, therefore, a society well disposed towards these ideas and beliefs and ready to behave and respond in the way that is expected of it, or which at least is ready to make honest efforts to achieve this goal and not scoff and mock at these ideals, as most of our educated men do nowadays without the least understanding what those ideals actually are.

The first stage in the creation of an Islamic society and an Islamic economic system is, thus, an emphatic declaration by the government of a country that, irrespective of past inaction and neglect, it sets before itself the aim of helping in the creation of an Islamic way of life. The government should also declare that it is prepared to adopt progressively such policies which aim at the fulfillment of the object and should seek and act in full co-operation with informed public opinion on this subject. After this declaration has been made, effective and practical steps should be taken immediately in a variety of ways calculated to promote the aims that are set before the nation. Let us see how and in what way governmental efforts can be helpful in enlivening the Islamic chords in the heart of a nation.

Admittedly, there is a vast scope for government-sponsored activities in the cultural and educational field. The government of Muslim countries can help to a great extent in the propagation of Islamic ideas through the medium of their vast propaganda machinery. What do we see in a country like Pakistan? Free literature is distributed by diplomatic missions in foreign countries about Pakistan — its industry, finance, culture, geography and history, and its political activities and aspirations, etc. At short periodic intervals, a brochure containing the latest news of the country is brought out and distributed free. The Government of Pakistan has subsidized the production of books and magazines by foreign writers about the country. The same policy can be adopted towards literature aimed at rejuvenating the religious sense of the nation. Why can we not produce subsidized literature on this important subject or even arrange free distribution? There are many other ways in which the government can also show that it wants to align itself with the general wish of the people that the country should be Islamic. It can encourage its officers and personnel to give a lead to their juniors in such matters as the offering of prayers, or at least ensure that, if they cannot encourage religious activities, they should not discourage them. While the choice of a dress should and can be left to individual likes and dislikes, the Muslim government can largely help by providing that their representatives should preferably appear in national dress in diplomatic functions. Surely something is necessary to remove the inferiority complex that most of the Muslims feel in wearing their national caps in foreign lands? Regrettable as it is, their own countrymen taboo them if they ever show their enthusiasm by putting on the national dress which their revered leader so publicly put on at every occasion. It is ridiculous that some Muslim diplomatic missions in foreign lands should hermetically seal their offices for a number of days at Christmas, Easter and Whitsun, including such occasions as Washington's birthday in the United States of America, but fail to observe a holiday on the Id. In fact, some offices close more for other than for their own Muslim festivals. Most of it is, however, due to the progressive and modernized outlook of the brave and dutiful sons of those Muslim countries which adorn governmental desks. All these measures cannot make a Muslim of you, but they go to show the stark fact of the great vacuum between us and our cherished or "tom-tommed" ideals. The moral values of these measures cannot, however, be denied. Strange as it may appear, each link in a chain goes to make up the chain, the chain represents the links, and yet the links cannot be a chain unless put together.

There is another important question: whether or not liquor should be served in the diplomatic receptions held by Muslim countries? There are instances where non-Muslim countries have decided against the serving of liquors, for example India, but that is no lesson to us. Similarly, the curricula of our educational institutions can broadly be based to include a study of the moral, ethical and economic values of Islam. Graduates coming out from our universities should not know Malthus' Law of Population and the teachings of Keynes and Karl Marx alone, but should also understand what their own religion says on these issues.

Economic field

In the cultural and educational field, governmental activities need not really be too intense. All that is required is a support — both moral and financial — and some action, and it should be enough to regenerate to a great extent the Islamic spirit in our hearts. More positive steps will be necessary if the financial structure of the State is to be changed to an Islamic pattern. The introduction of the Islamic pattern in the economic structure brings in the following three problems which have to be tackled:

1. Zakat to form the basis of our revenues;
2. Elimination of interest; and,
3. The future of such institutions as banks, insurance companies, etc.

Zakat

The problem of bringing in zakat as the basis of our revenues alone is enough to baffle expert economists, let alone this humble writer. We proceed to examine the pattern along which we should mould our budgets these days. The budgets are drawn up each year and each year some wise and unwise amendments in taxation and duties are made; some are accepted by the people and some they are forced to accept. A survey, however, reveals that in this era most governments of backward countries (by backward I mean those nations who export raw materials principally and import manufactured goods) base their revenue on income tax, import and export duties, excise duties, some
special taxes as sales tax, etc. In Western countries, however, the lion's share of the revenue is provided by income tax and corporation tax. The emphasis in the backward countries is on the indirect taxation, while in the industrialized countries it is on direct taxation. The question is whether zakat can replace such direct taxes as the income tax or the corporation tax, and if so, how? There are many phases of this change which will have to be studied very carefully. An important point is to find out a practicable way of correct and quick assessment of zakat, as unlike income tax, zakat cannot be assessed and collected at source. It becomes leviable only in arrears and has to be collected in arrears. Again, income tax is leviable on income which is more readily calculable than zakat, which becomes due when you possess wealth like savings, gold and silver, jewellery, stock-in-trade, land, land produce, etc. This, basically, is more difficult to assess than is income tax, but it is undoubtedly a better and more equitable form of taxation than is income tax, which does not really take into account the true liabilities of an individual. It seems that the problems which would undoubtedly confront any government if zakat is to be made the backbone of the revenues of a country will have to be examined by a body of men, say a specially appointed committee, and enforced with the full knowledge and co-operation of the people of that country. However, I think that some interim measures in this connection can be taken without much delay. These measures are only suggested as a basis of making a start possible till the full potentialities of zakat are appreciated and realized by the people and the governments.

The best way of making a start, in my opinion, seems that governments should initiate and start the collection of zakat on a voluntary basis. All that would be required to do would be to make certain arrangements at treasury or other government revenue collecting depots for the receipt of zakat dues. Special attention should be devoted to the collection during Ramadan and at the time of the two ‘Ids. There will be no compulsion whatsoever for the payment of zakat. The government can, however, exhort the people through suitable propaganda to pay more and more of zakat, and it is not unreasonable to assume that, if the arrangements are satisfactory, and appeals made in an "appealing" way, the people can be expected to respond satisfactorily. This method will also serve as a useful index of the potentialities of zakat on a voluntary basis.

Another method by which governments can make people zakat-conscious is the adjustment of zakat towards the payment of other State taxes. For example, if an individual is required to pay income tax to the extent of Rs. 1,000/-, he should, according to this scheme, have the option of paying Rs. 1,000/- to the zakat fund and be exempted altogether from the payment of the income tax. Similarly, if a cultivator is ready to pay zakat on land, he should be exempted to that extent from the payment of land revenue. Yet another idea is the collection of zakat through the medium of specially designed stamps for zakat on the pattern of defence savings stamps, etc.

The main idea of these interim measures is to arouse zakat-consciousness in the people without jeopardizing the revenues of the State. And it cannot also be doubted that if these measures are adopted, they will bring the people nearer their religion, not take them away from it. The fact that the full potentialities of zakat are not known in any Islamic country as yet makes it necessary for us to adopt some yardstick by which a State can know to what extent it can depend on zakat revenues, and there seems to be no alternative but to proceed in the way suggested previously.

Simultaneously, with the question of the collection of zakat is the question of defining the scope of zakat in modern conditions. I think it should perhaps be possible to allocate substantial sums from the zakat funds for the defence of the country, for poor houses, widows' pensions, etc. There are countries in the world that provide for old age pensions, notable amongst which is Great Britain. Why on earth we Muslims should call these measures progressive and realistic, when our own situation problème, is something which is difficult to understand. The simple and lamentable truth is that we are so far away from our ideals that we even do not know what they are.

Interest

Islam prohibits the giving and taking of interest, and yet interest is perhaps the most powerful single factor responsible for the maintenance of the huge edifice of private enterprise in Western countries, or I should say the world. Without interest it will be difficult, if not altogether impossible, to carry out all the colossal international trade. It seems undeniable that, like zakat, interest, too, cannot be abolished by a stroke of the pen or merely by wishing. The process of abolition has to be gradual and has necessarily to be initiated by the government. Unless a lead is forthcoming on a governmental level, it would perhaps be very difficult for the society itself to abolish this evil practice.

The first stage, therefore, consists in the government's forgoing its own share of interest, because unless this is done first and an example set before the people, the people themselves cannot be expected to cease charging interest. The budgets of most governments contain on the expenditure side a regular head of account for the accommodation of expenditure on interest. Governments have to provide for considerable payments of interest not only on government debt, but even on items such as the railways, post and telegraphs depreciation reserve funds. Now, if a government so desires, as it should, the principle of providing for the interest on depreciation reserve funds and charging the same to revenues can be shelved once and for all without in any way affecting the financial limits of the depreciation reserve funds. The share of additions to the reserve funds, made available to them annually, can be done on the basis of a formula, but it is not necessary at all that these additions should particularly be made as interest. Similarly, the government charges interest on all loans and advances made to its own employees, local bodies, private individuals, etc. Although it will mean a small (too trivial for that purpose) sacrifice in revenue, it does not seem unreasonable to expect governments to forgo interest on small advances of say ten pounds or so, which is the sum advanced for the purchase of cycles. A government employee has even to pay interest if he takes a temporary advance from his own deposits in the General Provident Fund. I dare say that interest transactions of this sort can be dispensed with if the State is willing to play its part in the abolition of interest from our society. Similarly, there is hardly any justification for a government to charge interest on the loans given to refugees for their resettlement, and on a point of principle and for the sake of a cause it might be advisable to forgo interest from local bodies and such institutions as corporations created for the purposes of development of industries or agriculture.

It would not be fair, however, to ask the government to sacrifice all the interest that it receives and leave the interest that it pays untouched. A government pays interest on post office deposits, State loans, provident funds of employees, etc. The second phase of the elimination of interest would therefore, consist of eliminating the interest liabilities of the State, or in other words, asking the public to forgo their part of the incoming interest. In practice, this part is not as difficult to implement as it seems on the face of it. For example, a fairly large portion of the bank deposits even now are interest free, and this portion goes up to as high as 50 per cent in many cases (this refers to current accounts, etc.). Again, most of the post office depositors
are small depositors, and the primary aim of their depositing their savings in the savings banks is not the earning of interest. There have been instances in which a large number of Muslim depositors in Undivided India did not draw their interest from post offices or even in their provident fund accounts. This percentage can be rapidly increased if the government declares and shows that it is ready to play its part faithfully in the elimination of interest. Such of the elements of the society which refuse to fall in line will be a separate problem and will have to be considered in so much. The heaviest responsibility of the State, however, relates to the payment of interest on the public debt. A sudden cessation of interest in this field might cripple the borrowing power of the government. It might also seriously jeopardise the financial structure of many institutions which count on sizeable incomes from their investments in government loans. It also cannot be said that the government will never in future be in need of borrowed funds. It seems that a pin-point procedure by which the government can be successful in first substantially reducing and then completely wiping off this liability cannot be laid down, and measures may have to be devised as more and more experience of the working of the whole scheme is gained. Instances of a similar sort have shown many a government nowadays has got rid of the surplus value of an inflated circulation of money by making a drastic currency reform. The old currency is just scrapped and the nation has to take the new currency, for which generally a larger amount of the old currency has to be surrendered. It may be that some such measure might be found necessary. Similarly, if we achieve what can really be called an Islamic society — a society that caters and cares for Islamic ideals and observes both the spirit and the letter of the rules, then I think the State will not only maintain its borrowing power but also be able to increase it, as there will be no difference in bank deposits lying in banks without interest and their transfer to the government on the same basis. A great advantage of the elimination of interest will be that dormant capital will not be able to create wealth, which will mean that either it will have to invest itself for protection or surrender itself for State use for the benefit of the society. In either case it will have a beneficent effect on the production and consumption of the country. The attraction of hoarding will be completely gone, as even hoarded money will be subjected to zakat, and there will be no alternative left for capital but to invest, produce and consume. This eternal cycle alone can ensure full employment and not wars and armament drives, on which the Western world has come to depend so pathetically nowadays.

What happens to Banks?

This is perhaps the last hurdle to be leapt. Is banking to continue in the present form or not? The primary functions of the banking institutions of today are first, the collection of surplus money, its safe custody, and at the same time keeping it available for payment in various manners convenient to depositors, and second, acting as financiers of both internal and external trade. The latter is perhaps the more important function of the two. It seems that the main income of the banks also comes from such financing, or in other words, from interest on loans advanced to private parties and not from the collection of deposits. The banks will therefore gradually have to be supplanted by government-sponsored institutions both of the banking type and of the trading type. Thus in so far as the import of merchandise is concerned, some sort of government undertaking will have to be brought into existence which will conduct import-export business beyond a reasonable minimum which can be left for private enterprise. The idea of leaving a reasonable minimum for private enterprise is that private individuals should import only to the extent of the finances which they possess and for which they have not to go to a bank for loan. Thus, for example, if machinery to the extent of one million pounds is to be imported, it can be imported on government account and distributed to retailers through either an independent government agency or an agency formed on a government-cum-private-enterprise basis, but an individual should be free to import the same machinery up to Rs. 10,000/- if he so wishes. The main effect of this arrangement will be that there would really be no need for the banks to finance the transaction, charge interest for the same, and thus make the imported commodity unnecessarily expensive. The banks can be left to act as collectors and safe depositors of moneys only and they can charge a small commission for rendering their services to their clients, just as they do for many services now.

As regards insurance companies, the insurance of life is really not necessary in a truely Islamic society, and these institutions will voluntarily go into liquidation once the life insurance business becomes unproductive. As regards other modes of insurances, for example, marine insurance, the necessary cover can be provided for by the government from a common pool, but insurance should cease to be a lucrative profit-making undertaking. The aim should be that the society should be prepared to care for and look after such of its members who have either lost in business or suffered other misfortunes, and they should not be left to face the searching enquiries of the insurance overlords whose prime aim is to find out how the claim can be rejected and not how to afford relief to the afflicted party.

Muslims and the world of tomorrow

A few words have to be said by way of conclusion. Undoubtedly all the Islamic countries are on the threshold of a new era of economic development and progress. Now is, therefore, the fittest time when we can think whether our sole aim should be the achievement of material progress as has been the aim of the West or something else, too. No less a person than Lord Keynes has said that, if the sole aim of the early industrialists had been profit, the great industrialization that we see today would not have been achieved. It is, therefore, after two centuries of progress that responsible opinion in the West realizes that the sole aim of the pioneers of industry and discovery was not the aim of today. Those great men were actuated by motives which were certainly nobler. The tragic fact is that, while posterity gained full advantage and, in fact, embellished the achievements to gain more wealth and power, it allowed its conscience to lag behind. The result was a lop-sided development of society, and no amount of adjustment can set it right, unless the conscience is allowed to play its full part again. It is here that the corrective force of Islam is most needed. That is why Islam is a code of life and is not a religion in the sense in which the West uses the word. It governs completely the economic life of a community. It controls production, consumption and distribution by standards still unknown to the West. It incites capital to production and yet successfully combats the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few. It gives full incentive to consumption yet stabilizes it at reasonable levels. What is, therefore, necessary, not that in our blind race for Westernism we forget to learn from the experience of the West itself, but that we should realize that, by a curious chance, there lies before us another opportunity to prove to the world what Islam stands for. It is time for us also to realize that we have come down to our present position not because we are Muslims but because we have ceased to be Muslims. The earlier this truth dawns on us, the better it will be for us and for the world. And this has a significance high and far beyond the field of immediate application.

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
THE BATTLEFIELDS OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD

UHUD

By DR. M. HAMIDULLAH, Ph.D. (Bonn), D.Litt. (Paris)

The Quraish of Mecca make preparations for attack on Medina after their defeat at Badr

The importance of the overland route to Syria and Egypt was too great for the Quraish of Mecca to abandon it at their first reverse at Badr. They did not find it an extravagance to collect contributions of a quarter of a million dirhams towards preparation for a retaliatory expedition (Sirah of al-Shamiy, ch. Uhud). They further spent practically as much in ransom money. Ibn Hisham (p. 555 ff.), al-Shamiy (ch. Uhud), and others have recorded that the Quraishites did not content themselves with their local voluntary militia, or even with the contingent of their perpetual, though mercenary, allies of the tribe of Ahabish. They sent important personalities, such as 'Amr Ibn al-'As, ' Abdallah Ibn al-Ziba'ra, Hubairah Ibn Wahh, Musafir Ibn 'Abd Manaf, Abu 'Azzah 'Amr Ibn ' Abdallah al-Jumahiy, to tour through all the tribes of Arabia and explain to them the new peril that was arising with Islam, and ask them to join the city, thus cutting their own way of retreat and reinforcement. I asked many a savant, local as well as foreign, and when nobody could satisfy me, I reluctantly concluded that the present Uhud must not have been the original Uhud where the famous battle was fought: the genuine Uhud must lie somewhere in the neighbourhood of Quba, now forgotten. The unanimous assurance of classical as well as modern historians and geographers, even the tomb of Hamzah, the martyr par excellence of Uhud reputation, could not move me to conclude otherwise.

Yet, when I got the opportunity of visiting the site and studying the terrain, I understood what the turning of pages of scores of books for years past and talking to or corresponding with savants of unrivalled erudition could not explain to me.

The location of Medina and what it looked like during the days of the Prophet Muhammad

The fact is, Medina is situated in a lava plain, about ten miles long and as wide. This was originally called the plain (Jauf) of Medina, and later renamed "Haram" by the Prophet.

forces in a "police action" against Medina. The mission was successful to a degree that "thongs of Bedouins assembled" for the task.

The secret agent of the Prophet at Mecca, his uncle 'Abbas, in spite of his being charged with ransom money when he was taken prisoner at Badr along with other Meccans, did not fail to inform the Prophet of the developments in time, by the agency of a Bedouin of the Ghifar tribe (Ibn Sall, II/1 p. 25; al-Shamiy, in loco). Medina was thus prepared when the enemy advanced in the month of Shawwal of the year 3 A.H. (615 C.E.). The Quraish and their allies camped near Mount Uhud, north of the city of Medina.

Mount Uhud

Uhud is a mountain due north of Medina, about three miles from the centre of the city. The Quraishites came from Mecca, which, as everybody can see, lies far in the south of Medina. I was for long intrigued why the Meccan invaders, coming from the south, did not halt to the south of Medina in order to launch the attack on the city of the Prophet Muhammad, but marched on still further, by-passed Medina and camped to the north of this plain is surrounded on all sides by chains of high mountains, and communications are maintained through narrow valleys. This plain, "between 'Air and Thawr" of the classical writers, is also not an even one: in between lie the majestic Mount Sal' and several other smaller hills of considerable strategic value.

In the time of the Prophet, Medina was not a city as its layout makes it today. It had not the congested streets and localities of modern towns. On the other hand, there lived in Medina in those days several Arab and Jewish tribes, and the locality or village of each tribe was separated from others, and lay at a distance of one, two or more furlongs from each other. A chain of such villages was to be seen from Mount 'Air right up to Mount Thawr.

These tribal villages each possessed one or more water wells, and the dwelling houses were constructed of stone and were generally double storied. Every village possessed several strong towers, called indifferently 'Umr or 'Ajmahb. In time of war, women, children, cattle and other movable goods were removed to them for safety. At one time there were more than one hundred such towers in the city, and the Banu Zaid alone

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possessed fourteen of them (Diwan of Qais Ibn al-Khatim, ed. Rowalski, p. 18). Some of them were very big. So the Utm al-Dihyan, belonging to Uthaihah Ibn al-Julah, was, according to Kitab al-Aghani (XIII, 124) a three-storied building; its ground floor was constructed of the black lava stone, and the two upper stories (nabarab) were of stones "white as silver"; and the tower was so high that one could seem it from a distance of a day's journey on camel. In the vicinity of Quba, the ruins of this tower were still to be seen in 1947. Its ground floor is preserved, and even in its ruined form gives us an opportunity of seeing a monument of military architecture of pre-Islamic days in Medina. Inside these towers there were often wells, so that in case of prolonged siege, drinking water should not be lacking to the inmates.

Apart from these dispersed and widely-separated villages, there were in Medina gardens and farms belonging to individuals in each tribe. Their compound walls were generally built of stones. Such gardens were spread in all directions, in and around Medina.

Among these tribal habitations, one was called Yathrib. The hamlet is still remembered, and is shown to have existed south-west of Mount Uhud, where water abounds. Maybe this was the sides were strongly protected by buildings and date-palm groves through which an enemy could not get access.

The terrain around Medina

Judging from present-day topography of the region of Medina, in the south-east, Quba and 'Awali were thickly populated. In the south-west and south, the lava and extremely uneven hilly terrain was absolutely useless as a fighting ground both for infantry and cavalry. In the east the Jewish villages succeeded one another from Quba to Uhud. In the west also there are plantations and gardens, though not so thickly clustered. The ground is less fertile and the condition could not have been better in those days. The assembly hall of the tribe of the Banu Sa'idah is shown on the northern wall of the modern town, just to the east of the Sha'emy Gate. This tribe must have lived there. Beyond the north-eastern Majidi Gate, there are other very old gardens, with reminiscences of the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Mid-north, dozens of old wells were recently discovered when ground was being cleared for the construction of the general hospital. A bit farther to the west, on the very Mount Sal' the Banu Hasm have left their tribal graveyard, and apparently they lived then in that direction. All along the west, along the river bed of Wadi al-Aaqiq, especially in the north-west, down to the historic well of Bi'r Ru'mah and even further south to the mosque of Two Qiblas (Qiblatayn), there are numerous gardens. The Bi'r Ru'mah and the land watered thereby originally belonged to a Jew, and 'Uthman (later the third Caliph) purchased it at the instance of the Prophet and made of it a public bequest, as is well known.

Thus only the far north offers an open space. The white saline earth is unfit for cultivation of any kind, even today. The locality where the Prophet Muhammad lived was more vulnerable from this side than from any other.

As mentioned above, south of Medina is hilly and full of lava blocks, and communications are maintained there through deep valleys and gorges. The route leading to the city from this direction and passing by Quba is rather difficult, and is reported never to have been used by big caravans. Single individuals scale it rarely, in an emergency only. Apparently the Prophet Muhammad himself had come that way, at the time of migration, for reasons of security; for he came first to Quba, and later moved to the middle town. But the horses and animals of transport of a large army would not use it. Moreover, it was the hot season at the time of the battle of Uhud, and the sun rendered the lava too hot even for camels. Camels never like stony ground. Lava plains surround Medina from the south, from the east and the west; only the north is immune from it. Houses were certainly built in the lava plain, apparently as a security measure, yet no plantations are possible there. An army camp required grazing lands, which are not found there. Any army may cross somehow the lava plain yet would not select it for a battleground. It is to be remembered that the 'Anbariyah Gate and the road leading thereto from the south is a comparatively recent construction, about three hundred years old. Otherwise, in ancient times, the caravans from the south halted, we are assured, at Dhu 'l-Hulaifah, and then entered the bed of Wadi al-Aaqiq, and, leaving Medina to their right, traversed

The Jumula Mosque near Qubaa (Medina)

*It is in this mosque that the Prophet Muhammad said his first Friday Prayers in 624 C.E.*

most prosperous, or in some other way most important or even the earliest congregation there in pre-Islamic times. Anyhow, it gave its name to the whole town, an appellation of the whole by the name of its part, a phenomenon not seldom come across in other countries. The township of Madinah al-Nabiy, later simply Madinah (Medina), lies in the centre of the municipal area.

The Meccan Quaishites had no particular grudge against the general population of Medina; they were angry against only one person, their co-citizen, the Prophet Muhammad, who had taken refuge there. To reach the "Madinah of the Prophet", it was necessary to cross thick clusters of trees of numerous gardens, and there was no open space to serve as a battlefield for an army of several thousand on either side. In his Wafa al-Wafa (s.w. Khandaq), al-Samhudiyy quotes from the second century author, Ibn Ishaq, that "one side of Medina was exposed, and the rest of
northwards as far as the confluence of the Zaghabah, and then alone turned back to Medina. The soft sand of the river bed was liked by the camels.

Such were the physical impediments of the terrain, which forced the Meccan army, tired and almost dead after the arduous march of twelve continuous days, to get away from Medina and camp at a safe distance from the enemy and take the much needed rest for men and for animals. In the locality of Zaghabah there is water and grass. The Meccans were sure of their victory, and so they did not worry about the route of their return.

**A description of the terrain of Mount Uhud**

As mentioned previously, Mount Uhud lies to the north of Medina, and stretches in a straight line in an east-westerly direction. It is four to five kilometres in length. Just in the middle portion, facing the town, there is a natural curve, semi-circular or horse-shoe in shape, spacious enough to hold several thousand people. There is another open space further inside, and both of these are connected by a narrow passage. To the south of Uhud flows the Wadi Qanat, to the south of which stands the 'Ainain Hill, also called the "Hill of the Archers" (Jabal al-Rumayt) on account of the archers posted on it by the Prophet on the day of the battle of Uhud. In the spacious open ground, north of Wadi Qanat, there are two springs. Maybe the name of Hill 'Ainain (lit., two springs) is due to this fact.

**Preparation of the Muslims, who were only 700 strong, to meet the enemy, 3,000 strong**

When the Quraishite army arrived in Dhu 'l-Hulaifah, Muslim spies mingled with the marching hordes, and returned to report to the Prophet Muhammad only when the enemy stopped and encamped at the Zaghabah, west of Uhud (Istitah, § Anas Ibn Fudalah; the Maghazi of Waqidiy, fol. 49b). The Prophet Muhammad was personally disposed to defend the city from inside "and fight it out in the streets", courting a siege, yet the clamour of the younger officers at last decided him to go out of the city and join battle in the open (Ibn Hisham, p. 558). He asked the volunteers to assemble in front of the Twin Towers of Shaikhan, south-east of the Uhud curve. It was there that he inspected the parade, and, as usual, rejected the too young or otherwise unfit (Sirah of al-Sha'biyin loco). There was a considerable number of women volunteers, including 'A'ishah, the youthful wife of the Prophet, who nursed the wounded, brought water for the thirsty and rendered other sundry services, as is described at length by al-Bukhari (§ 56: 67). Al-Zubayri reports the Meccite Muslims asked the Prophet whether they should not ask the Jews, their allies, to help in defence, and the Prophet replied, "We do not require that" (Hist. of Ibn Kathir, Vol. IV, p. 14). Other reports say about six hundred Jews of the tribe of the Banu Qaima'ah, led by the notorious hypocrite Ibn Ubaia, came to the help of the Prophet, but the Prophet said, "We do not require them; we do not take help of infidels against infidels" (Ibn Sa'd, II/1, pp. 27, 34; Ibn Kathir, Vol. IV, p. 22). This is rather strange, as the Banu Qaima'ah were already expelled; but we shall return to this later. Muslim volunteers numbered a

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1 The place is commemorated now by the Mosque of Shaikhan, which is unique in the vicinity inasmuch as it has a roof with two domes.

thousand in all. Later a gang of about three hundred hypocrites, under the influence of Ibn Ubaia, deserted at the last moment on a flimsy pretext; and it was only with seven hundred strong that the Prophet Muhammad went to oppose an enemy more than four times that number. Of these seven hundred, only one hundred had coats of mail (al-Sha'miy, in loco). According to one report, there were only two horses, one belonging to the Prophet Muhammad and the other to Abu Bardah (Ibn Sa'd, II/1, p. 27). It is not clear whether al-Zubair al-Awam, who opposed on horseback the enemy cavalry under Khalid, mounted the horse of the Prophet or had his own, and whether some more horses were not fetched by Muslim volunteers from their homes nearby, on seeing a strong detachment of enemy horses, and fought under al-Zubair (Tabari, p. 139 ff).

As to the enemy, the quarter million dirhams were not spent uselessly by the Quraishites. There were "paid mercenaries", of whom two thousand belonged to the single tribe of the Ahabish alone (Sirah, by Karamat 'Ali, p. 245), besides a considerable number of Bedouins from other tribes. The Quraishites mustered in all 3,000 combatants, including 700 with coats of mail and 200 on horses (Ibn Hisham, p. 561). The cavalry was posted as right and left wings, under two commanders (ibid).

**The Prophet takes up his positions**

On the first night after the arrival of the enemy, when the Prophet Muhammad was still in the city, the township was guarded by patrols, as also the house of the Prophet, the whole night (Ibn Sa'd, II/1 p. 26). After the assembly and inspection near the Twin Towers of Shaikhan, the Prophet spent the night in the open camp, and a guard of fifty strong under Muhammad Ibn Malsamah was entrusted with the task of patrolling around
the camp the whole night (Ibn Kathir, Vol. IV, p. 27). Next morning the Prophet marched into the curve of Mount Uhud and took up his position, making the inner opening as his camp. He decided to fight in the outer curve, and accordingly made his dispositions. He appointed a batch of fifty archers to take up their positions on the 'Ainain Hill. These, in co-ordination with the small cavalry under al-Zuzair, were entrusted with the task of protecting the passage between Uhud and 'Ainain from being penetrated by the enemy from behind the main Muslim army (Ibn Hisham, p. 560).

A conjecture about the then configuration of the 'Ainain Hill

The distance between 'Ainain Hill and Mount Uhud is so great that an enemy cavalry detachment could easily penetrate without being touched by the volley of arrows of the Muslim archers on 'Ainain. The Muslim cavalry also was too few to stop the enemy detachment. This difficulty can now be removed only by conjecture. Maybe the slope at the base of Uhud was not so low thirteen hundred years ago as it is now, owing to numerous inundations of the Wadi Qanat — one of which had washed the tomb of Hamzah and necessitated the removal of his body from the original burying ground to the present one — and to quarrying of stones for building purposes. The Wadi Qanat, which is a continuation of the Wadi Wa'aj of Ta'if, seems liable to great physical changes. In 1939 I did not notice any bridge over it east of 'Ainain Hill, yet in 1947 a very old bridge had come to light there owing to an inundation during the previous years. As to buildings, the huge mosque and tomb of Hamzah, razed to the ground since the departure of the Turks, numerous houses on the very 'Ainain Hill, dozens of government and private houses for police and others in the vicinity of the battlefield would require a considerable quantity of stone and earth. Otherwise, in ancient times the part of the slope between 'Ainain and Uhud must have been so high as to prevent passage of cavalry, which was obliged to cross nearer 'Ainain and thus become a target for the archers. Another possibility is that owing to the presence of two springs of fresh water, there may have been in those days one or more palm groves and gardens, with usual compound walls, occupying part of the passage now open. This is supported by some reports of the battle. Abu Dujanah's incident is well known: how the Prophet Muhammad offered his own sword to the best warrior, how several people, including 'Umar and al-Zubair, were denied the honour, and how Abu Dujanah obtained it on the promise of fighting with it unto death.

Our historians (Ibn Hisham, p. 56; Tabari, p. 1426) have recorded an improvised poem of Abu Dujanah, which he burst
forth reciting with joy at the great honour, a couplet of which says:

"I am the person, who contracted with his Beloved (Prophet),
While we were on the foot of the hill near the date-palm grove."

The action: the tactics and defeat of the enemy in the first phase of the battle

The Quraishtes must have mainly come from the Zaghabah camp to Uhud directly and encountered the Muslims near the present westerly Cemetery of the Martyrs. How did the cavalry under Khalid come behind the Muslims, east of A'ain? Had they come along with the main army and just separated from them a furlong before the battleground, made a detour and come out on the other side of A'main Hill, there would have been no surprise for the Muslims who could have diverted part of their forces to meet the danger. Many people suppose that there is a passageway from behind Mount Uhud, which leads directly into the inner opening where the Prophet Muhammad had camped and which is narrowly separated from the battleground. In 1932 and 1939 I wandered for hours and climbed the rocks, and am sure that there is no possibility whatsoever of the entrance of cavalry that way. In 1946-47, I circumambulated the whole mountain, and assured myself that the north of the mount is a solid and high way and there is no opening whatever to allow for the penetration of man, much less of horse. The only possibility is that the cavalry of Khalid galloped round the mountain from their camp, about ten kilometres, which is certainly too much for horses, and came in time upon the other side of A'main to try to attack the Muslims from their rear. The march of Khalid from the north of Uhud necessitated not more than about four kilometres in excess of his march, had he come along with the main army group of the Meccans. This is certainly too much for a cavalry detachment on important duty. Otherwise it will be impossible to explain why A'main is also called "Hill of the Archers", and that name is not given to some height of Uhud near the narrow passage joining the inner and outer openings in Uhud.

The first phase of the battle ended with the defeat of the Quraishtite main army, or rather the vanguard only. The repeated onslaughts of Khalid's cavalry were also successfully repulsed by the archers, and the Prophet Muhammad against the Quraishtites. Everybody then busied himself in plundering whatever booty he could capture (Ibn Hisham, p. 560). The battle was not yet over when the Muslim archers deserted their post, in spite of the stern warning of their commander, to take part in the plundering, thinking that the battle was over. The commander of the archers was left with only seven or eight men, when the invertebrate Khalid attempted again, and this time with easy success, to penetrate the battlefield from behind the Muslim army (Ibn Hisham, p. 570).

The Muslims were not prepared for this attack. They turned round to oppose the formidable charge of enemy horses; and when the retreating Quraishtites found that there was no more pursuit, they, too, stopped and reformed. The Muslims were taken from two sides, and when an enemy archer shouted that he had killed the Prophet — apparently misled by the change of coat of mail which the Prophet Muhammad had effected — the Muslims despaired, and fled in every possible direction (Ibn Hisham, p. 570).

Seventy Muslims lost their lives; twenty-three of the enemy were killed, most of them apparently during the first phase of the battle (Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Kathir, etc., in loco).

The Prophet Muhammad is wounded and defended by his followers

Several minor incidents are to be noted.
During the two days the Prophet was still in Medina or in the assembly and parade ground, the prospective battlefield was infested by enemy scouts and sappers and miners. A Christian monk of Medina, Abu 'Amir al-Rahib, had migrated to Mecca.

Hill of the Archers — the mount on which the Prophet Muhammad had placed his archers

Hamza, one of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad, is buried here

The ground of Uhud is stony. During the last phase, the enemy resorted to throwing stones upon the fleeing Muslims. If several received wounds in their back, the Prophet was hit in the face. The stone hurt his front teeth, and the iron rings of his coat of mail thrust deeply into his face and held so firmly that, when a companion tried to pull them out with the help of his teeth, he broke his teeth, yet could not extract the rings from the bone of the Prophet (Ibn Hisham, p. 571). Later the Prophet Muhammad made ablution for his daily prayer services in bandages for many days (Sharh al-Siyar al-kubir, by al-Sarakhsi, Vol. I, p. 89).
A small band of the faithful bravely defended the Prophet Muhammad till the last, and many of them sacrificed their lives in the noble task. A woman volunteer was also included in this improvised bodyguard, and her exploits elicited praise and appreciation from the Prophet Muhammad (Ibn Kathir, Vol. IV, p. 54; Ibn Hisham, p. 873).

With the help of some of the faithful, the Prophet Muhammad succeeded in getting out of the pit, dug by the monk Abu ’Amir, in which he had fallen, and climbed to a cave in

A Muslim woman on the battlefield snatches the fallen Muslim flag and raises it till the last

There were nobler incidents also. When during the first phase of the battle, several standard-bearers of the enemy fell one after another at the hands of the Muslims, and the enemy flag itself lay on the ground for long, nobody daring to raise it, it was a woman, ‘Amrah Bint ‘Alqamah the Harithite, who snatched it and raised it successfully till the last. This gave later a theme to the Muslim poet, Hassan Ibn Thabit, to compose a satire against the Ahabish who had come to the aid of the Quraisy and had fled in the first phase, to wit:

"Had not the Harithite girl been there, they would have been
Sold in markets like slaves " (Ibn Hisham, p. 571).

A hypocrite utilized the opportunity of the Muslim defeat to kill a Muslim for private vengeance. Later he was tried, and when found guilty was sentenced to death by the Prophet (Ibn Habib, al-Mubabbar, p. 467; Ibn Hisham, p. 579).

Another Muslim was killed at the hands of the Muslims by mistake. Blood money could be imposed, yet the son of the deceased, Hudhaifah Ibn al-Yaman, waived his right "for the sake of God", in view of the peculiar circumstances (Ibn Hisham, pp. 577, 607). Possibly the poor old man forgot the watchword during the turmoil, and was not recognized by his comrades, since he was a latecomer in the field.

The End

Slowly the news of the safety of the Prophet spread, and the Muslims began to gather round him again. A party of the enemy wanted to climb to the cave, but the Muslims pelted them with stones from high, and their number must also have been considerable. The enemy also did not suspect that the Prophet was there. So they retired without much ado (Ibn Hisham, p. 576). The enemy chief, Abu Sufyan, after apparently giving orders to his army to retire to their camp, made a final round of the battlefield, and found out the fact about the Prophet Muhammad. He was shouting boastfully, and the Prophet asked his companions not to reply. Yet when Abu Sufyan uttered some insulting remarks about the Prophet Muhammad, the famous altercations passed between him and Umair, who was with the Prophet (Ibn Hisham, pp. 582-3; Ibn Sa’d, II/1, p. 33):

"Raiseld be the idol Hubal.
God is the Highest and the most Majestic.
We have the idol ‘Uzza which ye have not.
God is our Friend (Mawla), and not yours.
Tell me the truth, O’ Umair, whether Ibn Qumai’ah is right in his claim of having killed Muhammad,
for I trust you more than him.
O enemy of God, the Prophet and Abu Bakr are alive
actually listen to what thou sayest.
Uhad for Badr, a day for a day.
Yes, but our martyrs are in paradise, and yours in hell."

The Quraisyites had already retired to the camp, and their chief did not, or could not, recall his men to capture this last pocket of Muslim resistance. He followed suit.

The Prophet Muhammad was intrigued at their suspicious withdrawal. He concluded that they were going to sack the undefended city of Medina. So, in spite of wounds, he at once prepared as best he could to reorganize his handful of men for defence. Yet his intelligence service men soon brought the report that the enemy were riding their camels, and that the horses were being led alongside bare-backed. The Prophet said: "In that case, they are intending a long journey back home, and not any immediate warlike activity" (Ibn Hisham, p. 583).

The Prophet was still not satisfied. He thought, the enemy must very soon repent and return back to Medina in order to pursue his victory to the end. And he was right. Anyhow, the

Mount Uhud (Ibn Hisham, pp. 572, 576). This is on the east side of the outer semi-circular opening in Uhud, and big enough for a man to lie down comfortably; and was also out of reach of enemy missiles.

When the Muslim resistance was broken, the enemy indulged in outrageous rejoicing. Hind, the wife of their commander-in-chief, Abu Sufyan, cut the belly of Hamzah’s corpse (he was an uncle of the Prophet Muhammad), took out his liver and devoured it to satisfy her thirst for revenge for her father, who had fallen in Badr at the hands of the same Hamzah in single combat (Ibn Hisham, p. 581).
Prophet marched a considerable distance in the wake of the enemy, sent also some advanced scouts — two of whom were captured and murdered by the enemy (Ibn Sa'd, II/1, p. 55) — some of whom succeeded in ensuring the enemy that the Prophet Muhammad had recovered and was prepared to meet them with a force stronger than the one he had mustered at Uhud; and the enemy's counter-bluff had no effect on the Muslims. The Prophet camped with the Muslims at Hamra al-Asad, about ten miles from Medina, on the Wadi al-'Aqiq, on the left of Dhu 'l-Hulaifah, and caused to be lit five hundred fires during the night (Ibid);

and after several days, when there was no more possibility of the enemy's return, he marched back to Medina (Ibn Hisab, p. 588).

Ibn Sa'd (II/1, p. 54) assures us that on his return from Uhud, and before his march in the wake of the enemy, the Prophet had posted guards for the protection of the city of Medina. Ibn Kathir (Vol. IV, p. 20) describes in detail how the Prophet at Uhud took his own position under the banner of the Ansarites, and how he issued orders to different commanders for moving in different directions to oppose the enemy.

INDEPENDENCE DAY OF PAKISTAN (14th August 1952)

EXCERPTS FROM THE SPEECH OF
The Acting Governor of Eastern Pakistan, Mr. 'Abd al-Rahman Siddiqi

"Our struggle, as Muslims, has not finished yet. We have yet to exalt the name of Almighty God and carry the message He sent to mankind through the man Muhammad Ibn 'Abdullah (may God's peace be on him) so that universal brotherhood may become the rule of life for humanity and distinctions of race and colour may disappear altogether"

Pakistan is the symbol of the Muslim resurgence in the world

"The advent of Pakistan was at once the outcome of and the stimulus to a great Muslim resurgence throughout the world. For a long time Muslims all over the world, tragically split and divided among themselves, have been helplessly chafing under the yoke of foreign domination. Thanks to this great wave of Muslim resurgence, during the short space of five years, three independent Muslim countries have come into being. In 1947, the Muslims of this sub-continent established the independent Muslim State of Pakistan. Almost simultaneously our Muslim brothers in Indonesia succeeded in casting off the foreign yoke and established the great Indonesian republic. Libya, another Muslim country, attained independence this year. The same struggle for self-determination is going on today in Tunisia and Morocco, and we pray to God that our Muslim brothers in the Maghrib may regain their lost freedom. The troubles in Palestine will also have to be put right sooner or later. The recent events in Iran and Egypt also are evidence of the same awakening among the Muslims, the same natural impatience with foreign domination and outside intervention in their domestic affairs.

"I recall these facts today because while domestic problems must inevitably claim a large share of our attention, we Pakistanis are deeply interested in the welfare of the entire Muslim world. By virtue of our faith, we Muslims are a great democratic people, and internationalism is a cardinal tenet of Islam which knows no geographical barriers or any ties of caste, creed or colour. We Pakistanis are vitally interested in the progress of our own country. We are equally vitally interested in the fortunes of the Muslim world as a whole, and indeed in the establishment of peaceful and progressive conditions throughout the world. Today, therefore, while we rejoice at our own independent, at our own achievements, we are no less mindful of the problems that face other Muslim countries.

Kashmir is a vital domestic problem of Pakistan

"Among our domestic problems, the most vital is that relating to Kashmir. For us a just solution of the Kashmir problem is a life-and-death matter. For us in Pakistan the issue is very simple. It is to ensure for our Muslim brothers in Kashmir the elementary right of self-determination. This is the right for which the Muslims in this sub-continent struggled bitterly for half a century. It is, indeed, the very raison d'être of the existence of Pakistan. It is the same right for which you see Muslims, and not Muslims only but other suppressed nations, struggling throughout the world. It is the right, the establishment and maintenance of which is the very breath of that great organization, the United Nations. We in Pakistan will do everything in our power, will stake, if need be, all we possess, to ensure that the people of Kashmir are able to exercise this right and are able to determine their own future destiny free from any external pressure or interference. During the short period that I have been Governor of this province, I have been greatly impressed by the depth of feeling among the people of this province on this issue.

"... In the meantime, let us ensure that no outside influences succeed in undermining the unity and solidarity of our people in Pakistan. Those who in the past have opposed the establishment of Pakistan tooth and nail still remain its enemies. They have not changed their objectives although their methods may have changed. They are still deeply engaged in attempting to weaken us by causing disunity and spreading dismay among our ranks. They have in the past sedulously tried and will continue to try to attack our solidarity. They will try to set the people of one province against that of another, one section of Muslims against another, refugees against local Muslims. In their desperate anxiety to divide us they will raise, as they have in the past raised, the cry of the Bengali language in danger, a cry in which there is no substance whatever in fact. Our enemies will try this and every other stratagem possible in their anxiety to sow the seeds of suspicion and disension amongst us. We must beware against their attempts to weaken our unity and our strength. We must jealously guard our solidarity, for this solidarity is the best and surest guarantee for the preservation of our freedom. So long as we remain united and firm, there is no problem facing our country, including the Kashmir problem, which will not be resolved in due course.

"Finally, let us today pay homage to the memory of the Founder of Pakistan (may peace be on him) and resolve to continue to follow the three beacon lights of Faith, Unity and Discipline on the onward road to unity, strength and progress.

"Our struggle, as Muslims, has not finished yet. We have yet to exalt the name of Almighty God and carry the message He sent to mankind through the man Muhammad Ibn 'Abdullah (may Allah's peace be on him) so that universal brotherhood may become the rule of life for humanity and distinctions of race and colour may disappear altogether.

PAKISTAN ZINDABAD"
(i.e., Long live Pakistan)
The Historicity of the

The Birthday of the Prophet

(Born on the 12th Rabbi' al-Awal)

Fell on the 12th Rabbi' al-Awal 1256

Of the founders of the various religious systems of the world, Muhammad is the only historical personage. There are many founders of religions who are not historical figures. Muhammad is based. These 13,000 men and women ;

Muhammad is the only religious teacher who has made it obligatory for his followers to believe and respect

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

From Muhammad, the servant of God and His Messenger, to al-Muquwqas, the chief of the Copts.

Hereby I call upon you with the message of Islam. Accept Islam and be saved, and God will grant you your reward twofold; if you turn back, you will bear the responsibility for what will grieve the Copts. 'O people of the Book! Let us come to a mutual agreement between ourselves, so that neither of us shall worship any but God, or set anything in association with him, or take others for lords besides God; if they turn back, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims.'

Seal

Muhammad,
the Messenger of God.

The centre portion of our block is a facsimile reproduction of a letter of the Prophet Muhammad written at his instance by Copt Brothers, Abimim, Egypt. The left-hand part of the block is the English translation of the Prophet Muhammad's letter to the text, there being no doubt...
Sheikh the Imam al-Rifai, Wali-al-fakih, Senator, and, perhaps, one of the members of his amanuenses to the chief of the Copts, al-Muqawqa, The original of this letter is preserved in the Library of the Cairo University. The letter on the right is the text of the Prophet's letter written in modern Arabic characters with the diacritical points added which were used in those days.
ALCOHOL — A PEST OF MODERN CIVILIZATION

By MURIEL G. HEATH

The psychological aids used by brewers to induce people to drink

The problem presented by alcohol is by no means a new one. Carvings on Theban Tombs, circa 1578 B.C., depict drunken people at a feast. A contemporary writer says: "He that abandons himself to drink is like an oat broken from its fastening which no longer obeys", that is, it can neither control nor be controlled; also, "He is like a house without bread"; the main support is missing. But now in the twentieth century the problem assumes a different aspect. We are living in the days of big business combines; in the days of advertisements which are elaborate, costly, based on subtle suggestions and a study of psychology. We are faced with the fact that a deliberate effort is being made in every land where purses have money in them to induce people to drink; to drink regularly, to drink on any and every possible occasion. In the last 50 years the relationship between men and women has undergone a change and in most countries there is a partnership between the sexes in work, sport and even in war. Many of the old restraints have been removed thereby; and men and women may be seen drinking together in public.

In England some years ago the drink sales were falling and the manufacturers of alcoholic drinks decided that something must be done to turn the tide. Sir Edgar Saunders, an official of a brewery company, told his directors that, "Tens of thousands, almost millions, of young men who did not yet know the taste of beer, should be induced to become the mainstay of the public house", adding that they would drink cheaper beverages at first but would go on to the more expensive ones as they made more money. Wine and spirit producers are spending vast sums on inducing people to purchase their wares. Their advertisements suggest that those who are in the know, and those who discriminate, drink their wines or spirits; no ugly people and no weaklings are seen on the hoardings, which seek to glamorize drink. The result of all these efforts is that drinking has become a cult, a fashion; cocktail and sherry parties abound; they are the easy, lazy way of entertaining when domestic labour and some essential foods — butter, sugar and tea — are in short supply.

So much for the situation. But is alcohol really a pest? The pest may be defined as a plague, anything destructive, a deadly disease.

A plague harasses or annoys. The police can testify to the trouble it causes. The writer was once a probation officer attached to a police court, and a summary of her cases proved that the drink factor was present in 35 per cent of them, in theft, in immoral conduct, in child neglect and in murder.

Is alcohol destructive?

In its very production food is destroyed; while there is starvation in India, Europe and China, while millions of people go to bed hungry every night, the destruction of food goes on to make wine, beer and spirits. In Kent, the Garden of England, 12,644 acres of fertile land are used to grow hops. The United Nations is doing its best to foster the conversion of natural resources but their efforts are offset by the illogical destruction of grapes, cereals and sugar, by the wastage of labour and good land in the production of what is a poison, a habit-forming drug. The idea fostered by the manufacturers that alcoholic drinks are nourishing is totally false; alcohol is not a food in any scientific meaning of the word.

Alcohol is destructive to the body.

Every living thing in nature, whether plant or animal, is composed of innumerable cells — human beings are no exception. Alcohol is a cell poison; it first weakens, then destroys. Every organ of the body becomes less healthy through the taking of even small doses; larger repeated doses may cause a complete breakdown, severe, even fatal, illness. The damage wrought may consist of fatty degeneration and enlargement of the liver, alcoholic gastritis and inflammation of the stomach lining; deficiency of Vitamin B1, with resulting heart disorders, is frequently found among drinkers. Resistance to infection is diminished, which gives added gravity to the contraction of bronchitis, pneumonia and kindred illnesses. Loss of appetite, gastritis and vitamin deficiency prepare the ground for tuberculosis to which the drinker is a ready victim. Since alcohol is a cell poison, and the brain consists of some three hundred million cells, it follows that mental health is impaired by its consumption, and authorities say that it is responsible for 25 to 30 per cent of male admission to mental hospitals.

Epilepsy is induced or aggravated by drink. It is found that those stricken with epilepsy in middle and later life are mostly men and generally alcoholics. Dr. Ninian Bruce, the lecturer in neurology at Edinburgh University, notes that epileptic attacks are most frequent on Saturdays and Sundays, a time of more alcoholic indulgence owing to the pay and pensions drawn at the week-end.

This is only a modicum of the evidence which might be set forth to show how alcohol deteriorates and destroys the body.

Perhaps the gravest and most indictable habit wrought by drink is that done to the family. No one can be unaware of the way in which anger, jealousy and other human failings which mar marriage, are aggravated by drink. The sorrow and pain caused by parents who are alcoholics are evident in many newspaper stories, but it is easier to overlook the suffering which many children undergo on account of drink-instigated quarrels which may never lead to actual separation. Still fewer people know that damage is done to the child of drinking parents before ever it sees the light of day. Maternal alcoholism during pregnancy may result in thyroid deficiency. Nature has placed a protective barrier, the placenta, between the child and any harmful thing which might enter its system through the mother. Through this barrier only three racial poisons can penetrate — lead poisoning, syphilis and alcohol.

Some people are fearful of passing on hereditary diseases to their children. Experts tell us that tuberculosis and cancer are not inevitably hereditary, and modern science has made it possible for a syphilitic parent, well cared for, to have sound children, but a large number of French medicals contend that "children of a chronic alcoholic are always tainted". A woman scientist, Dr. Agnes Bluhm, seeking to discover the extent of paternal responsibility for handing on damage through alcoholism, experimented with eight generations of white mice totalling 30,000. To the males of the first generation only she gave small doses of alcohol six times weekly by skin injections. There was no apparent physical injury but the germ cells were unfavourably and hereditably affected.

The chief results were a larger percentage of sterility, a larger percentage of stunted young, and increased general debility with a sub-normal resistance to disease.

The ill effects persisted through the seven abstinence generations descending through the alcoholized males. Dr. Bluhm believes that the injury to the stock is permanent. The Creator
ALCOHOL IS NOT A FOOD
BARLEY TO BEER

THE CONTENTS OF A BARREL OF BEER

CONTENTS OF SOME COMMON BEVERAGES AND MEDICATED WINES

"I Don't Belong to that Class"
has ordained a dual responsibility in parenthood from which neither father nor mother can escape, so that we should respect our bodies, if not for our own sakes, for that of our children.

Dr. Herlich, of Lausanne, found that out of 86 epileptic cases 50 had alcoholic hereditary. Sometimes the plea is made that if only people would take wine as do the French, many ills of alcoholism would be avoided, but the widespread alcoholism which exists in France today is causing grave concern to medical officers and other authorities. One school medical officer and his wife who examined nearly 4,000 children found that every tenth child exhibited effects due to parental alcoholism. There is little doubt that few people would deliberately condemn a child to a life of mental or physical ill health if they could prevent it, therefore it is incumbent upon the leaders of religious organizations and the educational authorities to see that those for whom they are spiritually or educationally responsible are fully informed of the facts so that preventable damage may be avoided by responsible citizens, not only during marriage but before, since damage can be done even before conception takes place. Only thus can the generations yet unborn enter into their rightful heritage of a sound mind in a sound body.

The citizen and alcoholic drinks

A further destruction wrought by alcohol is that of the citizens' safety and of many amenities which it is reasonable to expect in the twentieth century. One of the reasons why many things which man has made for greater ease of life and for added comfort in the home are denied to some people, is that they are not being produced in sufficient quantity to cope with export and home needs. It is not generally known that a man who consumes even a small quantity of alcohol with his mid-day meal, for example, produces less for the rest of the day than if he had abstained. This fact has been proved by exhaustive scientific investigation. For years, man's labour has been used in the main for destruction or the weapons of destruction — a tremendous wastage as far as normal life is concerned — and it will be a long time before manufacture has caught up with demands. The “catching up” period is inevitably lengthened if men and women, engaged in production of goods, use alcoholic drinks. The truly patriotic person who wishes to aid the best of his ability the recovery and the national economy of his country can best do so by refraining from intoxicants. It should be the aim of each one to co-operate in making a decent life for all to enable every man, woman and child, the world over, to be adequately fed, clothed, housed and educated.

When the question of safety arises the fact must be recognized that the internal combustion engine has revolutionized life while it has brought much ease of labour, much enjoyment and pleasure, it has also increased the dangers in both. The control of a machine of any kind demands both mental concentration and physical precision. Alcohol, being a narcotic drug, impairs these faculties, reduces efficiency; but an added danger lies in the fact that while the performance of the person in charge of a machine or motor is impaired, the performer is under the impression that the reverse is the case, and care which would be normally exercised is lessened and he gives way to an increased recklessness and lessened powers of judgment which increase the possibility of an accident. In former days most people who were in charge of machinery were under the control of an employer; they were work-people, engine drivers, ship engineers, etc., but nowadays tens of thousands of people own machines which traverse the public highways and which, in the hands of careless or inefficient people, become lethal weapons. The slaughter on the roads is now so appalling that it gives rise to serious concern on the part of the general public as well as the authorities.

In 1951, on the roads of Great Britain, 5,250 were killed, 52,360 seriously injured, and 158,874 slightly injured, making a total of 216,493 casualties. During that year on an average, 15 people were killed and 578 injured every day in road accidents. Drivers and pedestrians alike must do their utmost to see that they do nothing to contribute in any way to danger on the roads. It must be made clear that excessive drinking is not the greatest part of the trouble as far as drink-caused accidents are concerned, that people's alertness is seriously and measurably impaired by even one glass of beer or a nip of spirits, either of which is sufficient to slow up a driver's reactions for an hour or more.

A publican in Norway is forbidden to give drinks to a person who is about to drive a car, and if serving a motoring party, must learn which is the driver in order not to transgress. Pilots of a large air company are forbidden to take alcohol within 24 hours of flying, which goes to prove that the detrimental effects of drink are not worked out of the system so rapidly as many people erroneously suppose.

The physician of Bristol Royal Infirmary wrote in the British Medical Journal, 1 March, 1952: "In a large hospital at least 60 per cent of all motor accidents admitted during the evening and over the week-end have involved drivers who have taken alcohol, and whilst many of these drivers could not in any way be said to be drunk in the accepted sense of the term, their reaction time has been sufficiently impaired and delayed to make them unfit to drive a motor vehicle."

Alcohol and social manners

Intoxication does not come about suddenly; it is a process of gradually putting the brain out of action section by section. The Pedestrians' Association, England, arranged a conference on Alcohol and Road Safety, at which qualified experts, such as chief constables and doctors stressed the inadvisability of taking even the smallest quantity of alcohol before driving.

It is not merely in the physical sphere that alcohol works such devastation, but the destructiveness extends to the most finely developed part of the human being, his personality and his morals, owing to the fact that it affects first and foremost the higher functions of the brain which determine ethical conduct even before it affects that part which determines physical action, known as motor action. That is why people who indulge in intoxicants sometimes appear to have no sense of shame and evince a lack of responsibility to others. One of the ways in which this shows itself is in their eagerness to get other people also to drink and keep them in countenance. Those who from taste or from principle do not wish to partake are frequently begged, badgered, exhorted or coaxed to do so. A host may even be guilty of using innuendo, sarcasm, or derision in order to overcome the refusal of a guest. It is beyond comprehension to understand why when one can refuse to take tomatoes, oysters, caviare, or any comestible, without being subjected to such treatment. It is significant that the exception is made in regard to a habit-forming drug. There is a most indiscriminate and reprehensible distribution of this commodity which the law recognizes as dangerous and only allows to be sold under certain conditions and to people above certain ages. Hosts and hostesses who are normally kind people, and the last ones in the general way to wish harm to any of their guests, particularly the younger ones, provide it indiscriminately on all social occasions, serving it to young and old alike.

The danger which lies in the provision and consumption of drink on social occasions is perhaps best illustrated by the following true story. A prison chaplain told a friend of his that he apprehended a young man on the eve of execution for the murder of his sweetheart. Before his death young fellow asked to see his own minister, and the prison chaplain was present at the interview.
Characteristic Actions of ALCOHOL
Solvent and Dehydrant.

USEFUL OUTSIDE THE BODY
HARMFUL INSIDE THE BODY
Disguised as

Effects on Living Tissue
NARCOTIC
Disturbs Lipoid and Dehydrates Protoplasm

Fish, Bread, Fruit, Sugar, Meat in ALCOHOL

"OUTSIDE the BODY its Uses are Many;
INSIDE the BODY it’s NO use—NOT ANY."*
THE STAGES OF INTOXICATION

The Stages of Intoxication are brought about by the narcotising of the brain from above downwards, and depend upon the amount of Alcohol circulating in the blood.

"A LARGE NUMBER OF EXPERIMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE WITH SMALL DOSES OF ALCOHOL AND UNDER THE STRICTEST CONTROL TO DETERMINE THE PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL. THESE EXPERIMENTS PROVE CONCLUSIVELY THAT ALCOHOL AFFECTS THE MUSCULAR REACTIONS AND INTERFERES WITH THE CO-ORDINATION OF EYES, HANDS AND FEET." (Union of South Africa Report on Road Safety Research, 1945).

Stage I. "Apparent "DRY and DECENT" but in reality "deceived and dangerous". 1 Part of alcohol in 1,000 parts of blood. Drinker is not perfectly sober.

Stage II. "DELIGHTED and DEVILISH". 2 Parts of alcohol in 1,000 parts of blood. This is the usual amount of alcohol found in the blood of the "had-been-drinking" driver.

Stage III. "DELINQUENT and DISGUSTING". 3 Parts of alcohol in 1,000 parts of blood. The drinker begins to stagger. This is the stage at which most of the serious crime takes place.

Stage IV. "DIZZY and DELIRIOUS". 4 Parts of alcohol in 1,000 parts of blood. The drinker cannot stand up alone. In this stage the drinker is obviously less dangerous to others than when in stages II and III.

Stage V. "DAZED and DEJECTED". 5 Parts of alcohol in 1,000 parts of blood. The drinker cannot stand at all. He is still less dangerous to the public than when in stage IV.

Stage VI. "DEAD DRUNK". More than 5 parts of alcohol in 1,000 parts of blood. This is a lethal dose. This man is a social tragedy: is a danger to himself, but not to the public.

AT EVERY STAGE THERE MAY OCCUR SOME ACT WHICH IS DETERIMENTAL TO THE USER OR TO SOMEONE ELSE THROUGH HIM.

ABSTAIN!
The young man asked the minister if he remembered attending a certain social event some time previously. The minister said that he did. Then the condemned man said: "I was at the gathering. I wondered what I ought to do about taking wine, and decided to watch you and see what you did. You took it, so I did. That was the first time I had ever taken intoxicants; and it was under the influence of drink that I did the deed for which I shall pay with my life in a few days."

"I have not asked you to come and see me to blame you for that deed; the deed was my own fault and I must face the consequences. But I wanted to say to you before I die: For God's sake do not lead another person astray as you have led me." (A student of behaviour will note that there were three "sinners" on this significant occasion: the one who offered drink, the one who set a dangerous example in taking it, and the one who was too weak to make his own decision.) Muhammad once said: "The best of friends is he who is best in behaviour and character"; the best, probably, because his behaviour is such that it may be safely shared or followed on intoxicants.1

Nowadays there is no excuse for offering alcoholic refreshments as there are numerous attractively alternate non-alcoholic drinks. The best ones are not cheap, but neither are the "best" intoxicants. Such a variety may be found in any good hostess book—one which deserves special mention is White Cocktails, by Susan Shaffer Dibelka, 10 cents per copy, from the W.C.T.U., 220 Pine Street, Harrisburg, Pa., U.S.A., based on the recipes furnished by Mrs. John D. Pennington, a noted Pennsylvania hostess who has made a study and an art of the preparation and serving of non-alcoholic beverages.

Why people prefer alcoholic drinks to soft drinks

There are many reasons why people prefer beverages wherein lies destruction, one being the inferiority complex which invades many mingling with comparative strangers. Alcohol creates what is known as euphoria, a sense of well-being, of ease, of being a specially fine fellow. Unfortunately, the effect of alcohol makes the drinker less fine, less wise, less agreeable, bringing at the same time a loss of personal freedom, that loss of control over thoughts and actions which every discriminating person needs in order to evince that consideration and courteousness which are the main essentials of social enjoyment and good fellowship. These truths are only partially admitted or recognized. They need to be said firmly and often. Muhammad advised his followers: "Say that which is true, though it be bitter and displeasing to many. . . . It is better to sit alone than in the company of the bad." Writers through the ages have testified that alcohol has always been a pest, has wrought damage and destruction, and it continues to have the same effect on modern civilization. Within comparatively recent years leading statesmen such as Lord Stamp and Lord Snowden have even gone so far as to say that it is mankind's greatest enemy as war. It threatens civilization itself. For centuries man has used his brain and ingenuity to extend knowledge, to bring joy and culture into life. Therefore he should not be content to tolerate consumption of a poison which can wipe out, even temporarily, his own knowledge, his own enjoyment and that of others, in a matter of minutes. One of the greatest failings of modern man is that he is too often satisfied with "basement living" when it is within his power to live in the sun, enjoying most of the good things of life.

"Alcohol wipes out the best bit of man"

To those who are concerned that the spiritual development of man as individuals or as a race should be unhindered, the final condemnation of alcohol is to be found in the words of Mr. Arthur Evans, the great brain specialist: "Alcohol wipes out the best bit of (man) — the keen edge of muscle and nerve and those powers whereby we communicate with, and become part of, the Divine and the Highest"; thus showing that the menace of drink does not stop at the physical, the material, the mental, but that it even aims at man's eternal soul. In earlier days the truth was revealed to many who had not modern science to uphold their beliefs or the laboratory to prove them right in their claim that abstinence is a desirable, a holy thing. The Prophet Muhammad had the truth of the matter when he said: "The person who drinketh liquor . . . calleth down upon himself great punishment." An old English writer has said that "Man is not an island unto himself." In the important things of life, in the things which concern our eternal self, we should be united. A moral welfare, a holy crusade, is needed to overcome the vested interest of the drink traffic which threatens people of every race and creed, so that by example, by exhortation and by putting the best interests of the many before self-indulgence and commercial gain, modern civilization shall be rid of this pest — Alcohol.

Dailamah Al-Humairi says: "I asked the Prophet Muhammad: 'O Prophet of God! Verily we are in a cold land and we have to work hard. We prepare drink from this wheat which gives us strength in our work and in the cold of our towns.' The Prophet Muhammad said: 'Does it intoxicate?' 'Yes,' said I. He said, 'Give it up!' I said: 'Verily the people cannot give it up.' He said: 'If they don't give it up, fight with them.'"

Ansas says that he asked the Prophet Muhammad: 'O Prophet of God! Verily I have purchased intoxicant for the orphans under my care.' The Prophet said: 'Throw it and break the wine vessels.'

Umm Salamah says the Prophet Muhammad prohibited every intoxicant and exciting food.

Nu'man Ibn Bashr says that the Prophet Muhammad said: 'Verily there is an intoxicant from maize and an intoxicant from barley and an intoxicant from dry dates and an intoxicant from dry grapes and an intoxicant from honey.'

Jabir says that the Prophet said: 'What intoxicates in greater quantity is also unlawful in its smaller quantity.'

Ibriq Ibn Suwaid asked the Prophet Muhammad about intoxicants. The Prophet Muhammad prohibited their consumption. Ibn Suwaid said: 'Verily I prepare intoxicants for medicine.' The Prophet thereupon said: 'It is not medicine but a disease.'

'Ayesha said that the Prophet Muhammad was asked about bir — an intoxicating beverage of honey. The Prophet Muhammad said: 'Verily every drink that intoxicates is unlawful.'

1 Addendum by the Editor, The Islamic Review.

The Qur'an says: O you who believe! Intoxicants are only an uncleanness, the devil's work; shun it therefore that you may be successful (5:90).

SOME SAYINGS OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD ON INTOXICANTS

Anas reports that the Prophet Muhammad cursed ten people in the matter of intoxicants — the person who presses it, the person who is engaged to press it, the person who drinks it, the person who transports it, the person to whom it is carried, the person who gives it to others to drink, the person who sells it, the person who makes his living by it, the person who purchases it, and the person for whom it is purchased.

Ibn 'Abbas reports that the Prophet Muhammad said: "If the habitual drunkard dies, he meets God like one who worships idols."

Abdullah Ibn 'Amr says that the Prophet Muhammad said: "He who is disobedient to parents, unkind to the poor, harsh after charity and an habitual drunkard, shall not enter Paradise."

Abu Musa al-Ash'ari says that the Prophet Muhammad said: "There are three individuals who will not enter Paradise — an habitual drunkard, he who cuts the blood tie, and a believer in sorcery."

'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr says that the Prophet Muhammad prohibited intoxicants, games of chance, card playing, the intoxicant called Ghahara, and the Prophet said, "Every intoxicant is unlawful".

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France ruled the Arabs by “Divide and Rule” before World War II

In Syria, political power has been in the hands of the military since the overthrow of the President of the Republic, Shukri al-Kuwaitly, and the Premier, Jamil Mardam, in April 1949. Corruption and hopelessly inefficient handling of the campaign against the Zionists led to strikes inspired by Left-wing politicians. The army under its Chief of Staff, General Husny Za‘im, drove out the veteran leaders of the National bloc, who had been in power since 1943, and had negotiated the abortive 1956-37 treaty with the progressive Popular Front French Government of Leon Blum. These French politicians had themselves been pushed into power by a social upheaval in 1936 which had induced Blum to negotiate a treaty with the Syrians through his arabophile Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, P. Vienot. The reactionary French Senate and the government of the Radical Socialist Daladier shamelessly refused to ratify this treaty which would have granted Syria her independence. France also handed the Sandjak of Alexandretta to Kemal Ataturk. (In this district a substantial minority of 40 per cent were Turkish, but the majority were Arabs.) The French then calmly proceeded to divide up Syria into petty states, separating the Druzes and the ‘Alawites from the ‘orthodox’ Muslims, and play off the Christians against the Muslims in the Lebanon. A specialist in this game was the erstwhile French Lawrence in Syria, Major Collet. The Syrian National bloc suffered a temporary eclipse, but after the defeat of France by Germany in 1940 the powerful French colonial army which had been built up in Syria by General Weygand deserted its Allies, and the French General Dentz supported the Nazis, at the same time ruthlessly suppressing the Syrian nationalists. British and Arab Legion troops defeated the Vichy colonial army after some fierce fighting between de Gaulist and Vichy troops.

The tactics of the French in Syria during the war and after

A Free French administration was set up, but the British Army was in real control. General Sir Edward Spears, who had been responsible more than anyone for building up General de Gaulle as leader of the French Resistance Movement, courageously championed the Arab Nationalist leaders against the French administrators, who were carrying on the repressive tactics of the previous régime in flagrant contradiction to their public declarations in which they had promised to grant independence to Syria and the Lebanon. The Muslim leader and Premier of the Lebanon was arrested on 11th November 1943 with the other members of his Ministry for inaugurating a series of amendments to the Constitution with the purpose of freeing the Lebanon from French encroachments. General Spears earned the lasting hatred of French imperialists when he liberated the Lebanese patriots. He rightly considered that the war against Nazi Germany could not be won by antagonizing the Arab world by arresting popular Arab patriots miles from the fighting front in order to satisfy the egotistical aristocratic imperialism of the arrogant General de Gaulle. Syria and the Lebanon were founder-members of the Arab League. The Western Powers had recognized their respective independence, but the French were thirsting for revenge, and in June 1943 they bombarded Damascus, the capital, thus repeating a barbarous action they had taken in 1925 when there was a large-scale revolt which spread to the capital from the Jebel Duruz, where the Druzes under Sultan al-Atrash put up a magnificent resistance comparable with that of ‘Abd al-Karim and the Rif tribesmen in Morocco in the same year. By an irony of fate, General Gamelin, the vanquisher of the Druzes, was out-generalled by the Germans in 1940 and replaced by the equally unsuccessful General Weygand, while Marshal Pétain, the conqueror of the Rif, became the leader of Vichy France. Thus by mere chance the French conquerors of the Arabs received a dose of their own medicine.

Britain helps Syria and the Lebanon in achieving their independence

The British once again intervened and forced the French troops to retire to the Lebanon. The British tardily made good the wrong they had done the Syrians when they agreed to the iniquitous Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1917 whereby Palestine was partitioned off from the rest of Syria, which was to be mandated to France in flagrant contradiction to Britain’s previous promise to the Sharif of Mecca, Husain. (These promises made in 1916 were bound by certain modifications, but the Sykes-Picot agreement handed over the whole of Syria less the southern Sandjak of Palestine.) A crisis developed between the French government of General de Gaulle and the Churchill National Government in Great Britain, but fortunately Britain’s Foreign Minister, Mr. Anthony Eden, heeded the voice of General Spears, who was the real liberator of Syria and the Lebanon, for which he deserves the gratitude of the Muslim world. In 1946 French and British troops evacuated Syria and the Lebanon. Political independence was achieved, but economic
dependence on France and the franc remained. It was this
that led to a rift between Syria and the Lebanon in 1950.

**Syria under military rule since March 1949**

In March 1949 General Husni Za'im and the army leaders,
General Sami Hinnawi and Colonel Adib al-Shishakly, overthrew
the civilian government; the President of the Republic, Shukri
al-Kuwaitly, and his premier, Jamil Mardam, went into exile.
The army was thoroughly dissatisfied with the inefficiency,
corruption and nepotism which had prevented Syria from playing
an effective part in the Palestine campaign. General Za'im was
at first considered to be pro-Hashemite, pro-British, and a suppor-
ter of the Fertile Crescent and Greater Syria projects, but he
tried to win the support of Egypt, where his enemy, Shukry al-
Kuwaitly, was friendly with the government and the Arab
League officials. Za'im tried to consolidate his personal power.

The picture shows three state men (left to right, Mr. Mubammad
Zafrullah Khan, Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Faris al-
Khoury, one of the elder statesmen of the Lebanon, and Dr.
Fadil al-Jamaali, Foreign Minister of
Iraq in conversation

He was more pro-French than pro-British. He handed Ante Saade,
a political refugee, over to the Lebanese authorities, who executed
him. Saade believed in using methods of direct action to achieve
power and the fusion of the Lebanon with Syria. (Officially,
52 per cent of the Lebanese are Christians and 47 per cent
Muslims, but the Muslims are rapidly increasing, and their num-
bers will sooner or later exceed those of the Christians. Some
of the Christians wish the Lebanon to support the West, and not
the Arab League, but there is a fairly strong anti-West
Communist Party which has many Christian members.)

A coup d'état led by Colonel Hinnawi overthrew Husni
Za'im, who was executed. Hinnawi was friendly to Iraq and
Jordan, and to fusion under the Hashemites, who were on the
whole very unpopular with the Syrians, who are fundamentally
republicans. The result was that General Hinnawi went into
exile in the Lebanon, where he was assassinated by a relative of
one of the family of a politician, Barazi, whom he had caused
to be executed as a supporter of Za'im.

**Colonel Shishakly**

For two years Colonel Shishakly, who allowed civilians to
run the government, and controlled the police as well as the
army, finally took over the reins of the government on 2nd
December 1951. During the intervening period a friend of his,
Colonel Fawzi Silo, was a member of the ministry of one of the
 premiers, Khalid al-'Azm, and Akram Hourani, the leader of the
Socialist Party, a nationalist organization, favouring fusion of the
Lebanon with Syria and a friend of Saade, was reputedly the chief
adviser of Shishakly in the early days of his dictatorship. Nazim
al-Qudsi, of the Populist (Shab) Party, resigned the premier-
ship in March 1951 after an attempt to draw up plans for a
Federal Arab State. Another premier, al-Hakim, attempted to
get Syria to join in the Western Defence Scheme, but he was
vigorously opposed by Ma'ruf Dawalibi, a supporter of the
Muslim Brothers, who favoured a neutralist policy. Dawalibi
attempted to form a ministry, but the army came into action
once more, and in December 1951, Colonel Shishakly interred

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Powers, who have so far refused to support the Israeli on this point.

Relations between Syria, Iraq and France

Relations between Syria and Iraq have been very strained at the top. The Syrians encouraged the Jordanian Government in its opposition to the appointment of the Jordan Regency Council of a Hashimite. The Iraq Government refused to recognize the Shishakly régime and called for the reintroduction of a parliamentary régime in Syria. The Iraqi Foreign Minister has made a strong statement to this effect. A meeting between Shishakly and the former Iraqi Premier, Nuri Sa'id, at Shatoura on 16th July 1952, is reported by the Syrian Minister, Zafar Rifa'i, to have dissipated the tension between the two countries. French influence is, however, at work to stir up trouble between Syria and Iraq and Britain. To add to this has come the suppression of the Syrian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood on the grounds that it was dabbling in politics, which were outside its declared religious aims, and which aroused hostility in Egypt. In January 1952 Communists joined nationalists in demonstrating against the régime. The local leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood were arrested, and there were several casualties at Aleppo, where troops clashed with the demonstrators. Students were ordered not to take part in political organizations, and several were conscripted into the army and told that if they wanted trouble they should be put in the front line on the Palestine frontier.

Colonel Shishakly's call for one Arab State extending from the Taurus to Morocco

Colonel Shishakly has formed an Arab Party which has for its object the unification of all the Arab States from the Taurus to Morocco. The idea is excellent in itself. All Arabs have great respect for the intellectual ability of the Syrians. The idea of Arab unity which is so much in the hearts of the Arab masses and intellectuals has always been obstructed by the selfish personal interests of the local kings and rulers in the various States. Some Syrians have looked to the Muslim Brotherhood to achieve this long-delayed unity.

The regeneration under General Najib has regained for Egypt her confidence which she lost through King Farouk and the Arab League’s inefficient handling of the Palestine war. But Colonel Shishakly shares with General Najib the same desire to restore the military prestige of the great days of the Arab Empire. Colonel Shishakly also seems to favour entering into friendly relations with the Western Powers in order to obtain modern arms. It remains to be seen if he is serious about setting up a unified Arab State or whether he is merely attempting to divert internal discontent against the Zionists and to build up the idea of a Utopian State in the imagination of the Syrian people. The closer federation of Syria and the Lebanon is for every Muslim too obvious to need statement, and the Arab people of Jordan, Iraq, Syria and the Lebanon could form one powerful unit which together with Egypt could prove to be an effective barrier to Israeli pretensions. Therefore Colonel Shishakly's Arab State must not be dismissed without serious consideration.

Economic aspects of Syria and the Lebanon

Syria occupies an area of roughly 66,000 square miles and the Lebanon 3,900 square miles. Of this area only 15.9 per cent out of a possible 33 per cent of these areas is regularly cultivated. In the Lebanon the land is fully cultivated, but a population of 1,246,580 is squeezed into an area which is roughly 1/16th of the size of Syria, which has a population of only 3,252,687, i.e., less than three times that of the Lebanon. In Syria the chief exports are food and textiles. Figures for 1950 show that £(Syrian)102,254,0001 worth of agricultural products were exported. Exports went chiefly to the Lebanon, France, and the United States, while the chief countries importing goods into Syria were the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and France. In 1951 a tremendous increase was made in the cultivation of cotton: the area under production was increased from 77,951 hectares in 1950 to 217,562 hectares. In 1951, 50,000 tons of ginned cotton were produced. For this the Syrian Government has criticised some of the landowners for indiscriminately growing cotton on unsuitable soil, and has promised to control and give guidance in the growing of cotton in the future.

There are two cotton spinning mills in Syria as well as glass and porcelain factories and a sugar beet mill. The Iraq Petroleum Company pipe-line has been extended through Syria to Banyas on the coast, and a sum of about £450,000 is paid by the company to the Syrian Government yearly for this privilege.

The Lebanon depends largely on the port of Beirut for its revenue. Here over 900,000 tons of goods are loaded and unloaded each year (the tonnage of the imports exceeds that of exports by four to one). The Lebanon depends partly on remittances from the large Lebanese colonists living abroad and tourism. Since the termination of the French mandate there has been a serious economic dispute between Syria and the Lebanon which came to a head in January 1948 with the devaluation of the French franc. The Syrians desired to end their monetary connection with France and to protect their growing industries with a tariff system, and to develop the port of Latakia (Arabic: al-Latqiyah) in the north of Syria, so as to be independent of Beirut. There was also some competition between Syria and the Lebanon over the choice of the terminal of the tap-line (a pipe transmitting the oil from Arabia to the Mediterranean). Fortunately, in 1952 a new economic agreement was signed between the two countries.

Ownership of the land in Syria and the reforms introduced by the régime

One of the main causes of discontent in Syria which has led to the military coups d'état has been the unequal division of land, and the comparatively low standard of living of the mass of the people, of whom over two-thirds depend on the land for a living. According to United Nations statistics in the year 1949, the per capita income in Syria was $100 and in the Lebanon $140. This was higher than the per capita income in Iraq and Iran, where the average was only $85, and Sa'udi Arabia and the Yemen, where it was $40 and $45 respectively.

In Syria 60 per cent of the land is in the hands of the big landowners. According to a writer, Ziyad, in an article published in the Beirut paper al-Tariq, in 1949 several hundred big landowners owned 4,100,000 hectares; 30,000 landowners owned medium-sized holdings averaging 60 hectares; and 100,000 farmers had holdings of an average of 6 hectares. There were 200,000 families who possessed no land whatsoever. The majority of the big holdings were in the north.

Miss Doreen Warriner in her Land and Poverty in the Middle East has given a detailed account of the conditions prevailing in Syria. She says that three-quarters of the people live off the land in Syria and that the average cultivated land per head in 1945 was 2.4 acres, of which only 1.4 acres was properly cultivated. She says that "it is peasant indebtedness which supports the large landowners. Two bad harvests in succession will mean that the peasants become so much indebted that they will actually reduce the area sown for lack of seed and will therefore be obliged to sell to a money lender or city merchant. The majority of the big Christian merchants in the town have become rural landowners in this way, particularly in Latakia and around Homs and Hama.  

\[1 \text{£} = £(\text{Syrian})8\]
In the Syrian plain district entire villages have passed into the hands of merchants through indebtedness. 

"Most of these large landowners are city families, who take no interest whatsoever in actual methods of cultivation."

The peasants pay interest on loans from 30 to 100 per cent. Many of them pay from 50 to 60 per cent of the produce of the harvest to the landlord, as a form of rent, the percentage taken by the landlord varying according to whether or not the land is irrigated or whether the landlord provides the peasants with agricultural implements, water, etc.

The present government has been talking of distributing 2,000,000 dunams to the peasants. Akram Hourani, the leader of the Socialist Party, has been long pressing for land reform, but this was blocked by the landed deputies before the latest coup d'état. As in Egypt and Iran, the government is faced with the parliamentary opposition of the landowning interests. Recently, the government has reduced the price of bread to 25 piastres a kilo and has provided bread cards for the poor. If the present régime in Syria is to stabilize itself, it will have to carry out drastic land reform so as to give itself solid support amongst the fellahin.

A decree has been enacted which limits the land holdings of State-owned lands to 50 hectares. It also prohibits the sale of this land to new owners.

Other reforms in Syria

The Syrian Government has promised to introduce family allowances and a health scheme. A 36 per cent income tax is being levied on all incomes in excess of £(Syrian)750,000 per year. The government Wheat Office is being provided with funds in order that it may be able to supply farmers with agricultural materials and equipment. A profit of 5 per cent will be made on these sales. A decree issued on 2nd December 1951 abolished all titles of distinction. Technical education is being stimulated, and the sum of £(Syrian)2,800,000 has been allocated to the technical college in Aleppo.

Improvements in irrigation

Irrigation projects and the development of water supplies are being undertaken. 3,200 hectares have been brought under irrigation through the digging of two canals under the Lake Mazareeb Irrigation Project. Also in this district electric power is being developed in order to supply lighting and energy for pumping water during the summer months.

9,000 hectares of land will be irrigated by a canal system constructed on the left bank of the Khabour River between Tal Maghas and al-Hasejeh. The actual canal, which is 40 kilometres in length, has twenty-four subsidiary canals and a tunnel 385 metres long.

Under the Sinn Irrigation Scheme, the water level of the Sinn River has been raised 5 metres by a dam. Canals are being constructed, and it is hoped that in all 4,500 hectares of land will be brought under cultivation. A tunnel is being dug by the Sainrapr, Brice Company through the Waltani mountain which will drain the Rouj marshes, which cover an area of 3,500 hectares. The water will run into the Orontes. The land will be fit for cultivation. A waterfall 115 metres long will be utilized in order to develop electrical power for use in the vicinity.

Water supplies are being improved in the town of Qunaitra, while twenty-five artesian wells are being drilled in the Hauran villages.

Thus it can be seen that a serious attempt is being made to improve the Syrian agriculture, although the refusal of Point-Four aid has prevented any large sums coming from abroad to quicken up Syria’s economic development. On the other hand, Syria is naturally suspicious of American aid being linked up with political pressure in favour of peace with Israel in occupied Palestine.

Over £23,000,000 is being spent on the development of the port of Latakia. Jordan is keen to avail herself of the use of this port once it is in operation, as she is dissatisfied with the high charges of the port authorities in Beirut.

MODERN SA’UDI ARABIAN LITERATURE

By AL-HAJJ DR. ‘ABD al-KARIM GERMANUS

A few words about the background of modern Arabian literature

Arabia was the cradle and fountain of a considerable literature. Even in the times of barbarism, the culture innate in the souls of the Bedouins manifested itself in poetry and the qasidas (odes delivered during the sacred months at ‘Ukaz and Mecca) had been considered the utmost height the Arabic language could attain to. These were only superseded and eclipsed by the divine inspiration of the Qur’an forever unequalled in wisdom, beauty and force.

The Holy Qur’an standardized the dialect of the Hejaz, which thenceforth became and remained the literary idiom of the Arabs. After the Prophet Muhammad’s death, the poetical inspiration of the Arabian bards did not ebb away, it was only diverted into channels appropriate to the changed conditions. While the conquering armies carried every able-bodied man to the far-off battlefields, Medina remained faithful to the pious traditions of the Prophet, and Mecca became the centre of an enlarged Islamic community, enriched by the crowd of pilgrims flocking from the remotest parts of the civilized world. Life developed accordingly, the riches amassed through the territorial gains engendered a luxury and cultural refinement even surpassing the well-being of the pre-Islamic times, and created a worldly atmosphere, which is best characterized by the amorous poems of ‘Umar ibn Abi Rabia. Greek and Persian influences further enlivened singing accompanied by foreign musical instruments. The Hejaz retained its poetical traditions throughout the Omayyad rule.

The Abbasid court lured the best Arabic poets to Baghdad and their place in Arabia was filled by minor talents, consequently we notice a decline of poetry in pure Arabian lands, but scientific literature still owed much to scholars of the Hejaz, such as Mamil ibn Anas, al-Azraqi, Muhammad ibn Ishaq, al-Waqqidi, etc.

The sterile periods in the literary history of Arabia

In the third century of the Flight the Hejaz irretrievably lost its political position and Arabia declined in literary importance. The khutba (sermon) was read sometimes to the Abbasides, sometimes to the Ikshidids and Yemenites according to the changing waves of wars and insurrections. Poetry seemed to have lost its favourable position in Arabia proper. Thalib does not mention a single Arabian poet in his Yatima al-Dabr (The Wonder of the Age).

The following centuries saw the rule of the Sharifs of Mecca and the cultural decline continued while far-off Spain and other parts of the Muslim world still fostered the precious heritage of Islamic civilization. The chroniclers of the sacred cities, e.g., al-Sanjari, relate such incredible events as fill pious Muslims with

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horror. Worldly ambitions shadowed the once glorious centres of religion. Hamidha ibn Abi Nama in order to secure his inheritance killed his brother and had his flesh fried to be eaten by the other brothers. Ibn Batuta tells us that the Emir of Medina, Kabish ibn Mansur, killed his uncle and performed his ablutions in his blood. As a revenge Kabish’s sons murdered the Emir and licked his blood. In such a ferocious atmosphere culture perished.

The Turkish rule over Arabia was not a relief from barbarity, though the sultans tried to win some Meccan aristocrats for their cause. The only literary results were some laudatory odes in an insipid turbid style. Mecca itself suffered from the ever exchanged, expelled or executed Emirs who, knowing the short duration of their office, tried to enrich themselves while time permitted. The Turkish language was employed in the offices and Arabic suffered a deplorable neglect. The rise of the Wahhabis and their wars were by no means conducive to the elevation of the people politically or culturally. The reaction to the rise and eventual discomfiture of the Wahhabi rule brought a total stagnation to Arabic literature in Arabia at that time.

The Renaissance of Arabian literature in Arabia

The declaration of the Turkish constitution awakened the national consciousness of the Arab people who tried to liberate themselves from the Turkish yoke and at the cost of many hardships and heavy sacrifices new Arabic States came into existence. King Ibn Sa’ud ousted the Sharif from the sacred cities, established his puritan Islamic rule in Central and Western Arabia and inaugurated a revival of Islam and its culture. Printing presses began to work at Mecca and Medina and the king proved himself a patron of learning by ordering the publishing of books on the Hanbalite rite.

The valuable works of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyya have been reprinted in the Salafiyya at Mecca. Mecca boasts of several rich libraries. Two were founded by Indian Muslims: ‘Abdul-Wahhab and ‘Abdul-Sattar Dhilawi; which contain valuable manuscripts and books on the learned men of Mecca. The pride of Mecca is the library of Muhammad Majd al-Kurdi which he founded some 70 years ago. Here Rushdi Saalih, the editor of Mecca’s chief weekly, permitted his edition of Azraqi’s Akhbar Makka to be printed, the complete MSS. of which he had found in the Najd.

Some contemporary writers

The printing-house of al-Salihiyya has published ‘Uthman ibn Bishr al-Najdi’s work: ‘Umran al-Majd fi Tarikh al-Najd (The Title of Glory in the Story of Najd, 1349-1930). The author died in 1288 A.H.-1870 C.E. and had collected from scraps of notes and hearsay from his grandfather’s intimate stories of life in the Najd. The work is written in a half-popular style and contains valuable historic data, especially about the economic conditions of the past century.

Ibn ‘Abd al-Hamid, Hafiz Wahba, Ibn Muhammad Nasir

Ibn ‘Abd al-Hamid’s ‘Umdat al-Akhbar fi Madina al-Mukhtar is dedicated by his editor As’ad Tarabuznuni al-Husayni al-Madani to the Sa’udi prince, Faisal. It describes Medina, its historic monuments and places connected with the life of the Prophet Muhammad. Very little is known of the author and his time. Hafiz Wahba, Ambassador of Sa’udi Arabia in London, has published a very exact book on geography and history of Arabia in the twentieth century under the title Jazirat al-‘Arab. ‘Abd al-Qaddus al-Ansari describes the monuments and historic places of Medina with photographic illustrations, a valuable and unique guide for pious visitors to the sacred town. Similar books were written by the indefatigable Husain ‘Abdullah Basalaama on the sacred city of Mecca with good photographic plates of its monuments, under the title: Tarikh al-Kab’a l-mu’azzama and Tarikh l-Murar al-Majd al-haraam. The same author has also compiled a work of five volumes on the Life of the Prophet (Hayaat Sayyid al-‘Arab) in which he emphasizes the cultural importance of Islam (al-Nabidh al-islamiyya ma’u ’l-IIm wa ’l-Madaniyya). The work has been printed at Jidda.

‘Abd Qaddus edits a very interesting monthly review at Medina (printed at Mecca), al-Manhul (The Fountain), which deals with literary, historical and scientific subjects, useful to the large reading public.

Husain ibn Muhammad Nasir’s Madidi ‘l-Hejaz wa Haadhiruha is very readable; Muhammad Nasir one of the most learned men of Jidda possesses a rich library and his house is the gathering-place of learned men. I, too, enjoyed his unequalled hospitality during my stay at Jidda. His son has collected very important facts about the rule of King Husain and the subsequent historical events.

Sa’id ‘Abd al-Maqud, Bakathir, al-‘Arabi and ‘Aqeel

Literary life in Arabia is deeply influenced by the rising culture of Egypt and Syria. The daily intercourse between the two countries, facilitated by airways, will soon bring its ripening fruits. Writers and poets gather in the offices of papers and eagerly discuss the topical literary events of the world. This spiritual activity is manifested in the nicely published book, Waby al-Sabba (The Inspiration of the Desert) edited by Sa’id ‘Abd al-Maqud and ‘Abdullah ‘Umair bi ‘l-Khair. Dr. Husain Haykel, the eminent Egyptian author has written an introduction to the book in which he appreciates the work of the Arabian poets and prose-writers who have contributed to the volume.


Professor Dr. ‘Abd al-Karim Germanus
in Egypt and became teacher at Mecca, later editor of the Saut al-Hejaz. His chief interest was in the elevation of Arabian women to the standard of modern requirements and he has published several articles in which he urges people to adapt themselves to the exigencies of present-day life. He writes in an easy style, full of enthusiasm for the uplift of his country.

We discover a poet of great ability in Ahmad al-'Arabi, born at Medina, where he studied at Azhar and later travelled in India and Malaya. He was appointed teacher of the princes at Riyadh in 1354 A.H.-1935 C.E. Under his photograph we find his poetical motto:

"My picture is a small written scroll
Of my life. It can be read as a whole
Today, a symbol of the will of my soul;
But, when hoarseness my head makes uncoffin,
It will remind you of my youth
And after death be a memory of life:
Many a memory survives our strife!"

Amin ibn ‘Aqeel was born at Mecca 1329 A.H.-1911 C.E., and became teacher at Mecca. He busied himself with the reorganization of the pedagogical system of Arabia.

Qandil Khazindar, Sarhan, Sarraaj, Ashi, Naqishbandi and al-Khair

Ahmad Qandil, born at Jidda 1329 A.H.-1911 C.E., began his career as a teacher, later he worked on the staff of the weekly paper, the Saut al-Hejaz. He contributed a number of patriotic poems on short metres.

Husain Khazindar, born at Mecca 1336 A.H.-1917 C.E., is interested in social problems, for which he tries to pave the way with the introduction of modern ideas.

Old memories arise on reading the verses of Husain Sarhan, born at Mecca 1334 A.H.-1915 C.E., a scion of the ‘Arya tribe, whose ancestors belonged to the Hawazin in pagan times. Now he composes lyric poetry describing nature. He is strongly influenced by French authors.

Husain Sarraaj, a child of the garden-town of Taif, born 1912, imbued the spirit of the west in the American University of Beirut and his inspiration emerges from the fountain of European poetry.

‘Abd al-Wahhab Ashi, born at Mecca 1323 A.H.-1905 C.E., had a chequered career which led him from the post of schoolmaster via prison to the State Accounts Office, where he is serving now. His poetry is a cry of nationalism and reflects the old spirit of independence, so innate in Arabian hearts. Besides longer descriptive poems he composed a number of quatrains and some short prose-reflections on life and fate, and the vicissitudes of fortune.

A similar patriotic tone pervades the poems of ‘Abd al-Haqq al-Naqishbandi, born at Medina 1322 A.H.-1904 C.E.

‘Abdullah ‘Umar bi ‘l-Khair, born in Hadhramaut 1345 A.H.-1926 C.E. studied at Beirut and the Westernized environment induced him to struggle for modern reforms of Arabic poetry. He inserts his fiery, revolutionary thoughts between his lines.


‘Umar Sayrari, born at Mecca 1319 A.H.-1901 C.E. is a teacher at Mecca. His prose is a plain exhortation to his countrymen to patriotism.

‘Aziz Zia, born at Medina 1332 A.H.-1913 C.E., is a police official. He wrote poems and some prose articles in a similar tone to his fellow writers, awakening them to their patriotic duty.

‘Abd al-Salam ‘Umar, born at Mecca 1327 A.H.-1909 C.E., is an official of the Ministry of Finance. He busied himself with psychological studies and applied his research to the study of literature.

‘Umar ‘Arab (born at Mecca 1318 A.H.-1900 C.E.) after having been a teacher and town accountant serves at the office of attorney in Mecca. His poetry is dedicated to the lyrical expression of his sentiments.

‘Abd al-Hamid ‘Anbar (born at Medina 1326 A.H.-1908 C.E.), is teacher of the English language. His essays comprise problems of sociology. Muhammad ibn Surur al-Sa’ibah (born at Qunfuda 1316 A.H.-1899 C.E.) passed an eventful life: teacher, merchant, clerk, accountant, etc. He was an early partisan of Ibn Saud and consequently was arrested by the Sharifian Government at Jidda, but released on the occupation of that town. He was appointed secretary to the Mayor of Mecca, but in 1927 he was accused of political crime and imprisoned at Riyadh for a year. After his release he pursued business for some time, then he was appointed director in the Ministry of Finance and is today considered one of the ablest Sa’udi officials. He wrote a number of qasidas (odes) and shorter poems and sociological articles.

Muhammad Sa’id al-Amudi (born at Mecca 1323 A.H.-1905 C.E.) began his life as a businessman. He then worked in the printing trade, and later at the post office, and now he is editor of the paper, Saut al-Hejaz. He composed a great number of quatrains with philosophical content, and also literary essays.

Muhammad Hasan Faqqi (born 1350 A.H.-1911 C.E.) was editor of the Saut al-Hejaz and an official in the Ministry of Finance. His poems reveal a pessimistic tone and refined technique. His prose comprises essays of moral and social problems.

Muhammad Hasan Qutbi (born 1329 A.H.-1911 C.E.) studied at Bombay and then worked as editor of the Saut al-Hejaz and later he reorganized the schools and is now acting as director at Taif. He imbued during his stay in India knowledge of the burning problems of our time and presents them in a readable prose style to his countrymen.

The work is nicely illustrated with photographs of its contributors, most of them dressed in their national costume. From their faces the sincere enthusiasm and patriotism for their fatherland radiates towards their fellow-Muslims who, born in a more fortunate climate, tender their hopeful wishes for further success in the sphere of Arabian culture and well-being.

The literature of Sa’udi Arabia is marching with sturdy steps on the path delineated by the noble principles of Islam and it is to be hoped that in the near future it will yet add some more valuable contributions to Arabic culture.

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NOVEMBER 1952
WOMEN IN THE MIDDLE EAST

By MADAME SARAH al-MIDFA’I

Islam and the Arab woman

Owing to the prevalence of Islam in the Middle East, one finds a uniformity in the religious and social rights of women. Let it be said here that Islam has guaranteed to all Muslim women the benefit of education and encouraged them to improve their civil and social position. It also regulated marriage rules, which until the advent of Islam were not defined by any written law; it also gave her a legal entity of her own.

The Prophet Muhammad, who was anxious to improve the position of woman, propagated in his message respect for her; he elevated her status and declared her to be “the queen of her home”. The object of his message is partially lost if one thinks that it was merely directed to instil in the minds of the people that “there is only one God”. Muhammad is equally anxious to show his followers the real value of woman as an important member of society and to endow her with her rightful position. Thus Muhammad declared the equality of the believers, and it is indeed a fact that at no time was sex equality so important amongst the Arabs as during his time.

"Ye people, ye have rights over your wives, and your wives have rights over you," the Prophet Muhammad said. "Treat your wives with kindness," he added.

Polygamy, rife in Arabia before the appearance of Islam, was greatly restricted by the Prophet Muhammad, and, indeed, made virtually impossible. For according to the Qur’ân, one may marry more than one wife, if one is able to treat one’s wives equally and to maintain justice amongst them. Now to fulfil these conditions is almost beyond human ability. Today, although for various reasons, mainly economical, polygamy is a thing of the past in the Middle East, yet the validity and importance of the provision made by the Qur’ân in human relationships can neither be questioned nor doubted by a sociologist. Circumstances both in the life of the individual and community may arise which might necessitate the desirability of introducing polygamy.

Muhammad on divorce

As to divorce, this is also one of the provisions in the social system of Islam and is one of those things which have received the bitterest attacks from non-Muslims. Right from the beginning, Muhammad had realized the difficulties which might arise when a difference sprang up between a man and his wife. For instance, they might differ in character, in custom and in temperament — all this irrespective of whatever precautions each party might take before marriage to secure a perfect companionship. If love and respect between the partners ceases to exist, and their lives are always subject to bitterness, separation is ultimately the only solution. In many cases separation or dissolution of the marriage may be in the interest of the woman rather than the man. But this does not mean to say that the Prophet Muhammad encouraged divorce. On the contrary, he referred to divorce as "the most detestable of all lawful things". Thus in Islam divorce is permissible only in cases of extreme necessity, as, for instance, when both parties find themselves unable to continue their matrimonial relationship, and when they live under such conditions as would qualify separation. Islam is accused of recognizing its presence, although those who accused it of putting a very low value on the institution of marriage have of late incorporated it into their social system. I am referring to the various European countries where divorce at one time unthinkable is now regarded as desirable in some cases. As an attempt to discourage divorce amongst Muslims, the Prophet Muhammad said: "Marry, but divorce not, as divorce shakes the throne of God.”

The history of the Arab people is rich in the names of great women. From the dawn of history onward there have been among them famous queens and stateswomen. But more significant still is the fact that women have shared in the wisdom, learning and culture of their country, and many have achieved greatness. There were poetsess, such as al-Khansa, Laila, al-Akhlyliyyah, whose works rank with the best Arabic literature. There were great women like Sukainah Bint al-Husain, who still personifies for the Arabs the wisdom and culture of her time. Women of learning like Laila, secretary to the Caliph ‘Abd al-Rahman, shared in his success and at the same time collected one of the greatest libraries in the world. These, together with all the unnamed mothers and social workers, contributed to Arab culture and Arab civilization.

The women of the Middle East are waking up

Thirty years ago, women in the Middle East were almost unaware of what was going on around them in the rest of the world. That was due to the long period of seclusion of Arab women, which, it must be pointed out, is not ordained or countenanced by the Qur’ân. The verses in chapter 24 are quite clear on this. The laws regarding marriage and divorce which were enacted 1,500 years ago during the early period of Arab expansion were liberal, but for the last 600 years the Arabs had been more or less deprived of their political freedom. This state of affairs has affected all Arab institutions, which fell short of their original ideals and principles. Constant neglect and enforced ignorance had so crippled woman that she lost her value as a social entity and was forced inevitably into seclusion.

But now a change has taken place in the Middle East. During the years following the first world war, women there found themselves in an anomalous situation; now they were heirs not only to their own historic tradition but also to the struggle and achievements of their Western sisters. They had to live up to their own traditions on the one hand and to adapt themselves on the other to the West. Emotionally awake to the national consciousness, they recognized the magnitude of their task. Their complete emancipation became the joint aim of both sexes, so that education of women was admitted to be the first step towards the common goal.

Egypt can now boast of many women writers and reformers who have won for themselves a world-wide reputation. Even in the political field, these women have proved to be an invaluable asset to their country, as, for instance, Madame Safiyya Zaghloul.
and Madame Huda Sha'rawi. The Egyptian Women's Movement is now at its best under the wise and well-planned guidance of Dr. Durriyya Shafiq. Although she believes in women occupying important and responsible positions in the Government, and that women should be on an equal footing with men, she does not hesitate for a moment to say that her demands are in accordance with what has been ordained by the Qur'an and with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad.

The example of Turkey

Turkey, perhaps has set up one of the good examples of an advanced and enlightened nation. The reforms which were introduced during the time of Mustafa Kamal Atatürk were certainly unprecedented, and Turkey can now be most favourably compared with any of the civilized countries of the world. The reforms which were introduced in the structure of government were accompanied by similar reforms of no less importance in the social order of the people. No line of distinction can now be drawn between the Turkish women in Istanbul and other Western European women. A law was recently passed by the Turkish Parliament granting women full rights of citizenship, and in the present Turkish Parliament the opinions of many women delegates can be heard.

The women of Syria, the Lebanon and Iraq

In Syria and the Lebanon, women have gone far ahead of the women of Iraq. They have been granted many civil rights, including the right of participation in parliamentary elections. In the achievement of these rights, much credit goes to the American university at Beirut, which has played a great part in extending educational facilities to girls, and in bringing up a large number of educated and cultured women. Many of the graduates of this university have already distinguished themselves in various spheres of life.

Iraq has been fortunate in being able to incorporate into her educational system the most advanced educational theories from the neighbouring countries. At present equal educational opportunities are the right of all.

According to official sources, during 1947/48 there were about 33,000 girls at elementary schools, 4,000 girls at secondary schools, 2,000 women teachers in the elementary schools, and 200 women teachers in the secondary schools.

Although Iraq has no university, the following colleges fulfil many of a university's functions, in which the women's numbers are very good: (1) the College of Medicine, with 36 girl students; (2) the College of Pharmacy, with 16 girl students; (3) the Law College, with 107 girl students; (4) the College of Engineering, with 2 girl students; (5) the High Teachers' Training College, with 178 girl students; and (6) The Queen 'Alia College, which is especially for girls, with 232 girl students.

In addition, Iraq has large numbers of girls who have already graduated from these colleges, and among them are good poets, such as 'Atika al-Jhazrajji, Nazik al-Mala'ika, Rebab al-Kadhimi, Lami' 'Abbas, and Fatimah al-Na'ib.

During the last few years there has been an increase in the number of girl students, as well as of boy students, largely due to the feeling of the Iraqi women of her need of education, and also to the activities of the Ministry of Education. This growth of education is steadily bringing about changes in social custom. Also, national ambitions are creating among the women of Iraq a strong social consciousness, especially at the time of the Palestine crisis, which acted as an impetus to the rise of all Arab women. The struggle taught the women of the Middle East to be patriotic, self-denying, and diligent. Many Iraqi women,
including their Royal Highnesses the Princesses, went to the front to act as nurses, tending the wounded and comforting them.

Nowadays, women in the Middle East are concentrating their efforts on social services, such as the Red Crescent Society, child welfare clinics, adult literacy campaigns and housing schemes. All these were presided over by the late Queen Mother of Iraq, of blessed memory, who, together with other members of the Iraq royal family, set an example by her regular attendance at meetings and work parties.

Today, as the women of Iraq look back on the last twenty years, they remember gratefully the assistance they have received from men. As they look forward they are sobered, but not discouraged, by the fact that the distance they have travelled towards emancipation is infinitesimal compared with the distance still to be travelled. They have learnt that the boundaries of freedom are always expanding, and must be discovered and conquered afresh by each generation in turn. Their pride can only consist in their having been the first generation, the pioneers.


The Suez Canal has proved to be both a blessing and a curse for the Egyptian people; for although many Egyptians are employed by the Suez Canal Company which exploits the Canal, the Egyptian Government will not receive any great benefit from the profits of the Company until the latter's concession runs out in 1968. Also the building of the Canal by Egyptian and French and European capital inevitably led to the British occupation of Egypt, an event which had been forecast by British statesmen whose opposition to this project is ably chronicled by the author. The book avoids discussion of points which the Muslim world is primarily concerned in finding out. For instance, how much capital was invested in the Canal, how much profit was made and by whom, what salaries are paid to Egyptian workers in the Canal Zone, what steps are being made to train Egyptian personnel to take over the Canal in 1968, etc.? Unfortunately, this book diplomatically avoids these points, although a complete table is given of the tonnage of shipping which has passed through the Canal. From the table it appears that more than 252,000,000 tons of British shipping has passed through the Canal since 1870 out of a total of roughly 480,000,000.

Under the Agreement of 19th August, 1949, between the Egyptian Government and the Suez Canal Company, the number of Egyptian directors of the Company was raised from two to seven. This number will be raised to eight in 1959 and nine in 1964, but the French will still have sixteen directors. France retained from the outset technical control and as not more than 28,000,000 tons of French shipping have passed through the Canal since 1870, she has returned a very small share of her profits to the Egyptian people.

By the 1949 Agreement the Egyptian Government has been guaranteed only £850,000 or far less than ten per cent of the profits. By the same Agreement the Suez Canal Company has also agreed that four Egyptians should fill every five vacancies on its technical staff and nine out of ten Egyptians will fill vacancies on its administrative staff.

Mr. Schonfield, who has already written three other books about the Canal, traces the history of the Canal digging in Egypt from the earliest times. He is an extremely able writer and his narrative provides a lucid picture of the struggle between the European Powers — France, Britain, Germany and Italy. Unfortunately the author is European-minded and he ignores the views of Egyptian writers on a matter which is primarily their concern and does not mention the nationalistic campaign to nationalize the Canal before the expiration of the lease in 1968. This agitation became obscure by the Egyptian effort to drive the British troops out of the Canal Zone — an attempt which is unsatisfactorily dealt with by Mr. Schonfield in rather colourless prose, although he does reprimand Mr. Churchill who tactlessly spoke of "control" of the Suez Canal in his speech of 30th January, 1952, in the House of Commons.

Sesostris was reputedly the first Pharaoh to cause a canal to be built joining the Nile with the Red Sea. This event took place about 2000 B.C.

The Iranian ruler, Darius Hyustaspe, restored it and enlarged it in 521 B.C. The Roman emperor, Trajan, and later the Arab Governor, Amru, also exploited this canal, but in 776 C.E. the Abbasid Caliph Ja'far al-Mansur blocked the canal in order to impose economic sanctions on the cities of Mecca and Medina.

The French took interest in opening up their trade with India through Egypt in the time of Louis XIV. Napoleon's army of occupation was prevented from concentrating on a Suez Canal project when it was cut off from communication with France by Nelson and the British Fleet.

Lieutenant Waghorn, a British Naval officer, ardently propagated a canal project but the British, influenced by the railway pioneer, George Stephenson, were concerned in building a railway to the Red Sea and regarded the canal venture with grave suspicion. Lord Palmerston the famous British Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and champion of European nationalism, was the most determined opponent of de Lesseps who had attempted to get British as well as Egyptian co-operation for his scheme. The blacker details of the project and the pressure brought to bear on the Khedive, Muhammad Sa'id, are glossed over. Pierre Crayre must be consulted for a more objective picture of this period but on the whole, this book provides a useful background for the average student of contemporary problems.

* * *


The author of this book, as is well known to the world of Islam, is an English Muslim with an unsurpassed knowledge of Arabia and of Middle Eastern politics. He says in his preface that he found it difficult to write frankly and critically about a life-long friend, but his contribution will rank as an outstanding work of biography in the sense that he could never be accused of playing the hypocrite to the royal personage. It is refreshing indeed to see an analysis of the character of Ibn Sa'ud where as much prominence is given to his weaknesses as to his strength — a characteristic which one finds to fail in current biographies of much less important personalities than the King of Arabia.

The story not only embraces the origin and rise of Ibn Sa'ud but covers the important period after the unification of Arabia under him. Arabia, at the beginning of his reign, existed mainly on the subsidies from the British Government and the revenues collected from the pilgrims to Mecca. The discovery of oil, however, turned the barren desert land into one of the most financially stable countries of the Middle East. The oil revenue from the oil is now such as to enable the king to stop exacting pilgrimage dues from annual visitors to the holy places. As one reads the romance following the discovery of oil, one can
detect that it was Mr. Philby’s counsel that made it possible for Arabia to derive the utmost benefit from the granting of concessions to foreign oil companies.

The unification of Arabia was not a simple matter, and after the difficult task of its accomplishment, Ibn Sa’ud could not entirely ignore Muslim world opinion in the conduct and management of the holy places, still less could he be consistent with the newly-won independence of his country, discount the goodwill of those powers interested in the fate of the Middle East. All these complications he faced almost alone, yet emerged triumphant. Hence as a soldier, ruler and statesman, Ibn Sa’ud’s record is outstanding and above reproach. The only criticism, if any, is of his private life. Many readers would join issue with the author on the subject of the wives of Ibn Sa’ud, especially when he says:

“Like the Prophet before him, he had already at this
time begun to allow himself a certain latitude in such matters not strictly in accord with the rules. He has never exceeded the limit of four wives allowed by Islamic law; but each of his four wives having a house of her own with a full complement of servants, slaves and attendants, in which they received his visits in rotation, he also had a house of his own — the main building of the Shubra palace — which was run for him by four favourite concubines, enjoying a status indistinguishable from that of wedded wives.”

The Prophet of Islam had certainly more than the four wives allowed by Islamic law, but he did not take upon himself concubines as in the case of Ibn Sa’ud.

It is a matter of regret to see that Mr. Philby, in discussing the delicate aspect of the private life of Ibn Sa’ud, thought it fit to institute a comparison with that of the Prophet Muhammad. Besides, this odious comparison is uncalled for. Mr. Philby’s story would have remained as good if he had avoided dragging in the personality of the Prophet Muhammad; for that it comes from the pen of an avowed Muslim confirms the prejudices in the mind of the average English reader who knows next to nothing about the life of the Prophet Muhammad. The impression that is left behind on the mind of Mr. Philby’s narrative is that the Prophet Muhammad’s private life, like that of Ibn Sa’ud, was also far from being above reproach, and that Islam approves of concubinage.

The trend of present-day Middle Eastern politics is not omitted from this important book: nor are the crucial Palestine problem and relations between Arabia and Egypt. Also included is a splendid sketch of the life and character of the late King ‘Abdullah of Trans-Jordan, which is indeed a masterpiece and, in the opinion of the reviewer, Mr. Philby’s best chapter.

The author’s recollection of the reaction of Indian Muslims after the capture of the holy places makes painful reading. When the first Islamic Conference was convened at the instance of Ibn Sa’ud, he did not seem to have made a good impression on the members of the Indian Caliphate Society:

“...but perhaps the most serious potential cause of trouble was the attitude of Indian Islam, which, curiously enough, seemed to be fired with enthusiasm for the British parliamentary type of democracy as being the most suitable form of government to be imposed on the holy land of Islam! This section of Islamic opinion was certainly shocked to the core by Ibn Sa’ud’s assumption of the title of king, which seemed to knock the ground from under the feet of the champions of democracy.”

And again, commenting on the arrival of a second deputation from India, bringing a sum of Rs. 60,000 for relief of the victims of Medina, the author says:

“The attitude of this mission was openly hostile from the beginning; and it was not long before Ibn Sa’ud, having borne with them as patiently as possible in spite of much provocation, was constrained to request them to leave the country. To ensure prompt compliance on their part they were sent down to Jidda from Mecca under police guard, and placed on a ship bound for Suez on March 1st after little more than a month in the Hijaz.”

Then yet again it is recorded that Ibn Sa’ud...poured scorn on the activities of Maulana Shaukat Ali, who had been touring the world and thumping on the subject of ‘our brethren the Jews and Christians’.”

These extracts showing the early relations of Sa’udi Arabia with the sub-continent of what is now India and Pakistan will have a mixed reception among readers of the two latter countries, and no doubt will cause some argument and possibly self-examination.

This book is indispensable to anyone seeking knowledge of present-day Arabia. It is hoped that in the next edition a better map will be provided, as the existing one is totally inadequate, and correction made in flaws of spelling, as for example, “He therefore gave a wide ‘birth’ to Riyadh” (page 13).

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**ISLAM IN ENGLAND**

**The formation of a Muslim Welfare Society in London**

The Muslim Welfare Society (East London), Islamic Cultural Centre, London, N.W.8, has been formed by a group of Muslims residing in the United Kingdom, to promote the welfare of Muslims living in the East London area, whose conditions are far from satisfactory. The aims of the Society are to provide assistance to any Muslim in need of help, especially children, and to provide facilities for religious instruction. The latter appears to have been neglected completely in the past. It is estimated there are at least 500-600 children in the area, and the vast majority know nothing of Islam, although they are nominally Muslims. The Society also aims at doing whatever is possible to alleviate the distress of the poorer families by its own efforts and in liaison with various English authorities, such as the National Assistance Board, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Probation Officers, the London County Council, etc.

Membership of the Society is open to anyone, Muslim or non-Muslim, who has the welfare of Islam at heart. The minimum subscription is 5/- per annum.

The Society is in particular need of unwanted clothing for people of all sexes, ages and sizes. Spare clothing may be sent to the Secretary, Mr. Sa’id Chippeldorf, the Islamic Cultural Centre, 146 Park Road, London, N.W.8. It will be put to good use. The Society is also in need of support for the project to supply all the schools in the East London area (some 50 of them) with at least one copy of a good English translation of the Holy Qur’ân.

**A lecture on Iqbal**

On 28th September, 1952, Mr. S. A. Vahid, Secretary of the Iqbal Society, Karachi, Pakistan, gave a lecture on “The Poetry of Iqbal” at the Islamic Cultural Centre, Regent’s Lodge, London, N.W.8. Lt.-Col. Abdullah Baines-Hewitt, an English Muslim, presided at the lecture. In spite of bad weather the lecture was very well attended, and the hall at the Centre was
filled to capacity. Before the lecture all the guests were entertained to tea. In his lecture, Mr. Vahid surveyed the art of Iqbal and explained how wide and varied was the great poet’s sensibility. The lecture was punctuated by recitations of Iqbal’s poems, and two of his ghazals were sung by Begum Shohada Ali Baig.

When describing Jawid Namah, one of Iqbal’s masterpieces, the lecturer recited the lines in which the poet refers to the sale of Kashmir by the British to Rajah Gulab Singh:

“O breeze if you ever pass by Geneva
Convey this message to the League of Nations.
They sold peasants, crops, rivers and gardens,
In short, sold a whole nation and that too so cheap.”

The lecturer remarked that the only way in which the great British nation, that defended human liberty and freedom single-handed against Hitler and Mussolini, could offer atonement for this sin against humanity was by seeing that the helpless people of Kashmir were allowed to decide their own future in a free and fair plebiscite.

At the close of the lecture, Mr. Vahid repeated the lines in which the poet had with rare prophetic vision warned the European nations, nearly half a century ago, that unless they changed their outlook completely, they were heading for a disaster:

“O residents of the West, God’s earth is not a market.
The gold you think to be genuine will prove to be of low value.
Your civilization is going to kill herself with her own dagger.
The nest made on a frail bough cannot but be insecure!”

THE SHAH JEHAN MOSQUE, WOKING

Lectures

Dr. S. M. ’Abdullah, the Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, delivered a lecture at the Rotary Club, Guildford, on Monday, 25th August 1952, on "Pakistan and its Role in the Modern World". This was his second lecture at the club, the previous one having been given some two years ago on "Islam and Mosque at Woking". There were over a hundred members who attended the lecture. The learned lecturer, in speaking of the creation of Pakistan, dealt with the two-nation theory, the Islamic ideology and the unresolved Kashmir problem, etc. During the question time it was asked as to why Pakistan wanted to have Kashmir, and if it was for some material gain or natural resources. To this the Imam in his reply stated that Pakistan wanted to see that every nation and country got its birthright of self-expression and self-determination, and that Pakistan’s intention was simply to get the issue of the accession of Kashmir decided by the people of Kashmir themselves by means of a free and impartial plebiscite. The speaker described how that could not be done under the bayonets of Indian military occupation, which was the reason why Pakistan demanded the demilitarization of Kashmir before the plebiscite was held. The speaker continued to say that if, after the plebiscite, the Kashmiris decided in favour of accession to the Republic of India, Pakistan would have no cause to complain and would accept the decision as expressed by the free will of the people of Kashmir.

While thanking the speaker, a member of the club remarked that they had been greatly enriched by the talk and were especially glad to learn that Pakistan believed in the unity of the human race and its foreign policy was based on social justice and righteousness.

Dr. S. M. ’Abdullah delivered a lecture at the Rotary Club at Camberley on Tuesday, 23rd September 1952, the subject of his talk being "The Religion of Islam". During the discussion which followed the lecture, the special subject discussed was that of Islam’s attitude towards Communism. Since after the ’Id al-Adha Festival, regular Social-Religious meetings at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, have been held on Sundays at 3.30 p.m., when lectures on Islam and its culture are given. Also the Imam has started classes in religious instruction for children.
The Pakistan Minister of Information at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking

The Honourable Dr. I. H. Quraishi, Minister of Information and Broadcasting in the Government of Pakistan, paid a visit to the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, on Sunday, 14th September 1952. Dr. Quraishi had lunch and afternoon tea with the Imam and other friends, including British Muslims and Muslims of various other nationalities. The Honourable Minister, after the midday congregational prayers, consented to deliver a valuable talk at the request of the Imam in place of the regular Sunday lectures. The learned speaker explained at length how Europe adopted ways and means to misrepresent Islam. He took for his talk the subject matter of Mr. R. H. Nolte's talk entitled "What is Islam?", which had been broadcast by the British Broadcasting Corporation a few days before.

Marriages

On Monday, 25th August 1952, an English lady, Miss E. D. Conn, embraced Islam at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking. This was followed by the solemnization of the marriage tie between her and Tunku Ahmad Yahya, from Malaya, by the Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque. In the marriage party there were the two sons of His Highness the Sultan of Kedah, who also acted as two witnesses to the marriage ceremony. The party was entertained to tea by the Imam.

On Friday, 29th August 1952, the Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque officiated at the marriage ceremony of Miss Khadijah Mohsina Ebrahim and Mr. Syed 'Ali Gauhar Jaffery. The same afternoon at the London Prayer House attached to the Shah Jehan Mosque, Mr. 'Abd al-Majid, M.A., Editor of The Islamic Review, officiated at the marriage ceremony of Miss Judith Margaret Clayton and Mr. Muhammad Ahmad Abu Hamidiyya, from Jordan.

The Imam also officiated at the marriage ceremonies of the following: Lt. Vasef Husain (Pakistani) and Najma Bano Ansari (Pakistani); 'Azimullah Ansari (Pakistani) and Margaret Ruth Razia Needham (British); Sayid Husain Alatas (Indonesian) and Yohana Katharina Fadilah Buitendyck (Dutch); Syed 'Ali Gauhar Jaffery (Pakistani) and Khadijah Mohsina Ebrahim (Pakistani); and John Scaffon Peck (British) and Talieh Saleh (Persian).

New members of the World Brotherhood of Islam

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# Books on Islam

## Books by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din

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