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Abdul 'Aziz Shora, Esq., Editor, Roshni, Srinagar, Kashmir.
The Evacuation of the Suez Canal

As usual the British Foreign Office are letting the Anglo-Egyptian talks on the evacuation of the Suez Canal trail along at a miserably slow pace, basing their actions on the outmoded premises that time will modify Egyptian aspirations, whereas the fact is that the British troops should have evacuated the Canal Zone in 1946. In this connection it may be recalled that we are not alone in believing that the good intentions of the late Mr. Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary in the Labour Government, to carry out this act of elementary justice were wilfully sabotaged by the military authorities just as his attempts to come to an agreement with the Egyptians over the status of the Sudan were brought to nought by the British Sudanese administration.

It is unfortunate indeed for Britain that dynamic men of vision are not at the helm who would understand that an anti-imperialist policy based on social equality and neutrality towards the two major world powers with an emphasis on economics rather than militarism can alone lead to a final Anglo-Egyptian agreement. It is an undeniable fact that the Egyptians have an absolute right to dispose of their own territory as they should wish. Besides, shortly they will have full economic control of the Suez Canal Company. It will obviously be of economic interest to them to keep the canal open to all shipping. The purge the military movement of General Najiib is now carrying out in Egypt and which was frustrated seventy years ago by the British when they defeated al-Orabi at Tall al-kabir and consoliated the rotten power of the Khedive, attempting to achieve the impossible task of setting up an honest civil service in Egypt while maintaining a corrupt cosmopolitan camarilla in power, rules out all doubts to the contrary.

Egyptian troops, once they had recovered from the disastrous defeat of Tall al-kabir, fought admirably during the last six years of the Sudanese campaign (1892-1898). Had the British authorities wished it, they could have built up a powerful modern Egyptian army long ago. But this would have led to the enforced evacuation of the Canal Zone and the defeat of the Zionists in Palestine! The British, therefore, concentrated large forces in the Canal Zone and built up the Arab Legion in Jordan.

The incidents which took place in the Canal Zone, apart from the heroic defence of the Egyptian police, constitute the most inglorious episode in British history, comparable only to Amritsar and the activities of the Black and Tans in Ireland.

Essential to Middle East Security

But as destiny would have it, the blood of the Egyptian martyrs was not spilt in vain. The spirit of the Egyptian martyrs inspired General Najeeb and his military associates to overthrow the rotten régime of King Faruq and to adopt the nationalist programme of the Wafid, which had shown itself unable to combat corruption or to achieve the evacuation of the Canal.

Egypt’s present weakness, both military and economic, constitutes a menace to Britain and to the Arab Muslim world, while a strong Egypt would serve as a useful bastion against any aggression. Also, an Egypt in which the workmen, fellaheen and intelligentsi were prosperous would provide an expanding market for British goods.

Once Egypt has obtained military control of the Canal, she will require extensive economic support, which can best be given in the form of buying her high-grade cotton in increasing quantities. The failure of Mr. Butler, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, to help the British textile industry in his latest budget is a typical example of the indifference of British statesmen to the cotton-producing countries in Africa and Asia.

Egyptian control of the Canal will give her a military and strategic importance which may play a decisive part in deciding the future of Palestine, and the day may well soon come when Egypt is able to aid her Arab Muslim brothers in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco where the French colonials are pursuing a policy of force in defiance of the United Nations.

It is to be hoped that the Soviet rulers will continue their new policy of appeasement and that there will be a general lessening of tension in the world with a resulting decrease in armaments, so that Britain’s last excuse for remaining on Egyptian soil will have no leg to stand upon. As for the excuse that the Egyptian army is not competent to defend the Canal, it should be pointed out that the Egyptian army can only learn by practice and not by being protected by the British. The present military rulers are men who have risen to power by their own effort unaided by nepotism and corruption, and if the present British Government is sincere in its desire for the freedom of the world, it can show this in no better way than in taking immediate steps to evacuate the Suez Canal, thereby re-establishing good relations between the Arabs and the British people, who do not fully comprehend the deep resentment felt by the Egyptians at the continued occupation of their soil by foreign troops.
"By the light of the Qur'ān and the Hadith: Fairness in Dealing, Modesty, Shyness and Humility"

—by the late KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN—

Faith in Dealing

"And give full measure when you measure" (The Qur'ān, 11:35).

"Surely God commands you to make over trust to their owners" (The Qur'ān, 4:58).

"Believers... are those who keep others' trust" (The Qur'ān, 2:8).

Although the Prophet Muhammad, owing to his liberal nature, was always in debt, so much so that on the eve of his death his armour was lying with a pawnbroker for eighty pounds of corn, yet he was very strict and fair in his dealings. The Jews constituted the rich class of Medina, and whenever he stood in need of money he had to borrow it from them. The period preceding his Call to the Prophethood bears testimony to his scrupulous honesty and fair dealing. The Quraisy had bestowed on him unanimously the epithet of al-Amin ("The Trustworthy"), a title which they had never given to anyone before. Sa'ib was a certain merchant who came to accept Islam. People introduced him to the Prophet in high terms. The Prophet Muhammad said, "I know him better than you." Sa'ib said, "May my life be the Prophet's sacrifice. Muhammad was my partner"; and his transactions, his dealings were most straightforward and above reproach." (Abu Daud).

Once the Prophet Muhammad borrowed a camel from somebody. When he returned it, he returned a better one for it and said, "The best men are they who pay their debts with fairness of dealing" (Tirmidhi).

Once a Bedouin was selling camel-flesh. The Prophet Muhammad, thinking that some quantity of dates was lying in the house, effected a bargain for the piece of flesh on barter. On reaching home, he found that he was wronged. He came out and said to the butcher, I had bought meat thinking that there were some dates in the house, but now I find that they are not there." The butcher cried aloud and said, "O, you dishonest man." People said to him, "Are you in your right senses?" The Prophet said, "No, leave him; he has a right to say this." The Prophet Muhammad repeated his excuse, but the reply from the butcher at each time was, "O, you dishonest man." The Companions wanted to stop him, but the Prophet Muhammad intervened and said, "No, leave him; let him say whatever he likes; he has a right to it." After this the Prophet sent him to a lady with the request that she should give the promised quantity of dates to him. On his return he found the Prophet sitting among his friends. The generous and fair dealing of the Prophet had left a deep impression on the Bedouin's mind, and no sooner did his eyes fall on the Prophet than he cried out: "Muhammad, may God reward you! You have paid me full price and a goodly reward. You have paid up the full price and a better price." (Ibn Hanbal).

Once the Prophet Muhammad wanted to buy a few weapons in the Battle of Hunain (629 C.E.). He knew Safwan, who had not then accepted Islam, had a large stock of armour. The Prophet desired to make a small purchase, whereupon Safwan said, "Muhammad, do you wish to rob me of my armour?" The Prophet said, "No, I wish to borrow them; and if any of them is damaged, I will pay the cost." Accordingly, Safwan lent him thirty or forty suits of armour. After the Battle of Hunain, when stock was taken of all the weapons and armour and other things, it was found that a few suits of armour were missing. The Prophet said to Safwan, "A few of your suits of armour are missing. Kindly accept their price." He said, "O Prophet of God, the condition of my mind has undergone a change, and I am now a Muslim" (Abu Da'ud).

When the body of a dead man was brought for prayers, the Prophet Muhammad always asked whether the deceased had any liabilities which he could not meet. If it was found out that he owed something, then he would ask the Companions to say the prayers, but he himself did not join with them (Bukhari).

Modesty, Shyness and Humility

"And do not go about in the land exultingly" (The Qur'ān, 17:37).

"Say to the believing men that they cast down their looks" (Ibid., 24:30).

"And the servants of the Beneficent are they who walk on the earth in humbleness" (Ibid., 25:63).

The Arabs attached no great importance to modesty or shyness. Bathing naked was quite the fashion. The circumambulation of the Ka'bah was performed in a state of nudity. The Prophet, on the other hand, had a strong dislike for absence of modesty and shyness, for bathing naked and the naked circumambulation. The Prophet once said, "Do you go to the public baths?" And the people answered, "Bathing in a public bath is very useful for diseases, and causes the dirt on the bodies to be removed." The Prophet said, "When you bathe, do not bathe naked." In Arabia there were no public baths. But in the towns lying on the boundary adjoining Arabia there were many. It was for this very reason that the Prophet said, "When you go to conquer Persia and other foreign countries, you will come across many baths. Go to them with sheets on your bodies." Some ladies who belonged to the town of Homs, Syria, came to the wife of the Prophet, Umm Salma. She inquired of them which town they had come from. "Homs," Umm Salma said, "Are you, then, of those women who bathe in public baths?" They said, "Public bathing something to be condemned?" To which she answered, "I have heard from the Prophet Muhammad that a woman who takes off her clothes in a place other than her home is disgraced by God." It is related in the traditions collected by Abu Daud that the Prophet had prohibited his followers from bathing in public baths; but he relaxed this injunction in favour of men, provided that they did not bathe naked. He made no such concession for women (Bukhari).

In punishment and retaliation he was very cautious and considerate. He would prefer, as far as possible, forgiveness to punishment. Once a certain man who was guilty of a sin came to the Prophet and confessed it, begging the Prophet to inflict punishment for it. The Prophet kept silent and turned to a companion. The time of afternoon prayer came. He related the same story once again. The Prophet said, "Have you said your prayers?" He said, "Yes". The Prophet said, "Then God has forgiven you" (Bukhari).

The Prophet would not impose unnecessary restrictions on his followers. Relaxation and leniency were the red threads that ran through all the punishments he inflicted. It is related that a certain man, guilty of transgressing the religious law in a certain respect, confessed his fault to the Prophet, who said, "Set a captive free." The man replied, "I cannot do that." "Then keep fast for two months," "No," said the man, "I am not strong enough." "Then go and feed sixty poor men," said the Prophet; and the man refused, saying, "I have not got the means." The Prophet kept silent for a little while, when a basket of dates was presented to the Prophet. Then the Prophet inquired after the man who had been questioning him, and the man said, "Here I am." Then, said the Prophet, "Take this basket and distribute it among the poor." The man said, "O Prophet of God, there is none so poor in Mecca as myself." The Prophet laughed and said, "So be it; go and distribute it amongst your family." (Bukhari).

Disregard of Distinction

"I am only a man like unto you." (The Qur'ān, 18:110).

The Prophet used to join with the Companions in their manual labour. After his flight to Medina, his first anxiety was to erect a mosque there, afterwards to be known as the "Prophet's Mosque".
THE INFLUENCE OF THE BELIEF IN THE ONENESS OF GOD ON HUMAN SOCIETY

"Therefore, the Unity of God, once admitted as an implicit and unshakable belief, at once takes man to soaring heights of sublimity. But mere belief is a half-hearted admission, unless the believer supports his belief by concrete acts of obedience to the Divine Dispensation. Islam, for this very reason, lays more emphasis on acts than precepts. It is because of this noble doctrine that Islam possesses a subtle elasticity in its constitution which makes it a living force for the ages. It encourages spiritual and material advancement in all spheres of life, provided, of course, the fear of God, which forms the very basis of human activities, is preserved as a guiding principle."

The various obstacles in the way of man and his Creator

The gravitational centre of Islamic culture is the idea of the Unity of God. It is nowhere so lucidly found in its pristine glory as in the Qur’an. This sacred phrase has been instrumental in removing all the barriers that existed for ages between man and God and between man and man. Priesthood, celibacy and other outward forms of sanctimoniousness always stood in the way of man and God. Islam enabled man to commune directly with his Creator without an intermediary. The present world would have provided quite a different spectacle if the early Arabs had not kindled the light of Islam in the world. The nomads of Arabia, fired with the true Islamic spirit, took the torch of this natural religion to the four corners of the globe, thereby establishing the Kingdom of God on an unprecedented scale.

Before the advent of Islam, polytheism was rampant. People thronged the shrines of the so-called deities for their ambitions and wants. Men and women, old and young, openly practised idolatry, and, instead of apostrophizing the One God, in their distress, they bowed down in humility before the man-carved images of their supposed deities. Not only Arabia, but almost the whole world had a similar or somewhat modified conception of God. This obscurity in the idea of the One Deity was partly the outcome of mythological beliefs handed down from generation to generation and partly because of the superstructure of priesthood built up by monks, rabbis and other religious heads of the period. They did this for personal gain as well as for egotistical gratification.

Islam’s conception of God unique in the history of spiritual education of man

Islam came to them as a bolt from the blue. For the first time in the history of mankind the ignorant masses came to learn of the existence of the One Omnipotent and Omnipresent God. No doubt some of the saner elements among them had a faint idea of God, but it was mechanical in nature. In other words, the popular belief was that God had delegated his powers to the various deities, who deputized for Him in the respective duties assigned to them, while He Himself was sitting on His Throne, as a silent spectator. This was a ludicrous belief. Islam vigorously tore down the magic web the priesthood had woven round the concept of God and religion. For the first time, people learned they, too, had a share in the economy of the Universe, that they were free and that God was as accessible to a peasant as to a king. The seeds of intellectual revolution sown by Islam began to bear fruit through gradual stages, and the world heaved a sigh of relief from the downtrodden monopoly of the priests.

Islam and its critics

Critics admit that Islam did for mankind in a few years what the whole world of generals, statesmen, politicians, kings
and philosophers could not have done in centuries. Islam, they also admit, is not a new faith, nor a new religion, inasmuch as it affixes its seal of approval to its predecessor religions and prophets of yore. It did not introduce anything extraordinary; what it did was to combine all the good that existed before and discard all with bad. The Holy Scriptures were so treated by a series of interpolations. Just as a flower vase contains flowers of variegated colors, designs and smell, so does Islam consist of the essence of all former faiths and beliefs. It, however, gave to the combination the shape of perfect symmetry, finality and wholesome and lasting goodness, the main idea of the Unity of God remaining in situ. It preached, though under entirely new conditions, the same gospel of One God, the equality of man and the inevitability of Resurrection, as its predecessors did. It did not preach intricate philosophies, unworkable idealism and abstract religious dogmas. It did not propound preposterous theories relating to God and the Universe. Islam consists of a few practicable and easy-to-follow methods and beliefs, which, if properly adhered to, must surely bring mankind from the abyss of despondency nearer to their Creator.

**What the belief in the Unity of God in Islam means**

Belief in the Unity of God implies unflinching devotion and loyalty to God. A true Muslim has got to fear nobody but God. His love or fear of God makes him mindful of false gods. The polytheistic tendencies in man involve him in a constant struggle with selfishness, fear, temptations, false ambitions and superstitions. If, however, he has an implicit faith in, and owes undivided allegiance to, his Creator and no one else, he spares himself from multifarious worries. Complete dedication to the will of God places him in a safe circle. Tariq ibn Ziyad, when he landed with a few thousand men on the shores of Gibraltar, knew very well he was going against seemingly insurmountable odds, more so when, scenting the uneasy attitude of his comrades, he set fire to the ships which had brought them to the shores of Gibraltar. It was, indeed, a practical demonstration of the dedication of one's life to the will of God. The result was that he defeated the enemy, who was several hundred times superior to him in numerical and material strength.

The Unity of God, in Islamic jurisprudence, is the very foundation-stone on which the structure of Islam stands inviolate; without this all-important factor, Islam would have had no meaning or attraction. The Divine intention has all along been and will always be to elevate mankind to the highest pitch of perfection. And this is possible only if the individual concentrates his attention on the One and Only God. It appears, however, that the individual, despite intellectual perfection, is still inclined to other than his Creator. In modern times, man has rationalistic propensities, and so he does not like to bow down for prayers before the idols of deities and demigods. Instead of this, however, he has taken up a more rational attitude than his predecessor. He devotes the same attention, the same duty, the same zeal and fervour, to wine, women and wealth as his predecessor did to the images and the incense of temples of yore. Here I cannot resist the temptation of quoting the Qur'anic verse which, believe it or not, has moved me many times. The verse reads:

"O man! what is that thing which has estranged you from the Merciful God, Who has created you in perfect symmetry and given you as good a shape as He liked and then joined the parts of your body into a complete whole?"

Therefore, the Unity of God, once admitted as an implicit and unshakable belief, at once takes man to soaring heights of subtlety. But mere belief is a half-hearted admission, unless the believer supports his belief by concrete acts of obedience to the Divine Dispensation. Islam, for this very reason, lays more emphasis on acts than precepts. It is because of this noble doctrine that Islam possesses a subtle elasticity in its constitution, which makes it a living force for the ages. It encourages spiritual and material advancement in all spheres of life, provided, of course, the fear of God, which forms the very basis of human activities, is preserved as a guiding principle.

**The lack of belief in the Unity of God responsible for many of the ills of today**

The modern age, since Martin Luther (1483-1546 C.E.), has divided man's activities into the two watertight compartments of secularism and religion, as a result of which religion has been divorced from politics, with what results? Humanity is at loggerheads. Ideological differences multiply day by day. Hot and cold wars are set on foot. The affairs of the world are worsening day by day. All this is happening because man has forsaken God. And no wonder if God also should begin to forsake man. If one power-bloc has banished God from its country, the other has intervened Him within the precincts of its Church. It is a fact that, lacking fear of God, and with advanced scientific knowledge, perfection of art, invention of formidable weapons of destruction, conflicting ideologies have sprung up, and in spite of top-level meetings and conferences, no compromise is immediately in sight. There is no likelihood of it in future, either. On the other hand, the gulf of enmity and hatred is widening. Can this attainment of perfect human knowledge, deadly weapons and the gaudily array of might be called a sincere attempt to solve the questions? If not, there is, then, something radically wrong. And it is the absence of Islamic principles which makes the situation more confounding.

It was the binding force of Islam, which united the hostile camps of Arabia, yes of the whole world, into one compact unity of fraternity and brotherhood. That, indeed, was a miracle, and that miracle could be performed even today, if the world would believe in the inevitable application of the laws of Islam to the present deteriorating conditions of ailing humanity. The influence of the belief in the Oneness of God on mankind is of far-reaching effect. The faithful dedicates himself, lock, stock and barrel, to His will. It means a sort of prepossession to do and see everything for Him only. It is only when this phenomenon assumes a widespread appeal that we are entitled to call ourselves a Millat, to use a word of the Qur'an. The Arabic word Millat has a wider significance than internationalism. The idea of the Millat is as indissoluble as the Oneness of God itself.

**The Qur'an on the Prophet Muhammad**

According to the Holy Qur'an, the life of the Prophet Muhammad is a model for mankind to emulate. He was sent to no particular tribe, group or community, but to the whole world. He was in the forefront among statesmen, reformers, warriors, generals, politicians, prophets, business men, disciplinarians and socialists. Indeed, he was an institution in himself, the like of which the world has never seen. He led a very simple life, despite the treasures of wealth heaped round his feet. He shunned ostentation, pomp and show. He practised first before he preached to others. His sincerity of purpose, unassuming disposition, his matchless qualities of head and heart, his unending devotion to God, his love for the poor and sympathy with the downtrodden, his coolness of mind in peace and war, his unswerving zeal for prayers, his affable manner, his impartiality to friend and foe, his unique administration of equity and justice, his unexampled solicitude for righteousness, his unerring judgment, his unsophisticated simplicity, his lofty morals, his flawless interpretation of Divine revelations and, above all, his undiluted love for humanity, have most appropriately earned him the noblest title of Rabhmat li 'l-'Alamin (A mercy for the peoples of the worlds), and place him in the front rank of his predecessors, making him, in the unassailable words of his revered wife 'Ayesha, "the Qur'an in practice"."
ISLAMIC PROHIBITION OF Riba (USURY) 
AS A BASIC PRINCIPLE OF ECONOMICS

By A. H. M. MUHIY-UD-DIN

"Islam suggests mudharaba or partnership, with a two-sided risk. The capitalists would supply capital with a view to promoting industry and commerce instead of riba, and the labourers and skilled workers would contribute on an agreed proportion of loss or gain. On this proportionate partnership between the capitalists and labourers all big industries such as iron and steel, cement, water, land, highways, railways, workshops, shipyards, foreign exports and imports, banking and trading of all kinds can easily be taken up and safely conducted. In fact, the Islamic prohibition of riba, and the introduction of its substitute, mudharaba, on the aforesaid lines, can eliminate many deep-rooted evils and ills of modern society both in the East and in the West. Because this system of mudharaba ensures complete harmony between the capitalists and labour. Once mutual interest and goodwill prevail between employer and employee, the universal fear of Communism is bound to disappear."

Usury and what it means

The word al-riba (usury) in Arabic means increase in anything, or to give a thing in addition. The Arabs used it to denote the additional amount which a debtor paid to his creditor in consideration of the time he was given to use the creditor’s money. According to the Encyclopaedia of Islam, riba is usury and interest; in general, any unjustified increase of capital for which no compensation is given. The Oxford English Dictionary defines usury as the “practice of lending money at exorbitant rates of interest especially at higher interest than is allowed by law”. It is a transaction of money-lending with a fixed time limit and payment of interest as well as speculation of all kinds which formed an essential element in the highly-developed trading system of Mecca.

The pre-Islamic conception of usury

To grasp the Qur'anic prohibition of riba, it is essential to go back to the practices of the pre-Islamic pagan Arabs, especially among town dwellers of Taif, Mecca and Yathreb (al-Madinah). Tabari made an interesting survey of the state of affairs: "In pagan times the Banu Thaqif (of Taif) used to advance loans to another person for a fixed period, at the expiry of which the creditor demanded from the debtor either his capital or an additional sum for the extension. The debtor either repaid his debt, if he had money with him, or requested an extension in the period of repayment, with the result that if a one-year old she-camel was due at the expiry of the extended period, he would be required to give a two-year old she-camel; and at the second extension he would return a she-camel which had been her third year, but was not yet four years old. If this were impossible, for the third year, the creditor demanded the camel which had passed its fourth, but was within its fifth year. And so on.”

The same practice prevailed in transactions of gold or silver. The debtor on his failure to repay his debt after one year was bound to pay double the principal (capital) loaned out. For instance, if a sum of 100 dinar (a local denomination of currency) were borrowed, in the second year the creditor demanded 200 dinar; in the third year 400 dinar, and so on, until the creditor discharged his complete debt.

The citizens of Mecca also had an enormous business by way of interest transaction. The manner in which riba was acquired in Mecca during the pagan days was similar to that prevailing in Taif.

Khazin has described riba among the pagan Arabs. "If anyone owed something to another, the latter would demand repayment of his dues at the fixed time. The debtor would either repay the dues or apply for an extension of time in consideration of an additional sum as a return for the ensuing time." Baidawi says that in pagan times in Arabia if a person contracted a loan from another for a fixed time, the creditor would enquire at the expiry of the period whether the debtor would repay his loan or pay interest. If he was able to repay, the debt was discharged. If not, an extension of the time for repayment was granted on additional interest.

According to Suyuti, the riba in pagan Arabia lay in the fact that the creditor demanded, at the time fixed for payment of his debt, his dues from his debtor. If the latter complied, the capital advanced would be received, and the debt discharged. But if the debtor was unable to pay, extra time was granted to him on payment of an additional sum.

Yathreb (al-Madinah) being a town long under the influence of the Jewish merchant community, suffered a great deal as a result of the practice of the interest transaction of riba. Said Ibn Abu Burda narrates on the authority of his father that when he went to Yathreb he met ‘Abdullah Ibn Salam, who asked: "Why do you not come so that we may feed you on barley and dates, and so that you be counted amongst influential people?" He replied: "You live in a town where the practice of interest transaction is greatly in vogue.”

Baidawi states that one of them gives on loan a certain amount for a fixed period. Then he goes on adding to it, to such an extent that the debtor’s property is consumed by a small debt. Khudri sums up that pagan Arabs advanced loans for a fixed time. When that time lapsed the creditor demanded repayment of his dues or interest thereon from his debtor. If the debtor was unable to pay, the amount of the loan would then be doubled; for instance, if a one-year-old she-camel was due the creditor demanded a two-year-old one, or if one measure of corn was due, it was increased to two, and so on.

Types of usury at the beginning of Islam

The following types of riba were practised by the Arabs at the dawn of Islam:

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(a) A person sells a certain thing to another person, agreeing to receive the sale money at a certain fixed time. If the purchaser could not pay the purchase money within the prescribed time, another easing-time was allowed to him with the addition that he agreed to pay an increased amount.

(b) A person lends another a certain amount for a principal capital with a fixed sum as *riba*.

(c) The creditor and the debtor agree on a fixed rate of *riba* for a certain fixed time. If, within that time, the debtor failed to repay his loan with the agreed amount in addition to it, he would then be required to pay at an increased rate of *riba* for the additional easing-time.

The effect of usury in pre-Islamic days and the Qur’anic verdict on it

Ultimately the entire society plunged into an endless conflict between the debtor tribes and the creditor tribes in pre-Islamic days. The restless pagan Arabs lost all the bonds of their social affinities, being divided mainly into paupers on the one hand and a few rich feudalists on the other. Countrywide tension, want, fear, disbelief, thirst for blood, looting and plundering were let loose owing to the monopoly of money in the hands of a few. In fact the maldistribution of wealth and accumulation of gold, silver and coin by the dealer of interest-transaction disturbed the peace of the Arabian peninsula during the dark ages of ignorance.

Hence the Qur’an has laid down a very strict prohibition with regard to interest on money. But it endeavoured to improve matters gradually through ethics instead of law. It has laid down that lending money to the needy is an act of charity since the credit is an essential human necessity. “O believers, give God an honourable loan.” Lending to the needy person is, according to Islam, an exceedingly good action, hence derivation of an undue profit on the money lent is interest.

“That which ye give in usury so that it may increase on other people's property hath no increase with God; but that which ye give in charity, seeking God's countenance, hath increase manifold.”

It was customary in the pre-Islamic era to charge compound interest on all debts in which some early Muslims indulged.

“O ye who believe, devour not usury, doubling and quadrupling (the sum lent). Fear God, if you would have fortune.”

An historical instance of the fall of the corrupt Jewish trading community is given by way of a benign warning:

“We have deprived them of glorious bounties because of their taking usury, when they were forbidden it, and of their devouring others' fortunes uselessly.”

The Qur’an describes the psychology of the dealers of usury when it says:

“Those who swallow usury cannot stand up but like he whom the devil hath prostrated by touch ariseth up. That is because they say: 'Trade is just like usury', whereas God has permitted trading and forbidden usury. He unto whom an admonition from his Lord cometh and he refraineth, the past was his concern and his matter is unto God. As for those who return (to usury) they are the inmates of hell fire; they shall remain there ever.”

God hath prohibited usury and made and increased charities. God loveth not the sinful unbeliever. Besides the mentality of the moneylenders in this verse charity is established as the antithesis of usury. In addition to this, Imam Razi points out that *sadaqah* and *riba* are the antithesis of one another, for while in *sadaqah* a person gives out in charity the additional part of his wealth to another, in interest he acquires for himself additional parts of others' wealth. How then will the religion which has enjoined *sadaqah* upon its followers make interest lawful for them? Outwardly it appears that interest adds to the wealth of the creditor, and *sadaqah* reduces the giver's wealth, but, generally speaking, the reverse is the case, for ultimately *sadaqah* adds to man's wealth, while the ultimate end of the devourers of usury is poverty. To this the Prophet hinted “the more the interest, the less does the wealth become.” But all these ethical approaches of the divine wisdom could not check the tempting interest-transaction of new converts to Islam. It is narrated by commentators that the Banu Thaqif of Taif used to advance loans to the Banu Mughirah of Mecca on fixed rates of interest. After their acceptance of Islam, they still demanded their interest due from the Banu Mughirah, but they refused the payment on the grounds of the Qur'anic injunctions. The Banu Thaqif insisted and intensified their demand. A quarrel ensued among them. The dispute was referred to ’Atab Ibn Uayd, the Governor of the Prophet at Mecca. He recorded the case, and forwarded it to the Prophet for decision. At the time the final and stern words prohibiting the interest-transaction — *riba* — were revealed.

“O ye who believe, fear God and give up what remaineth of *riba* (due to you) if you are true believers. Then if ye do not follow, fear war from God and his apostle (against you). And if ye repent, then ye have your capital (without interest). Do not wrong, and ye shall not be put to wrong. And if he (the debtor) is in straightened circumstances, then let there be a delay till a time of ease. And to remit the debt in charity would be better if ye would know.”

In this verse of the Qur’an, the *riba* is considered as an act of an unbeliever; a stern challenge was given to the swallows of *riba* with a force and vigour which is not evident elsewhere in the Qur’an. Abu ’Ubayd Ibn Salam reported the significance of the pact between the Prophet and the people of Taif in his celebrated book *Kitab al-Amal*, the first of its kind in economics; it read: “The Banu Thaqif will obtain from their debtors only the capital advanced.”

Besides these clear verses, there are a number of authentic traditions strictly against *riba*, which describe it as thirty-six times worse than fornication. Jabir said:

“The messenger of God (peace be on him!) cursed the devourers of usury (creditors) and also its givers (debtors); the scribe of the deed and the witnesses to it are said to be all alike in the degree of sin.”

Moulana Syed Sulaiman Nadavi writes:

“The prohibition of *riba* (interest) is an issue concurred upon not only in Islam but by almost all the religions of the world and the majority of ancient philosophers. The Bible, the scripture of the Western world, too, prohibited it. So did the Greek and Roman thinkers. But the Jews have always and everywhere striven to transgress the limits imposed upon them by their religion, and the Christians have followed them. In this field the easiest step taken is the christening of usury as interest (which may be originally a Hebrew or Greek word), and thereby transformed its sense. Thus, out of this emerged the words 'interest' and 'usury'; the former was sanctioned, and the latter was prohibited: this demarcation, however, is not definitive, since the difference between these two is one of loss or greater loss and not one of loss or profit.”

According to Sulaiman Nadavi, there is no basic difference between interest and usury, since both lead ultimately to the
same usurious result. Islam is not the only religion which prohibits it, but all the religions which coincided with the fruitful thoughts of the philosophers and thinkers of all ages did so.

'The verdict of history

Greek theory of interest. Ancient Greeks forbade money-lending on interest. Aristotle compared money to a barren hen which laid no eggs; a piece of money cannot beget another piece of money was the doctrine of Aristotle.28

Roman Theory of Interest. Charging any interest was prohibited in the early stages of the Roman Empire, but it appeared in the later stages. Hence severe restrictions were imposed, and rates of interest were strictly regulated.29 The Romans were the first nation to enact laws for the protection of debtors.30

Interest in the Middle Ages. Payment of interest on money loans was named usury in the Middle Ages, and the charging of usury was strictly prohibited by the common law. Lord Keynes believes that there was also an economic motive behind the medieval prohibition of usury.31 It is only during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with the gradual decline in the power of the church, and the release of selfish forces from the anchor of religion, that the neo-theory of interest arose.32 But gradually with the rise of movements on the basis of trade unionism, prohibition against usury and undue interest began to be renewed in Europe and America in the twentieth century.

Arguments for prohibiting usury

In the light of the above-mentioned facts and figures, the following argument for the Islamic prohibition of riba can be advanced:

(1) According to the Qur’anic theory the sole object of money is to facilitate exchange to the fuller satisfaction of human wants. Since exchange is the only natural purpose of money, it could not be allowed as the source for accumulation, i.e., to increase at usury or interest. Islam only tolerates profit motive by means of legal joint stock company basis or private enterprise on a mutual foundation without any exploitation.

(2) All kinds of usury or interest-transactions are based on a one-sided risk, which ultimately makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. This causes the breakdown of the balance of society. The interests of the moneylender are secured in usury while no provision is made for the debtor. This is sheer injustice.

(3) Money transactions on usury cause a dangerous setback to the legal investments for the advancement of industries and the public utility, in so far as "it is an accepted fact that worldly affairs cannot progress satisfactorily without trade, arts and crafts."34 Usury causes a great hindrance to the natural rolling of money and thus hinders trade and commerce, import and export.

Finally, the Islamic prohibition of riba checks the misuse of money accumulation and maintains the balance of the society.

Conclusion

Islam suggests mudharaba or partnership, with a two-sided risk. The capitalists would supply capital with a view to promoting industry and commerce instead of riba, and the labourers and skilled workers would contribute on an agreed proportion of loss or gain. On this proportionate partnership between the capitalists and labourers all big industries such as iron and steel, cement, water, land, highways, railways, workshops, shipyards, foreign exports and imports, banking and trading of all kinds can easily be taken up and safely conducted.

In fact, the Islamic prohibition of riba, and the introduction of its substitute mudharaba on the aforesaid lines can eliminate many deep-rooted evils and ills of modern society both in the East and in the West. Because this system of mudharaba ensures complete harmony between the capitalists and labour. Once mutual interest and goodwill prevail between employer and employee, the universal fear of Communism is bound to disappear.

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THE BATTLEFIELDS OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD

The Conquest of Mecca

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

"After the service, Muhammad addressed the assembled citizens in the compound around the Ka'ba, and after reminding them what they had done to him and his disciples, and how unjust they had been, he asked them what they expected of him then? After a brief pause he continued:

"No more responsibility burdens you today,
Go, ye are relieved!" (Tabari, p. 1642)

Instantly Mecca was transformed, and overnight practically the entire population was won over to Islam. Nothing else could have won them so profoundly and sincerely. They were not the inhabitants of a defeated and occupied country, but equals with the victors in rights as well as obligations. When a Messenger of God is the conqueror of a town, nothing less exalted could be expected."

The strategy of the Prophet Muhammad

As had been predicted by the Prophet Muhammad, the Siege of the Ditch (5 A.H.—626 C.E.) proved to be the climax and the high tide of the Quraishite offensives. Punctuated by their efforts, thenceforward they had to be content with the defense against the ever-growing Muslim power. Diverse were its causes: mere failure in the Battle of Badr and the Siege of the Ditch was not responsible for the changed situation.

In fact, the Prophet Muhammad always preferred, both as a general policy and as a point of principle, to overwhelm the enemy but not to annihilate him. The means thereto were twofold: bringing economic pressure to bear on the Quraishites, and increasing his own military might ceaselessly with a long-range policy. He struck at the right moment when the enemy would not dare offer any resistance and his objective could be reached in a bloodless manner. The resources and energies of the enemy, preserved intact, if redirected in better and constructive channels, could add to the power of the Islamic State.

The most important, if not the only means of the livelihood of the inhabitants of Mecca — that "Valley without Cultivation" — was the caravan trade of winter and summer (The Qur'an, 106: 1-4). In less than four months after the migration to Medina, the Prophet tried and practically succeeded in closing the northern route of the summer traffic passing by Medina to Syria and Egypt. The Prophet Muhammad had concluded alliances with the tribes inhabiting west of Medina, in the neighborhood of Yanbu', by which the route frequented by the Meccans passed. History has conserved for posterity the text of several of these pacts (cf. Documents sur la Diplomatie musulmane à l'Époque du Prophète, by Hamidullah). With the expansion of Islam and of the Muslim State, the influence of the Prophet Muhammad was also extended. Soon he was able to close the route of the Quraishites to Iraq via Najd (Ibn Hisham, p. 547). These northern regions were frequented in summer. The winter caravans generally went towards the south, to Yaman and 'Uman, via Ta'if. Naturally this could not so easily be stopped in the early days. Nevertheless the international trade between India and Europe, which is said to have passed through Mecca, was stopped. This deprived the Quraishites of their monopoly of providing escorts, which must have been a heavy loss of considerable income, not to speak of the direct gains of the northern traffic, which was reaped to bring them cent per cent profits. Small detachments were sent even to harass the enemy on its southern marches.

One of the earliest expeditions was that of 'Abdullah Ibn Jahsh to Nakhlah, near Ta'if (Ibn Hisham, pp. 423-4). Another, sent a little later in the year 3 A.H.—625 C.E. to Qaradah was able to capture from the Meccans a load of silver worth 100,000 dirhams (Tabari, p. 1375). Did this belong to the goods in transit? After the Battle of the Ditch, in 5 A.H.—626 C.E., Muslim influence penetrated into Najd as far as the east as Yamamah, which granary was the main source of Quraishite import of grain. When Thumamah Ibn Uthai, a chieftain of Yamamah, stopped, at the instance of the Prophet, exports of grain, historians record that a famine in Mecca was the result (Ibn Hisham, p. 997; Ishtab, No. 278). The Hijaz is recorded to have generally suffered from lack of rain in this year, 6 A.H.—626 C.E. The incident that the Prophet Muhammad had once sent a sum of 500 gold dinars to be spent on the destitute in the then
enemy Mecca — and at which Abu Sufyan had grumbled that the Prophet was trying to win the hearts of the young Meccans (Saraqisyet, Mubdat, X, 91-92) — probably also belonged to the same period. Perhaps the most potent of all factors was that gradually the allies of the Quraishites were deserting them, and were either embracing Islam or otherwise making friends with Muhammad. As a matter of fact, we come across, at this moment in history, Muslim tribes migrating in all directions from Mecca, north, east, and even south. Soon came the truce of Hudaiibiya (6 A.H.—627 C.E.). Khaibar in the north capitulated immediately afterwards (Muhammad 7 A.H.—628 C.E.). Scarcely a year had passed when the Meccans broke the truce, though they repented the next moment. They sent a delegation to Mecca and tried to renew the pact of Hudaiibiya. The Prophet Muhammad did not agree to the renewal. Naturally the Meccans feared Muslim reprisals every day; they were then alone, and had no one to rely upon for help.

The truce of Hudaiibiya

It should be recalled that in the year following the Siege of the Ditch, the Prophet Muhammad was able to persuade the Quraishites of Hudaiibiya to conclude a truce with the Muslims for ten years. The Quraishites were given all they really desired and also their amour-propre was satisfied in return for their remaining neutral in case Muslims were at war with a third party. The Meccans may or may not have known that in this way they were deserting the Jews of Khaibar, and consequently they were also losing Jewish help against the Muslims. They were not only the two main parties to the truce of Hudaiibiya, but also those who adhered to the terms of the truce on one side or the other. It was these subsidiary parties who dragged the main groups into the war. So, it is said, the Bakrites once talked of the Prophet Muhammad in an abusive manner, whereupon the Khaza’ites, who were the allies of the Muslims, revolted. Probably they shed some blood of their neighbours, the Bakrites. The Bakrites prepared a night attack in revenge, wherein the Meccans also took part. As a Khaza’ite reputation later related to the Prophet Muhammad in Medina, the night attack was launched when the Khaza’ites were in congregational prayer. Naturally, death and injuries among these defenceless men were unusually high (Ibn Hisham, p. 805). There no longer remained the danger of being engaged simultaneously on two fronts, Khaibar having already been reduced to submission and disarmed. The Prophet Muhammad had a free hand to deal with Mecca. He detested shedding human blood, and tried to take the enemy unawares. We can never admire too much the way in which he succeeded in this difficult task.

How the Prophet Muhammad moved his army, 10,000 strong, against the Meccans

An army of ten thousand was something unusual in those days, and could hardly be sent unperceived by the enemy scouts or their friends. There was no question of a night attack, the distance was one of twelve days’ march. This is what the Prophet Muhammad did; he first stopped all exits, to friends as well as to neutrals, from Medina. (There was one case of flagrant violation, that of the famous letter of Hatib Ibn Balaa’ah to his friends in Mecca, but it was detected in time, and the mischief was remedied.) Then, according to the chronicler al-Ya’qubiy, the Prophet Muhammad ordered the various contingents of volunteers not to assemble in Medina, but to join the Prophet when he passed their tribal settlements, all along the route to Mecca. This strategy succeeded so well that the Quraishites could not get news of the arrival of the Muslim army before it camped on the other side of the mountains surrounding Mecca. To increase the effect of the shock, the Prophet Muhammad ordered that every Muslim soldier should light a fire. Ten thousand fires during the night gave the impression that many more people were cooking their meal. Providence also came to the help of the Muslims. Abu Sufyan, the supreme chief of the Meccans, fell that night into the hands of Muslim scouts; and consequently nobody in Mecca know what to do. Next morning the Prophet Muhammad began his march on Mecca, which we shall presently describe, and Abu Sufyan was freed, being told that he could assure the people of Mecca that whoever shut himself in his house, or laid down his arms, or took refuge in the compound around the sanctuary of the Ka’ba, or entered the house of Abu Sufyan, would be unharmed.

To declare one’s house an asylum is certainly a great honour. Perhaps Abu Sufyan merited it. For the famous author Thabit al-Bunaniy, a Tabi’iyy,1 assures us that in the early days of Islam, when the Prophet Muhammad was harassed by street boys and other commoners in Mecca, he used to find asylum in the house of Abu Sufyan, who had the courage and the culture to defend his guest (Ibn al-Jawziy, al-Majtiba, MS. Cairo, p. 85). The Prophet Muhammad did not forget this, and this was his reward.

There was in fact no experienced and influential person at the moment in Mecca: Abu Jahl had died, Khalid Ibn al-Walid and ‘Amr Ibn al-As had embraced Islam, Abu Sufyan had suddenly disappeared (as we know, he had fallen in the hands of the Muslims), and there was no time to call allies, if any, for help. Some junior chiefs, like ‘Ikrimah (son of Abu Jahl), no doubt initiated some resistance, at least with the help of the members of their clans, and there were some skirmishes between them and the Muslim detachment under the fiery commander Khalid Ibn al-Walid. In the main, however, the Meccans believed in the assurances brought by Abu Sufyan, and also

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1 An Arabic word used to describe those men and women who conversed with the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad. The traditions which are related by them.
recommended by him, and permitted a peaceful and practically bloodless occupation.

Even if he had wanted to organize and offer resistance, it was too late for Abu Sufyan to do so. For the Prophet Muhammad did not allow him to quit the Muslim camp before his army was actually on the march on Mecca, and had effectively occupied all the approaches to the city (Ibn Hisam, p. 814). There was no question of mustering and mobilizing their own volunteers, far less of sending word to allies, if any, and getting their help in time. Abu Sufyan was the trusted leader of the Meccans, and he sincerely believed that resistance was impossible and utterly futile, as his dialogue with his wife, preserved by chroniclers, shows. An irresistible force of the enemy, coupled with an unbelievable clemency, proved too much for the Meccans at this psychological moment, and their hate for Islam must have been thrown in the melting-pot for any eventual new mould.

Disposition of the Muslim army corps by the Prophet Muhammad

Mecca is situated in a valley, surrounded on all sides by high mountains. There is only one highway, which traverses the city from north to south. Two byways join this main thoroughfare: the way to Hajun and the way to Kada'.

The main army group of the Muslims, with the Prophet Muhammad himself in their midst, advanced from the main, northern side. The high-town (Ma'lat) is situated there. A group was led by Zubair Ibn al-Awam on the Kada' road, in order to close the escape to the sea coast, via Wadi Fatimah. A strong army group entered the city from the main thoroughfare, from the south, via Lit, and occupied Masfalab, or the low-town. Maybe it was a cavalry group, and in spite of the detour, synchronized its arrival in the city at the same time as the other detachments. Yet another group entered the city from the Hajun road, and closed the escape to Jidda as well as to the Yemen (cf. Ibn Hisam, pp. 816-817; Tabariy, p. 1635).

As in every other expedition, there was a watchword for the Muslim soldiers even on this occasion (Ibn Hisam, p. 818).

The arrangement of the army in ranks and files was done mericulously. A special marshal (waad) looked after these matters (Ibn Hisam, p. 815), and it was through him that the Prophet executed his instructions. Our author (ibid.) has preserved a graphic description of the entry of the Muslim army as seen from the heights of the hills of Mecca. In fact, Abu Quhafah (father of Abu Bakr) was still living in Mecca. He had become blind, and when he heard of a foreign attack on the city he took the hand of his granddaughter and alighted on some prominent point, and asked her to tell him what she noticed. The little girl even noticed how the waad (marshal) was arranging the ranks, and other details. At last, when she told him how people were advancing, he said: "Let us hasten home now, for it is dangerous to be caught by an army on the move.

There was an excellent arrangement for keeping the supreme commander aware of all that was passing in the different detachments. If he found any intervention or instruction necessary, he

at once arranged for it. When, during the last stages of the occupation of Mecca, one of the officers remarked to his men that on that day the head of proud Mecca would fall and the city would be plundered, as soon as the Prophet Muhammad came to know of the matter the officer in question was forthwith relieved of his post (Tabariy, p. 1636), which was entrusted to another person, and it was said: "No, the honour of Mecca
shall increase today, and its sanctity will in no way be violated, as it is there that the Qiblah of Islam is situated." And a general proclamation was issued that complete peace and order should prevail in the town.

The different detachments were formed on the basis of a natural division, different tribes constituting different groups. Although the Muslim emigrants of Mecca, the Ansarites of Medina, the Aamirites, the Gifitarites and others, each constituted separate corps, yet they were so co-ordinated that they all worked like different parts of the same machine. This arrangement had the added advantage of making a psychological impression; the number of groups and detachments would not impress the common man in those days as much as the number of tribes which represented the whole of North-Western Arabia.

The entry of the Prophet Muhammad into Mecca

The ex-patriated Meccan (the Prophet Muhammad, peace be with him!) was now triumphantly returning to his birthplace, after eight years of continuous physical and mental torture on the part of his fellow citizens. He was entering at the head of a victorious army, yet in what manner? Like any other tyrant, full of arrogance, forgetting the Almighty, the Cause of all causes, and intoxicated with self-conceit? No, far from it. He was, in fact, entering, in the words of Ibn Hisam (p. 815), shyly, prostrating himself repeatedly on the very back of the camel he was riding, before the One God, thankful to Him for all He had vouchsafed, declaring an all-embracing amnesty and peace, in place of any thought of avenging past material or mental afflications, and in fact demonstrating what God wills of Godly men, viz., "Enter the town and eat of it as you like in plenty, and enter the gate prostrating and say, 'Amnesty'" (The Qur’an, 2 : 58 ; 7 : 160). As Tabari very well notices (pp. 532-533), the immediate recipients of this divine rule of military conduct, the Jews (of the time of Moses, peace be with him!), had fallen far short of what may be expected from the believing and practising Faithful, when they fought against the Amalekites. It was destined for Muhammad, the "Prophet of War", to demonstrate that even in his battles he was the "Prophet of Mercy" (as a Hadith says: ana Nabiy al-Mahmah, ana Nabiy al-Rahmah).

The Qur’an (48 : 24) mentions a particular incident, that after the "victory" a part of the diehards laid an ambush of particular gravity against the Muslim army inside the very township of Mecca, and reminds the Muslims how God saved them from their implacable enemy. On this occasion, also, the "Prophet of Mercy" pardoned the culprits.

The Prophet Muhammad declares a general amnesty

Immediately after the occupation, the man-made gods were relegated to what they merited. The incident in the house of Abu Sufyan was pathetic. His wife, fearless Hindah, began to break into pieces the idols in her home, and began to repeat: "How proud we were of you! Yet how deceived were we in that belief!" The same Hindah came veiled before the Prophet with other women of the city to embrace Islam. The dialogue was interesting:

"Do you promise not to kill your infants?"
"We had reared them as children. It was you who killed them in the Battle of Badr!"
"Do you promise not to commit fornication or adultery?"
"Can a free-born woman do that?"
"Do you promise not to steal?"

At this Hindah was overwhelmed, and saw that Islam was not a political necessity: it was a code of human life. She said: "O Messenger of God! stealing is really bad; but just think, my husband is very miserly, and for the necessary expenses of maintaining the home I have stolen, from time to time, some money from my husband." The Prophet Muhammad could not help smiling and saying, "All right, that much is not forbidden" (Tabari, pp. 1643-44 ; Sunahy, II, 277).

We close by mentioning the last gesture of the Prophet in the conquered city. The day following the occupation, when complete peace and order reigned in the city, he led the congregational prayer, which was attended with curiosity by the Meccan pagans. After the service, Muhammad addressed the assembled citizens in the compound around the Ka’ba, and after reminding them of what they had done to him and his disciples, and how unjust they had been, he asked them what they expected of him then? After a long pause he continued:

"No more responsibility burdens you today,
Go, ye are relieved!" (Tabari, p. 1642).

Instantly Mecca was transformed, and overnight practically the entire population was won over to Islam. Nothing else could have won them so profoundly and sincerely. They were not the inhabitants of a defeated and occupied country, but equals with the victors in rights as well as obligations. When a Messenger of God is the conqueror of a town, nothing less exalted could be expected.

The Political Scene in the World of Islam

NORTH AFRICA, EGYPT AND THE WEST

By ABU MUHAMMAD

The Rangoon World Socialist Conference and North Africa

The World Socialist Conference which met in Rangoon, the capital of Burma, early this year, passed a resolution supporting the cause of freedom for the people of North Africa — Tunisia, Algiers and Morocco. The conference was attended by delegates from Socialist parties all over the world, including the French Socialist Party. A resolution passed by the conference, with regard to North Africa promised the support of the World Socialist Movement for the people of North Africa in their struggle for freedom and independence of foreign rule. This resolution has something of a moral binding force upon the members attending the conference, since it is a declaration of the policy which members of the World Socialist Movement will pursue. This, of course, raises speculation as to whether the French Socialist Party will put this resolution into effect if it ever gets in power in France. European political parties, when not in power, are traditionally known to make rash promises to grant freedom for their colonized peoples, but these promises have always been speedily shelved or rescinded the moment they get in office. For these reasons, forecasting the attitude of the French Socialist Party when, if ever, it gets in power, is just idle guesswork. But this does not mean that the resolution passed at this conference was altogether useless. For one thing, the peoples of North Africa have another solemn affirmation by a
respectable international body of their national rights. For another, the Socialist parties in Asiatic and other non-imperialist countries can be trusted to take every opportunity to enforce this resolution and to advocate the claims of the people of North Africa. Indeed, they had never spared their wholehearted support for this cause.

Another problem on which speculation is rife is the attitude of the British Labour Party, which was represented at this conference by its leader, Mr. Clement Attlee, towards implementing this resolution should they return to power — a thing that is likely to happen before long. Would the British Labour Party adopt the same attitude towards the North African problem as it did towards the Egyptian problem — making promises of evacuating British troops from Egyptian soil and later shelving these promises?

Turkey and the Arab States

There has been a noticeable change of late in the attitude of Turkey towards the North African problem. The Turkish Press suddenly cast off its cautious attitude towards this problem and gave its vociferous support to the claims of the North African nationalists. Until quite recently the Turkish Press had only paid lip service to the cause of the North Africans. Now the Government and the Press in Turkey have pledged unequivocal support to the Arabs of North Africa. A strong campaign is afoot against French colonial policy in North Africa, and Turkish public opinion is being roused to understand the plight of their Muslim brothers in North Africa. French misdeeds there are being exposed passionately to the Turkish public, which has been shocked to learn of the enormity which France has committed against the people of North Africa.

This change in Turkish policy has gladdened the hearts of the nationalists in North Africa and of the Muslim and other well-wishers of the people of North Africa. It is now expected that a new and comprehensive Eastern-Muslin-Arab bloc will be formed which will be able to give more effective support to the cause of the peoples of North Africa.

The Turkish delegation at the United Nations gave expression to this new policy towards North Africa. For instance, Turkey cast her vote with the majority which supported the view that the United Nations was competent to discuss the Tunisian and Moroccan complaints made against France. This marks a significant departure from previous Turkish policy. It will be recalled that at the Paris United Nations session of 1950-51 she had voted against Tunisia and against Turkey in the Security Council. This impelled me at that time to write harshly in these columns of Turkey's attitude of non-co-operation, and sometimes of open and distressing hostility, to her Muslim brothers, in an effort to please the United States of America and Great Britain.

There is something new on the political horizon in Turkey. France has been angered by this sudden change of Turkey's affiliations. An invitation which had earlier been extended by the French Government to a group of Turkish press correspondents to pay an official visit to North Africa in order to gain first-hand information about the situation there was abruptly withdrawn. So the iron curtain struck by France around North Africa has now become impregnable even to the Turks.

The Middle East Defence Pact, Great Britain, the United States of America, the Turks and the Arabs

It is noteworthy that this change in Turkish policy towards North Africa coincided with the return of the Turkish Foreign Minister, Mr. Fuat Koprulu, from his visit to London early this year. This has given rise to speculation as to whether this change in Turkish policy has been inspired by Great Britain. There seems to be some foundation for this assumption. It is thought that Britain now favours such a policy not because of any change in her attitude of hostility to the claims of the North African nationalists, but as a result of her desire and that of the United States of America to induce the Arab countries to join the proposed Middle East Defence Pact. Although the Arab countries have on many occasions shown that their sympathies lie with the Western democracies, yet they have not so far taken up any categorically hostile attitude towards the Communist bloc. By joining the Middle East Defence Pact, which will also include Turkey and Greece, the Arab countries will satisfy the paramount desire of the Western democracies by rallying to their camp in opposition to the Communist bloc. The United States of America and Great Britain have for long been placing attractive bait before the eyes of the Arab countries in an effort to induce them to join the Middle East Defence Pact. When the Arab countries failed to respond to these enticements and promises of economic help and aid under the Point-Four Programme, Great Britain offered to barter with the Arab countries, particularly Egypt, her promise to withdraw British troops from the Canal Zone in return for Egypt joining the Defence Pact. Despite all these persistent efforts, the Middle East Defence Pact is still far from being a reality.

The Western democracies have now realized that it is idle to hope that the Arab countries will join a Middle East Defence Pact, or even consider the possibility of joining it, until two fundamental conditions are fulfilled. The first of these is the bringing about of a true affinity between Turkey, who is the pillar of this proposed Defence Organization, and the Arab countries. The second is the attainment by the Arab countries, and particularly by Egypt, of their national aspirations. It is only when these two prerequisites are achieved that the Arab statesmen can contemplate entering into discussions on the possibility of joining a Middle East Defence Pact. Paramount in their minds during such discussions will be the furtherance of the interests of the Arab peoples, and the decision they arrive at in this respect will be inspired solely by this motive. The Western democracies will therefore have to convince the Arab Governments that it will be in their material interest to join the Middle East Defence Pact rather than to remain neutral as they have been inclined to do so far.

Viewed in the light of these factors, it would appear that this sudden outburst of sympathy on the part of Turkey towards the cause of the Arabs of North Africa, which has become the cause of the whole Arab world, is essentially a means of paving the way for gaining the goodwill of the Arabs and inducing them to join the Western democracies and Turkey in the proposed Defence Pact.

Friendship and co-operation between the Arab countries and Turkey is a thing very much to be desired. It is to be hoped that Turkey will maintain such an attitude towards the Arab countries irrespective of the fact that they may procrastinate in joining the Middle East Defence Pact or ultimately flatly refuse to join it. Between the Turks and the Arabs there are strong bonds of a common heritage weaved mainly by Islam. The estrangement of these two nations of late also ran against the dictates of their mutual interests.

It must be emphasized that the key to inducing the Arab countries to join the Middle East Defence Pact lies with Great Britain and not with Turkey. As long as Great Britain maintains her present uncompromising and hostile attitude towards Iran and Egypt, and as long as Jordan remains a British semi-colony and Iraq remains subject to antiquated treaties giving Great Britain undue advantage over her soil, the Arab countries can hardly be expected to join the Western democracies in any defence pact. It must be remembered that there is no real cause to impel the Arab countries to undertake such open hostility to

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the Communist bloc, which so far has not interfered with them to any great extent.

The New Era in Egypt unfolds itself
When on 10th December 1952 General Muhammad Najeeb, the Prime Minister of Egypt, ordered the arrest of several prominent political leaders in the country for failing to co-operate with the reform movement or for hindering its progress, he also announced the abolition of the Egyptian constitution which was enacted in 1923. A committee of fifty members, drawn from all walks of life in the country, was set up and charged with drafting a new constitution which would be more in keeping with the present trend of thought in the country, which has undergone a drastic reorientation as a result of the military coup d'état and the removal of King Farouk.

General Najeeb and his advisers had expressed, on more than one occasion, their desire not to bring about any drastic constitutional change very suddenly. They wanted to enact reforms piecemeal so as to avoid any major clash or reaction in the nation. From what they showed great consideration towards the political parties; indeed, their treatment of the political parties has been criticized as too lenient. All that General Najeeb had asked of the political parties was that they should carry out a purge in their ranks and rid themselves of corrupt and undesirable elements who infested them from top to bottom. Political leaders at first procrastinated over this request. Later they interpreted General Najeeb's patience and tolerance as weakness, and became defiant and truculent. There was no alternative before General Najeeb other than to act firmly and to strike at these political parties with an iron hand.

General Najeeb and the former political parties of Egypt
On 23rd January 1953, a day on which celebrations were held all over Egypt to mark the passing of six months since the military coup d'état, General Najeeb announced drastic measures to strengthen the hold of his régime on the country and to reduce the menacing opposition of the old corrupt political parties and cliques. He had received evidence that some reactionary forces were planning a coup d'état which would undo the achievements of the military régime and restore the old corrupt order which flourished under King Farouk. There was also evidence that these reactionary forces had contacted foreign powers for help. In short, the scene was set, unless General Najeeb intervened promptly and in a very decisive manner, for plunging the country into bloodshed and chaos and imposing upon it again the shackles of the old corrupt order. General Najeeb acted swiftly. He ordered the arrest of about 100 political leaders and some 25 high-ranking service personnel who were suspected of complicity in this plot.

Simultaneously with announcing these arrests, General Najeeb signed a decree for the dissolution of all political parties in Egypt and for the confiscation of their property. He also announced a transitional period of three years before political parties will be permitted to resume their activities and before parliamentary elections are held. A period of three years was considered by General Najeeb as the minimum period which could give the country time to reflect on the reform movement and also allow the authorities to carry out the necessary purge in all walks of life and to rid the people of corrupt and harmful elements. Not until this task is accomplished will it be safe to allow democratic practices in Egypt, for democracy, of its nature, is open to perversion and abuse when the electorate is not politically conscious.

It is only fair to say that General Najeeb and his advisers did not resort to this drastic step until they were satisfied that there was no alternative left to them. Had the political parties carried out the purge upon which the military régime had insisted, General Najeeb would have been too happy to allow the rule of democracy and of democratic niceties of political association and liberty of action for all sections of the population. In the circumstances, however, such a step on his part would have amounted to political suicide.

Another important measure taken by General Najeeb was the formation of a United national political party, which will be supported by, and will support, the Government. This party will thus be a melting-pot for all political parties in the country, and will be nourished and strengthened by the Government in every way. So, at least for the coming three years, there will be only one political party in Egypt.

The one-party system has its advantages and its disadvantages. In Turkey, the Republican Party which was founded by Kemal Attaturk worked well and has been the father of progress in that country. Again, Soviet Russia owes her strength to the fact that there is only one political party in the country, namely, the Communist Party. But, on the other hand, one must not forget that it was the Fascist Party in Italy, and the Nazi Party in Germany, which were the government parties that plunged the world into World War II and brought ruin to Italy and Germany.

Egypt is passing through a serious period of experiment. The ship is captained by General Najeeb, a man of great honesty and devotion, who everyone trusts will bring her safely to harbour.

THE HISTORIC SPEECH OF TARIQ IBN ZIYAD

One of the most masterly speeches made by a Muslim on the subject of Jihad (fighting in the cause of God) is the one by the famous Muslim leader, Tariq Ibn Ziyad, which he made in July 711 C.E. on the occasion of the start of the Arab conquest of Spain. Tariq Ibn Ziyad was the freed Berber slave of Musa Ibn Nusayr, the Governor of North Africa, who sent him at the head of 7,000 men to inaugurate the Muslim invasion of Spain. Tariq Ibn Ziyad and his men sailed from the port of Ceuta in Morocco and landed at the southernmost tip of Spain, some thirteen miles away, at what is now known as Gibraltar after him (Arabic: Jabal Tariq). Immediately upon landing, Tariq Ibn Ziyad ordered the burning of all the ships that had transported his men together with the greater part of the provisions which they carried. Thereby, Tariq impressed upon his men the fact that there could be no turning back for them nor any way of escape. Roderick, the last Gothic king, massed his armies to meet Tariq Ibn Ziyad's men, and soon afterwards, on the 19th July 711 C.E., near the mouth of the River Barbate (now called Salado) a pitched battle took place. From this battle the Muslims emerged victorious, and with continued reinforcements they marched along to occupy the whole of Spain. The golden rule of the Muslims in Spain lasted almost 700 years.

These are the words (translated from the Arabic) with which Tariq Ibn Ziyad addressed his men soon after he had assembled his troops on Gibraltar. They were the words that inspired unprecedented valour in the hearts of these men. They also reflect the character of this great man.

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“O you men, whither escape? The sea is behind you and the enemy is in front of you... and nothing will avail you, by God, save sincerity and patience. Know you that in this island you are more at a loss than are orphans in a banquet of villains! Your enemy is meeting you with his army; and his armaments and provisions are plentiful. You, however, can only look to your swords for support. And there will be no provisions for you save what you can take out of the enemy’s hands. And if for long you remain in a state of want, and you do not accomplish your purpose, then your powers will wane and those hearts which are now filled with fear of you will become daring against you. So banish the thought of such a fate by combating this tyrant. His fortified city has thrown him at you; but it is nevertheless possible to vanquish him if you allow yourselves to die. I would not have warned you of a serious matter to which I would be immune, nor would I have thrust upon you a plan in which the cheapest elements are lives, had I not been putting myself in the same position. So know you all that if you be patient for a while over the difficult things, you will enjoy the easier and more pleasant for much longer. Do not prefer yourselves unto me, for your share in it is not greater than mine. You have come to know of the many good things in which this island abounds; and the Leader of the Believers, al-Walid Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, has selected you as the most valiant amongst the pure and incorrupt Arabs. He was pleased to consider you as worthy of being related by marriage to the kings of this island. This he did in the belief that you would willingly undertake to fight. He has also requested you to face in battle the heroes and the knights, so that through your valiant achievements he may earn the approbation of God for the upholding of His reign and the exposition of His religion in this island. All this island’s booties will be yours from Him to the exclusion of all the other Believers. God Almighty will grant you aid to accomplish what will bring you rewards not only in this life but in the life to come. And know you that I shall be the first to respond to what I have called upon you to do. When the two armies will meet I shall go forward myself to meet Roderick, the tyrant of this nation, and to kill him, if God permits. Follow me; and if

A view of the Rock of Gibraltar (distorted form of the Arabic words Jabal Tariq — the Rock of Tariq), named after Tariq, the first Muslim conqueror of Spain

I die after I slay him, then you have nothing to worry from his direction, and you will not then need a wise hero to whom you can entrust your affairs. But if I die before I reach him, then you should follow the example of my determination and fight him; and you will spare yourselves the effort of conquering this island by killing him first.”

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1 The Arabs used the word jazeera (island) to denote a peninsula.
2 Roderick, the last Gothic king, killed in the Battle of Wadi Bakkah on 25th-26th July 711 C.E.
3 The Umayyad Caliph (685-705 C.E.).

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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
AN IRAQI LOOKS AT IRAQIS
The Cultural Potentialities of Iraq

By DR. S. A. KHULUSI

The Iraqi nation is a nation with great potentialities. There is not the slightest doubt that this part of the world has played a great part in history from remote times of antiquity down to the present day. It has been the home of several great civilizations. True, the Iraqi is at times discontented and critical, but that is, of course, due to his desire to improve his conditions in the shortest possible time. I think on the whole the average Iraqi is endowed with a fair amount of intelligence. What he lacks is the right orientation which can only be realized through mass education and a sound basis of culture. The Iraq Ministry of Education has of late been aiming at this objective, but on a limited basis, due to financial reasons. We have started the roving cinema project, and public educational lectures that are given in very simple and intelligible language. For the last few months we have also been making tentative use of the radio in a series of school broadcasts. Subjects, both literary and scientific, were simplified and offered indirectly to the public through these broadcasts. It is hoped that eventually every school in Iraq will have its own radio set and will listen to the school programmes at specified hours which will form part of the academic timetable. Through these school broadcasts, when systematized and made regular, we shall be able to inculcate the right philosophy into our students so that they may grow up with definite objectives in life instead of falling easy victims to all sorts of propagandists, as has unfortunately happened in past years.

What the Iraqi needs at this juncture of his political and social development is a sound philosophy that is unaffected by sentimentalism. It is by this means that we can rid ourselves of parochialism and misinterpretations of patriotism. Our patriotism must be constructive rather than destructive. It should be far from the aggressive spirit that can have nothing but evil consequences in its wake. With this plan in mind we shall be able to achieve a good deal with our school broadcasts, which are progressing steadily. We are doing our best to make them as attractive as possible to students in particular and to the public in general. Music, short stories and well-produced plays have been prominent features in our programmes. The aim has been to make as large a number of students and teachers take part in these broadcasts as is humanly possible.

Thus we shall be able to discover and encourage the hidden talents of our boys and girls. So far we have been lucky enough to discover some promising poets and musicians around the age of sixteen.

Another plan which might give momentum to cultural progress in Iraq is the exchange of European and Iraqi students. During the years I spent lecturing in the University of London, I discovered many students who were desirous of coming to Iraq to pursue a course of studies in Arabic history or literature at one of its colleges, on the exchange basis; that is an Iraqi student is taken and looked after by a British family in return for having their son or daughter looked after by an Iraqi family or a boarding school. If such a plan could be adopted, and it is feasible, I think it will help to promote international understanding to a very great extent. All we have to do is take the initiative and start inviting foreign students, first for holiday tours in Iraq and then for a course of studies.

Eventually, of course, there could be a plan for the exchange of professors and lecturers between our colleges and English or American universities, especially in subjects concerning the history and the languages of the Middle East. We should in fact start a movement of occidentalism to run parallel with that of orientalism in Europe and America. It is time that we aimed at producing authorities on European languages and history, just as Europe has produced some fine authorities on Semitic languages and history, so that Baghdad will one day be once again a great centre of learning for foreign students. But first of all we must eradicate the xenophobia that is found amongst certain sections of the community. That is only possible if we can replace it with mutual respect that is based on mutual understanding. We can do this to a certain extent by offering free or cheap-rate journeys to European countries, and by encouraging the learning of European languages. The teaching of a European language should include the exposition of the beauty of that language and its literature. If you love a language you are bound to have some affection for its people as a people, i.e., apart from politics.

I think the Westerners who have the interests of Iraq and the Arabs in mind should do their utmost to show their benevolent spirit and sympathy towards their problems whether in the U.N.O. or the U.N.E.S.C.O. or other assemblies of an international character, because it is so easy to gain the friendship of the Arabs, and especially the Iraqis. For one thing they easily put their faith in anyone who acts favourably towards them. They never forget a good turn. At the same time they never forget an injury.

There is no doubt that there are all the makings of a great cultural nation in Iraq. All we have to do is to give a spur to the dormant talents by taking what is good in Western culture and civilization and throwing away what is bad and worn out in Iraqi traditions and social customs. The cultural potentialities are certainly many and varied. There is in Iraq a great aptitude for painting, sculpture, music and poetry. But for fear of being accused of exaggeration I would say we are a nation of poets. Added to moral and cultural help we, of course, need the economic help of those nations who wish to see the land of ancient Babylon running once again with milk and honey, and lifting the torch of civilization and freedom high in the world.

JUNE 1953
A MILENGE SINACHAKAN-I-CHAMA
BAZM-I-GUL KI HAMNAFAS
(Muslims who live for the ideals of love and effort will
make the whole of th

SA'UDI ARABIA
The State Visit
The Governor-General of Pakistan, Mr.
(4th MARCH - )

The Kingdom of Sa'udi Arabia
AREA 927,000 square miles POPULATION 6,000,000

The Governor-General of Pakistan is Mr.
al-'Aziz Ibn 'Abd al-Rahman al-Faisal al-
The King welcomed the Governor-General
with which one welcomes a brother. To
consider himself as his younger brother
that the great Pakistani nation was a sour
the world. In reply the Governor General
of Pakistan was service to Islam and the
idea of the service to the cause of Islam
durability than any o

MECCA — 6th
Why the Muslims ha

In reply to an address of welcome presented to the Governor-General of Pakistan by the Pakistan Muslim Community in Mecca, Mr. Ghulam Muhammad said:

"To those of you who are fortunate enough to live in this Holy City, my farewell message is this: Each time you pray
in the Khana-Ka'ba (the House of the Ka'ba), please pray for the progress of Muslims everywhere.

"Pray also that God, in His mercy, may grant Muslims love and tolerance, and the urge for action and seeking knowledge
of both religion and arts and sciences in the service of their fellow Muslims and of humanity. This has been, is, and shall be
my prayer. . . ."

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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
AND PAKISTAN

His Excellency
Ghulam Muhammad, to Sa`udi Arabia
MARCH, 1953

Pakistan

AREA 364,216 square miles POPULATION 76,000,000

ng greeted by His Majesty King `Abd `ud at the Royal Palace, Qasr Murabba.

of Pakistan with a warmth and affection.

King asked Mr. Ghulam Muhammad and Sa`udi Arabia his home, adding:

of strength to the Muslims throughout

of Pakistan said that the prime object

the common bonds of faith and of the

very far more important and of greater

vational alliances.

MARCH 1953

Med in their Mission

"Pakistani came into existence with the sole object of service to the cause of Islam and the Muslim world. This young

State was not founded on love of power; nor was it motivated by any desire to use its power and influence to the detriment of

the larger interests of humanity and peace. It was not created with an eye to any intrigue for new groupings. I repeat that the

genesis of Pakistan is selfless service to the Muslim world.

"It is gratifying to note a new wave of freedom in the Islamic world. A number of new Islamic States have come into

existence or attained independence during the last few years — Pakistan, Indonesia and Libya — while the surge for self-
determination and freedom is spreading amongst Muslims in Africa and elsewhere.

JUNE 1953
The Governor-General of Pakistan is kissing the Black Stone which is fixed in the east corner wall of the building of the Ka'ba at the height of about 5 ft. The Stone is of a reddish black colour about 8 inches in diameter and is now broken into pieces held together by a silver band.

The Stone is kissed by the visitors and pilgrims as they pass by it in their circumambulations. The fact that the practice of kissing it in the course of circumambulations was retained by the Prophet Muhammad has been turned by Western critics of Islam into an argument that Islam retains remnants of pre-Islamic idolatry. This view is not supported by historical facts, one of them being that among the innumerable objects which were taken for gods by the pre-Islamic Arabs, the Ka’ba and the Black Stone were never worshipped by them.

The kissing of the Black Stone is out of respect and love for it, the Stone having formed part of the building of the Ka’ba, which was rebuilt by the Great Patriarch Abraham. This Stone has been there ever since the Ka’ba has been known to exist.

"Helping these people to obtain their freedom, as Pakistan has been doing, cannot be regarded by any right-thinking person as a manifestation of power-seeking.

"It will only be a service to the cause of Islam. The people of this Holy City should ponder deeply the causes of the rise and decline of the Muslim peoples.

"The shining light of faith and guidance that was lit in this very city and which so brightened the darkest corners of the world has now become dim. This, I regret to say, happened through the failing of the people and their leaders.

"The responsibility for the present decline of Islam lies squarely on the shoulders of Muslims themselves. Let me say that Islam was founded on truth, tolerance and service to humanity. Its main spring was Tawheed (the Oneness of God) and the urge to do everything li Sabillillah (In the way of God). These ideals released forces which brought about the flowering of human thought and institutions.

"Far more important than political power, they helped in enhancing the reunion of Islam to the eternal glory.

"Muslims lost sight of these ideals of life and conduct and preferred a life of luxury, women, power and indolence. They lost the urge for the correct purpose of life and sank into the abyss of intrigue, jealousy and greed. Muslims declined because of these evils and because of their entanglement in details and feuds both religious and political.

Many of us neglected Islam and preferred to be entangled in the cobweb of dogma. Islam's underlying principles of unity, its zest for action, selfless service and tolerance have been forgotten, and that is what I mean when I say that the responsibility for the present decline of Muslims rests upon themselves.

"We, the Muslims, today have to change our whole outlook. Let us follow once more the teachings of the Qur'an and of the Prophet, which is Islam in its highest form. To inculcate the spirit of tolerance towards other religions was one of the teachings of the Prophet, which the Muslims today seem to have forgotten.

"Europe based its knowledge on the contributions of Muslims while we drag on in the mire of ignorance. God has given us all resources but we lack a knowledge of the sciences to use them for the benefit of Muslims and humanity.

"I may be forgiven for speaking frankly. I feel it essential to speak out frankly and boldly so that our people are aroused to a new consciousness which throws a great responsibility on all of us for the welfare of Islam and of the Muslim people. I hope you will cultivate the great motive for action which is in the way of God and deep faith, and vision. . . .

"What I have seen in Sa'udi Arabia fills my heart with pleasure and gives me hope that under the able and far-sighted guidance of His Majesty King 'Abd al-'Aziz Ibn Sa'ud, this land will prosper and progress."

DAHRAN, Sa'udi Arabia — 8th MARCH 1953

The role of Pakistan in the world of Islam

In reply to an address of welcome by Sayyid 'Abd al-Rahman Shihani, Director of the Diwan of the Governor of the Eastern Provinces, who said that the visit of His Excellency Mr. Ghulam Muhammad was Pakistan's gift to Sa'udi Arabia and would go far in cementing even stronger ties of friendship between the two nations, the Governor-General of Pakistan said:

"The Ar-Razi-i-meaddas (the Holy Land) is my home, and the generous and sincere welcome accorded to me by His Majesty King Ibn Sa'ud, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince, the Princess and the people, makes me feel as though I am being welcomed home.

"Pakistan's aim is service to Islam and the Muslim peoples, peace and co-operation in protecting freedom of thought, individual liberties and human rights. Pakistan is opposed to regimentation of thought or of individuals and groups. Pakistan does not aim at power, or alliances motivated by any selfish political considerations. Islam is the middle road between two extremes — the extremism of some parts of the West and the other extremism which was a denial of many human freedoms and human liberties."
When at Mecca on 5th March 1953 the Governor-General of Pakistan, in company with other members of his party, performed the 'Umra — a visit to the Ka'ba which consists of seven circumambulations around it.

It is at Mecca that the levelling influence of the Hajj — the Pilgrimage to Mecca — in destroying all distinctions of race, colour and rank between man and man, is brought home to all those Muslims who gather there every year from all conceivable parts of the world. Muslim society has always been singularly free from colour and race prejudice.

The Governor-General (first from left) is saying his prayers in congregation in front of the Ka'ba.
AN APPEAL TO THE MUSLIMS
In the Light of a Panoramic View of Islam’s Past
By MUHAMMAD ‘ABDUR RAHMAN KHAN

The role of the religions of the world in building up the character of man

The present critical condition of the human race needs no expatiolation: it is patent truth. In spite of all manner of scientific discoveries and inventions, men all over the world instead of helping one another, are striving their utmost through sheer greed or malice to oust one another from their possessions. Social dishonesty was bad enough in the past, but was generally fortuitous, but nowadays, owing to lack of religious faith or principles, it has become a regular organized affair.

Religion helped man to overcome foul temptations, aptly called the “Devil’s promptings”. The most liberal and all-embracing of these religions, in historical order, are Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. Buddhism was absolutely free from caste or class distinction and preached equality of human rights and duties, but it regarded life as an embodiment of endless misery due to insatiable desires, and advocated its extinction rather than its prolongation.

Judaism was a staunch supporter of righteousness and loyalty to God, but believed His favours to be reserved exclusively for the Jewish race, ignoring all others. True Christianity was much more liberal and charitable. Jesus Christ, born under peculiar circumstances, befriended from first to last by God alone, in the brief period of his hard life and trials sought to relieve the entire human race of its sufferings and held out hopes of salvation to even the most confirmed sinner if he were but sincere and unflinching in his repentance.

The early Christians of the days of Nero (57-68 C.E.) or Galerius heroically defied savage Roman persecutions, mass murders, laceration of limbs by wild beasts of prey, and burning to death like live torches in the inhuman gladiatorial shows. The more they were persecuted by the Roman successors of the brutal Etruscans (who seem to have surpassed even the Assyrians of old in their thirst for blood), the more their love for Jesus Christ increased, and Christianity triumphantly penetrated into the remotest corners of the Roman world.

Meanwhile Rome itself was in a state of social and political chaos. Corruption of the members of the Senate, acute class differences and the race for monopoly of power by avaricious generals resulted in the disappearance of the republican mode of government and the establishment of an empire (14 C.E.), which reached its greatest extent under Trajan (98-117 C.E.). But the moral degeneration continued and Rome was pillaged and sacked several times by Barbarians from all around the empire (in 410, in 455 and in 1084 C.E.). The remnants of this empire split up into two sections. The western empire lingered on for some time under vicissitudes of fortune and then disappeared altogether (in 476 C.E.). In spite of these calamities the spirit of Jesus permeated the entire Roman world. The Bishop of Rome assumed the more exalted title of Pope as the highest dignitary of the Christian Church and laid claim to the defunct Roman office of Pontifex Maximus. Several of these earlier dignitaries were undoubtedly worthy successors of Jesus Christ’s Apostles. One of the most pious of them, Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII, 1073-85 C.E.), called himself Servus Servorum Dei (Servant of the Servants of God).

The Eastern empire continued throughout the conciliatory policy of Constantine the Great (306-37 C.E.), who had the vision to see in Christianity a powerful cementing material to bind together the heterogeneous races of the empire. Justinian I (438-527 C.E.) salutary measures (like the Codification of Law — Corpus Juris), the building of the beautiful Church of St. Sophia in Constantinople, supported by the victories of his generals, Belisarius and Narses, gave the Eastern empire a further lease of life. But the rise of the Sassanid dynasty (227 C.E.) to power in Persia led to constant wars between the Persian and the Eastern Roman empires, weakening both and imperceptibly paving the way for their eventual downfall.

Besides these and other external calamities, like plagues, etc., the Christian Church had to face a number of internal troubles arising from the difficulty of conforming faith to reason. Subtle differences in belief about the nature and personality of Jesus split up the Church into a number of rival creeds, bitterly opposed to one another.

In these circumstances the Prophet Muhammad (571-632 C.E.) came forward with his mission of Islam to save the human race from moral destruction. In spite of determined opposition from some of his self-seeking kith and kin and ceaseless persecution by people in power, he succeeded at last through indomitable firmness, sympathy, and affection of his fellowmen, in presenting to the world a way of life which appealed to the hearts of everybody (whether Arab, Abyssinian, Greek or Persian, as exemplified in the voluntary conversions of his own wealthy consorts Khadijah, Bilal, Suhayb and Salman).

Islam demanded implicit faith in the unity of God as the creator and sole master of the universe, and prescribed simple rules for prayers, periodic fasting, regular payment of alms for relief of the poor and pilgrimage to a central place to bind together its followers into a common brotherhood. This simple and beneficent faith, free from metaphysical puzzles or monopolizing priestcraft, spread rapidly over the East and the West far beyond the narrow confines of Arabia, and would have dominated the entire world, if its followers had remained faithful to it.

Democratic system of government in early Islam changes into monarchical system

With the acquisition of wealth and power Muslims began to waver in their loyalty to God, and to forget His commands as specified in the Qur’ân. After the death of the Prophet Muhammad and the termination of the glorious but brief period of the Medinese Caliphate (632-661 C.E.), old tribal feuds, long suppressed, reappeared in their worst pre-Islamic characteristics. It was through respect for the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad that the Ansârs (Helpers) of Medina persevered in their loyal comradeship with the Muhajirs (Emigrants) of Mecca and co-operated in the election of Abu Bakr as the first Caliph of the Prophet Muhammad. Under Abu Bakr’s firm rule and guidance the Riddah revolts were suppressed. His brief régime of two years was followed by ‘Umar’s succession, whose unique simplicity of life and exemplary justice contributed vastly to the success of the Muslims in their wars against Persia and Byzantium. But jealousies and intrigues slowly crept in, and ‘Umar was murdered by a Persian slave (Abu Lulu Firuz) in the Mosque of Medina in 644 C.E. (1st of Muarram). This murder was followed later by a series of terrible calamities; the
murther of the third Caliph 'Uthman (on 17th June 656 C.E.), the Battle of Jamal (on 9th December 656 C.E.) between the partisans of 'Ayesha and 'Ali, with the loss of 10,000 Muslims, 'Mu'awiya's opposition to 'Ali terminating in the Battle of Siffin (20th July 657 C.E.), complications arising from arbitration between 'Ali and 'Mu'awiya (13th Safari, 37 A.H.—657 C.E., the Khairejite revolts, the murder of the fourth Caliph, 'Ali (on 17th Ramadhan 40 A.H.—660 C.E.), while performing morning prayers in the Jami' at Kufa, Iraq, and the murders of his sons, Hasan (669 C.E.) and Husayn (10th Muharram, 61 A.H.—10th October, 680 C.E.).

In the course of these internece feuds the character of Muslim government changed from simple democratic to confirmed monarchical and hereditary rule. But the imputes received from the Prophet Muhammad's teaching persisted, and within a century of his death Islam had spread from the borders of China in the East to the shores of the Atlantic in the West.

The Umayyad régime, notwithstanding the abominable atrocities of some of its misguided representatives, maintained the pristine glory of Arab simplicity and daring. Though bred and brought up in the desert, its leaders did not hesitate to dispute with powerful Byzantium her supremacy in the Mediterranean. The warriors of Arabia defeated the Greeks in several naval engagements, especially in the one known as Dhar al-Sawari (54 A.H.—655 C.E.). Had there been no devastating civil war following the murder of the third Caliph, the Arab armies might possibly have captured Constantinople itself.

Sulayman Ibn 'Abd al-Malik's (715-18 C.E.) love of revenue was responsible for the loss of further opportunities of epoch-making conquests by distinguished Muslim generals like Muhammad Ibn Qasim in India, Qutaybah Ibn Muslim in Eastern Turkestan, and Musa Ibn Nusayr in Spain. Sulayman persecuted these great commanders most shamefully. His redeeming feature was his nomination of the saintly 'Umar Ibn 'Abd al-Aziz as his successor, which led indirectly to voluntary mass conversions to Islam.

In the administration of ever-increasing conquered territories the Jabiyyah tribal spirit revived; the quarrels between the Mudarites and Yamanites shook the Umayyad Government to its very foundation. These clannish differences spread throughout the entire Muslim world (both in the East and the West). And the descendants of the Prophet's uncle, 'Abbas, taking advantage of these divisions and carrying out elaborate propaganda in favour of the descendants of 'Ali, at last defeated and killed the last Umayyad ruler (Marwan II) in 750 C.E., and set up the Abbasid régime, which from its new capital, Baghdad, controlled the destinies of the Eastern Muslim world, at first in reality, then nominally, for 500 years.

The cultural and scientific activities under the Abbasids

Mansur (1754-75 C.E.), the real founder of the Abbasid Caliphate, though reputed to be a cruel and rather parsonious man, built Baghdad (not far from the ruins of old Ctesiphon) as its capital and based its government more or less on the old Persian model, with Wazir and Haijih as chief political officers. Under later successors Baghdad vied with old Byzantium itself in court ostentation and hareem extravagance.

As a supporter of cultural activities and scientific investigations, no single Muslim dynasty can bear comparison with the Abbasid. Its thirty-seven rulers, all direct descendants of 'Abbas, ruling from a great city on the Tigris, whose trading vessels sailed over the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea, the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean and even the China Sea, contributed much to the spread of civilization over the whole of the then known inhabited world. Some of the most important among them (in order of time after Mansur) were the renowned Harun al-Rashid (786-809 C.E.) of Arabian Nights' fame, who snubbed Nicephorus I of Constantinople and captured Heraclea and Tyana in 806 C.E.; Harun's second son, 'Abd Allah al-Mamun (815-35 C.E.), whose establishment of the Bayt el-Hikmah, installation of an observatory at Baghdad, measurement of the length of a degree of latitude and patronage of translators of Greek science, mathematics and philosophy (directly or indirectly), entitle him to be regarded as the first real originator of the Renaissance; and al-Mu'tasim (853-42 C.E.), Harun's third son, who was the last to launch an expedition against Byzantium, which crossed Mount Taurus (in 838 C.E.) and captured Ammorium, the birthplace of the reigning Syrian emperor, Theophilus, but had to be recalled on receipt of a secret report about a plot being hatched at home.

The Abbasids, even at the height of their power, were far from generous to the descendants of the unfortunate grandsons of the Prophet Muhammad, the time of which Muhammad al-Rida (d. 818 C.E.) was heir-apparent, but the opposition of the people of Baghdad forced him to cancel the nomination. Under influence of his Mu'tazilite judge, Ibn Abi Duwad, al-Mamun issued his proclamation of Khabar al-Qur'an (in 827 C.E.), which irritated the orthodox Muslims very much. About 833 C.E. he instituted the "Mihnah", an inquisitorial tribunal for trial and correction of those who denied this dogma. Some of the greatest theologians of Islam were ill-treated by this tribunal. But this was only a transitory affair.

The liberal spirit of Islam drew under its protection alien communities and creeds: Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Magians, Manichaens, Muzakhians, etc., when they professed their verbal loyalty and agreed to pay the jizyah². Peaceful life, expanding trade and flourishing industries gave rise to an extremely wealthy class of residents in Baghdad, Basrah, Siraf, etc., not all confined to the ruling community. The wealth of the Barmaki family, of ship-owners, jewellers, etc. (like Muhammad Ibn Sulayman of the time of Harun al-Rashid, Ibn al-Jassas of the time of al-Muqtadir (908-52 C.E.), could stand comparison with that of the Fuggers of sixteenth century Augsburg or the Rothschilds of eighteenth century Frankfurt.

The Arabs, in spite of their general dislike for agriculture (in contrast with their centuries-old liking for trade), encouraged and improved it in their conquered territories. It was thus that Sicily, Southern Italy and Muslim Spain changed from the wildernesses of the days of the Roman downfall into veritable orchards and gardens.

In the field of literature and law the utmost care and discernment were employed in collecting, scrutinizing and recording the Traditions of the Prophet, and learned jurists patiently worked out the various rules and systems of fiqh (jurisprudence) to establish uniformity of religious practices among ever-increasing numbers of converts from different countries. Some of the later schools of Baghdad, like the Nizamiyah founded by Nizam al-Mulk of Tus (1065-7 C.E.), served as models for the foundation of the future colleges and universities of the world. (It is an irony of fate that such a great and good scholar as the author of Siyasat Nizamah and administrator was murdered by an Isma'ili fanatic in 1092 C.E.) Al-Ghazali's (d. 1111 C.E.) Ihya al-Ulum ad-Din and a host of other monumental works by distinguished encyclopaedists had a marked effect on the minds not only of Muslims, but of Christian and Jewish scholars also.

1 An Arabic word meaning "ignorance" means by transference the pre-Islamic period of Arabia.
2 A tax paid by non-Muslim subjects of Muslim rulers which they paid in lieu of exemption from military service.
But profligacy and neglect of religious duties among the later representatives of the Bani 'Abbas weakened their hold on their possessions. Decentralization set in and a number of quasi-independent States appeared on the scene under ambitious 'ulama'. These States blazed forth for a time and then disappeared for ever. The Caliph was often a puppet in the hands of mercenary soldiers of Persia, Nubia or Turkistan. Such were the Buwayhids of Shiraz (945-1055 C.E.), who, notwithstanding their barbarian origin, produced a number of enlightened monarchs under the influence of Islamic civilization.

The Umayyads of Spain

The Umayyads of Spain were the first to break off from the Abbasid sway. The Tulunids, the Ikhshidids, etc., in the West, the Tahrids, Safarids and the Samanids, etc., in the East, shone for a time with borrowed lustre, but were sooner or later extinguished. The Seljuks and the Ghaznavids had longer and more extensive careers, but followed along the same road to destruction. Among the most notable achievements of the Seljuks may be mentioned Alp Arslan's (1063-72 C.E.) victory over the Byzantine emperor, Romanus Diogenes, at Malazgird, north of Lake Van in 1071 C.E., in which the Emperor himself was taken prisoner, and 'Umar al-Khayyami's (d. 1123-4 C.E.) formulation of the Jalali Calendar, more accurate than the Gregorian in use all over the world. Among the epoch-making achievements of the Ghaznavids are Sultan Mahmud's (996-1030 C.E.) annexation of the Punjab (1022 C.E.) and Firdausi's (c. 941-1020 C.E.) preparation of the 'Shah Nameh' — a Persian epic of surpassing grandeur.

The Khwarizm Shahis had a more pathetic history. They revolted against their Seljuk masters and planned to replace the Abbasids by an 'Alid dynasty; but 'Ala al-Din Shah's stupid chauvinistic policy brought on his territories the tempest of Genghis' well-organized and merciless hordes, and the luckless Khwarizm Shah had to flee for his life and end his days on an island in the Caspian Sea (1220 C.E.). Soon Musta'sim, the last of the Abbasids, had to face a similar catastrophe; Genghis' grandson, Hulagu, an equally anti-Muslim fanatic, laid siege to Baghdad and, in spite of Musta'sim's abject submission, put him to death along with almost every member of his family and the bulk of the Muslim population in the city (1258 C.E.). Innumerable treasures of centuries-old Muslim arts and letters were given over to plunder and the flames. Thus was destroyed the most important centre of Muslim power and culture in the East, through profligacy and dishonesty, intrigue and maladministration.

Even as early as 827 C.E. the Arabs under the third Aghlabid Amir of North Africa, Ziyadat Allah I, had launched a naval campaign against Sicily, and the island was completely conquered by 902 C.E. For a time Southern Italy (with Calabria and Bari) also came under Muslim sway, but was lost owing to internal tribal and racial quarrels. (The Arabs had attacked Rome also in 846 C.E., and their raiding parties had traversed even the Alpine passes.) The Bani Fatimids of North Africa ousted the Aghlabids from Qayrawan (909 C.E.) and appointed al-Hasan Ibn 'Ali al-Husayn al-Kalbi as Governor. Under the Kalbids, Arab culture spread rapidly among the polyglot people of the island. Muslim Sicily reached its zenith during the Amirate of Abu al-Futuh Yusuf Ibn 'Abd Allah, a descendant of al-Hasan (989-98 C.E.).

After more than 250 years of Muslim rule the island (with the loss of naval supremacy in the Mediterranean) succumbed completely to the Normans under Roger I in 1091 C.E. But Arab culture and civilization, arts, industries and horticulture, continued to bear fruit in the Mediterranean world for generations, as may be seen from the travels of Ibn Hawqal (fr. 943-77 C.E.) and Ibn Jubayr (1184 C.E.) to the island, and the works of the geographer al-Idrisi (1106-66 C.E.) at the court of Roger II. Most works of Muslim art may yet be seen in the Suseo Cristiano of the Vatican.

Shi'ah dynasties

Even before the fall of Baghdad in 1258 C.E. a number of Shi'ah dynasties broke up the unity of the Muslim world. At first, Idris Ibn 'Abd Allah, great grandson of Hasan, established the Idrisid dynasty in al-Maghrib (Morocco) with Fas (modern Fez) as headquarters, from 788 to 974 C.E. A general of al-Hakam II of Cordova put an end to this dynasty.

Then, after a number of tribal battles in which the Berbers found an excellent opportunity for taking part, the Shari'ah dynasty of Morocco came into power in 1544 C.E., with only slight differences of faith from that of the Orthodox Sunnis.

The Hamdanid dynasty, descended from Hamdan Ibn Hamdan of the Bani Taghibi tribe, was established at Mauisil as the capital (929-91 C.E.). In 944 C.E. Sayf al-Dawlah of the same dynasty seized Halb and Hims from the Ikhshidids and founded a North Syrian dynasty which lasted until 1003 C.E. The Hamdanids were patrons of learning, fine arts and music. Such illustrious men as al-Farabi (d. 950 C.E.), al-Istahhani, author of 'al-Aqbaus (c. 987-967 C.E.) and Munawabi (915-65 C.E.), received handsome rewards from their court. Hard-pressed between the Byzantines and the Bani Fatimids of North Africa, they found it expedient to submit to the latter.

The Hammadids

Ali Ibn Hammud, a former Governor of Ceuta (Sibta) and Tangier (Tanjah), claiming descent from 'Ali, but really half Berber in origin, seized Cordova (1016-18 C.E.). He had also conquered Malaga, where his eight descendants continued from 1025 to 1057 C.E.

The Bani Fatimids were the most important of all. The dynasty was founded by Sayf Ibn Husayn, an Isma'ili propagandist, at Qayrawan in 909 C.E., through intrigues and support of Abu 'Abd Allah al-Husayni al-Shi'i, who proclaimed him the Imam, 'Ubayyad Allah al-Mahdi. On accession to power, al-Mahdi killed al-Shi'i, his best supporter, and took possession of North Africa from Morocco to the borders of Egypt. In 914 C.E. he seized Alexandria and founded Mahdia near Qayrawan. His great grandson Mu'tazz snatched Egypt from the Ikhshidids in 969 C.E. His slave, Jawhar al-Siqilli, founded Qahirah (modern Cairo) and made it the capital, also building the al-Jami' al-azhar.

The dynasty rose to its zenith during the peaceful régime of Nizar al-'Aziz (975-996 C.E.), but declined after his death and the accession of his half-insane successor, al-Hakim, whose rash destruction of the Holy Sepulchre in 1009 C.E. let loose the fanaticism of Christian Europe and brought about the Crusades that raged from 1096 to 1302 C.E., destroying Muslim culture in the Middle East, spilling much innocent blood in the name of religion. Sultan Salah al-Din's timely appearance on the scene saved the situation. Disgusted with the anarchy prevailing in Egypt, through the continuous intrigues of ministers and the incompetence of the half-ripe occupants of the throne of Egypt, Salah al-Din deposed the last Bani Fatimid (poor nine-years old al-'Adid) in 1171 C.E. Salah al-Din and his successors (the Ayyubids) not only defeated the Crusaders and restored the ruined Muslim culture of Egypt and Syria, but added considerably to it by establishing schools, hospitals, etc.
After a time, however, family quarrels among these Ayyubids developed into wars, and the mastery of the mid-Orient fell into the hands of their Mamlik slaves — the Bahriids (1250-1390 C.E.), who were the Turkish and Mongol bodyguard of the Ayyubid al-Salih, and settled by him in the barracks of al-Rawdah in the Nile, and the Burjids (1382-1517 C.E.), the bodyguard of the Bahri Mamlik Qalawun (mostly Circassian slaves), quartered on the towers. They were rough, merciless soldiers, mostly illiterate; but some of them, e.g., Baybars (1261-77 C.E.), Qalawun (1279-90 C.E.), Ashraf and Nasir, were destined to render yeoman service to Islam and civilization in general by finally driving away the Crusaders from Syria and Palestine in 1302 C.E. and inflicting signal defeats on anti-Muslim Il-Khanid accomplices like Kibughah at ‘Ayn Jalut (on 3rd September 1260 C.E.) and Aqba at Hims (in 1280 C.E.).

The Il-Khanid dynasty of Persia

After the fall of Baghdad (1258 C.E.), Hulagu became the first Il-Khan of Persia. He remained up to the last (1265 C.E.) a confirmed opponent of the Muslim faith and culture. His love of astrology, however, drew him more and more to astronomy, and he appointed a number of Muslim and other astronomers to conduct scientific investigations in his newly-installed observatory at Maragha. The famous Nasir al-Din Tusi was one of them. The Il-Khanid rule in Persia lasted seventy-five years. Great scholars like al-Juwaini (d. 1283 C.E.) and Rashid al-Din, the historian (d. 1318 C.E.), flourished at their court. Hulagu’s great grandson, the seventh Il-Khan, Ghazan Mahmoud (1294-1304 C.E.), adopted Islam as the State religion of the Shihah sect and did much to revive Muslim culture.

(As if the havoc wrought on the Islamic countries by the Tartar hordes of Genghis and Hulagu was not enough, an adventurer, Tamerlane (Timur the Lame (1336-1405 C.E.), claiming descent from Genghis in the female line, waged war against Muslim Iraq, Syria, etc. (ostensibly to avenge the wrong done in the past to the family of the Prophet Muhammad), and the brave but conceited Ottoman Sultan, Bayazid I (1389-1402 C.E.), and put to the sword hundreds of thousands of Sunni Muslims. He invaded Muslim India also and carried out terrible massacres at Delhi and other places, building up pyramids of skulls to display his love of cruelty.)

The Il-Khanid rule in Persia survived for 150 years, until at last, through misrule and anarchy, it fell into the hands of Jalayr, Aq Quyuni and Qara Quyuni Turkomans and Kurds.

The Moors in Spain

The representatives of the refugee Umayyad line established a splendid Amirate in Western Europe and continued to rule in Spain until 1031 C.E. with intermittent success. Muslim Spain reached its highest pinnacle of glory under ’Abd al-Rahman III, al-Nasir (912-61 C.E.) and al-Hakim II (961-76 C.E.). But the same forces of evil operated on them, the same old tribal feuds complicated with intrigues of local Christian States, until at last Muslim Spain was divided into a number of small States, cultured no doubt, but given to profligacy and under the ignoble vassalage of the dominating new Christian kingdoms.

Al-Mu’tamid, of Cordova, appealed to the new Murabit leader, Yusuf Ibn Tashhin, of Morocco, for release from this bondage. He came with a powerful Berber essay and defeated Alfonso X, of Leon and Castille, at Zallaqah (near Badajoz) on 23rd October 1086 C.E. in a memorable battle; but returned to Spain uninvited in November 1090 C.E. and banished al-Mu’tamid to North Africa with his favourite poetical wife I’timad and daughters, taking possession of his seat of government. But the luxuries of Andalusia soon demoralized the Murabitis also, and they were practically annihilated by a new Berber confederacy of puritans who called themselves Muwahhidin. Their new commander, ‘Abd al-Mu’min, conquered the whole of Muslim Spain with the exception of the Balearic Isles (after making Morocco the seat of his government about 1145 C.E.).

The Muwahhidins rendered some significant services to the cause of Islam against the consolidated aggressive Christian powers, but rashly launched a religious war (jihād) against the Christian princes of Spain. At Las Novas de Tolusa (70 miles east of Cordova), called al-Uqab by Arab historians, they were opposed by a very powerful army of Christians under the Kings of Navarre and Aragon, supported by the Tempiai of Portugal and French Crusaders with Alfonso VIII of Castile as commander-in-chief. The Muwahhid army was led by the Caliph Muhammad al-Nasir, son of al-Mansur, and suffered a most disastrous defeat in which only 1,000 escaped out of 60,000. Al-Nasir fled to Morocco and left Muslim Spain at the mercy of its Christian victors. After this terrible calamity only the petty State of Granada lingered on as a seat of Muslim culture and erudition (under the Nasrids of Alhambra fame) till Ferdinand III of Aragon and Isabella of Castile, combined by marriage (1469 C.E.) forced the last Nasrid ruler, Abu ’Abd Allah, to leave Spain for ever in 1492 C.E. Thus ended the tragic history of the Moors in Spain.

Various Christian orders

The expulsion of Islam from Spain is regarded by some of the greatest historians of Europe as a great religious and political achievement. It was certainly the result of centuries of systematic effort to combine the Christian princes of the peninsula and present a united front against the Muslims. When the hold of the Catholic Church began to slacken on the Christian public owing to the abuse of Church money and the corrupt life of some of its priestcraft, earnest reform movements were started in various places such as the establishment of the Benedictine order founded by St. Benedict of Nursia (483-543 C.E.) at the Monastery of Monte Casino in 529 C.E.; the Franciscan order (the Grey Friars), sworn to poverty, founded by St. Francis of Assissi in 1209 C.E.; the Dominican order of Preachers (the Black Friars), founded by St. Dominic in 1215 C.E.; the Carmelites, order of monks, founded on Mt. Carmel (c. 1156 C.E.), reconstituted in 1209 C.E.; later became the mendicant order, known in England as the White Friars; the Augustinian Hermit Order, or Austin Friars, which arose in 1263 C.E.; the Carthusian order of Monks, founded by St. Bruno at La Chartreuse in 1086 C.E.; and, the most recent, the Jesuits (the society or company of Jesus), founded by Inigo Lopez de Recalde (c. 1492-1556 C.E.) in 1559 C.E. at Salamanca, Paris, etc.

Some of the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church were found difficult to reconcile with common sense, like that of Transubstantiation—that the sacramental elements of bread and wine change their substance at consecration and become the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ. A number of theologians. Zwingli, Martin Luther (1483-1546 C.E.), etc., refused to conform to this belief, and with the support of some of the princes of Central Europe established the Reformation. The Society of Jesus was a counter reform in the body of the Roman Catholic Church itself. Both movements did a lot of good by stopping the abuse of Church money and raising the standard of morality among priests. But in the zeal for discipline and the hectic efforts to maintain the integrity of the Church, a severe ecclesiastical tribunal called the Inquisition was established to punish and reform the heretics. Many a "dissenter", however minute his "dissent" may have been, was even burnt at the stake, in violation of the teachings of Jesus himself and in utter disregard of even the elementary principles of humanity.
The first Inquisitor-General was the Spanish theologian St. Dominic de Guzman (1170-1221 C.E.), appointed by the Pope in 1215 C.E. The Inquisition developed into a regular institution under Pope Gregory IX (1127-41 C.E.); it was established in Aragon (1235 C.E.), in Venice (1249 C.E.), in France (1255 C.E.). It was revived by a Papal bull in 1478 C.E.; re-instituted in Spain with Thomas de Torquemada (1420-98 C.E.) as Inquisitor-General in 1480 C.E. Inspired by the bull Summis desiderantes (1484 C.E.) and the book Maleficiarum written by two inquisitors, it conducted a vigorous campaign against witchcraft. Its methods at times were very severe, and included torture and burning at the stake. It was long active in most Christian countries, but now remains only for the suppression of heretical literature.

The Ottoman Turks

The year of the fall of Baghdad (1258 C.E.) is memorable in another respect, being the year of the birth of 'Uthman, son of Ertaghral, founded of the dynasty of the Ottoman Sultans — thirty-six men, all in the same line beginning with 'Uthman (1299-1326 C.E.) and terminating with the death of Sultan Muhammad Rishad on 4th July 1918 C.E. From 'Uthman to Sulayman I the Magnificent (1520-66 C.E.), practically all of them were men of great determination and energy. Their simple soldier life deteriorated slowly after their capture of Constantinople during the reign of Muhammad II on 29th May 1453 C.E.

These Turks came originally from Central Asia, fleeing before the Mongols. In return for timely military aid to the Seljuk prince of Iconium (Quinijah) Kayqubad, in a critical battle with the Mongols at Angora, they were allotted a portion of the country to settle in. 'Uthman was succeeded by his son, Orkhan, in 1326 C.E., who captured Brusa and made it the seat of his government. His brother 'Ala-al-Din was a great administrator. Amongst other works, he instituted the Yani Chari — an army of youthful ex-prisoners-of-war and boys from conquered Christian countries, received in tribute at the rate of 1,000 a year, and brought up as Muslims in a military academy. They were blessed by the saintly Haji Bektrash, who passed the sleeve of his robe over the head of the leading youth. In commemoration of this beneficence the Yani Chari wore a piece of cloth with their white wool cap. They formed the flower of the Turkish army until they became demoralized by taking part in court intrigues. (Mahmud II, disgusted with their conduct, actually annihilated them in 1826 C.E.)

Among the most notable Sultans may be mentioned Murad I (1360-89 C.E.), who captured Adrianople (in 1361 C.E.), and victor of Sarap Sandughni (defeat and destruction of the Serbs on the Maritza in 1364 C.E.) against Louis I, King of Hungary and Poland, and the princes of Bosnia, Serbia and Wallacia, Bayazid I Idrim (1389-1402 C.E.), victor of Kosovo and Nicopolis, whose chauvinistic policy against Timur's protégé in Asia Minor led to a clash with his Tartar hordes and brought Turkey to the brink of destruction. His successor, Muhammad I Chalapi (1402-1421 C.E.), who restored the country almost to its former position through perseverance, tact and rectitude; Chalapi's son, Murad II (1421-51 C.E.), victor of Varna and the second battle of Kosovo, and conqueror of Serbia and Bosnia; Muhammad II (1451-81 C.E.), conqueror of Constantinople itself; Sulim I (1512-20 C.E.), victor of the battle of Khaidirum (1514 C.E.), and conqueror of Mesopotamia, Syria and Egypt (1517 C.E.), and Sulayman I the Magnificent (1520-66 C.E.), in whose reign the empire reached its greatest extent on land and sea. The worst defect of these Sultans was their fratricide, which remained a tradition with them for centuries.

Even during the days of decline, heroic Sultans like Murad IV (1623-40 C.E.), who died at the early age of twenty-eight, did their best to stop the decline. But when the later incumbents, demoralized under hareem influence and European intrigue, could no longer manage their State affairs properly, power fell into the hands of their Wazirs (1640-1757 C.E.), mostly naturalized foreigners, some of whom were highly able men like Muhammad, Ahmad and Mustafa of the Koprulu family, and Sokollu Muhammad, etc. Distinguished army leaders like Sinan Pasha, who brought Arabia under Turkish sway in 1570 C.E., were also not found wanting.

Sulayman's régime is famous also for the naval victories of Turkey and her North African sea-rovers like Khayr al-Din Barbarossa, Turgut, Piali, etc. The Mediterranean, in spite of the sudden rise of Spain to power and the financial resources of Venice and Genoa, was dominated entirely by Turkey and her mercenary sea-captains until 7th October 1571 C.E., when Don John of Austria, with the help of the Venetian, Spanish, Genoese, Sicilian, Neapolitan and Papal fleets, inflicted a terrible defeat on unprogressive and vainglorious Turkey at Lepanto. The Turkish navy recovered some of her past strength for a time, but could do little against the concert of Christian Europe.

Two unpardonable mistakes committed by Sulayman through ignorance have done incalculable harm to Turkey. The first was the murder of his lifelong devoted friend and minister, Ibrahim, in 1536 C.E., and the second, the murder of his most capable and industrious son Mustafa, on the instigation of his Russian wife Khurram (known to Europe as Roxane). All the rest of his life Sulayman mourned these two losses, but it was of no avail.

The rapid rise of Russia and Austria and the increasing coalition of Western Christian powers to free the Christian races from the Turkish yoke reduced the Sultan to the ignoble position of the "Sick Man of Europe". Turkey sank lower and lower with defeat after defeat from her unscrupulous enemies and selfish hypocritical "friends and well-wishers". The unlucky policy of the Young Turk Party in the First World War (1914-18) to join the Central Powers deprived her of all her possessions outside of Asia Minor and Constantinople. Mr. Lloyd George would have given away the best part of Asia Minor also to Greece on a linguistic basis, but the timely national movement in Turkey upset all these plans, and Mustafa Kemal (1880-1938) was forced to abolish the Sultanate and Caliphate and, after a successful war against Greece, declare Turkey a Republic with Ankara (Angora) as its seat of Government, later confirmed by the Treaty of Lausanne on the 24th July 1923.

The Turks are a remarkably persevering and virile race. In the course of their long and chequered history they have survived terrible disasters and are still going forward. Unfortunately, they are very backward in scientific knowledge and technology. The sooner they remove this defect the better it will be for them. The only fear about them is their arrogant attitude towards Islam and the rest of the Islamic world, forgetting all the benefits they have acquired by changing from Shamanism to Islam. Their avowed search for a "Muslim Luther" only reveals a lack of knowledge of Islamic principles as well as of real church history.

The First World War brought about another and far more extensive loss to the Arab world. The Arabs under the Sharif of Mecca fell into the trap laid by ostentatious well-wishers and, believing most ungratefully the delusions of their old benefactors, the Ottoman Turks, the Arabs raised the standard of revolt. Far from building up the much-talked-of Grand Arab bloc, their most noble representatives the Hashimites lost the Hijaz to the Sa'udis and Palestine to the Jews; and Tripoli, Tunis, Algeria and Morocco to predatory European powers under the disguise of "advisers" and "protectors".
The worst enemies of Islam, Tartars and Crusaders excepted, are Muslims themselves

From this brief survey it is clear that the worst enemies of Islam — after the infidel Tartars and ignorant Crusaders — have been the soi disant Muslims themselves, on whose minds Islam has produced only a passing impression and who have done little to adopt the truly Muslim way of life. Islam has proved to the world that its followers could acquire worldly progress with spiritual purity, could compete with the nations of Asia, Europe and Africa in the acquisition of arts, sciences and industries, could gain the mastery on land and sea in trade and war, could teach and faithfully practise toleration, together with loyal support, to allies, and benevolent patronage to the vanquished.

Far from accusing Islam as being an impediment to progress, modern self-styled Muslims should first see how far they themselves are real Muslims and what is their present position in education, trade and commerce. They should exert themselves to the utmost, wake up from their lethargy and self-complacency, sink their class and racial differences, and apply themselves heart and soul to the acquisition of modern sciences, technology and agriculture. No Muslim should consider himself educated if he is ignorant of the teachings of the Qur’an, Islamic history and its general connection with the history of the world.

THE LAWFULNESS OF PAINTING IN ISLAM

By DR. ZAKY M. HASAN

The Qur’an and the Hadith on painting in Islam

The Qur’an does not forbid painting or sculpture, but Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, is reported to have said:

1. “Those who will be most severely punished by God on the Day of Judgment are the painters.”

2. “The angels will not enter a house in which there is a picture or a dog.”

3. “Those who make images will suffer on the Day of Judgment; they will be called upon to breathe life into the forms that they have fashioned.”

The orthodox view on the subject was that the painting of a picture of any living thing was strictly forbidden and was one of the great sins because it was threatened with the above grievous punishment. So the making of any sculpture or painting of any living thing was forbidden under every circumstance, because it implied a likeness to the creative activity of God.

The views of modern European Orientalists on painting in Islam cannot be substantiated

But some Orientalists and historians of art hold that the Prophet Muhammad did not dislike or forbid painting, and that hostility against it started among Muslim theologians in the second half of the second century A.H. (eighth century C.E.). They argue that the Sayings or Traditions (the Hadith) attributed to the Prophet Muhammad on this subject are apocryphal and represent only the view of the theologians living in the time when the Traditions (Hadith) were collected and written (c. third century A.H.—nineth century C.E.). One of the pioneers of these Orientalists and art historians was the French scholar R. P. Lammens, who wrote an article in the Journal Asiatique for September-October 1915 entitled “L’Attitude de l’Islam primitif en face des arts figurés”.

His thesis in that article enunciates the view that Muhammad was not hostile to painting or sculpture and that no such hostility existed immediately after the death of the Prophet.

One of the most fervent advocates of this theory in our day is Professor K. A. C. Creswell, formerly head of the Institute of Muslim Archaeology in the Fu’ad I University of Cairo. He adopts it in his monumental work Early Muslim Architecture in two volumes, and in an article published in 1946 in Art Islamica and entitled “The Lawfulness of Painting in Early Islam”.

The views of a Muslim scholar of the sixteenth century C.E. on decorative art in Islam

We disagree with that point of view in an article published in the Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, Fu’ad I University, July 1944. We believe that hostility to images goes back to the time of Muhammad and that it emanated from horror of paganism and idolatry and from fear that the Arabs might return to the cult which prevailed among them before Islam. There was, furthermore, the aversion to luxury during the early period of Islam, when the true Muslims led a simple life of devotion and fought for the faith of God. The unlawfulness of painting and sculpture of living things depended on whether or not the object was in a place of honour. The theologians who registered the Traditions about the prohibition of images did not ascribe to the Prophet something which was altogether of their own creation.

The theologians, however, may have exaggerated in to be general for all times and all nations. In fact such an interdiction would have no raison d’etre if it is sure that the worship and veneration due to God remain for Him only.

We cannot say that there was no objection to pictorial art in early Islam simply because of the many figurred objects of art and paintings which we know of that period. In fact, the theological objection to paintings and statues is a definite thing, while the attitude of certain persons towards that objection is something absolutely different. Many an act has been prohibited by the Qur’an but practised by some of the early Caliphs and by many Muslims of their time.

The theologians, however, may have exaggerated in ac­crediting to Muhammad these traditions which mean strict and absolute prohibition. The objection to pictorial art is not a part of the Muslim creed.

The last contribution to the study of the subject is the Essai sur l’Esprit de la Decoration Islamique, published in French and Arabic by Dr. Bishr Fares (Cairo, 1952). In an additional note, Dr. Fares gives a text from a manuscript of a book entitled The Argument about the causes of the Different Qur’anic Readings, and written by Abu ‘Ali al-Farisi, an Arabic scholar of the fourth century A.H. (sixteenth century C.E.).

The new element in this text discovered by Dr. Fares is that its learned author holds that the prohibition refers only to images of God. According to this author, only this is agreed upon by all authorities; as regards images not representing God, opinions differ, and are far from being certain.

According to the Muslim orthodox view, God is incorporeal, incomparable, and unique.
The first Woman Pioneer
in the movement for the emancipation of Indonesian women,
RADEN ADJENG KARTINI
(21st April 1879—17th April 1904)

“The name of Raden Adjeng Kartini is written large in the pages of Indonesian history — a pioneer, a humanist, she was above all a patriot. Her life was dedicated to the cause of her country and the women of her country. Her name will for ever be remembered and honoured by the people of Indonesia”

Kartini, a symbol of feminine virtue

Although a national heroine, Kartini was far from being one who fought and won battles, as could be imagined when considering other countries. Joan, the saintly warrior of France, is an example of the victorious national figure. Neither was Kartini the courageous nurse who sought to alleviate the sufferings of mankind, as did Edith Cavell and Florence Nightingale. Nor was she a saint like Sainte Geneviève, who comforted her people during Attila’s attack on the city of Paris and led them through patience and endurance to safety.

Rather is Kartini a symbol of young womanhood and of feminine virtue. She finally succeeded, by the exercise of much patience and tact, in achieving acceptance of women’s rights, although at the beginning she was obliged to surrender to stronger wills than her own and to circumstances which were not yet ripe for drastic changes.

Born in Djapara in Central Java on 21st April 1879, Kartini was the fifth child of Raden Mas Adipati Ario Soronirangrat, Regent of Djapara. Her grandfather, Regent of Demak, had been the first member of the Javanese nobility to have given his children, both girls and boys, a Western education. By this step her grandfather found himself the object of violent criticism from the strongly conservative aristocracy, which at that time — in the middle of the nineteenth century — stood uncompromisingly opposed to any acceptance of Western cultural influence, and her father faced the same criticism.

However, whilst her brothers completed their secondary schooling and later studied at universities in Holland, the education given to Kartini and her sisters was restricted, for despite the progressive outlook of her father, the girls of the family were held to the custom of being enclosed at the age of about twelve until a marriage had been arranged for them. The few years of schooling Kartini had been given and the contacts she had made with Dutch friends only strengthened her desire to learn and to use her knowledge to educate others.

At the age of twelve Kartini was, in accordance with custom, forbidden to go beyond the walls of her parents’ house. It was not until she had reached the age of sixteen that she was permitted to attend ceremonies in public accompanied by her other unmarried sisters. During these four years in the enforced seclusion that weighed so heavily on her, when her repeated requests to continue her schooling were refused, Kartini achieved the remarkable feat of continuing her own education, acquiring not only a very considerable general knowledge but a mastery of the Dutch language which gives her letters the quality of literature.

It was during this period that she learnt both of the conditions of subjection which held Indonesian women in bondage and the suffragette movement then gaining influence in Holland and other countries of Europe.

Kartini’s determined refusal to acquiesce to an arranged marriage led to a situation in which she was almost alone within the family circle. What sympathy she had from her father and from her brothers and sisters could not go beyond mild encouragement, and when her eldest brother returned there were frequent quarrels because she resisted the authority he attempted to assume. In her books she found consolation and was able to form the ideas, so much in advance of her time, which she so clearly expressed later in the correspondence with her European friends.

Released from seclusion she applied for permission to continue her studies in Holland, but although permission was subsequently granted, the circumstances of her approaching marriage to the influential Regent of Rembang and the advice of friends caused her to request that the scholarship made available to her should be transferred to an
Indonesian student, Agus Salim, who later emerged as a leading figure in the nationalist movement. Other plans to study medicine, to enter a teachers' college in Djakarta, to train as a midwife, never came to fruition.

In 1903 Kartini married the Regent of Rembang, a step she never regretted, for her husband sympathized with her and encouraged the work to which she had dedicated herself. In her home the same year, Kartini founded a school for young girls, with the help of her sister Rukmini. Unhappily, however, four days after the birth of her child, on 17th April 1904, Kartini passed away at the youthful age of twenty-five.

Kartini, the first pioneer in the movement for the emancipation of Indonesian women

In a lifetime that was tragically cut short, Kartini became the first pioneer in the movement for the emancipation of Indonesian women. On 21st April each year Indonesia commemorates the birthday of this noble woman whose courage and determination inspired those who followed the path she had lit with the torch of her ideals. The voice that fifty years ago shattered the silence of tradition in demanding freedom, equality and justice for women is today echoed in the hearts of millions of Indonesian women who with the achievement of national independence have brought reality to the aspirations of Raden Adjeng Kartini.

In Kartini's letters can be seen the development of her outlook from an attitude of violent criticism of established social and religious customs — extending even to the tenets of Islam — later tempered by time and by disappointments, to a degree of tolerance and religious inspiration that was not resignation but a realistic appraisal of the means to improve the lot of Indonesian women.

Kartini's letters were first published in Holland under the appropriate title Through Darkness to Light, seven years after her untimely death. The publication, which was arranged by Dr. Abandanan and his wife, both of whom had guided and advised her in Java, resulted in the establishment the following year, 1912, of the "Kartini fonds", an association formed to foster and develop education for girls in Indonesia. An Indonesian translation, Habs Gelap Tertitikab Terang, first appeared in 1922, and is still in constant demand today. Arabic, English and French translations of the collected letters of Kartini have also been published.

In the opening paragraph of the first letter in the collection there is expressed the deep desire Kartini felt for a new order of things and for friends who could work with her to bring about the changes she knew were necessary.

"I would so much like," Kartini wrote, "to have for a friend 'a modern young girl', a friend to whom I would be drawn from the bottom of my heart, a girl who faces life fearlessly and smiling, filled with the joy of living and the desire to study, who is not obsessed with her own comforts and pleasures but who is conscious of the ills that afflict mankind and who is willing to strive to better the conditions of all humanity. . . . The chains that bind us to the customs of centuries past will one day be broken . . . but how long? . . . For four years I was shut off from the world outside, secluded within the four walls through which there was no passing. Only I can know the misery of those long years . . . but the thunder of a new era is rumbling."

Kartini advocates the right of women to equality with men

With an intuitive perception confirmed by reason, Kartini realized, in advocating the right of women to equality with men, that injustice largely stemmed from the imposition of artificial distinctions which denied the equality of all men and women. She refused to insist on the traditional obesiance of women of lower social status. "It saddens me," she declared, "to see a woman who is older than I am, but not of the same rank, bow before me." She ridiculed the futility of minor Dutch officials in insisting on being addressed as kandjeun (a Javanese term of respect for those of high rank) just as she castigated the "absurd snobbery of the Javanese nobility".

Kartini also saw how the social and political struggle for equality with the Dutch rulers, then hardly in its initial stage, would, as it developed, "draw in the women of Indonesia". "How fortunate we are," she concluded, "to live in these times. It is an era of change, when the past flows by like a falling tide and the future draws near."

Pointing to the unfortunate and unhappy plight of her countrywomen, Kartini railed against certain practices of the Muslims and the reading of the Arabic script of the Qur'an without an understanding of the language. "How," she asked, "can I feel respect for a religion I am forced to accept but forbidden to understand." Yet Kartini, in criticizing the submission of women allowed by the outmoded Muslim theology, was not in any sense irreligious. "It is God," she affirmed, "who will strengthen the spirit of those who struggle. . . . God alone can know and understand the wonders of this world; His hand steers the course of Nature; it is He who will bring together ways that are far apart to make of them a single path."

Nor was her opposition to arranged marriage and to the horror of polygamy a blind rejection of marriage. Kartini looked to the future when women would marry as equals and not as slaves. "It is my dearest wish," she wrote, "to have children, boys and girls of my own, whose characters I would form in accordance with my ideals. I would first have done with the ugly idea that places man above woman."

Kartini's ideals realized in modern Indonesia

Kartini did not live to rear her own children nor to see the fruits of the pioneer work for the education and emancipation of her countrywomen. But from the small school she established in Rembang there developed numerous Kartini schools throughout Indonesia. Under the pressure of social change and political development the old prejudices were gradually broken and gradually women came to demand their rightful place in society. The spread of Kartini's ideals encouraged and gave an orientation to the various women's organizations which later came into existence first within political parties and later as independent bodies.

Barriers to the education of women were finally removed, and in 1921 the first Indonesian woman to gain a Doctorate of Law graduated in Djakarta, and in 1922 the first Indonesian woman doctor graduated from the Djakarta Medical School. Although the idea of equality came to be accepted in principle, it was not until the achievement of Indonesian independence that women were given full legal equality by the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia.

The transformation has come even more quickly than Kartini had dared to hope. Today women take their seats in Parliament; in the fields of art and science women are active; women are prominent in sport; there is a women's political party and numerous women's organizations. In every sphere of Indonesian life there are to be found women occupying important positions. The changes Kartini foresaw and desired to hasten have been brought about.

The name of Raden Adjeng Kartini is written large in the pages of Indonesian history — a pioneer, a humanist, she was above all a patriot. Her life was dedicated to the cause of her country and the women of her country. Her name will for ever be remembered and honoured by the people of Indonesia.

JUNE 1953
AT THE THRESHOLD OF ISLAM

By JALAL-UD-DIN HOWE

Mine was not a spectacular conversion from one faith to another; nor was I impressed by the thoughts, views or actions of any person or body of associates. I wish that this had been the case, for then I should have been saved the torment of doubts, fear, disbelief, anger and bitterness of soul. No, I just journeyed on in my quest, trying first this belief, then that, then this again, until I hardly knew whether I was coming or going or just rotating round on one heel in a crazy world that both attracted and repelled me according to my mood. A world that was mine to conquer, yet a world that sickened me so much that I wanted no part in it, and oft wished that I were dead — cursing, as I did, the day on which I was born and the world in which I lived. But let me start at the beginning, as it were.

I left school during the middle 1930’s, at a time of great industrial strife, although conditions were not quite so bad as they had been during the preceding five years. However, the improvements had been small, and unemployment was the “Order of the Day,” with its following train of poverty, squalor, starvation and outbreaks of violence.

I was soon acquainted with more than a youthful share of life’s troubles, and at the age of sixteen years I was busily engaged in asking the “why” of things.

“Was there a God . . . why?”

“What caused misery . . . ?”

“Why was the world so tormented . . . ?”

“Who said so, anyway . . . ?”

I visited churches of every denomination and listened to preachers, who knew not the answers to “Why?”, talking down to the so-called sinners, sinners who, to my mind, were the sinned against — the victims of conditions supposedly brought about by God Himself in order that man should be chastened and, working men in particular, controlled and kept in their place.

Repent, repent, beware . . . beware . . . and the doors of Hell will be opened . . .

“He who believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live,” quoth Jesus in his day — but here were millions of people living a million deaths in conditions that could surely put Hell to shame. Hell on earth — was not life itself a hell? Was it not a condition of Hell itself for a woman to watch her children starve, slowly, before her eyes?

Starvation — a harsh word — was replaced by “malnutrition” in official circles, and the conditions began to be accepted as standard in this land of ours; and, just as the various political parties failed to provide the material food for hungry stomachs, so official Christendom failed to provide a satisfactory spiritual food for the millions who groaned and asked, “Why?”

If Christ died for the world, then I ask, why this? . . . why that? The sins of man had been atoned for, so why should this be? . . . that be? Original sin! Original sin! . . . and the sins of the fathers . . .

Jalal-ud-Din Howe

Who gave you the right to criticize the Church . . .? Confusion upon confusion, and a plague upon you all! The youngsters left the Church to find other ways; some turned to politics, some to open crime and others to prostitution, neglected and even condemned by the all-important Church,
which was failing in its mission because there wasn't any logic in anything any more.

So I continued asking "Why?" all the way, until I was weak within myself. So I explored further and left Christian circles, flitting, like a moth, from one flame to another. Buddhism tried to take me from the world — but I was of the world, surely, and why should I ever become a beetle in the long drawn-out process of evolution in a theory of incarnation and transmigration of souls, whilst Buddha, aloof in his Nirvana, cared not for my sufferings?

No! No! No! But still, why? Confucianism, Taoism, Yogism, Hinduism, Sikhism — but I was weary, sick at heart at eighteen years of age. Then one day my father, a much-travelled ex-soldier, happened to say: "... and if I had my time over again, I would wish to be a Muslim".

A plangent declaration for me. I went out and bought a copy of the Holy Qur'an. Starting again in my quest I purchased book upon book and studied them to get at the truth and the beginning of things.

"There is no god but God, and Muhammad is His Prophet."

"There is no compulsion in religion."

"And cry therein shall be 'Peace, Peace'."

Peace, where, in the name of God, where?

"And the Believing men and the Believing women."

"I take me for refuge to the Lord of Men, the King of Men."

"Let there be justice amongst you."

"Ye are sprung the one from the other."

"Seek ye knowledge, even to China."

"Devour not the substance of the orphan ..."

"Give in fair measure ..."

"God, Lord of the Worlds, to Him shall ye return."

"Whoever brings a good deed shall be rewarded ten fold ... and no soul shall bear the burden of another. Ye love your Lord, rather love your brethren first. Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, help the weak, protect the young."

Here, at last, was something to grasp, something to do, and something to live up to.

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**ISLAM IN ENGLAND**

**WOKING MUSLIM MISSION AND LITERARY TRUST**

Lecture at the Sanctuary of St. Francis, St. Margaret's-on-Thames, Middlesex, England

Rev. A. H. King invited Mr. S. M. Tufail, M.A., to give a talk about Islam to one of their meetings on 3:30 p.m. on Saturday 11th April 1953, at the Sanctuary of St. Francis, 21, St. Peter's Road, St. Margaret's-on-Thames, Middlesex, England. Mr. Tufail addressed a small gathering of about twenty friends and stayed there until 7 p.m. to have an informal discussion about matters arising out of his talk.

**Sunday gatherings at the Mosque**

Meetings have been regularly held at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey, at 3:30 p.m. during the period under review. The programme entitled "Queries" was conducted on three Sundays by Miss Rasheeda 'Abdullah, Miss Hilja Werner and Mrs. I. Kamal respectively. On Sunday 19th April 1952, Mr. Daniel, of Woking Spiritualist Church, gave a talk about spiritualism, and after the talk he replied to many questions raised by the audience.

**Marriage ceremonies**

Maulana 'Abdul Majid, Editor of *The Islamic Review*, Woking, Surrey, solemnized marriages between Mr. Fouda al-Rawi (Arab) and Miss Pakiza Rafik Hilmi (Arab); Mr. S. J.

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**ENGLAND**

Mochtar (Indonesian) and Miss Anna Maria Leensma (Dutch), at 18 Eccleston Square, Victoria, London, S.W.1.

Dr. S. M. 'Abdullah, M.Sc., Ph.D., solemnized a marriage between Mr. Fakhar-ud-Din Qureshi (from Kenya) and Miss Donna Margaret Fahmida Read (British) at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey.

**New members of the World Brotherhood of Islam**

Mrs. Jordana (Sultanah) Dzera; Mr. John Sutherland ('Abdullah Shams-ud-Din); Miss Irene Mildred Wardner (now Mrs. Tauhidah Samad); Miss Winifred Fan; Mrs. Fahmida Qureshi; Miss Josephine E. Gosling; Miss Marie Dolores Packer; Miss Duff-Gray (Musarar al-Hasab), and Mr. Robert Vivian Lowe.

**Saturday gatherings and Friday Prayers at 18 Eccleston Square, Victoria, London, S.W.1**

On Saturday afternoons at 5 p.m. meetings are regularly held at 18 Eccleston Square, Victoria, London, S.W.1, the London office of *The Islamic Review*. Mr. Abdul Majid, Editor of *The Islamic Review*, generally gives a talk about Islam, or starts a discussion about some social and religious problem. These meetings have been carried on for the past fifteen years. Those who feel interested are cordially welcome.

Friday prayers at the above-mentioned address are held at
1.15 p.m. Muslim students and visitors from abroad will find it helpful to remain in touch with Muslims living in the United Kingdom.

**Visitors to the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey**

Mr. Frederick O. Curry, Bognor Regis; Mr. Ibrahim Isma'il al-Khatib; Dr. M. A. Khan; Miss E. M. Suffern; Mr. S. Hussain Saleh; Mr. Nassir E. Saleh; Mr. A. Ghaffar; Mr. A. Gaffar Osman; Mr. Muhammad Rahq (Trinidad); Bibi Rehannah (Trinidad); Mrs. Roshan Ansar (Pakistan); Mr. Gulam Kibria (Staines); Mr. Jalal-ul-Din Howe (London); Mr. M. R. Taradar; Miss Edith Large (London); Mr. Abdul Jabbar Khan (Pakistan); Mrs. Barekat (Seray Mola 'Ali, Teheran, Iran); Mr. Kamal-ul-Din (English Muslim from Malaya); Mr. and Mrs. Aran Hj. Hamid (Johore); Mr. Mahmud Haji Omar; Mr. Saad Sultan Salim (Kuwait, Arabia); Miss Rogers (Northampton); Mr. Zaffar Attar; Rev. and Mrs. J. Austin; Mr. and Mrs. A. Johnson; Dr. Taj-ud-Din (Jordan); Dr. and Mrs. Najib (Jordan); Mrs. Fatimah (London); Mr. D. W. Stirling; Mr. and Mrs. Karmi (Jordan); Mr. M. Sood; Mr. 'Abdul Khaliq Kazi; Mr. and Mrs. A. McDonald; Mr. Mohamad Akbar; Syed Zafar Ahmad; Mr. and Mrs. M. Akinola Belo; Mr. M. N. Shaikh; Miss Sylvia Salma Cohen; Mr. Philip Cadman; Mr. Youssef Nazri; Mr. M. Salawdine (France); Mr. G. M. Chaudhry; Lt. Col. Muhammad Sadiq (Manchester); Mr. Ali Ahmed; Miss G. Vean Laughton; Mr. Hilda Wallace (Johannesburg); Dr. and Mrs. Kamal; Mr. Ismail Osman (Kedah, Malaya); Miss Siti Kalthom (Malaya); Mr. A. Summerse (Scottish Muslim from Malaya); Mr. M. A. R. Baig (Pakistan).

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**Sunday 14th June 1953 — 'Id al-Fitr (Festival of the Breaking of the Fast)**

Sermon and Prayers at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey, 11.30 a.m.

Trains from London (Waterloo) 9.50, 9.54, 9.57, 10.27, 10.50 a.m.

Day return fare (3rd class) 6/4.

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**Monday and Tuesday, 15th and 16th June 1953.**

Second Annual Congress of the Muslims of the British Isles.

Accommodation should be booked in advance.

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**IMPORTANT**

It causes great inconvenience and delay in complying with your letters if you do not quote your subscriber's number. Please do not forget it. The number will be found by the address on the wrapper.

Manager, *The Islamic Review*, Woking, Surrey, England

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**CORRECTION**

The article about "Ramadhan — The Month of Fasting" in *The Islamic Review* for May 1953 was written by Dr. M. H. Rahat (not M. A. Rahat) of Sans Souci, Wakenaan, British Guiana, South America. We are sorry about the mistake in his name.—Editor.

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**NOTICE**

*The Islamic Review* is ordinarily sent by surface mail. Readers who wish to get it by air-mail should please note that they will be requested to pay 4/- extra per copy for air-mail postage.

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**Congress of Muslims of the British Isles 1953**

There is a great opportunity for you to make new friends and develop new understanding with Muslim brothers and sisters from various countries.

The second annual Congress of Muslims in the United Kingdom will be held by the Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England, immediately after the 'Id al-Fitr (festival of the breaking of the fast) on 15th and 16th June 1953. It is, however, regretted that a combined Congress of Muslims living in Great Britain and Europe, as was contemplated last year could not be convened owing to various difficulties.

There will be a full programme of lectures, discussions and games. An excursion to a local place of interest will also be arranged. There is a great opportunity for all the intending visitors to make new friends and develop new understanding with Muslims from various countries. Last year there were more than fifteen nationalities represented in the small gathering of the Congress. Those who took part in the Congress felt it was unique in many respects. Do not miss this year if possible.

**Expenses:**

- Accommodation for two nights, breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea, supper, games, excursion £3-0-0 per person
- Accommodation for one night, etc. (with excursion) £1-15-0 per person
- Accommodation for one night, etc. (without excursion) £1-7-6 per person

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**For visitors not requiring accommodation at night**

Two days — Lunch, afternoon tea and excursion £1-0-0 per person
One day — Lunch, afternoon tea (with excursion) 15s. per person
One day — Lunch, afternoon tea (without excursion) 7s. 6d. per person

No accommodation arrangements will be made unless money is received in advance.

Please apply early.

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**SECRETARY**

CONGRESS OF MUSLIMS OF THE BRITISH ISLES

THE SHAH JEHAN MOSQUE

WOOKING, SURREY, ENGLAND

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Note: Above are the minimum charges. Donations towards the Congress will be greatly appreciated.
BLANKET BOY'S MOON, by Peter Lanham. Published by Collins at 12/6.

Blanket Boy's Moon is the title of a book which deals with an exposition of the average African's life in the Union of South Africa.

The chief character, Monare, is from Basutoland, where the blanket, often brightly coloured, is a chief item of apparel, and the tribal law grips life firmly.

Monare's moon rises, is full of wanes, and during its phases we follow this typical, but great, African through life in his home country, then to Johannesburg, Durban, Mozambique, and finally back to Basutoland again. The story begins as related to a cellmate in Johannesburg's 'small hell', No. 4 Fort, whither Monare is brought after an unjust arrest. We see Monare struggling throughout with two systems, his own tribal law and that of the white man. His troubles centre, in the main, around these conflicting systems.

We see the shocking picture of African life in the City of Gold, Johannesburg; thousands of African men with no families, and the consequent deterioration of the spirit. Later we see Monare return to his home rich, through the business of selling trousers. There, ordered to carry out a ritual murder by his chief, we see him act under fear of tribal law and become involved unwillingly in the murder of his great friend.

From then on Monare is hunted, and so leaves for Durban where, working on the wharves, he saves the life of a Muslim Imam by pulling him from under a falling 200 lb. bag of sugar. Later, during an African riot, he again defends this Imam and his family. This earns the undying gratitude of the Imam, the result being that Monare lives with this family for some time, preparing for his departure from Durban as the "Great Detectives" are now close on his track.

Following his acceptance of Islam, we notice a great change come over Monare. Islam creates in a man an entirely new feeling — that he is someone, not of undue importance, but at least to God he is a vital personality. One other aspect of this acceptance of Islam is that the Muslims honestly appreciate that a man is not the colour of his skin, but of his spirit, and all this lies at the bottom of the relations between Monare and his Muslim friends. The author must be praised for his simple, yet convincing exposition of these facts about Islam.

Islam brings true equality among its followers. The following quotations may be of interest to the readers:

"Lile (Monare's son) said eagerly: 'Not like the Christians, O my Father, where the white men stay in one church, and make coloured Christians worship in another.'"

"Not like the Christians, my son! Amongst the Muslims there is nothing of that sort. In the mosque, if the white man comes late, there is no place reserved for him — should the one to arrive before him be a beggar, then he must stand on the beggar's left!"

"Alfred said: 'Ee! Monare — that is the religion for us Africans'!"

"Monare went on to tell them about his long talk in the motor car with the white man, Newington Sahib, and how his thoughts had been broadened and made clear through the discussion which started on the subject of equal pay for equal work. He repeated to them the warning of the Moulvie Mazaifar Khan, that they should close their ears to the speeches of the Communists, who strove to use the misery and poverty of the African people to secure their own ends."

"Lile now questioned: 'And what of these Indians, my Father — other than these Pathans you love so much? Are they our friends or our enemies?'"

"My son, like us, are the Indians oppressed! They have no say in the Pits in Cape Town; they, too, must put up with much ill-treatment from the white man. Doubtless some amongst them like to bear down harshly on the Africans, even as the white man bears down harshly on them. But so many of them have sympathy and charity in their hearts, that I could not say that they are our enemies. I think that we Africans must put out of our minds that the Indians and coloured people are not of our own blood and descent — rather must we look upon them, and claim, as brothers-in-misfortune. As in this country the white man placed all who do not possess white skins in one kraal, and calls them 'non-Europeans', let us behave as if indeed we all did belong to the same kraal, and stand together against the harshness of the white man. I would like to see every African a Muslim.'"

P. D.


This book, which might well be designated as a biography of the creator of the Sa'udi Arabian kingdom, 'Abd al-'Aziz Ibn 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn Sa'ud, is noteworthy because it makes the most interesting revelations about the shortcomings of this feudal empire which is being forced to adapt itself to modern techniques through the impact of oil production on its economy, oil having raised its yearly revenue from £100,000 to an income of £80,000 per year within a quarter of a century. It also makes an astounding frank criticism of the régime. One would have thought that this would rebound unfavourably on the author; but as no action has been taken against him, it is but fair to point out that the king has shown a commendable spirit of Islamic-Arab tolerance towards his old friend. This also raises the hope that the king will harken to Mr. Philby's voice; for his remarks are objective and his plea that a proper administration should be set up, that ministerial offices should be increased, and that the king should delegate far more power to his sons, who have been starved of real power in their own country, is timely and just. In this connection one cannot help recalling that all this useful advice, if it had been applied in Jordan by King Abdullah, the sad events following upon his death might never have taken place. King 'Abd al-`Aziz Ibn Sa'ud, who has kept the reins of office more firmly in his own hands like King Abdullah, will leave a dangerous vacuum when he dies. Mr. Philby, in his narrative points out how the sons of King Ibn Sa'ud have reacted abroad against the too stern a discipline at home.

It would, however, be an injustice to the king and to the author to concentrate entirely on this aspect of the book. Mr. Philby cites a great many instances to show the extreme shrewdness of King Ibn Sa'ud in the past, not forgetting to point out how the British, including such well-informed authorities as D. G. Hogarth, underestimated him. He tells us how the king showed a spirit of tolerance towards the Imam Yahya, the ruler.
of the Yemen, once he had defeated him in warfare, and after
the Imam's murder (King Ibn Sa'ud had warned the Imam that
he must put his house in order or risk a revolt), he refused
to deal with 'Abdullah Ibn al-Wazir, and gave moral support to
the Imam's heir, Ahmad, thus abandoning the traditional oppor-
tunism which has long characterized Arab feudal politics and has
often resulted in the perpetuation of bloody feuds which have
prevented Arab unity before and in modern times lost Palestine
to the Zionists.

Mr. Philby gives an interesting account of the period of
fasting in 1931 when King Amanullah, of Afghanistan, was a
guest of King Ibn Sa'ud during the month of Ramadhan. He
states that the king is himself a light eater, and that after the
impressive banquets, the remains of the food are consumed by a
host of retainers and their relations, so that in reality they benefit
the poor as well as the king's personal guests.

Mr. Philby's views on the Palestine question are well known.
They will meet once again with the unanimous disapproval of
the Muslim world. He was amongst the first of the British Arab
experts to welcome partition at the time of the Peel Commission
Report. Later he tried to get King Ibn Sa'ud to sponsor a deal
whereby the Arabs of Palestine should be bought out by the
Zionists for £20,000,000. In other words, the Arabs would
receive about £18 per head to leave their own country and be
resettled in Sa'udi Arabia or elsewhere. It is hard to understand
how he can plead that he is a friend of the Arabs. In practice
he has proved to be only a friend and supporter of the King of
Sa'udi Arabia and a brilliant scholar and an interesting
personality.

Unfortunately he gives no detailed account of the reasons
for his temporary eclipse during the war. Had he come into con-
cflict with the British authorities because he was defending Arab
nationalist interests or were there more personal reasons?

Of course, Mr. Philby supports King Ibn Sa'ud against the
Hashemites and shows up some of the inaccuracies in King
'Abdullah's memoirs. The squabbles between Iraq and Sa'udi
Arabia are to be deplored. These countries must work together
for Arab unity. The economic development of Iraq and Kuwait
is the brightest spot in a gloomy landscape. The real issue in
the Arab world is fair distribution of wealth.

Mr. Philby's somewhat slighting remarks about Western
democracy are undoubtedly the products of his own personal
experiences in Britain during the last war, and they should only
be taken as such. Mr. Philby believes in reform from above
before it is too late.

His account of the negotiations of the original British
interests which did not exploit their concessions and of the
reluctance of the Iraq Petroleum Company to bid more than the
£100,000 (about one day's revenue from oil in 1952), a sum
for which the Standard Oil Company of America clinched the
deal, gives the reader an idea of the part he played in these
negotiations on behalf of the American company.

Mr. Charles Crane, a great supporter of the Palestine Arabs,
was largely responsible for Sa'udi Arabia's present-day wealth,
for he generously placed the services of an eminent American
mining engineer, Mr. K. S. Twitchell, free of charge to the dis-
posal of Ibn Sa'ud's Government. Mr. Twitchell discovered the
oil deposits.

The book contains an account of the king's early years and
of his efforts to restrain his more extreme supporters who wished
to subdue the rest of the Arab world, starting with Iraq. In deal-
ing with the problem of the city of Mecca, Mr. Philby curtly
dismisses the Indian Muslims, and he seems to be unable to
appreciate the real international aspect of Islam and of the
obvious rights of 100,000,000 Muslims in the sub-continent of

India (not to mention the 75,000,000 Muslims in Indonesia) to
have an important say in the administration of the holy city.

Mr. Philby's books always provide interesting reading, and
knowledge and anecdotes are intermingled attractively, so that
there is never a moment's boredom.

* * *

ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF RELIGION AND RELIGIONS,
by E. Royston Pike. George Allen & Unwin Ltd., Ruskin House,

The work of one hand and heart, the Encyclopaedia of
Religion and Religions by E. Royston Pike is a fair exposition
of the present and past religious beliefs and practices of man-
kind. The whole book is an attempt to present facts as they are
or as the author has understood them to be without either being
apologetic or critical.

"Facts," as the author puts it, "are sacred, and never more
so when they are those hallowed by religious association. . . .
Almost without exception, the compendiums of religious knowl-
dge prepared hitherto have been written from the standpoint of
a particular faith, creed or Church. With no propagandist aim
to serve, I have endeavoured to preserve a nicer balance, a better
proportion, in the space allotted to this religion and to that."

The book is extremely helpful to the student of comparative
religions who needs up-to-date and unbiased information of the
theological tenets and philosophical ideals of various religions and religious denominations that have played a vital part in human affairs.

* * *

EDUCATIONAL CHARTS OF TURKEY, EGYPT AND PAKISTAN. Published by Educational Productions Ltd., 17 Denbigh Street, London, S.W.1 (Phone Victoria 1067-8). Price: Turkey, set of 3 charts, 15/-; Egypt, set of 3 charts, 15/-; Pakistan, set of 8 charts in English, 7/-; Pakistan, set of 8 charts in Urdu, 17/-.

Educational Productions Ltd. have prepared some coloured charts of Turkey, Egypt and Pakistan for visual aid in education. These charts deal with the area, population, history, people, agriculture, trade, communications, etc., of these countries. One can at a glance know things and remember them by looking at these charts. The impression is much more lasting than the lifeless figures and details in cold print.

The first chart about Turkey shows its important strategic position commanding entrance to the Black Sea through the Straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles. In the centre (top) is the picture of Istanbul, with the world-famous cathedral of St. Sophia in the foreground; on the extreme right (centre) is the picture of Ankara, the capital of Turkey since 1923; on the right (bottom) is an illustration of the foothills of Mt. Ararat (E. Anatolia); on the left there are two illustrations of Amanara and Fertileye.

Sheet 2 deals with the history of the Ottoman Empire and the progress the New Turkey is making in industry, mineral resources and farming. Sheet 3 deals with the town and country life and the changes which have been brought about in the daily life and habits of Turks by Mustapha Kemal.

Charts about Egypt emphasize the value of the Nile (the life-blood of Egypt) and the importance of the Suez Canal. Giant statues of Rameses II, the Mask of Tutankhamen, Pompey’s Pillar, the Mosque of Abu ‘Abbas and the mosques of Cairo also find their true place in Sheet 2.

Pakistan charts, although smaller in size, give greater details about the land area, population, history and occupations of the people.

The original price for eight charts about Pakistan (in English) was 20/-, but they are now available for 7/- only. This reduction is made by the generosity of the Government of Pakistan, who sponsored this production.

WHAT OUR READERS SAY . . .

(The letters published in these columns are, as a rule, meant to be informative and thought-provoking in the interests of Islam. Nevertheless, the Editor does not take responsibility for their contents.)

ISLAM IN WEST AFRICA

Woodham Way,
New Haw,
Surrey.

12th April 1953.

Dear Sir,

The Bulletin de l’Institut Français d’Afrique Noire, Dakar, French West Africa, for January 1953, contains the following criticism of an article of yours entitled “Islam in West Africa” by M. Sarwar Khan (vide The Islamic Review for July 1952). I think the views expressed therein will be of interest to your readers.

“West African Islam is the order of the day — according to the Atlas of Islamic History by H. Hazard, Princeton, U.S.A. (1951), Islam dans l’Afrique Occidentale by A. Guillery, Paris, Larousse (1952), and yet another under preparation by M. Trimingham on the same subject (in English). The English Muslim journal, The Islamic Review, Woking, deals with the same subject in an article covering — with the exception of French Occidental Africa — all the territories (Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Rio de Oro, etc.) — and also French Equatorial Africa and the Cameroons.

“As it is studied from the English viewpoint and based solely upon English sources, there are evidently errors about the French territories, and also some from the historical point of view.
"It is an exaggeration to say that the Hausas are spread over the whole of Central Africa. This is true as far as Nigeria, the Niger and some of the commercial centres there. The Peuls are spread over the whole of the Sahilian band of the countries discussed in the article, and not only in Nigeria and the French Sudan. Sokoto was not founded by the Peuls because it had existed for centuries before their arrival in the country.

"The contacts between Islam and West Africa date from the eighth century and not from the ninth century. One would also like to know what the author means by the 'Princess of Ghana' (Futa Jallon).

"The author speaks with regret of the golden days of the Peul Sultanate and of others of the nineteenth century 'Golden'; perhaps for the ruling Muslim class, which, throughout the course of the decades, has brought not only ruin and fire to the whole of the neighbouring non-Muslim countries but also a goodly measure of sorrow to all the people who were made the victims of the wars of slavery of Samory and Rabah and others.

"The European conquest, if it has put a stop to the conversion to steel to Islam, has also contributed in an extraordinary measure to, and also unexpected development of, the religion of Islam in West Africa.

"If there is a fact which nobody can deny it is that Islam is in the process of conquering slowly in a peaceful manner the whole of the interior, despite the efforts of the Christian missionaries. Islam is a simple religion; it is very much adapted to the black mentality; it allows polygamy, which has been installed for centuries in the commercial centres, even in animist areas. Having donned a pacific appearance, having the prestige of the Book and of a civilization with the primitive populations (the European is a model farther removed, more difficult to imitate, and not making a religious proselytization), it is natural that it should be so. Islam has also been favored for reasons of European administration and for reasons of control.

"The statistics given by the author are as follows (we give in parenthesis the figures which we think are more correct):

Rio de Oro and Mauritania: 100 per cent Muslim.
Senegal and Gambia: 90 per cent (85 per cent Gouilly, 75 per cent approx.).
French Guinea: 90 per cent (80 per cent Gouilly, 65 per cent approx.).
French Sudan: 60 per cent.
Niger: 90 per cent (80 per cent approx.).
Dahomey: 54 to 70 per cent (15 per cent approx.).
French Togoland: ? (5 per cent approx.).
Ivory Coast: 9 per cent (15 per cent approx.).
Haute-Volta: 50 per cent (15 per cent approx.).
Portuguese Guinea: 85 per cent (35 per cent approx.).
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Total of French Equatorial Africa: 30 per cent, cf. H. Hazard, 20 per cent approx.).
Tchad 55 per cent (45 per cent approx.).
Oubangui-Chari: 11 per cent (3 per cent approx.).
Central Congo: 64 per cent (0.2 per cent approx.).
Gabon: 47 per cent (1 per cent approx.)."

Yours, etc.,
O. MAY.

WHY I ACCEPTED ISLAM

Central Electricity Board,
Sitiawan,
Perak, Malaya.

Dear Sir,

One always chooses the shortest path to reach a destination, and I am sure Islam provides the shortest though most difficult path towards that goal.

I was a Roman Catholic before accepting Islam, but I lost faith in those rites such as the Trinity, Holy Communion, consecration of the host, mysteries, etc. I did not lose faith in God. No Catholic priest could help me by explaining these problems rationally, and the only reply was "Mysteries will remain mysteries; Jesus is the last prophet and Muhammad is an imposter." (God forbid!).

My faith dwindled in that religion until I happened to mix with lots of Muslims in Malaya. I used to talk about religion with them and we sometimes had heated arguments. Gradually I became convinced that Islam is rational and that Islam is what I know as truth. There is nothing to adore but God. No images, statues or paintings are found in a mosque. It is prayer in a mosque or anywhere that has won me over.

I have yet to learn much about Islam. After reading your pamphlets I now know that man was born without original sin. What a difference it makes to the outlook of a man.

Yours faithfully,

IBRAHIM VOO.

* * *

LETTER TO GENERAL MUHAMMAD NAJEEB

Mohallah Hybat Khatoon,
House No. 1/2/28,
Mauzumm, Baghdad, Iraq.
9th December 1952.

Dear Brother,

I recollect to have heard on the radio that you are collecting donations from rich people in Egypt for the poor class and I therefore take the opportunity to congratulate you on this and other actions taken by you to improve the position of the poor Egyptian brothers.

You will kindly excuse me for taking up your valuable time by addressing this letter to you, as I think it will not be out of the question for me to put before you the following suggestion with a sincere hope that you will pursue it with due consideration.

It is the duty of all rich Muslims to afford monetary help to their poor brothers and why the poor are sufferers is due to their neglect. I am inclined to believe that if rich Muslims followed implicitly their duty in terms of the Islamic law there would have been no poor society as it now exists.

Why should not the Muslim Governments take advantage of the law and force the payment of zakat which, as it appears, has not been willingly done and in a proper manner.

Why should not the present Egyptian Government take the lead by enforcing certain laws and regulations whereby zakat is collected for the benefit and full advantage of the poorer class.

I propose that fixed charges should be made payable on all goods imported and exported into the country and that certain
rules be introduced by which no clearance can be effected unless the tax, thus fixed, has been paid. This can be easily achieved through the assistance of Customs administration without any additional expense.

I am also of the opinion that death duty should be collected in the form of zakat from the inheritance of the deceased when it exceeds a certain amount. The amount thus collected from the goods imported and exported together with death tax should be reserved in the bank named "Zakat Bank".

The fixing of the tax I propose to be in a manner so that it should not at the same time serve as a burden. The basis I suggest to be on the same principle as at 2½ per cent. Taking for granted that the profit made by the importer of 100 bags of sugar is ID.50, the tax will work out ID.1/25, equal to Fils.1250 at Fils.12 per bag, and similarly for other goods on the grounds of surmised profit.

I am sure that by these means a large sum can be collected to give every possible assistance to those who deserve such help to improve their living conditions, and that a special committee be appointed to see that it is properly and lawfully distributed.

I am also of the opinion that a major portion of the amount should be allotted to certain projects wherein poor-class Muslim children be given the advantage of learning certain arts and crafts to enable them to stand on their own feet and the profit made from these projects should also be utilized for the poorer class.

I wish I could be of help to my poor Muslim brothers, and to them I offer my sincere sympathy. I pray to God to give you a long life to serve Islam in particular and the Muslims in general.

Your Muslim brother,
MUHAMMAD AMEERZADA.

REPLY FROM THE EGYPTIAN MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Ministère des Affaires Sociales,  
Cabinet du Ministre, 
Cairo, Egypt.  
14th January, 1953.

Dear Mr. Amerzada,
I have pleasure in acknowledging receipt of your kind letter of 9th December 1952, about the zakat tax.

Your proposals are highly appreciated and are being given every consideration.

Thank you for your brotherly interest and good wishes, which are heartily reciprocated.

Yours very truly,
(Dr.) 'Abbas 'Ammar,  
Minister of Social Affairs.

THE MONTH OF FASTING

149 Oriental Road,  
Woking,  
Surrey, England.  
10th May 1953.

Dear Sir,
I have read with great interest the article about "Ramadhan — the Month of Fasting," by Dr. M. H. Rahat, of Sans Souci, Wakenaan, British Guiana. He has very ably discussed the effects of fasting on the human body. I wish he could have thrown more light on the spiritual aspect of the problem too. The last paragraph in this article, however, needs some modification. Dr. Rahat writes:

"To those who are sick and are not fasting during the month of Ramadhan, my advice is that they should try to fast."

Now the teaching of the Qur'an is that a sick person or a traveller should not fast during his sickness or journey, and those who find it extremely hard may effect redemption by feeding a poor man (8: 184-185). The later exception according to Muhammad 'Ali "covers the case of the woman who gives suck and the one with the child, as also the old man who cannot bear fasting" (al-Bukhari, 65: ii, 25); also such sick people whose sickness is prolonged and such people whose journey extends over the whole year (The Qur'an, Arabic text translation and commentary, revised edition, by Muhammad 'Ali, Lahore, 1951, p. 76).

I think if a sick person has to fast he should only do so under expert medical advice.

Yours faithfully,
T. SHAIKH.

* * *

MASSACRE IN CASABLANCA

115 Abbots Gardens,  
23rd March, 1953.

Dear Sir,

With reference to your editorial in The Islamic Review for February 1953, I beg the courtesy of your columns to bring to the notice of sympathetic readers all over the world a European viewpoint of the atrocities committed on the Arab population of Casablanca by the local authorities in December 1952.

This viewpoint disseminated as that of "influential Catholics" in France was reported in the Sunday newspaper The Observer, by its Paris correspondent, Miss Nora Beloff, on 1st February last. Doubtless many of your local readers have seen the report headed "Massacre Inquiry Demand". It is chiefly for the benefit of your readers in the East that I wish to make a summary of this report, quoting as much of it as possible.

A group of French Catholics, "publicly blaming the Casablanca massacre in December not on the Arab Nationalists but on the French local authorities," have requested President Auriol to sponsor an inquiry commission to discover who was responsible for the massacre and how many people were killed. M. Francois Mauriac, the most eminent member of the Catholic group, "has publicly compared the crime with the Guernica atrocity and the Italian bombings in Ethiopia as a challenge to Christian conscience". It is interesting to note that a spokesman of the Government in Paris is reported to have said that the request "would almost certainly be rejected". Naturally, the local authorities have reaffirmed their own account and have labelled the dissenting Europeans as "anti-French", "anti-patriotic" and "disloyal". The official account puts the blame on the Istiqal Nationalists, the Communists and the local trade unions, who are reported to have used the murder of the Tunisian leader Mr. Fehrat Hashshad as a pretext for inciting the riots on December 7 and 8 and calling for the slaughter of Europeans." The official estimate of the casualties was 38 Arabs, 4 Europeans and 2 native policemen.

The report issued by the Catholic centre of intellectuals is, however, exactly opposite. According to it, "the Moroccan response to Hashshad's death was only to call for a 48-hour strike and
a day of national mourning”. It affirms that “the police incited panic to take the opportunity of decapitating the Nationalist movement by killing off or deporting its leaders”. And it is feared that the Moroccon trade union leader, Mahjoub, “either died in the fighting or was battered to death in the police cell afterwards”.

The report of the Catholics continues: “The fighting started when police fired on the demonstrators on the night of December 7. Despite a crop of atrocity stories, deliberately circulated to create a true psychosis of collective horror, and afterwards discreetly denied, no Europeans were killed until the following morning — and then only in the rush when the police repulsed demonstrators with tanks and machine guns.”

On Monday 8th December 1952, the “police deliberately allowed 2,000 Arabs to enter the centre of the European city which houses their trade union headquarters. Then they sprang a trap, rounded them up with ‘indiscriminate brutality’, and delivered many unarmed Arabs to a mob of howling Europeans. These, including many women, and driven crazy with the atrocity stories, rushed at them screaming ‘Aux assassins!’”

The Catholic report concludes: “On that afternoon it is indeed true there was massacre; it is true there was lynching; it is true that men and women ran amok and murdered other men. But these people running amok, these massacres, these Lynchings, were the Europeans of Casablanca, and this must be said.” M. Barrat, Secretary of the Catholic Centre, concedes that no exact figures of casualties are available, but he believes that “several hundred Arabs were killed”.

The report needs no comment. But it must be said that the shining example of moral courage and integrity in the action of the French Catholics rekindles our faith in mankind.

Yours faithfully,

R. Y. ALTALIB.

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PEN-PALS

A number of readers of The Islamic Review wish to have pen-pals of either sex from different countries. Their names, addresses and interests are printed below.

Miss Zakeya Ali, 64 Charlotte Street, Port of Spain, Trinidad, B.W.I. Aged 17, wishes to correspond with boys and girls between 16 and 24.

Mr. Mamunul Aziz, Baptist Mission Hostel, Dacca, Pakistan. Aged 18, wishes to correspond with friends in Muslim countries. Can correspond in English language.

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Mr. ‘Abdul ‘Aziz Foondor, Bon Accueil, Briace Verdiere, Mauritius, Africa. Age about 16. Interests: Camping, swimming, rowing, etc. Wants to have correspondence with some friends in Great Britain.

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