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Between Ourselves

THE COVER
A minaret of the tomb of the Moghul emperor, Jahangir, in Lahore, West Pakistan.

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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
RELIGION AND MATERIAL PROSPERITY NOT INCOMPATIBLE

"Men of Faith to have a two-fold Paradise : a Paradise on earth and a Paradise in Life-to-come"—Says the Qur'an

The philosophy of renunciation of life is rooted in the misconception as to the duality of the human nature. Its two component elements, the flesh and the spirit, were conceived to be something perpetually antagonistic.

The next logical step was that if man wanted to develop spirituality, it could only be done by crushing the promptings of the flesh. The thousands of naked Sadhus in India, undergoing voluntary physical tortures, and the institution of monasticism in Christianity, are the product of this misguided zeal to reach God by trampling upon the physical body He has given us. For that very reason in the Middle Ages, the Church discouraged even taking a bath as something irreligious, inasmuch as it implied the satisfaction of the flesh.

Islam, among many other reforms, dealt a death-blow to this erroneous view of human nature. The flesh was as much the gift of God, it taught, as the spirit. The two were in no way incompatible: they were complementary. But for the flesh, there would be no life of the spirit. The flesh is to the spirit what the soil is to the seed. But for it, the life of the spirit would never germinate, grow or blossom.

There was absolutely nothing wrong with this world, nor with human nature, proclaimed Islam. Man was the viceroy of God on earth, and he was here to work out those wonderful Divine potentialities within him. This earthly life declared the Prophet, was a tillage for the life to come. Man was the architect of his own destiny, this worldly life being the essential material to build it with.

The Qur'an declared that for a man who leads a life in the fear of God, there is a twofold Paradise — a Paradise on this earth, and a Paradise in the life to come.
There is thus no inconsistency between religion and material prosperity. A truly religious life inevitably leads to material prosperity as well. As a matter of fact it is wrong to put these two into two different water-tight compartments. Islam declared them to be two facets of the same life-principle, which is an organic whole. The inter-relationship between the two is one of emphasis, not of mutual incompatibility.

Religion must always come first and foremost in the thoughts of man. The achievement of the material needs must be subservient to that over-riding aim. As a Persian sage has said, we must eat to be able to remember God, and not live just to eat. Given this proper balance, even the so-called worldly pursuits become acts of religion. According to Islam, a man who earns his bread so that he can properly look after his family and children is engaged in a truly religious pursuit.

According to a saying of the Prophet, “A man who works to earn his living is a friend of God”. The bifurcation between the religious and the temporal thus becomes purely artificial. All human actions, so goes another saying of the Prophet, are to be judged according to the intentions behind them. If the motive behind is good, the apparently worldly pursuit becomes a truly religious act, while an apparently religious act loses all significance if it lacks a good motive behind it. It is thus the motive, and intention, that makes a human action fall under the category either of religion or material pursuit.

Islam goes much further than this. It makes the discovery of the forces of nature and the harnessing thereof to the service of man as a religious obligation of man. In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, the Qur’ān tells us, there are signs of God for those who are gifted with wisdom. Elsewhere we are told in the Qur’ān that whatever is in the heavens or in the earth, has been created for the good of man.

It is thus an express Divine purpose in the creation of man that he should develop the natural resources and convert this worldly life into a Garden of Eden. That indeed is the suggestion in the parable of Adam and his wife put in paradise and given complete freedom to help themselves to whatever they wanted to their hearts’ content.

The significance of that man, by applying his mind and energies to the tapping of natural resources, should convert this earthly life into a veritable paradise — a land of prosperity, free from poverty, ignorance and disease. There is one thing, however, he is warned, that is likely to lead to his “fall” from this state of perpetual happiness and bliss. That is the sin of sin and transgression. He is told on pain of expulsion from Paradise to shun as deadly poison the fruit of this forbidden tree.

From this figurative picture of human life on this earth, it should be obvious that in the Divine scheme of things, the material and the religious are interwoven together, the one being indispensable for the other.

To our mind, what is wrong with Communism is certainly not its various development projects and the material prosperity that is claimed to have come in their wake to the masses of the people in the Soviet Union. The evil of Communism consists in making this material prosperity the be-all and end-all of life.

History shows that no civilization, however advanced, can sustain for long, or bring true peace of mind, if it is not rooted in moral and spiritual values. Lack of this spiritual foundation has been responsible for the decline and decay of many a human civilization of antiquity which lies buried in Egypt, Iraq, the Indus Valley, and several other parts of the ancient world. Communism and the great wonders it has wrought in the realm of scientific achievements can be no exception.

Whatever the material prosperity Communism may have brought to the people, it has brought no peace to the world. In fact, wherever it goes it is a signal for bitterness between man and man, and clash and conflict between class and class, and nation and nation. In its own lands Communism has become synonymous with regimentation, loss of individual freedom, and suppression of human dignity. In foreign lands it is a name for infiltration, subversion, disorder and chaos.

In the face of this record, at home and abroad, it will be a very bold man indeed who will claim that Communism supplies the only answer to the problems of life.

Coming to the Western democracies one finds the same story repeated in a different form. Although there is a great deal of lip service to religion and religious values, the emphasis still lies on the side of the material pursuits to the neglect of those values. That is the reason why despite the many good humanitarian trends that one finds in the democracies, these still seem to be only a half-way house towards a life of true happiness. The Western civilization has placed every conceivable comfort at the disposal of man, but it has failed to bring him any peace of mind. The reason lies in this ill-balance between the relative emphasis on religious values and worldly comforts.

The question before man, therefore, is not whether to choose between religion and material prosperity. The question is how to integrate both. Both are equally indispensable for a life of true happiness and prosperity. We can do neither without the one nor the other. When Jesus said, “Man does not live by bread alone,” he indeed indicated the answer to the question which has been puzzling the minds of thinking people. The saying by no means minimizes the necessity of the material needs of human existence. It takes the necessity of their satisfaction for granted. While recognizing those needs, however, it emphasizes that there is something more than that which man must discover and pursue if he wants to live a life of true happiness and bliss. That something is a life of faith in God.

There lies the crux of the whole question, and the answer thereto. A life of faith in God is the only path that leads to material prosperity as well as to mental peace and bliss.

That is what every revealed religion came to proclaim. That is what the modern man needs. Unless he rediscovers this basic value of his life, no amount of material progress and prosperity will bring him any real peace and happiness. In fact all his present-day progress in material prosperity looks like his death-dance. The international tensions which are the direct product of the greed for material prosperity may any day burst into a conflagration and consume all this big fabric of civilization built so laboriously, but built on the foundations of sand.

This is not a bogey of the imagination. A third world war with its destructive hydrogen bombs is already a fate staring mankind in the face. The only ray of hope yet left is a belated rediscovery of the kind of faith that was taught by Moses and Jesus and other world prophets. The latest exponent of that faith, the Prophet Muhammad, and his last and final revelation, the Qur’ān, only recaptures and sums up that same spark of faith, lost through the long centuries.
MEET THE MESSENGER OF GOD

III

Al-Amin: The Embodiment of Uprightness

By MUHAMMAD YAKUB KHAN

While yet in the prime of life, the Prophet Muhammad’s name was a household word for the highest standard of integrity and uprightness. For these qualities, as we saw in our last article, he was acclaimed by friend and foe as Al-Amin (The Trustworthy).

In the most crucial moments of his eventful life the Prophet lived up to this reputation. Indeed, the more critical the situation Divine wisdom placed him in, the greater the lustre it brought to bear upon this dominant trait of his personality. Let us recall two more such highlights of his life.

It was the thirteenth year of the Call. The Meccans’ persecutions of the small band of Muslims had touched the peak point. Life had been made intolerable for them. The Prophet had permitted them to seek shelter wherever they could find it. Some time ago, batches of Muslim refugees had migrated to Ethiopia, where they received asylum from the Christian king of that country. Now, when things once more became too hot for them, the Prophet advised his companions to go to Medina, and settle down there. While everybody was gone, the Prophet, like a dutiful leader who cares more for the safety of his people than his own, stayed behind. He was awaiting Divine revelation to show him the green light to go ahead with his emigration plan. Along with him stayed behind just two men, Abu Bakr and Ali, his closest associates. They pressed him again and again to quit Mecca, which had become unsafe for his very life. But no! The Prophet would not take one step without making sure that it was God’s will to do so.

On the other side, activities in the enemy camp had reached boiling point. Alarmed at the rapid growth of the Muslims’ strength at Medina, the Meccans held a general council to consider how to meet the danger. Leading men from among each clan participated in the deliberations. Various ways and means were suggested as to how to extirpate Islam. One suggestion was to imprison the Prophet. Another thought banishment would be the best way to deal with him. Abu Jahl, the ringleader, did not find these to his satisfaction. So long as the Prophet was alive, even though in captivity or exile, he was bound to be a force. Abu Jahl would not advise taking risks. He did not believe in half-measures. He thought the Prophet must be done away with. That was to him the only way to get rid of the threat of Islam once and for all.

To kill the Prophet, however, was no easy job. It meant stirring a whole blood feud with his clan, the Banu Hashim, who, though equally opposed to his mission, were honour-bound by the code of Arab chivalry to avenge the blood of their kinsman. It was therefore beyond the power of one individual to touch the Prophet. The entire clan of Banu Hashim would be up in arms against him. To tide over this difficulty Abu Jahl hit upon a plan. Let each clan contribute one man towards the task that was suggested. The gang thus formed should in a body fall upon the Prophet and finish him. This would obviate the risk of individual action. The Banu Hashim would not be a match for all the clans combined.

The horrible plan being agreed upon, a body of armed men was forthwith got up, which laid siege to the Prophet’s house to attack him in a body as soon as he came out. The Prophet also came to know about this. When things reached this stage, Divine revelation also came to advise the Prophet that it was time for him to migrate also. While, however, he was making secret preparations how best to slip out of the murderous trap that was laid for him, the one thought that was uppermost in his mind at this moment when his very life was hanging in the balance was what to do with the deposits which various men had entrusted him with for safe custody.

Be it noted that while every Meccan was out for his blood and considered the Prophet his chief enemy, he was yet the one man, out of all the people, considered trustworthy to keep deposits with. At that very moment, when he had to flee for his life, he had a number of deposits in his custody. What to do with those deposits? This was the question that meant more to him than his life. He could not possibly leave without returning all these to the owners.

At last he thought of a solution. He sent for Ali, and apprised him of the whole situation. Divine permission to quit had come, he explained, and he wanted to go. But there were two obstacles in the way. First, there was the enemy gang on the lookout for him, and second there were the safe-deposits of the people with him which had to be returned. To get over both these obstacles he sought Ali’s help. Ali was to lie down in his bed. This would put the besiegers off their guard, thinking their prey was secure in their hands. This would also take the other load off his mind. First thing in the morning, when Ali rose, he was to call on every depositor and return his deposit to him intact.

What a code of honour! There he is in the very jaws of death. His bloodthirsty enemies are at his doorstep. With drawn swords, they are impatiently waiting the moment when he should emerge out of his house to strike at him. It is but human should he in this supreme moment forget everything else except his own safety. The Prophet was, however, made of sterner stuff. With him honour was more than life.
It was unthinkable for him to slip quietly away; that would mean betraying the confidence reposed in him by the people. What did it matter, if death stared him in the face? It was easier to face death than run the risk of what might be construed as bad faith. What weighs on his mind is the question of the people’s deposits. He cannot think of leaving without making sure that these would be duly returned. The Al-Amin proved Al-Amin even in this fateful hour when the enemy’s sword was hanging over his head!

We get a glimpse of the Prophet as Al-Amin when the scene was shifted from Mecca to Medina, where he, along with his handful of followers, settled down. The Hijra opened a new chapter in the fortunes of Islam. The small Muslim fraternity daily gained in strength by the addition of more and more converts. The rapidly growing power of Islam filled the Meccans with apprehension. They made repeated attacks on Medina to nip the growing menace in the bud. Every time, however, they suffered reverses at the hands of the Muslims. Even their last combined attack, known as the Ahzab, ended in a miserable rout. Thinking that the Meccans’ anti-Islamic fury had spent itself, the Prophet thought of performing the pilgrimage to the House of the Ka‘ba. This was a privilege which from times immemorial was not denied even to the worst of enemies. Indeed all warfare was taboo during the months of the pilgrimage. There could be no reason, thought the Prophet, why the Meccans should obstruct him in the performance of this religious duty.

At Hudaybiya

So along with 1,400 of his followers he set out on the pilgrimage to Mecca. To disarm all possible misgivings as to his peaceful intentions he saw to it that the Muslims carried no arms except swords, which were to be kept sheathed. The Prophet’s hopes were, however, soon belied. When the Muslim caravan reached the vicinity of Mecca, news was brought that the Meccans with their allies had mustered strong forces to offer opposition. A messenger was forthwith sent to explain that they had no hostile intentions, that they were there to perform the Hajj. As a further guarantee of their peaceful intentions, an offer was made to the Meccans to conclude a truce for a number of years. The Quraysh elders welcomed the offer. They had by now grown wise enough to realize that they could not crush Islam by force. They deputed one of their wisest men, Urwa by name, to negotiate terms with the Muslims. The Muslims were encamped at Hudaybiya, a place at a day’s journey from Mecca. Urwa came to the Muslim camp to discuss terms with the Prophet. The negotiations failed, on which the Prophet deputed another leading Muslim to go to Mecca, and bring round the Quraysh to agree to the truce terms. The envoy was, however, ill-treated. His camel was killed. Besides, a detachment of the Meccans fell upon the Muslims by surprise, but was itself taken prisoner. To promote his peace mission, however, the Prophet, rather than punish this act of treachery, set the whole party free. And to push forward his truce plan, he deputed a man of the high social standing of Uthman, who had considerable influence at Mecca, as his envoy to discuss terms with the Quraysh. Uthman also was not properly treated. He was kept under a strict watch which led to the rumour that he had been killed. When the rumour reached the Prophet, he realized that the Meccans were bent on mischief. He had no alternative left except to strike a blow in self-defence in case the worst came to the worst.

Death-pledge

It was a most critical situation. The Prophet’s following was but a handful of men with no better equipment than swords. His unbounded faith in the righteousness of his cause, however, made up for the lack of numbers and arms. He called upon his men to take a fresh oath of allegiance that in the event of a Meccan attack, they would stand by him till the last man, and the last drop of blood. This allegiance goes down in the history of Islam by the name of Bay‘i-Ridwain. When the news of the Muslims’ desperate resolve to fight to the bitter end reached the Meccans it put them in a chastened mood. To obviate another disaster, they considered discretion the better part of valour, and sent one, Suhail by name, with truce terms of their own. Suhail’s terms amounted to treating the Muslims as a defeated party. Among others, one term was especially distasteful to the Muslims. If any of the Meccans should abscond and join the Muslim camp at Medina, it laid down, he was to be repatriated to them, but if any of the Muslims should desert Islam and make common cause with the Meccans, the latter were not bound to hand him over to the Muslims.

This term placed the Muslims at a great disadvantage. But the Prophet was anxious to maintain peace at any cost and wanted to accept even conditions so humiliating. This caused a great deal of dissatisfaction among the Companions. The Prophet, however, sacrificed the sentiments of his associates to the cause of peace, so dear to his heart. And the treaty known as the Truce of Hudaybiya, with all the disability it imposed on Islam, was put in black and white.

Truce put to the test

The ink of the treaty had hardly dried when it was put to the most acid test ever recorded in the annals of international code. It so happened that one Abu Jandal, who had recently joined Islam, was caught by the Meccans. Day after day he was mercilessly beaten by them to make him repent the faith, but to no avail. Every refusal on his part was followed by worse torture. Hearing that the Prophet was encamped at Hudaybiya, Abu Jandal was on the lookout for an opportunity to make good his escape. Once he was in the camp of Islam, he thought, he would be safe. Finding his opportunity one day, he gave the slip to his captors and made a desperate dash for Hudaybiya. After a tiresome run along unfrequented routes he at last reached the Muslim camp. The Meccans, however, demanded his repatriation under the terms of the treaty that had only just been signed. This was a most difficult situation. There stood Abu Jandal, the very picture of misery, tortured for accepting Islam, pleading with his fellow Muslims for asylum. There were the Meccan delegates demanding that the treaty must be honoured, and the fugitive handed over to them. Abu Jandal uncovered his bleeding back to let the Muslims see the hell of torture he had been going through. This sent a shudder through the Muslim fraternity. They all pleaded with the Prophet to intervene, and turn down the Meccans’ demand. For the Prophet himself, who was mercy personified even for his foes, it was a most excruciating moment. But an agreement, once signed, was something sacrosanct for a Muslim. It could not be just thrown away as a scrap of paper. Islam lays the greatest possible stress on the honest fulfilment of all agreements. The Prophet was faced with a most difficult choice. Apart from the fact that Abu Jandal had been tortured for the faith of Islam, on mere humanitarian grounds he was a very strong case for being given asylum. There was the strong current of the Muslim gathering’s feelings on the question.
In the midst of this internal conflict that the Prophet went through, however, there came ringing the clarion call of the Qur'an, \textit{Asfuo bit uqood} (Make good what you pledge!). The Prophet's choice was made. "The treaty must prevail. Abu Jandal must go back with his persecutors. And in the midst of scenes of the deepest pathos, he was allowed to be snatched away, so that the high standard of integrity Islam demands in all relationships was not lowered.

\textbf{Honours treaty obligations}

Soon after the Prophet arrived back in Medina there came up another similar case. Another convert to Islam, 'Uthba by name, tortured no less mercilessly by the Quraysh, followed the example of Abu Jandal and reached Medina. Two of the Quraysh followed close upon his heels and demanded his repatriation under the provisions of the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah. Like Abu Jandal he was also told to go back with the Meccans. "Do you force me back to idol-worship?" remonstrated 'Uthba. A trying situation for the Prophet again, 'Uthba pleading for asylum in the name of religion, and the Quraysh insisting on their pound of flesh! But word once pledged must be honoured whatever the cost.

"'Uthba," said the Prophet, "we cannot but hand you back to the Meccans. It may be that God may provide another way out for you." 'Uthba, like a true Muslim, bowed before the Prophet's decree. And a way out was now providentially thrown open before him.

On his way to Mecca, in the custody of the two Meccans, it struck him to make a bid for freedom on his own. At the first opportunity, finding the men off their guard, he struck one down, and the other took to his heels. 'Uthba was now a free man. But the door of Medina was still blocked to him by the treaty. Consequently, he selected a neutral zone, a place called 'Is, on the coast, falling neither under the jurisdiction of the Quraysh nor of the Muslims, and took up his abode there. As the news reached Mecca, other persecuted Muslims also flocked there, so that it soon grew up into a Muslim settlement free from the inhibitions of the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah. This new stronghold of Muslims became a new threat to the Meccans' trade with Syria. The only way to liquidate this centre was to open the gates of Medina to converts to Islam. So they came to the Prophet, offering to abrogate the treaty terms banning entry into Medina of new converts, to which the Prophet readily agreed.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.jpg}
\caption{A view of the sacred Ka'ba where the Prophet Muhammad, along with 1,400 companions, wanted to go for pilgrimage, but was not allowed to do so by the Quraysh. He then had to negotiate a truce treaty at Hudaybiyyah, a place about a day's journey from Mecca.}
\end{figure}
THE DIVINE DIVAN

55(a)
Be not disturbed by the hurly-burly,
Striving thy hardest late and early.
(The Silence and the Stillness there is thine.)
Be not oppress'd by the rude unrest
That maketh each moment fly distress'd,
(The Silence and the Stillness there is thine.)
Thou art in the tumult, round thee it rages
With a devouring roaring, but what is that assuages
Thy dizzy blindness, deafness? Written on the pages
Of thy heart's heart.
Never to depart
From thy heart's heart:
"The Silence and the Stillness here is MINE."

55(b)
Change cometh over the sky, and change cometh over our
lifetime.
Joy giveth place: dark gloom descendeth: in anguish we
wander
This way and that, perplex'd. Cry halt to such folly! be
silent!
Seek in the Stillness the ONE. Who knoweth no changes for
ever.
Lo! He is there in thy heart, so be not estranged for ever.
Grace is available.
Joy unassailable.
There in thy heart.

55(c)
Belovéd, when I think of Thy transcending Love,
That fills the universe with Mercy from above,
Then must I listen to my heart-beats low,
Until they sound in tune for ever. "Love, love, love."
For, while I meditate, the moments go.
Bearing my love for Thee abroad (I know it must be so)
Towards mankind, towards all creatures Thou hast made,
That thus I find, in forms that may not fade,
(Howe'er they change) a million ways of loving Thee
display'd.

55(d)
A million ways of loving Thee — to love Thy creatures here!
The lover can the Belovéd see clear-mirror'd in the stream.
No lightning flash can brighter seem than the Belovéd's eyes;
No thunder roll across the skies with more majestic voice
Than the Belovéd's music notes that make this heart rejoice.
In climbing clouds, or sounding waves,
Or shadowy whisperings of woodland caves,
Or sweetest grace of flower face,
The thrill
Is still
The rapture of the Belovéd's love, that nothing can displace.

William Bashyr Pickard.

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Islam makes it incumbent on a Muslim to spend part of his earnings in charity.
The idea underlying the institution of Zakat is, primarily, the purification of the individual, which the word literally means.
Like the pruning of plants by a gardener, which is conducive to making its growth all the more luxuriant, Zakat also brings the donor, in the long run, greater abundance of wealth in the Divine scheme of things.
The Qur'án repeatedly enjoins Zakat, bracketing this virtue with saying prayers:
"Those who believe in God, and keep up prayer, and spend benevolently out of what We have given them... these are on the right path with their Lord, and these it is that shall attain the highest good." (2:25).
"Surely, those who believe and do good deeds, and keep up prayers and pay Zakat, shall have their reward from their Lord, and no fear or grief shall befall them" (2:277).
The importance of Zakat was underlined by every prophet mentioned in the Qur'án. This is how Jesus Christ is spoken of as extolling this virtue:
"And He (God) has enjoined on me prayer and Zakat so long as I live" (19:31).

The Prophet Muhammad enjoined charity even over and above Zakat, saying:
"In one's wealth there is a due (charity) besides Zakat."
To underline this he recited the Qur'ánic verse (2:177):
"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces (in prayer) towards the East and the West" (Tirmidhi and The Mishkat, 6:6).
The rate at which Zakat has to be assessed is 2½ per cent on all wealth (capital as well as profit) which has been in one’s possession for a year.
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The Imam,
The Shah Jehan Mosque,
Woking, Surrey, England.
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Islamic Literature, Kashmiri Bazaar, Lahore, Pakistan (Correspondence in English and Arabic).

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The Ismailia Association, Karachi, Pakistan (Mr. Alidina Sherali, Secretary-General).

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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
Mysticism in Islam

By Osman Hyder Mirza

A brief introduction to Sufism or Islamic mysticism

Although mysticism, in some form or other, has been a distinct feature of several established religions, it is by far the most remarkable in its association with Islam. In fact, under the name of tasawwuf (known to Europeans as Sufism), it may be said to have attained its highest expression within the orbit of the above faith, both as regards its theosophic and theopatheptic aspects, while, at the same time, it has exercised through the centuries an inccalculable influence on the intellectual and emotional life of the Muslims, not to speak of the inspiration which it has directly or indirectly lent to the literature and art of the Islamic world.

It may at first sight seem a bit inconceivable how Sufism, which is essentially eclectic and latitudinarian in its outlook, came to link itself with the simple, exclusively positive faith of Islam. The incompatibility is, however, only apparent, for, as the Sufis aver, there are ample indications both in the Qur’an and the Traditions, the acknowledged criteria of religious truth, to justify a mystical interpretation of Islam. Nevertheless, Sufism was looked at askance in certain authoritative circles, and it was a long time before it could find a place in orthodox belief. Another thing to remember is that Sufism in its mature form is not the product of a single age or period, having gone through an evolutionary process during the first few centuries of the Islamic era (known as the Hijra, starting from 622 C.E.). We must not, however, regard the development of Sufism as that of a speculative or philosophical system, but rather as the gradual unfolding of divine mysteries to successive generations of saintly persons. To think otherwise would be a negation of Sufism, which is essentially based on intuitive knowledge. The difference between mysticism and philosophy is epitomized in the sequel to an interview between Abu Said, the mystic, and Ibn Sina (Avicenna the philosopher), when, according to the popular story, the former expressed his estimate of the latter by saying, “What I see he knows,” while the latter said of the former, “What I know he sees”.

The epithet Sufi, derived from suf meaning “wool” and denoting a “wool-clad” ascetic or devotee, first appears in history about the middle of the second century of the Hijra, but the origin of Sufism goes back to the early days of Islam in the lifetime of the Prophet, some of whose companions (sahabas), belonging to an ascetic group known as Ahl al-Suffa or “People of the Bench”, may be regarded as the precursors of Islamic mysticism.

Before the end of the first century A.H. the Sufi move-

Prayer in Islam

By Muhammad Yakub Khan

1. The Significance of Prayer
2. The Main Prayer—Fatiha
3. The Prescribed Prayer
4. Special Prayers

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April 1959
ment received a fresh impetus from a reaction against the worldliness which had by this time penetrated all classes of Muslim society, being the inevitable result of a sudden accession of wealth and power brought about by the vast and surprisingly rapid conquests achieved by the armies of Islam.

The early Sufis (of the first and second centuries A.H.) were simple, unsophisticated souls who in their quest for truth and righteousness had adopted a life of voluntary poverty (faqir), of which a conspicuous example was afforded by Ibrahim Ibn Adham, a scion of the royal family of Balkh, the story of whose sudden conversion bears a close resemblance to the Buddhist legend. One day, while hunting, he heard a voice admonishing him for his frivolity and telling him to abide before it was too late. He took the hint, discarded his costly dress and left his kingdom in the humble dress and felt cap of a shepherd. Another prominent figure of this period, a learned divine named Hasan al-Basri was a true mystic inasmuch as he emphasized the facility of external acts of devotion without the inner light which is the essence of religion. "A grain of genuine pity," he declared, "is better than a thousand pounds of fasting and prayer." His contemporary, Shadiq al-Balkhi, introduced the term tawakkul in Sufi phraseology, meaning thereby absolute, unqualified reliance on God and submission to His will, and made it his guiding light. It is related of him that he once bought a melon for his wife, which proved to be rotten, and on being rebuked by her for making such a bad bargain, he managed to pacify her with the argument that it was not the buyer or the seller or the cultivator who was really responsible for the melon being spoilt, but the Creator, and who could be angry with Him?

— an extreme example of that fatalistic view which has been a feature of Sufism since its inception. The saintly woman, Rabia al-Adawiyya, introduced a fresh glow and exaltation in early Sufism by her concentration on serving God simply for the love of Him, and not for the sake of any reward or from a motive of fear—a selfless attitude, beautifully portrayed in one of her recorded prayers which she was accustomed to pray in the stillness of night: "O Lord, the stars are shining and the eyes of men are closed and kings have shut their doors and every lover is alone with his beloved, and here am I alone with Thee."

Again she prayed: "O my Lord, if I worship Thee from fear of Hell, burn me therein; and if I worship Thee in hope of Paradise, exclude me thence, but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, then withhold not from me Thine Eternal Beauty."

With her preoccupation with Divine Love and fellowship with God (ins). Rabia makes the transition from the ascetic quietism of early Sufism to the final form assumed by it with the introduction in the third century A.H. of the doctrine of Gnosis or Illumination (ma'rifat) by Dhu'l-Nun al-Misri and that of "dying to self" (fana) by Abu Yazid (Bayazid) of Bistam. The rise of a school of "existentialist monism" (wahdat al-wujud) early in the seventh century A.H. completes the evolutionary cycle of Sufism, the main features of which we now propose to discuss.

**Main features in the evolutionary cycle of Sufism**

After the second century A.H. we find a distinct change of complexion in Sufism—a change, however, which is evolutionary rather than radical in character. The asceticism of early days with its fasts, vigils and mortifications is still there, but is no longer a prominent or characteristic feature: it is now only a stock, so to say, for the mystical graft. On the other hand Sufism has gained in spiritual intensity and breadth of outlook. Its horizon, at first defined by the ideal of a meticulously pious and righteous life, has receded beyond recognition. Its vision now embraces both heaven and earth: its sympathy has become universal: its object is to penetrate the innermost secrets of creation, to apprehend the Divine mysteries that lie beyond the ken of ordinary mortals and to lose itself in the contemplation of the Beatific Vision.

This evolutionary process is epitomized in the individual lives of the great mystics of the time who, after passing through the various trials and tribulations of the preparatory stage (the Path of tarikat) have at last, by the grace of God, received enlightenment.

As an illustration we may present a brief sketch of the spiritual career of a celebrated mystic, Abu Sa'id (357-440 C.E.) of Mayhana (in East Khurasan), as recorded in his picturesque biographies, in which a great part of the story is told by himself. As a little lad he had once the privilege of accompanying his father, Abu'l Khayr, to a meeting of the Sufis of his native town at the house of one of their number, when the extraordinary spectacle presented there of the assembled dervishes falling into ecstasy and dancing in rapture at the repeated singing of a mystical verse made a deep impression on his mind and excited his childish curiosity. Later on, in his youth when he was a student at Sarakhs, he happened to pass by a dervish, seated on an ashkebar near the city gate, sewing a patch on his gebardine. Abu Sa'id stopped and stood watching him at his work, while the dervish continued with his sewing without taking any notice of him. But having sewn the patch on he looked up and said, "O Abu Sa'id! I have seen thee on this gebardine along with the patch." Then he rose and took his hand, leading him to the convent (khanqah) of the Sufis at Sarakhs and introduced him to their leader, saying, "O Abu'l Fadl, watch over this young man, for he is one of you." This was the beginning of his initiation into Sufism. The venerable Shaikh told him to concentrate on the spiritual meaning of the word "Allah" and to repeat it until it penetrates his heart and soul and his whole being becomes this one word, and advised him to go and seek a place of solitude and to behave with patience and resignation to God's will. So Abu Sa'd abandoned his studies and came home to Mayhana and retired into the niche of the chapel in his own house, where he sat for seven years, saying continually, "Allah! Allah! Allah!". As a result of this unceasing remembrance (dhikr), the way was opened for the flood of transcendental consciousness to burst into his heart and soul. It was not, however, the end of his ascetic training. In the years to come he redoubled his austere practices. His old interests and habits faded away. He discarded his books, which were formerly the object of his zealot study, and he prayed to God, saying, "O Lord, nothing is revealed to me by heart by all this study and learning: it causes me to lose Thee, O God! Let me be able to do without it by giving me something in which I shall find Thee again." The society or even the sight of men became unbearable to him and he wandered alone in desert and mountainous places and would often completely disappear for a month or more. At last, after a series of trials and vicissitudes extending over a number of years, he arrived at the end of the path and attained to perfect illumination. We now see him as a theosophist and saint. It is true that in this higher stage he does not discontinue his austerities, but he now takes pains to hide them. His former aversion to the society of men has wholly disappeared: he now lives in their midst and moves about in their assemblies to teach and guide: having drunk the heavenly nectar he returns to his terrestrial abode. A change is also visible in his mode of life. Ascetic poverty and priva-
tion is replaced by an apparent ease and affluence. He treats the dervishes around him to sumptuous banquets, burns a whole bundle of aloes-wood in an oven, so that his neighbours may be able to enjoy the perfume with him, and orders a row of candles to be lighted in daytime. But a swaggering limb of the law, who had the temerity to rebuke the saint for his extravagance, miserably failed in his attempt to blow out the candles, for, as he set about puffing at them the flame flared over his face and burnt his moustache. It must be extremely dangerous to provoke a saint!

Sufi theosophy

It may be explained that saintship is the realization of the concept of Perfect Man (al-insan il kamil), whose spiritual experience is the foundation of the Sufi theosophy. According to this theosophy, the created world is the outward aspect of that which in its inward aspect is God. It holds that Being is one (the doctrine of wahdatul wujud or unity of Being), that all apparent differences are modes, aspects and manifestations of Reality, that the phenomenal world is the outward expression of the Real (al-Haqq). The essence of God, the Absolute Essence (Dhat) is infinite and incomprehensible. No words can express or hint what the essence is, since it has no opposite or like. A knowledge of the Essence or Pure Being is, however, conveyed to us through its attributes (sifat). The attributes of the Essence are the forms of thought by which it is manifested and made known, and the sum of these attributes is the universe, which is “phenomenal,” only in the sense that it shows reality in the form of externality. Although from this point of view Essence and Attributes appear to be distinct from each other, the two are ultimately identical. The so-called phenomenal world — the world of attributes — is no illusion: it really exists as the self-revelation or other self of the Absolute.

While every appearance in the phenomenal world shows some attribute of reality, man is the microcosm in which all the attributes are united: he is an epitome of all the diverse aspects of the Absolute, inasmuch as he reflects not only the powers of nature but also the divine powers “as in a mirror.”

According to a celebrated mystic, Husayn Ibni Mansur al-Hallaj (309 C.E.), who suffered martyrdom for declaring, “I am the Reality (ana’ il-Haqq)”, the essence of Divine Essence is Love. Before the creation God loved Himself in absolute unity, and through love revealed Himself to Himself self alone. Then, desiring to behold that love in-aloneness, that love without oneness and duality, as an external object, he brought forth from non-existence an image of Himself, endowed with all His attributes and names. This Divine image is Adam, in whom and by whom God is made manifest — divinity objectified in humanity. Hallaj, however, distinguishes the human nature (nasut) from the Divine (lothut). Though mystically united they are not essentially identical and interchangeable. While at supreme moments a man may lose himself in God, he can never be identified with God absolutely.

This brings us to the doctrine of annihilation of self (fanu) which occupies a pivotal position in Sufi theosophy. While the heart (qalb) of man when cleansed and purified is capable of reflecting the Divine attributes, his soul or spirit (rūh) is imbued with the love of God and is ever yearning for union with Him. The love which the human soul feels for its Creator is in fact a reflex, as a great mystic has said, of the love which the Creator feels for His creatures.

Fanu is a prerequisite of attaining spiritual perfection and a unitive existence with God. It has both an ethical and a mystical side. In its ethical aspect fanu is associated with sufa (purity), signifying the emancipation of the soul from all those base passions and desires with which it is afflicted; in other words, the extinction of the evil self (nafs) and the attainment of a moral transformation. In its mystical aspect fanu is correlated with baqa (abiding), denoting an eternal life with God and partaking of His attributes, though not becoming identical with Him. The doctrine of infusion or incarnation (hidutel), it may be noted, is definitely repudiated by authentic exponents of Sufism.

Ultimately it is from Divine love that the “annihilation” of Sufism, leading to union with the Divine Being, is derived, as the following passage from a well-known Sufi writer shows: “God divides the one substance of His love and bestows a particle thereof, as a peculiar gift, upon every one of His friends in proportion to their enравishment with Him; then he lets down upon that particle the shrouds of fleshliness and human nature and temperament and spirit, in order that by its powerful working it may transmute to its own quality all the particles that are attached to it, until the lover’s clay is wholly converted into love and all his acts and looks become so many properties of love. This state is named ‘union’ alike by those who regard the inward sense and the outward expression.”

Sufism in poetry

In view of the above exposition one can easily understand that Divine love is the inspiration of the mystical poetry of Islam (especially of the Persian school), which portrays, in the vivid colours of imagery and symbolism, the aspiration of the human soul towards God. The conception of God as the Divine Beloved has imparted to this poetry a distinct ethereal beauty, while in its lyrical forms it bears the impress of a soul set aflame by a transcendent love. It is the outpouring of a heart purified and sublimated by the fire of longing — a longing infinite and ceaseless. According to a Sufi writer, love is of two natures: the love which is tranquil and the love which is rapture. The former is found among both the elect and common folk, while the latter is found only among the elect and it leads direct to God. It is mostly love of this latter variety which is responsible for the creation of the mystic poetry; in other words, this poetry derives its inspiration from ecstasy, which is the only direct means of knowing God. But the road to the unitive state — the ultimate goal of the human soul — is long and arduous, beset with many a pitfall, and ecstatic experience is seldom abiding. There is usually an interval between the lover and higher states of ecstasy, full of intense aridity and acute suffering. The human soul, after having had a taste of nearness to God, is again returned to its former level. But this separation is a torture, a source of trial and affliction, for, how can it rest in peace after having experienced the rapture of union with the Divine Beloved? As the poet ‘Iraqi says:

“Whatever pain or grief there was
In all the wide, wide world,
They put the whole into a mass
And named the thing as Love.”

Nevertheless, it is this torture, this infinite yearning, which constitutes the essence of Divine love and forms the central theme of Sufi mystical poetry. According to an early Sufi writer (al-Muhasibi, 3rd century C.E.), “the light of yearning is the light of love. When God kindles that lamp in the heart of His servant it burns fiercely in the crevices of his breast until he is lighted by it, and that lamp is never extinguished.”

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Again, it is this light of yearning from which proceeds the cult of Beauty in Sufism. Having once enjoyed the experience of a unitive state with God and being restored to material life, the soul seeks after “the verdant pastures, the beautiful vistas, the fresh green gardens” and every lovely thing in this physical world to console it, as examples of God’s handiwork, for the loss of the Artist’s own Presence:

“Not a vein is there, not a speck nor blush
On the petals of the rose,
But has come from the Mighty Artist’s brush,
By which it in beauty flows” (Urdu poet).

It may be explained that according to the mystic conception, beauty (jamāl) is one of the great attributes of God. In fact, in the mystic’s vocabulary Truth, Reality and Beauty are synonymous terms. God is Absolute Beauty, as He is the Absolute Truth and Reality (al-Haqq). In the beauty of objects in the phenomenal world, the mystic finds a reflection of the Divine Beauty—not the least in that of the human form, man being a microcosm of the entire creation. Hence it is no wonder that the sight of a comely face never failed to throw a lovelorn mystic into transports of ecstasy, making him oblivious of the censure to which he might expose himself by his apparent infatuation with a phenomenon. Yet, the eye of the mystic sees only the Reality behind the veil and is free from the least taint of sensuality. Thus, in an old memoir we have the story of the Persian poet Iraj, who, on being reproved by his spiritual preceptor for losing himself in the contemplation of the handsome features of an artisan lad in the bazaar, said with simple innocence, “O Shaikh! Where is the Other that thou seest Two?” meaning thereby that God alone exists and there is no other existence.

Not that an earthly love is quite ruled out from a mystic’s spiritual horizon. In an intensely spiritualised form an earthly love may well serve as a bridge or stepping-stone to Divine Love. So one should not fear, as the Persian poet Jami tells us, “to drink wine from Form’s flagon”, taking care, however, not to linger on the bridge, which on the other hand, should be traversed with all possible speed. According to the great mystic Ibn al-`Arabi, lovers (of the classical type, such as Qays and Ghaylan) are a pattern to the gnostics, because God only afflicted them with love for human beings in order that He might show, by means of them, the falseness of those who pretend to love Him, and yet feel no such transport and rapture as deprived these enamoured men of their reason, and made them unconscious of themselves.

The romantic poetry of Sufism, no less than its lyrical form, proceeds from this allegory of love, which is so fundamental in Sufi thought. All the love romances and allegories of the Sufi poetry — the tales of Layla and Majnun, Yusuf and Zalaykha, Shirin and Farhad, etc. — are “shadow pictures” of the soul’s passionate longing to be reunited with the Divine Essence.

Sufi ideals

Sufism constitutes the spiritual element in Islam, as distinguished from its law and theology. It is not a system composed of rules and principles, but a moral disposition which seeks to realize the highest aspirations of the human spirit through a ceaseless endeavour to attain perfection. Complicacy or self-satisfaction is the very antithesis of Sufism. “Even if you should attain to the Throne of Glory,” says a well-known exponent, “do not cease each moment to say, ‘Is there more than this?’ Plunge yourself into the Sea of Gnosis, or if you cannot do that, sprinkle the dust of the road upon your head.”

The love which the gnostic feels for the Divine Being has a universal aspect, inasmuch as it embraces the whole Creation. To love and cherish God’s creatures is the primary aim of the gnostic and the highest form of devotion. No one is more enamoured of the maxim —

“He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small”

than the gnostic who has attained spiritual perfection.

According to a Sufi writer, when God loves a man He bestows upon him three qualities in token thereof: a bounty like that of the sea, a sympathy like that of the sun, and a humility like that of the earth. “If men seek to draw near to God,” says another great mystic, “they must seek Him in the hearts of men. They should speak well of all men, whether present or absent. To bring joy to a single heart is better than to build many shrines for worship, and to enslave one soul by kindness is worth more than the setting free of a thousand slaves”.

The role of the saint as a spiritual preceptor proceeds from a similar feeling of compassionate love towards God’s creatures, whom he would fain bring into his own happy state. It is this feeling of love which makes the saint “descend from the mountain of transfiguration to the lower levels of this world, so that weak may seek out his company and may kindle their lights at the radiance which the saint has brought from the heavenly places”.

It may be observed that for some Sufis absorption in the ecstasy of garma is the end of their spiritual journey. The heady wine of Divine love makes them quite oblivious of their surroundings, and henceforth no relation exists between them and the material world. But these “God-intoxicated” who do not return to sobriety, have fallen short of the highest perfection which comprehends both the inward and the outward aspects of the Divine Being. To abide in God (haqqa) after passing away from self (jana) is the mark of the Perfect Man who not only journeys to God, i.e., passes away from plurality to unity, but continuing the unitive state, returns to the phenomenal world from which he set out. In this descent

“He make the Law his upper garment
And the mystic Path his inner garment”.

for he brings down and displays the Truth to mankind while fulfilling the duties of the religious law. “That is the true man of God,” says an exponent, “who sits in the midst of his fellow-men, and rises up and eats and buys and sells amongst other people, and who marries and has wife and children, and yet is never for one moment forgetful of God.”

“What is the world? ’Tis but forsooth
To heed not God in life!
And not your cherished goods or gold,
Nor yet your son or wife!” (Jalaluddin Rumi).

The Valley of Gnosis has neither beginning nor end, and the road of mystic knowledge hidden therein is revealed to each traveller according to his aptitude and capacity for receiving illumination. Since there are different ways of making the journey, no two birds will fly alike. Some fly with the speed of wind, others flutter and hesitate; some fly high, others grace along the ground. Each finds his own place in the knowledge of the Truth; each worships God

(continued on page 15)
THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE LIFE AND LITERATURE OF PAKISTAN

Pakistani women are now faced with a new mode of life. They have always enjoyed a position of privilege and honour in our country

By BEGUM SHAISTA SUHRAWARDY IKRAMULLAH

The sudden and spectacular change that has come over the mode of life of Pakistani women is a matter of great interest, particularly to the people of the West. This change has been brought about by social, political and economic factors, but I do not propose to analyse the causes that

social and personal capacity which does that, and the Pakistani woman in her role as daughter, wife and mother has always held a position of privilege and honour in our country. As a daughter she has always been regarded more tenderly and received greater care and attention than the sons. The fact that the girls were with their parents only for a short while made the parents' — particularly the father's — attitude towards them one of affectionate wistfulness. They were often referred to as sawan-ki-chirfan ("The summer swallows which come to delight the heart only for a short while"). Parents always justified their greater care and attention towards the girls by the traditional remarks such as "they are another's trust", "a lent treasure," dusry ki amanat, paraya dhan, etc. The brothers carried on the father's tradition of affectionate concern for the girls of the family, and the affection of the father and the brother for the daughter and the sister, and her devotion to them, is the most popular theme of our folk songs. One of the most traditional songs sung at the time of a bride's departure from her father's home is:

Kaahai ko Biyahi bidays Babul,
Kaahai ko Biyahi bidays.

It expresses the sadness that a girl feels at leaving her father's home and recounts the joys of girlhood. Another popular song is one which expresses the feelings of young married girls in their new homes at springtime, and begins with the poignant lines:

Neem ke bhirole puake Saawan bhayi kablii aaga
Jeeewet meriy mian ka jiya doli bhayi bulwaaega

which means, "The buds have formed on the neem tree. The spring is at hand. Long live my brother, he'll be sending the palanquin to fetch me home". "Sending the palanquin" is an idiomatic phrase in Urdu which had a particular significance. The palanquin was sent only for the loved and honoured guests, and the phrase therefore expresses the affectionate concern of the brothers for their sisters.

All this goes to show the tenderness in which girls were held by their families, not only while they were with them but even after they had left the nest.

As a wife a Pakistani woman was regarded as custodian of her husband's honour, and the adornment of his home. Mian ki Namoos and Ghar kiy Zeenat are the traditional phrases that describe a wife. They had absolute control of household matters, including finance; in fact, all the Western music hall jokes showing the subterfuges by which

H.E. The Begum S. S. Ikramullah

brought Pakistani women out of seclusion into the arena of public life or to recount their achievements into that sphere. I would confine myself to describing the traditional place of women in our society.

The new freedom has brought with it wider opportunities, but that is not what determines the position of women. It is the attitude of their men towards them in the

1 Courtesy, Bulletin Pakistan Society.

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according to his own light. The true gnostic has no quarrel with anyone on this score. For Ibnu'l Arabi, the "Doctor Maximus" of Sufism, all roads lead to Mecca:

"Within my heart all forms may find a place.
The cloisters of the monk, the idol's fane

A pasture for the gazelles, the Sacred House
Of God, to which all Muslims turn their face:
The Tables of the Jewish Law, the Word
Of God, revealed unto His Prophet true
Love is the faith I hold and whereso'er
His camels turn, the one true faith is there".

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women get money out of their husbands are completely unintelligible to us, because in our society the opposite was the case. It is the husband who has to ask the wife for money. Our jokes and humorous sketches revolve round the sufferings by which husbands try and get money out of the wives. It was the mother and not the father who decided the question of children’s marriages, and in many instances even when the father might not approve of a match it would take place if the mother did; but the opposite was never heard of.

In her role as a mother the position of a Pakistani woman is pre-eminent

But it is in her role as a mother that the Pakistani woman’s position is pre-eminent. Though many a religious injunction has been disregarded or forgotten, the Prophet’s pronouncement that “Paradise lies under the feet of the mother” has been one of the precepts that has been honoured wholly and completely. In most Pakistani homes, men do not merely respect and obey their mothers, they almost worship them. In my own family circle and that of my husband, and in the very large circle of my friends and acquaintances, I have invariably found this to be true. A mother’s word is law; her slightest wish a command, and her displeasure a proof of the utter unworthiness of her sons. I can give examples where sons have given up property claims, have taken decisions which have profoundly affected their own or their children’s future, and have broken off engagements because their mothers wished them to do so. Even when, objectively seen, the mothers’ requests have been unreasonable or even wrong, the sons have acquiesced. Boys have not been sent to England, girls have been withdrawn without completing their studies from universities, marriages have been made and engagements broken off at the wish of mothers; and this has continued to happen until recently, even when the mother is old-fashioned and the sons are educated and Westernised. It is only very recently that this almost fanatical obedience to mothers is weakening. In fact today, while the women have a far greater freedom and opportunity and are holding posts and positions on equal terms with men, their influence in the home is waning. There is a great deal of talk of the rights of women, but their privileges are certainly on the decline.

That there should have been misunderstanding and misconception regarding the position of women in Muslim countries is, however, quite understandable. The fact that they remained in seclusion or purdah itself was a barrier to accurate knowledge. Not only was it impossible for men to penetrate the mystery, but even foreign women were not very often allowed inside Muslim homes. In Pakistan, India, China and most other Eastern countries there was a distrust of foreigners that precluded them from learning intimate details about home and family. Also, the fact that women were kept in seclusion created a prejudice in Western minds. They regarded it as a sign of inferiority and bondage, and did not know that to us it was a mark of privilege and a badge of distinction. It is generally possible to get an idea of a country’s life through its literature, but here again a difficulty presented itself. The early romances in Urdu and Persian did not attempt to give a picture of the period in which they were written, nor did they deal with ordinary men and women in their everyday life. They concerned themselves with kings and queens of unknown countries, genii and fairies. Even so, it is not impossible to get some idea through literature of the place and position of women in our society. From Mira’s al-Urs, the first prose work which can lay claim to be called a novel, a very clear idea can be had of the women’s position in an orthodox Muslim home. It was written in 1871 C.E., long before the movement for women’s emancipation had started, and therefore cannot be regarded as in any way influenced by it. In it we can see Ashghi completely dominating the household. Though Akbari, the other sister, is as reckless and irresponsible as Dora in David Copperfield, her husband yet puts up with her, tries every means to placate and please her because, as his aunt says, “Well, son, she is the custodian of your honour, and you can do nothing that will bring criticism on you.” It goes to show that even when the wife was at fault the question of her husband’s not putting up with her did not arise. But even more significant than this is the reproof of Muhammad Aqil’s mother when he fails to answer her: “So my son, I call you and you hear me and do not answer. Has a mother’s position deteriorated so much in the thirteenth century?” The “thirteenth century” meant the thirteenth since the Prophet’s time. Amongst us there was a belief that
manners and morals deteriorated as time went on, and what Muhammad Aqil's mother is trying to say is that she knows manners have deteriorated a great deal, but surely not to the extent that a son should be so rude as not to answer when his mother calls him!

The magnificent epic poems of Mir Anis deal with the story of the martyrdom of Husain and his family, which took place in Arabia in the seventh century C.E., but the most remarkable thing about these poems is that they give an absolutely accurate and detailed picture of the life and society of Mir Anis's own time, namely the late eighteenth century. From these poems we can, therefore, get a detailed idea as to the women's position in Muslim society of those days. The veneration in which a mother is held, the deference with which a wife is treated, the consideration that is shown for a sister and the affection that is lavished upon daughters — illustrations for all these attitudes can be found in Anis's work. I would, therefore, confine myself to quoting just a few lines which describe a lady entering her carriage: I think they suffice to illustrate my point:

_Poohanchee junhee naaqahe ke qareen dukhtare_  
_Haider_  
_Khuda ha舌 pakarne ko barhe sithe payambar_  
_Fizza to samhaale huwe the gosho‘a chaadar_  
_The parvad mahmil ko uthaee ‘Ali Akbar_  
_Farzand kamar bastah chalo raast khar the_  
_Na‘lai unthaa laine ko ‘Abbas khaare the._

As the daughter of Hydro came near the door of her carriage,  
The grandson of the Prophet stepped forward himself to hand her in,  
The maid was holding the edge of her train,  
And Ali Akbar (nephew) parted the curtains of the carriage.  
The sons stood on either side in attendance,  
And Abbas (younger brother) stooped to pick up her shoes.

I must add that this attitude of deference and consideration for women was mostly to be found in better families. It was the hallmark of the upper classes. But the fact that the attitude to women was the yardstick by which one's place in society was measured is itself significant, and though in actual practice the attitude and behaviour of less cultured families may not have been so exemplary, even amongst the very uneducated and uncultured this was the yardstick by which their relative decency was gauged.

**Women have been as much conversant with literature and poetry as men**

As literature, or, to be more correct, I should say poetry, is the breath of life in our society, women have been as much conversant with it as men, and from Moghul times there have been women writers and poets of distinction. The memoirs of Babur's daughter, Gulbadan Begum (born 1523 C.E.), are regarded as a classic of their kind. Nur Jehan, wife of Emperor Jehangir, Jahanara, daughter of Shah Jehan, Zebunnissa, daughter of Aurang-Zeb, were all poets of merit whose work is still read and recited with pleasure. This does not mean that the taste for poetry was confined merely to the royal princesses. It was a taste that was shared by the whole society and by all classes of people, as is shown by many references and anecdotes. The Empress Nur Jehan's maid, when she broke a mirror, went up to her mistress and announced the accident in a verse:

_Be Qaza‘ aadinah cheeniyy shikast_  
_Accident of fate has shattered the Chinese mirror._

The Empress capped by saying:  
_Khooch shud saamaane khud biyiniy shikast._  
_Good that the aid to vanity is shattered._

Nur Bai, a dancing girl in the court of Muhammad Shah, made her excuses to Nadir Shah, who wanted to take her with him to Iran, in the famous couplet:  
_Mam sham‘e jaan gudaazzam, too subhe dil-kushaayi_  
_Soozam garat nah biyinam meeram chun roonmaaaiy_  
_Nazdeek iyn chhunynam door aan chunaan keh gufam._  
_Nai tuabe wisaal daaram nai taqate judaay._

Miss Fatima Jinnah with her brother, the Quaid `Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Miss Jinnah is a prominent lady, well-known for her devotion to Pakistan.

_I am a candle: and you are the light of dawn._  
_I live in my anguish when I do not see you._  
_When I see you I die._  
_So am I, such is my condition before you and thus after you._  
_Hence I do not dare to be with you nor away from you._

It is difficult in translation to convey the nuance and the subtlety of this verse. The young girl had the most difficult task of refusing the Emperor's offer without offending him, and managed to do so by composing this *Qut'ah* which has given her immortality.

Then there is the story of the prince who, having lost a bet in playing chess, had to give one of his wives to the winner. He went into the palace and told the wives of his
predicament and asked whom he should surrender. Each of
the wives replied in verse, giving very good reasons why they
should not be the one to be given up. Their poetic names
were Jahaan (World), Hayat (Life) and Fanai (it is difficult
to give the exact sense of this word, but the nearest I can
find is Annihilation in Eternity). The one whose name was
the World said, "The king of the World needs World by his
side"; to which the one called Life said, "What use
would the World be without Life?" The third said, "The
World and Life are two transitory; take Fanai, for only Fanai
remains". Dilaram, the fourth, however, went one better.
Her verse not only told the prince why she should not be
given, but also the moves by which the prince could defeat
his opponent, describing the intricate moves in terms of
chess and using her own name, Dilaram, which means Heart's
Ease, as cleverly as the others had used theirs, so saving the
situation for all of them. She said:

Shahi do rukh badeh dilaraam madeh
Feel o piyadah paysh as ki shaath maath

which means:

King, give the castles away,
But not your Heart's Ease.
Put the elephants and the men ahead
And use the horse to check-mate.

There are many instances of this sort of complete
mastery of language which enabled women on the spur of
the moment to produce excellent verses. I cannot resist
the temptation to quote one more example. Zebunnissa's
father, Emperor Aurang-Zeb, being of a puritanical
position, did not much like his daughter writing poetry, so he set her a
task. Within twenty-four hours she was to find a second
line to the verse: "Durre ablaq kasai kam deed maajood."
"Who has ever seen a black and white pearl?"; or, if she
failed to do so, desist from writing poetry. The princess sat
up all night thinking, but could not think of a suitable verse.
By the next morning the task was almost up, and as she was
dressing before going to report her failure tears kept welling
up in her eyes, and lo, an idea came to her. The tears had
melted the kohl in her eyes and so gave her the idea for the
second line of the verse:

Durre ablaq kasai kam deed maajood?
Bajuz askhe butane surmah adaad.

Who has ever seen a black and white pearl?
None, except when the tear drops from the kohl
eyes of a beauty.

Women writers of recent times and their works

Unfortunately, very little written record remains of the
literary work even of men of these times. Civil wars, care-
lessness and negligence are responsible for the loss. There
are, however, fragments to be found showing that women
wrote poetry often and with ease. Even the few examples
that exist have not been available to me here, and therefore
I have not been able to give more examples.

Coming from the Moghuls to more recent times, there
is a great deal of unpublished poetry and verse by women
to be found in the family albums, or bayazis, as they are called
in Urdu; and most families would be able to name at least
two or three women poets amongst them.

From 1898, when the first women's magazine, Tazhib-
un-Niswan, made its appearance in Lahore, women's work
in prose and verse became available in print. In looking
through the earlier pages of Tazhib-un-Niswan, one is struck
by the excellence of the verse and prose written by women.
The thought content is not deep, but they are written with ease
and simplicity, and go to prove that the writers had a great
deal of practice before they sent their work for publication.
The poetess to achieve greatest distinction at that time was
Zaheeda Khatoon Shairwani. Her verses have an appealing
sweetness and simplicity, they showed the purity of clear
water. She wrote in all the traditional forms, Ghazals,
Qasidas and elegies, as well as Musaddas and Masnavi,
which were the favoured forms for narrative poetry. She
was amongst the first to become popular. She died very young,
at the age of 26. Her collection of poems, Firdause Takhayal,
was published after her death. Her sister, Nikhat Shairwani,
also wrote verses, some of which had considerable poetic merit;
but she continued writing, her work might have improved.
Zaheeda's contemporary, Rabia Sultan, was also a writer and
poetess of promise, but her early death prevented the
promise from being fulfilled.

Khurshid Ara Begum, who is today regarded as one of the
best women poets, began writing very early, and her verse
even then showed a complete command of Urdu and Persian.
She does not write much now, but whatever she has written
has a maturity and polish which makes it rank as a classic.
Baghdadi Begum, Rabia Pinhan and Bilqis Jamal wrote
in the 1920's and their verses then showed promise, but the
muse seems to have deserted them since then. Amongst the
most well-known poets of today is Safia Shamim Malib Abadi.
She writes mostly Ghazals and Rubais; there is a real touch
of poetic genius in them. Shahab Qizalbash's earlier poems
had fire and promise. She does not write much now, but
she is still very young and one hopes that she will yet fulfil
the promise of her earlier work. Zohra Negah is the youngest
of our women poets. She began writing at the age of 17
only a few years ago; her verses have a subtle flavour,
delicacy and poignancy which accounts for the fame that has
come to her so quickly.

Prose developed late in Urdu, and therefore lags behind
verse both in excellence and quantity. We have a great deal
of Urdu poetry which can compare with the best poetry in
other languages. But the number of prose works, novels or
short stories which can do so is much smaller. The novel
made its appearance in Urdu at the end of the nineteenth
century, and the first novelists were Nazir Ahmad and
Sarshar and Sharir. These were followed by a host of lesser
writers, including women. The most popular novels in the
early part of the twentieth century were written by women.
They were nearly all on social themes, didactic in tone
and aiming at reform. Nazir Ahmad's influence could be strongly
felt in the work of the earlier women writers, and that of
Sarshar in others. Sharar had no women imitators, though
they formed the largest number of his readers. Muhammadi
Begum, the editor of Tazhib-un-Niswan, was amongst the
earliest women writers. Her work showed the influence of
Nazir Ahmad most strongly. Nazir Sajjad Haider comes next
in the line of women novelists. She was a prolific writer and
has written several novels and collections of short stories.

A host of novels by women writers followed. Their
authors were women who were well known as writers of
articles and essays, but in most cases it was their only
attempt at novel writing. These novels were alike in their
theme and subject matter. They were domestic novels trying
to depict some social evil or other and seeking reform for
it. Muhammadi Begum's Sharif Beti, Safia Begum's Aai-Kal,
Niaz Sajjad Haider's Akhtar Begum, Abbas Begum's Zohra
Begum,valida Afzal Ali's Gudar ka Lal, Taya Begum's
Anwari Begum, Jahanara Begum's (Begum Shanawaz's)
Husanara Begum, were all without exception written for the
purpose of social reform, and because of this obviously
didactic aim the characters in them, particularly heroes and
heroines, were at times rather dull and wooden, and the plots

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
were weak. But where the authoresses ceased to be consciously didactic they could write well. Their minor characters and sketches are consequently much better portrayed than their major ones. These novels are of interest now and will be even more so for the picture they present of manners, customs and family life of the period. They show the effect of Western influence on Muslim homes; the gradual change of attitude, the intense admiration that was felt for things English at this period, are reflected in these novels. During this period it was thought that the panacea for all our ills lay in adopting English manners and customs, and these sentiments are expressed in these novels. Education for girls, the discarding of superfluous ceremonies, adapting a simpler way of living, these are the goals to be aimed at. The wearing of heavy jewellery, bright colours, eating of pan, sitting on taklits, all of these are decried as outward symbols of a decadent society. These novels faithfully reflected the mood before the national consciousness was reborn. They belong to the era of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Khwaja Altaf Hussain Hali, the era of conscious reform.

This mood was to disappear soon and be succeeded by one of national renaissance, the chief herald and embodiment of which was Iqbal.

Besides the women novelists who wrote under the direct influence of Nazir Ahmad and Rashid al-Khairi (an eminent novelist with a strong didactic vein of a later period than Nazir Ahmad), there were those who could be said to be imitators of Sarshar. Mahmood Begum’s Raushanara Begum and Khatoon’s Shaukat Ara Begum are reminiscent of Sarshar’s Fasana-i-azad. They are consequently more amusing to read and their characters more lively and interesting. They also have a moral vein, and their heroes and heroines are the personification of all the virtues. But in them didactism is secondary to the story interest. There is more humour in these novels, particularly in Shaukat Ara Begum, and though the heroes in each of them are “England returned”, and the heroines know how to talk English — both of which were regarded and are presented as highly commendable attributes — the characters portrayed are much less anglicised than the ones in the more reformist novels.

Sarvath Ara Begum by Hamid Sultan, and Shama by A. R. Khatoon, are two more recent novels in the same style. They follow the more or less conventional plot: the beautiful and virtuous heroine, the equally virtuous and noble hero, who, after many vicissitudes of fortune, finally succeed in being united to each other.

As the introduction of a love-motif in the Western sense would not have been approved of and would certainly not have given a correct picture of our society, hero and heroine in all these novels mentioned are therefore either betrothed or even actually married. They are parted through the machinations of enemies, and the story concerns itself with their reverses of fortune. All ends well invariably, however, and we leave the hero and heroine happy, and with our faith in the eventual triumph of right over wrong further restored and strengthened. The charm of these novels is in the picture they give us of the colourful, unhurried and leisurely life, a life which is now, alas, a thing of the past.

The popularity of the novel was soon to give place to that of the short story, and consequently women writers turned their attention to it. The early short stories written by women appeared in Tahqib un-Niswan and ‘Ismat (another women’s magazine which had made its appearance in 1908): they dealt with social themes and had the same didactic tone as their novels. Khatoon Akram was the best-known short story writer of this period. But soon women were writing not only for exclusive women’s magazines but for literary periodicals such as Makhzan, Nayyarg-I-Khayal and Humayun. With the short story came a new attitude towards literature. With it began the era of “new writing” in Urdu. This meant a more realistic and approach to life. The work of these authors reflected the tendencies and implications of modern life, and foreshadowed the economic and political revolution that was gathering momentum. The new writers were definitely socialist in their outlook, and had quite a different attitude to human conduct and human suffering. Up till now, submission, patience and indifference had been extolled. The slogan of the moderns was revolt and defiance. Instead of seeking to stir up pity, they sought to rouse the indignation of the oppressed. The plots and situations which these modern short story writers used were not original, but they presented them from an entirely different point of view. Rashida Zafar and Ismat Chughtai were the two best writers of this new school. Rashida Zafar published only one volume of short stories, ‘Aurat Aur Dusre Atsane’; the smouldering indignation and merciless portrayal of character that is shown in these short stories marked the writer as outstanding. It is a pity that her complete absorption in politics — she later became an active Communist worker — prevented her from writing anything further; and her early death some years ago put an end to the hope that she might some day write again. Ismat Chughtai is preeminent amongst short story writers in Urdu today. She has written full-length novels as well, but it is in the short story that she is at her best. Her writing has a rapier-like quality, and she can present any situation in a few deft strokes. She is merciless in exposing sham and hypocrisy. Her realism has a bitter but astringent quality. Her two volumes of short stories, Chotian and Kalian, are amongst the best stories that can be found in the Urdu language. Her short novels, Dhanvi Baadshen and Ziddi, are also very good. Her first and only full-length novel, Terhi Lakir, though it has the same flavour as her short stories, shows that she cannot handle the plot of a novel as dexterously as that of a short story. She has now taken to writing scripts for the cinema. The lure of the screen has already deprived Urdu literature of some of its best writers. We can only hope that it has not taken Ismat Chughtai also.

Saleha Abid Hussain is a writer of distinction in Urdu. Her stories have a poignant realism, but not the bitter quality of cynicism which is to be found in some of the other realist writers. There is no false sentimentality in Saleha, but neither has she the almost malevolent delight in showing the worst in human nature. Saleha is not unaware of life’s shadows, but they do not obscure her vision of the sunshine. She knows and writes about much that is sad: in fact, there is an awareness in her stories of how helpless man is against destiny, but a ray of hope illuminates this sombre picture. Niras Men Aas, which means “Hope in Despair”, the title of one of her works, can be said to describe the mood that pervades all her work. Her first collection of short stories, Naqsh-e-Awwal, appeared during the 1930’s; she has followed this by two other collections, Saaz Hasii and Niras Men Aas. Her first full-length novel, ‘Azra, which appeared about nine years ago, can be considered to be in the best tradition of the Urdu novel-writing. The characters are perhaps a little too idealized to be entirely convincing, but the picture they convey of a Muslim home is an admirable one. The colours are subdued: the picture is golden and mellow like an old print. Her second novel, Aatish-e-Khamosh, is a recent publication. The story is not so well constructed as that of ‘Azra, but there are passages in it which make good reading. Her (continued on page 22)
Arrival in Karachi: Lt.-General Azam Khan, Senior Minister in the President's Cabinet, presents his Cabinet colleagues to Prince Philip.

Pakistan Welcomes

Prince Philip arrived in Dacca on 4th February, where thousands of schoolchildren turned up to greet him at the Airport.

Civic Reception at Shalimar Gardens, Emperor Shah Jahan.

Prince Philip delivers his address to the Commonwealth at the 11th Annual Meeting of the United Nations' Commission for the Advancement of Science, New Delhi.

Prince Philip arrives with the Aga Khan to witness the festivities at the new Parliament building in Dacca.

The Islamic Review
The Prince witnesses the action of the new miracle drug Sepajmaline, discovered by Pakistani scientists. A dog's heart, detached from its body, completely stopped by electric shock, is revived after 15 seconds to normal activity by injecting the new drug, while the dog to whose blood stream the heart was artificially linked remained under an anaesthetic without apparent ill-effects.

THE ROYAL VISITOR

The Duke relaxes after a six-hour duck shoot at Larkana, about 250 miles from Karachi. President Ayub Khan is sitting on his left. On his right is the Commerce Minister, Mr. Zulfkar Ali Bhutto. The boy standing is a school student presenting to the Royal guest his pencil sketch.
The Role of Women in Pakistan (continued from page 19)

most recent work is a critical appreciation of Hali, one of the most important poets, critics and essayists of the last century. She is admirably suited for this task, for she has the ability to write and also a great deal of personal knowledge, as she is the great-grand-daughter of the Maulana Altaf Hussian Hali.

Chronologically, Hijab Ismail (Mrs. Imtiaz Ali Taj) belongs to the same period, but her attitude and style of writing are entirely different from those of her contemporaries. She can be called the Elinor Glyn amongst the lady novelists. She is an escapist par excellence, and her stories are suffused with romance. She takes the reader into a dream-world, into an atmosphere of "might and light and half-light". Her characters are as unreal as her atmosphere. It is difficult to decide in which country the scene is laid, for the setting has all the voluptuous richness, romance and colour that one associates with Oriental harems, together with the luxurious modernity of a Fifth Avenue flat. Their romances are supposed to be pages depicting fragments of the heroine's life. The strange thing is that on their first appearance these romances were taken to be true recollections of Hijab Ismail's own childhood. This shows that despite their utter unreality she had somehow managed to make them convincing. Their vivacity and humour makes them interesting reading, and perhaps their great popularity in the '30s is due to the fact that they presented such a complete contrast to the works of other writers of that time. The first of these stories of romance was Meri naatamaam muhabbat aur dusre afsane. This was followed by several others: Laash aur dusre afsane, Kaunta Ilves ki maaut and Sunahar Ke Sat. In these later romances Hijab has recourse to a rather macabre type of adventure story: they are written in imitation of the early English and American stories of blood and slaughter, but Hijab Ismail somehow manages to give even these a romantic background. Strange islands, ruins and haunted castles on the outskirts of African and American deserts are chosen as scenes for these eerie stories of murder, poisoning and intrigue. The plots are well constructed and the endings always unexpected, and in most cases it turns out that the strange happenings that gave rise to such fears are traced to some quite harmless cause. Hijab Ismail, though she enjoyed great popularity, found no imitators; perhaps because her writing is so much an expression of her own strange personality, and therefore her works stand in isolation, neither being influenced by the trend of her time nor influencing others. The short story continued to concern itself with the social and political problems which were further accentuated by partition and the debacle that followed after it.

Amina Nazli's stories are extremely short: in fact some of them can be considered merely as sketches; but she has a penetrating observation and the ability to present in a few deft strokes the limitations and frustrations of the lower-middle-class life. The soul-destroying struggle against grinding poverty, the bitterness that is accentuated by the existence of great wealth alongside it, the drabness of these people's everyday life, which now appears even more drab in comparison with the glamour that can be seen in the cinema — that is the theme of Amina Nazli's stories in Doshala aur dusre afsane and her stories that appear in 'Ismat. These are at times rather frightening in their unvarnished presentation of bitter reality.

Qurat al-'ain Haider's volume of short stories, Sitaron Sai Aage, is a forerunner of the new type of writing which is likely to become popular in Pakistan. English words and phrases such as "bored", "dash!", "goodness gracious me!", "it is the limit!" are liberally sprinkled through the story. Even whole sentences are in English. This jars on the conservative and the purist, but as Qurat al-'ain Haider writes of the smart slick set, it can be said to be an accurate portrayal. Her full-length novel, Maitre Bhiy Sanam Khane hain, paints on a larger canvas the same picture that one finds in Sitaron Sai Aage. The time is just at the end of the last war, when the national movement is gathering momentum in India. But the dashing young airmen and smart laquered ladies of Qurat al-'ain Haider's society are only dimly aware of the significance of it all. They go about their hectic life, oblivious of the gathering storm, their rather incoherent discussions being the only proof that they are even aware of the situation. Qurat al-'ain Haider has succeeded in portraying only a particular segment of society, but she has managed to convey its subtle nuances and brittle unreality. Qurat al-'ain Haider was born in a literary milieu. Both her father and mother are writers of merit in Urdu, and her own writing shows promise. She is still very young, and it is to be hoped that she will continue to write and that her work will gain in maturity and depth.

The sisters Hajra Masroor and Khaadija Masroor write in the style of 'Ismat Chugtai. There is the same economy of effect, the same vein of cynical realism, the same almost jubilant delight in shocking conservative opinion by flouting the taboos. They began to write just before the establishment of Pakistan, when still in their teens, and though even now they are hardly out of their twenties, they are considered as amongst the best writers in Urdu. I have not seen any of their work in recent years, but what they wrote immediately after partition was provocative, challenging and controversial. Tasmim Salihchati is amongst the most promising young women writers. Her collection of short stories, Rugga Sharar, contains some very good work. Sittara toot Gaya has a sincerity and a poignancy which is seldom found in so young a writer, and Bhuka hai Bangal shows an awareness of social problems and a sense of reality which is surprising in one brought up in such sheltered luxury as Tasmim. It is to be earnestly hoped that she will continue to write.

Mumtaz Shireen's eminence in Urdu literature is due more to her critical essays, which are excellent, than to her short stories. She does, however, write short stories as well, and her long short stories, Depok and Bharat Nadya, which have the riots that followed the establishment of Pakistan as their theme, are powerfully written and have a stark realism about them. She, together with her husband, edited Naya Daur, a quarterly literary magazine which ranked amongst the foremost publications of its kind in Pakistan.

I have attempted in this brief survey to give some idea of the place of women in the life and literature of Pakistan. I have tried to show that this place has always been occupied and is not only a recent achievement. The serenity and the absence of stress and strain in our women's lives offered the ideal conditions for writing, and are the reason why — though there was hardly any formal education — we find such a large number of writers amongst women in the early part of the century. There has been a conspicuous decrease in their numbers in recent years, and during the last few the output of established writers even has been very meagre. Neither the atmosphere nor the pace at which one lives today is suitable for creative writing, but it will be a great loss indeed if women, as a result of having entered the arena of public life, were to give up the field of literature, to which their contribution has been remarkable and for which they have a natural aptitude.
VICTORY DAY SPEECH OF PRESIDENT GAMAL ABDUL NASSER IN PORT SAID

The Arabs were born to be free men in their own homeland. What is life without freedom and dignity?

—says President Gamal Abdul Nasser

Addressing a mammoth crowd assembled in Port Said on Tuesday 23rd December 1958, Gamal Abdul Nasser said:

"My compatriots. Today is the second Victory Anniversary, and I meet with you here in this gallant city that was the spearhead of victory. Port Said the brave, that set the highest example of valour and sacrifice for the sake of liberty and independence. Port Said, the determined city that resolved to stand as a bastion in the face of treachery and aggression. Port Said, where young and old alike stood side by side, pledged to protect the soil of their dear land. Port Said, where unarmed youth stood up against the armadas of the great powers. Thus, as we celebrate Victory Day, we also set a precedent for the world in selflessness and sacrifice. I thank the Almighty that as I meet with you today, my mind is more at rest than ever before.

1957 was a decisive year

"Fellow countrymen: The dominating characteristic of 1957, I say, was the removal of the traces of the aggression. We were at the same time resisting the economic blockade, political isolation and the conspiracies and designs of imperialism. Indeed, 1957 was a decisive year in so far as it concerns Arab Nationalism. At that time Arab Nationalism was fighting one of its fiercest and most violent battles against Imperialism and Zionism. In fact, after the end of the aggression and after the inability of the aggressors to realize their aim, we had to face other kinds of battles: we faced an economic blockade aimed at subjugating us, and at attaining the objectives for which they attacked us.

"Besides the economic blockade, there was also political isolation which they tried to attain through sowing the seeds of discord between us and our Arab brethren in every Arab country. In 1957, conspiracies started with the aim of isolating our sister-country Jordan. With this the battle of Arab Nationalism entered a decisive phase of its history.

The victory of the Arab nations

"It was a great victory to the Arab nation and to Arab Nationalism when aggression failed in 1957.

"Brethren: This victory was in fact the beginning of a series of victories in the whole of the Arab world.

"Brethren: Indeed, we emerged from the battle of war with stronger determination and firmer confidence in our right to freedom in our right to live. Indeed, Arab Nationalism is a driving force to you here as well as in every other Arab country. The banner of Arab Nationalism, my brethren, which we raised in 1953, was not meant to be an ineffectual slogan to be cried out on occasions; on the contrary, it was a true expression of freedom, strength and independence.

Principles and objectives of Arab Nationalism

"Today, when we feel our liberty, dignity and independence, we know that these are felt by our brother Arabs in every Arab land. Today we feel we have the right to live in this vast nation, where there is no place any more for imperialism, humiliation, domination, or occupation. You, my brothers in Port Said, have set the highest example in the defence of liberty and independence against the great powers and their flocks — and you were victorious. We were born to be free, or to die if need be in the cause of this freedom. We were born to be free men in our own land, for what is life without freedom and dignity?

"These, my brethren, are the principles by which we fought, and for which we fought — genuine independence, genuine liberty and genuine strength — emanating from our conscience, from our own selves, and in our own interests. All this is the context of Arab Nationalism, Arab Solidarity, Arab Brotherhood, and Arab Unity.

"The year 1958 has been a year of victory for us. It marked the triumph of the principles of freedom and independence; and the triumph of the principles for which you fought.

"You fought against Britain, France, and their ally, Israel. You fought against international imperialism and world Zionism. Although you were small in number, you emerged victorious against enormous powers. You gained triumph because you have faith in your objectives. The signs of victory began to appear in 1958.

"In reviewing the victories we have achieved we can enumerate the objectives for the sake of which we fought. We fought because we wished to realize true liberty and independence and to come out from zones of influence.

"We fought because we were determined to have back our Suez Canal, which was usurped from us by Imperialists.

"We fought because we had been resolved to build the
High Dam with our hands for the welfare and prosperity of our people.

"We fought because we had proclaimed 'Arab nationalism and Arab unity'. We fought because we had resolved to build up a strong national army.

"But for what did the enemies fight? For what did Britain fight? For what did France fight? And for what did Israel fight?

"All of us know why Israel fought. Israel fought in order to realize ambitions and to strengthen Zionist nationalism.

"France fought because she felt she could settle the Algerian problem in Cairo. The Algerian problem was responsible for the downfall of French Cabinets.

"Britain fought because she believed that the victory of Arab nationalism would be the end of zones of influence and the British Empire in this part of the world.

"Britain believed that the victory of Arab nationalism would be a threat to British influence as well as to the British Empire itself.

"My brethren: These are the principles for the sake of which we fought and these were the objectives for the sake of which we fought.

"Our objectives were clear. With his clarity of purpose we maintained the unity of our nation, and with this unity we emerged victorious.

The Baghdad Pact

"In 1958 the Baghdad Pact collapsed. It was this same Baghdad Pact which we opposed in 1955 and which we fought against in a bitter fight because it represented the spheres of influence, domination and power blocs.

"In 1958 the will of the Arab people reigned supreme and the Baghdad Pact, which aimed at including us in its spheres of influence, collapsed.

"In 1955 Mr. Eden announced in the British House of Commons that the Baghdad Pact would raise Britain's voice over this part of the world. The collapse of the Baghdad Pact meant that no voice but the voice of its sons themselves could be raised over this part of the world, and that no voice other than the voice of the Arabs themselves could be raised over the Arab nation, where there was no room any more for foreign domination. In 1958, after the collapse of the imperialist agents, a number of national leaders came into being to prove to the world at large that Arab nationalism is moving forward and consolidating, and that it is going on from one victory to another.

The High Dam

"In 1958, we also began putting into effect our Five-Year Industrialization Plan, as well as a development plan for the Syrian region. In 1958 we decided to build the High Dam, the dam for which we fought and which the enemy tried to prevent us from building. Building the dam means new agricultural land and a rise in our income.

The High Dam, my dear brethren, was not our last project. They refused to finance it, but we agreed with the Soviet Union that it should finance its first stage. No sooner had we started on the High Dam than we thought of opening new horizons. The High Dam will give us an additional 2,000,000 feddans to cultivate. Yet we only exploit 4 per cent of the Egyptian territory. We must exploit it all.

"Today, dear brethren, we are exploring the possibility of creating a new valley in the Western Desert, parallel to the Nile Valley. We are seeking to utilize artesian water to bring into cultivation new land on the southern borders, 130 kilometres north-west of Aswan, in Kharga and Dakhla Oases, Farafra Oasis, and Bahariya Oasis. This area is estimated at 3,000,000 feddans, and the water available is sufficient for the cultivation of half a million feddans or more.

"In the Five-Year Plan starting in 1959, we envisage this new valley parallel to the Nile Valley. We have lived on the banks of the Nile for thousands of years, and gave up the desert. But the miracle that will happen is the blooming of the desert beside the Nile.

"We shall strive to harness all the available resources for our country, and in this way we can create a really strong nation. In the Syrian Region we have started the Ten-Year Development Plan: plans for electrification, the generation of power, the erection of dams, the digging of wells, the construction of roads and railways — in addition to the industrialization scheme in both regions.

"Today, dear brethren, after these few years of our revolution, we can see the beginning of the results of our work and the fruition of our efforts.

"Brethren, the Communist Party in Syria rose agitating against your unity, against Arab nationalism, but your power and the power of the Arab people in Syria made them shrink back into their holes and flee from the people's face.

The Plebiscite

"The merger was accomplished, being unanimously demanded by the Arab people as revealed by the result of the plebiscite.

Reactionaries working against the cause of Arab Nationalism

"Reactionary elements, in collaboration with Zionism, are working against Arab nationalism. Israel is working unceasingly with all its strength against your unity and your nationalism; and reactionary elements are working with all their strength against your nationalism and your social revolution. I am sorry to say that some elements have appeared working against Arab unity.

"We, brothers, will fight opportunists and reactionary elements in order to establish throughout our country a free socialist, democratic and co-operative society.

"With unity we will gain victory against Zionism, imperialism and opportunism.

"With unity, in which we have faith, we shall resist whoever works against this unity and whoever works against Arab nationalism.

"History tells us that every time we were partitioned into small countries we were subject to the domination of large powers and other countries with wicked designs against us.

"During the days of Saladin, Arab nationalism scored a victory over the Tartars, who had invaded Baghdad and reached Syria. Arab nationalism, with unity, defeated the Tartars at a time when no other army in the world could defeat them. Arab nationalism is your force. It is your weapon. Arab nationalism spells safety to us and every other Arab country.

"In this place and in this city we fought many battles for the sake of Arab nationalism because of our firm belief that these battles were ours.

"We have a social ideology which conforms to our circumstances, religion and nature. This ideology is, I have declared before, a social, co-operative, democratic system.

"We have also previously declared that never had we any wish to turn you all into labourers. On the contrary, we wish to enable sons of this nation to become landowners in

(Continued on page 25)
AN 18th CENTURY CHRONICLE OF DAMASCUS

Glimpses from an interesting manuscript left by the famous historian Ahmed al-Budairi al-Hallaq

By DR. GEORGE HADDAD

Ahmed al-Budairi al-Hallaq

Among the manuscripts of the National Library (Zahiriya) in Damascus are two copies (Nos. 3737 and 4283) of a manuscript, still unpublished, entitled "The Daily Events of Damascus 1154-1175 A.H." (1741-1761 C.E.). The author of the manuscript did not belong to any of the social categories to which the Syro-Lebanese historians and biographers of the period usually belonged. He was neither one of the Ulema such as were M. Khalil al-Muradi or Muhammad al-Muhibbi, nor was he a priest like Mikhail Braik or Hananiya al-Munayyir, nor was he a government official or a descendant of a ruling family like Nicola al-Truk or Emir Haidar al-Shehhi or Mikhail al-Sabaghi. He was simply a barber, endowed with a keen power of observation and with a sharp ear. He must have been sufficiently interested in the events of his day to record the most worthy of notice among them and to comment on them. His name was Ahmed al-Budairi al-Hallaq (the Barber).

While still an apprentice barber, al-Budairi came into contact with some of the outstanding Ulema of Damascus such as Sheikh Abdul-Ghani al-Nabulsu (d. 1143 A.H.—1730 C.E.), who used to frequent the barber shop where he made his apprenticeship. Later on we find among his acquaintances, and probably his customers as a master barber, such important Ulema as Sheikh Ismail al-Ajiluni, the traditionalist of Syria, and Sheikh Ali Kuzbar, head of the Shafite School. He used to attend the circle of a number of these Ulema. In his shop, as in the classical barber shops of the Arab world until very recently, contemporary events were related, discussed and commented upon. Yet the interest of al-Budairi al-Hallaq, as it appears from his annals, lay not so much in political as in social events. It is true that he mentions the new walis (governors) and describes the riots and disturbances caused by the troops. But his main concern is the life of the people, the struggle against high prices, the oppression of the rulers, the problem of insecurity, the epidemics and earthquakes and the dissolution of morals. One can see the effects of his association with the Ulema from his interest in religious life and in the way he explains all disasters as the result of the prevalent disregard for religious and moral laws.

Ahmed al-Budairi the Barber covered in his manuscript only twenty-one years of the history of Damascus, but they included the rule of seven governors (some of whole ruled only for one year). Two-thirds of the period (1156-1170 A.H.—1743-1756 C.E.) were covered by the rule of just one wali, the astute and remarkable Asaad Pasha al-Azem, builder of the still famous Azem palaces of Damascus and Hama, and of the Khan Asaad Pasha of Damascus. Al-Budairi wrote in the form of annals, year by year and month after month. It seems that he wrote in colloquial style and that he mixed with his writings a number of invocations and prayers in rhymer form. Towards the end of the last century his manuscript was revised by an Imam of the Sinaniya Mosque, Sheikh Muhammad Said al-Qassimi (d. 1317 A.H.—1899 C.E.), who tells us in the prologue to the present

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a co-operative country in which all work hand in hand. With this we can ensure prosperity and happiness to all members of society.

The Syrian region

"My brethren: In looking forward to the future we work and build in both the Egyptian and Syrian regions. After the birth of the United Arab Republic it was not easy to make plans for the Syrian region as we had already made plans for six years for the Egyptian region. "Planning and collection of information take time. As I have told you before, we had no information about the Syrian region at the time of the merger. But now we have drawn up a five-year plan and various development projects for the Syrian region. "My brethren: I feel that the implementation of this plan and project is going slowly. We must proceed speedily with the execution of projects in the industrial and agricultural fields in the Syrian region. With this object in view a committee has been formed of Vice-President Abdul Latif al-Baghdady, Vice-President Akram al-Hunary and Al-Sayed Zakaria Mohieddin, U.A.R. Minister of the Interior, to speed up the execution of the five-year plan and various development projects in the Syrian region so that both regions should go forward side by side and on one political basis. "My brethren: These are our principles; this is our

system; and this is our way. We must know where we are and we must know our way in order to maintain the unity of our nation. "Today in your name and on behalf of the gallant and struggling Arab people everywhere we declare to the entire world that we are fighting the battle of peace and the battle of construction for the sake of universal peace, welfare of the world at large, and for the economic and social progress of the inhabitants of the United Arab Republic.

An appeal for peace

"My brethren: We announce to the world that we adopt a policy of non-alignment, and that we have no faith in the use of atomic weapons. "My brethren: We announce to the entire world from Port Said that for the sake of peace we do not believe in alliances, military blocs and alignments. "For the sake of peace we believe in self-determination as well as in ending zones of influence so that every country should enjoy its own resources. "My brethren: We address from Port Said to the entire world an appeal for peace. "Never will the Arab people accept that the small countries be playthings in the hands of large powers. "My brethren: I hope to meet you again next year when, with God's help, we shall have completed our task of building a social, co-operative and democratic country."

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copies of the manuscript that he polished its language, leaving out all that was incidental and superfluous and keeping only what was essential and significant. The changes made by Sheikh Qassimi do not seem to have touched the core and spirit of the manuscript. We still find in its pages the naïve religious concern of a simply educated craftsman for the condition of his people. Only the revised copies of the manuscript remain; they contain 110 and 116 pages respectively. The original copy written by the author must unhappily be considered lost.

Period of decline

In Damascus, as well as in the other cities and provinces of the world under Ottoman rule, the eighteenth century was a period of continued decline in the material and moral aspects of life. Before the attempts at reform and the beginning of the Arab awakening in the nineteenth century, the administration had reached its lowest depths of negligence and irresponsibility; the sufferings of the people caused by the indifference of the authorities and the state of general insecurity had become unbearable. In the frank and simple description of al-Budairi al-Hallaq we have a vivid picture of conditions which have characterized the life of the Arab East until very recently. He describes for example the greed of the rulers who plotted with those who monopolized the foodstuffs, accepted bribes from them, neglected to inspect prices and sometimes themselves joined in the organizing of the wheat monopoly. Even when the harvest was good, when there was no drought and no attacks of locusts in the regions that provided the cities with wheat, the governor would intervene in order to raise the prices. Al-Budairi tells us that in the year 1162 A.H. (1749 C.E.) the people of Damascus celebrated because the price of wheat went down. But Asaad Pasha, the governor, sent his men to the bakers to warn them against selling bread at a low price, because he had wheat-producing land in the region of Hama. Al-Budairi says that this governor had the habit of storing his wheat until wheat became scarce and the prices went up; then he would bring his crop to market to sell it at a high price and at the same time pretend that he was helping the people in a time of crisis.

The populace in certain cases got out of control as a result of high prices and scarcity of bread. Al-Budairi relates that in 1745 C.E., in the first years of Asaad Pasha’s rule, disturbances took place and the mob attacked the Seray (government house) of Damascus. Asaad Pasha resorted to what certain Roman governors used to do in Antioch in order to shift responsibility on to others; he told the people to go to the qadi (judge). When they went to the court to see the judge, the judge’s men beat them with sticks; the people answered by throwing stones and the officials of the court fired on them and left a few wounded persons on the ground. At this point the Janissaries intervened and helped the mob; the judge was obliged to run away and some of his men were killed. The court was plundered and the panic resulted in the closing of the bazaars.

Al-Budairi was severe against the greedy and the unjust and did not hesitate to censure the Ulema for their greed. In the years 1749 C.E. he mentions with disgust: “I was told that Hamed Ellendi al-Amadi, the Mufti of Damascus, had stored wheat as the notables and the grandees do and as those who are not afraid of God. When the merchants came to him and said, ‘Let us sell the wheat for 50 piasters a measure,’ he answered, ‘Let us wait, for the price might still go higher.’” Al-Budairi ends the story with this comment: “If the Mufti of the Muslims has no pity on God’s creatures, how can we blame others?”

Status and condition of Damascus in the eighteenth century

Among the greatest curses of the period and one which perhaps caused most harm to the people was the state of insecurity in general and the riots that exposed the lives and property of the inhabitants to destruction. The quarrels between the local and the imperial Janissaries, or between the Janissaries and the private soldiers and guards of the governors, were among the chief causes of rioting. Al-Budairi relates among the events of 1758 C.E. the story of a most horrible riot caused by the revolt of the Janissaries against a new governor, Abdallah al-Chataji. The Janissaries wanted to impress the new governor with their force the second night of his arrival. After they had gathered in the Suwaiga quarter, they began shouting to frighten the people. The inhabitants immediately resorted to closing the gates of their quarters. In the morning the Janissaries advanced to Bab al-Jabiyah and began shooting in the direction of the governorate. The new governor became angry, held a council and demanded that the Janissaries deliver those responsible for the disorder. On their refusal, he led his forces in the direction of the Midan quarter and pushed back the Janissaries without much resistance, killing a good number of them. When his men realized their victory, they started plundering the Midan and the other quarters. “They killed or captured old and young without exception,” says Al-Budairi; “they plundered private homes and stores; they raped women and virgins alike and took their jewellery. In brief, Damascus never beheld such a disaster since the days of Timur” (Tamerlane).

The unfortunate thing in such riots is that the inhabitants were the victims, whether it was the governor and his soldiers who were victorious or the governor’s opponents, and no effort was made to defend them against the attacks of the unruly soldiers.

The beduins in the desert and the open country were another serious source of danger on the highways. The governor of Damascus often bought their obedience by regular payments and he was especially mindful of keeping the road to Mecca safe for the pilgrimage caravan. Damascus was the rallying point for the pilgrims coming from the northern and Asiatic provinces, and the governor of Damascus was usually the Emir al-Hajji, or leader of the caravan of pilgrims, that left every year for the holy places. Asaad Pasha al-Azem was particularly successful in taking care of the safety of the pilgrimage caravan. In the year that followed his transfer from Damascus, and under his successor Husein Makki, a great disaster took place. The pilgrims coming back to Damascus were surrounded at Tebrak (in northern Arabia), robbed of their possessions, even of their clothes, and some of them were killed. Al-Budairi describes the event (in the year 1757 C.E.) in detail and speaks of the havoc and distress it caused in Damascus. He mentions that when the news of the attack reached the city, reinforcements were sent with clothes and provisions to meet the pilgrims who had been left naked and starving. It is suspected by some that Asaad Pasha had arranged this beduin attack in order to discredit his successor and prove that no governor could match him in keeping order and security during the pilgrimage. It is also believed that this event was one of the reasons that decided the Sultans to destroy his once faithful servant, Asaad Pasha.

The truth perhaps is that Asaad Pasha was getting too rich and influential after an unusually long period of rule, and his fortune was a great temptation to the Sultan in Constantinople. His transit to Aleppo and then to Sivas in Asia Minor, and the dispatch of an agent to kill him, are only an example of how the Ottoman sultans used to treat even their
most loyal governors. Al-Budairi relates that after Asaad Pasha’s murder, a kubbaj (messenger) was sent by the sultan to Damascus (in the year 1757 C.E.) to take control of his possessions. “He entered the palace,” says al-Budairi, “and began to unearth the great hidden treasures. He pulled these treasures out of the floor, the walls, the ceilings, the courtyard and even the toilet rooms. It was a mass of coins, splendid objects that cannot be valued, jewels and other things which God only knows.”

The palace of Asaad Pasha

The palace which Asaad Pasha began building in the sixth year of his rule (1749 C.E.) is still one of the main tourist attractions of Damascus. Al-Budairi mentions how almost all the master builders, painters and carpenters were mobilized for the palace and how building materials reached extremely high prices and practically disappeared from the market. He tells us how Asaad Pasha used to send his agents to the various homes of Damascus to pull out whatever interesting marble pavements, stones, columns or fountains they might find. He rarely paid the price of what his agents took. In building his palace, Asaad Pasha tore down the house of the Caliph Muawiyya to the south of the Umayyad Mosque as well as the surrounding khans, houses and stores. On the outskirts of Damascus, al-Budairi tells us there was a mill in ruins on the river Baniyas (a tributary of the Barada) containing some interesting stones and columns. Asaad Pasha ordered his men to stop the flow of the river, to the great distress of those who used its waters, in order to pull out the contents of the mill. The operation lasted twelve days. Another day, Asaad Pasha was invited to the home of a notable in Damascus: he saw some beautiful cypress trees, and when he expressed his desire to have a number of them in his palace, the host cut three of them and offered them to the Pasha. Several medressahs and entire bazaars were either destroyed or deprived of some of their architectural features for the building of the palace.

In the pages of al-Budairi one notices that in the midst of this atmosphere of irresponsibility, corruption and cruelty, the inhabitants felt that they had no choice but to accept their miserable fate. Their resignation was mixed with a kind of religious feeling and piety that went to the extent of superstition. The greedy governors sometimes tried to win the favour of the people by a pious act, such as the building or the restoration of a mosque. It is interesting in this respect to read on the same page in which al-Budairi severely
censures the governor Asaad Pasha and his entourage (in the year 1753 C.E.) for making colossal fortunes while the people were in distress because of the scarcity of foodstuffs and building materials — in the very same page, immediately after his bitter criticism, al-Budairi reports the following time: “In those days I was told that Asaad Pasha began repairing the Umayyad Mosque: I have even heard that he bought rugs for the mosque to the value of four bags (about 2,000 piasters). May Allah reward him with His bounties.”

In addition to the disastrous conditions we have already mentioned — riots, insecurity, corruption and greed of the rulers — there were other conditions, sometimes even more disastrous, such as epidemics, locusts and earthquakes, which the inhabitants had to face without any serious help from the authorities. When the waves of locusts attacked the fields and orchards, the people used to collect and burn as many as they could and sometimes, in the absence of any organized government action, they used to resist the locusts with processions, invocations and prayers. In the year 1747 C.E. al-Budairi tells us that locusts came in alarming quantities and did much harm, along with the other evils like lax morals, high prices, conceit and wickedness. Thereupon Sheikh Ibrahim al-Jebawi came out with his mystic order and his banners and drums, and went to visit the sanctuary of Sayyida Zainab in the suburbs of Damascus. After praying for the end of the disaster they returned in the evening, and went all around the city, passing near the governorate, where they performed some ritual dances, while everyone wept and asked God to destroy the locusts.

The disaster that finally overtook Damascus

In 1758 C.E. a terrible earthquake took place. It destroyed most of the minarets, the great dome of the Umayyad Mosque, the towers of the citadel and most of the homes in Damascus. The inhabitants fled to the orchards, mountains and cemeteries. Al-Budairi relates in this connection that the governor, Abdallah Pasha al-Chataji, himself ordered the people to fast for three days and to go out on the fourth to the Mosque of Al-Musalla, famous for answering prayers. On the fourth day the inhabitants flocked from all quarters to that mosque; the Pasha himself came with the notables, the mufti, the cadi, the Ulema, and the mystic orders. They all joined in prayers which were accompanied by crying and weeping, and al-Budairi tells us that “God treated them gently as a result, and the earth began to move less violently.”

A few months after the earthquake, the plague spread in the month of Ramadhan 1172 A.H. (the beginning of 1759 C.E.). Al-Budairi says that for two days before the feast of Ramadhan and two days after, one thousand funerals used to leave from each of the gates of Damascus every day, the like of which had not been known since the plague of Amwas.

These are only some glimpses from the interesting and useful manuscript left by the historian Ahmed al-Budairi, the Barber, as revised by Sheikh Al-Oassimi. In the absence of such original material bearing on the social and economic life of Syria in the eighteenth century, the observations of this eye-witness can be of much use. We hope that this manuscript will soon be published and that it will help satisfy the need of the specialist and of the curious general reader. The description given by al-Budairi al-Hallaq throws light not only on the life of that period but helps us also to understand the conditions and problems of Syria and the Arab world in the following periods down to the present time. The period in which al-Budairi lived has left its impact on the mentality and way of living of succeeding generations and it is only with difficulty that the modern Arab States are getting rid of the effects of that frightful legacy. —Courtesy, The Middle East Forum.

A barber-auctioneer’s shop, Damascus.

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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
AN AMERICAN’S 23 QUESTIONS ON ISLAM WITH A MUSLIM’S ANSWERS TO THEM

By An Egyptian Scholar

**Question 1**: God.

_Supreme Being. Amplify in the light of what the average Muslim scholar would understand. Explain this also in terms an adolescent person would understand._

**Answer**: Learned or illiterate, young or old, all Muslims have the following belief in God:

- God exists.
- He is the one and only God.
- There is no beginning or end to His existence.
- Neither is He comparable to all other created things or beings, nor other created things or beings are comparable to Him.
- His existence is not dependent on any other existence.
- He is self-existing.
- His existence is a requisite of His personality. He does not beget, nor is He begotten. He is neither a father nor a son. He is not limited by time or space.
- He knows everything without requiring any means. He is all-hearing, all-seeing. He has absolute life and absolute power.
- He is possessed of absolute will.
- He wills and effectuates what He wills.
- He is also possessed of speech: through prophets He sends Sacred Books to men.

The opposites of these attributes cannot be thought of God. He is the unique Creator of the universe who has no partners or companions. It is He who creates; who keeps alive, kills and restores to life again; and who grants blessings and favours to His righteous creatures and inflicts torments on the wicked ones.

His works make us ponder on His omnipotence and grandeur, but we will not speak of His personality and nature.

Such is the belief in God of every Muslim without exception. Learned Muslims, however, are able to prove their faith in God by argument based on reason and tradition.

**Question 2**: Do you believe in the Holy Trinity as the Christians generally do?

**Answer**: In general Christians believe in the Trinity, in other words, they believe that God is both one and three. They, however, disagree on this concept of a tripartite deity. Some of them say that God is an essence composed of three hypostases: Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Others believe that God, Mary and Jesus constitute the three persons of the Trinity; that Jesus, while being the Son of God, has two natures, a divine nature and a human nature, which are united into one; and that Jesus with his human nature is a created human being and with his divine nature the Creator, uncreated and deity. Such is what Christians call the Holy Trinity.

We Muslims will never accept such a doctrine.

The God we believe in is, as pointed out in the first answer, one and indivisible. Here is the reason why we cannot accept the Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

The principles of faith in Islam are founded on reason. The myth and mystery opposed to logic are not entertained by Muslims. The fact, however, that the God of the Trinity is one and three at the same time constitutes a logical contradiction.

Considering that Jesus, believed to be one of the three hypostases, was born at a comparatively recent date, the universe which existed before his birth must have been devoid of God. For, in view of the fact that Jesus is one of the three hypostases forming the Godhead and that the Godhead group could not exist while Jesus had not yet appeared, God must of necessity be non-existent before the birth of Jesus.

Since the existence of the Godhead group consisting of the three hypostases depends on the existence of Jesus, a constituent element thereof, this dependence implies impotence. Yet, God’s omnipotence being incontestable, such impotence and dependence are false.

It is for this reason that though certain members of the Church tried to explain away the three hypostases as a symbol of the three attributes of God, i.e., personality, life and knowledge, this too was rejected by many.

**Question 3**: Do you consider Jesus divine or not? (The position he has, if any, in your religion.)

**Answer**: As pointed out in the answer to the second question, Christians believe that Jesus is (God forbid) the Son of God and one of the three hypostases. Clothed in a human body, they say, he was born of Mary.

It is maintained that he prayed much in the world, that he was crucified by the Jews, that he fled in search of a hiding place when they wanted to kill him, that when he was being crucified after his arrest at his hiding place he showed signs of extreme grief, that he complained of his condition to God, crying, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”, that after crucifixion he descended into Hell, rescuing there from Adam and all the prophets who were his progeny, that rising from the midst of the dead he ascended the heavens three days after to sit there on the right hand of the Father, the omnipotent.

We Muslims do not believe any of these assertions or doctrines. For, as admitted by Christians, Jesus, once nonexistent, was later born of Mary, sucked mother’s milk, ate and drank. In short, he was a human being who among human beings passed his infancy and adolescence. In other words, he was created, non-self-existent and transitory. Then, how can a created, non-self-existing and transitory being be conceived as uncreated, self-existent and everlasting?

If Jesus, as claimed, had been possessed of divinity, would he have been so impotent in the hands of the Jews, admitted by Christians to be the weakest of all races, as to seek a refuge for saving himself?

Furthermore, had Jesus, who is said to have prayed much, been possessed of the essence or nature of divinity, would not this be tantamount to ascribing to God the absurd action of worshipping Himself?

Christians ascribe divinity to Jesus, and yet they admit that he was killed. Then how, after his death, could the continuation and stability of the universe been possible without God? Jesus, as the Son of God, is said to sit on the right hand of the “Father”. Would not this be tantamount to accepting...
him as something separate from God, and to assigning him a place and direction?

If the attribution of divinity to Jesus stems from the term “Father” found in the Scriptures, it is not used in a literal sense but means a Lord, a Guardian. To take that term in a literal sense would be a straying from the right path.

The Supreme Being is mentioned in the Scriptures not only as the Father of Jesus, but also as the Father of the whole mankind: “Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God” (Matthew 5:9).

“That ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:45).

Thus, if this relationship of Father and Son were used in a literal sense in respect of Jesus, the same should apply to other human beings as well. Then they, too, must of necessity be the sons of God. There seems to be no reason why Sonship should be confined to Jesus.

If Fatherhood were used in a figurative sense with regard to other human beings, the same must also apply to Jesus.

That Jesus was but a prophet and human being, as the other prophets who preceded him, is evident from the following paragraphs:

“And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying ‘Who is this?’ And the multitude said, ‘This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee’” (Matthew 21:10, 11).

“And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: ‘They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots’” (Matthew 27:35).

“And it came to pass that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

“And when he was come into his own country he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished and said, ‘When hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?’

“And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, ‘A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house’.

“And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief’” (Matthew 8:53, 54, 57, 58).

As for the Muslim belief in Jesus, we believe that he is a human being who attained to the rank of a prophet. The fact that at God’s order “Be” he was extraordinarily born of a mother without a father does not necessitate his possession of divinity. This may only signify the greatness of the power and will which God exercises over the whole creation and nature. As admitted by Christians, Adam, too, was born without a mother and father.1

Like the prophets preceding him, Jesus was permitted by God to perform, as a proof of his prophethood, such miracles as curing the sick without the aid of medicine, or even restoring the dead to life. Genuine Gospel verses, not tampered with or distorted, were also revealed to him by God, embodying injunctions and prohibitions.

Just as he, Jesus, acknowledged all the previous prophets, including Moses and the Pentateuch revealed to the latter, so did he acknowledge and predict the Seal of the Prophets, Muhammad, who was to come after him.

Jesus said to his people, “God is both your Lord and mine. Worship Him alone, for this is the straight path,” teaching them what was permitted and what was forbidden. He has nothing whatever to do with divinity or divine Sonship. On the Day of Reckoning, Jesus will vehemently reject in the spiritual presence of God such imputations made to him and to his mother, asserting that they were empty imputations and slanders fabricated subsequently.

Such is the Muslim concept of Jesus, which is based on reason and tradition.

**Question 4:** The Holy Ghost. (For those who believe in a Divine Trinity, this would be one of the three. Do you have anything similar to this in your religion?)

**Answer:** As was indicated in the answer to the third question, Christians have maintained that the Holy Ghost is identical with God in essence, and that it came out of God (the Father) and entered the body of Jesus.

In Muslim belief, God being unique, supreme, self-existent without any partners whatever either in essence or in attributes, it is impossible to consider any existence as His associate or partner.

In Islam even hypocritical or ostentatious prayer is deemed inconsistent with the Unity, such prayer being considered as secretly giving partners to God. Thus, there exists in Islam no such Holy Ghost as believed by Christians.

But, in addition to human spirits which God has, since Adam, created and breathed into all human beings and prophets alike, we believe in the existence of an angel called the Holy Spirit (the Angel Gabriel).

Thus, the spirits and the Holy Spirit are created beings. The Holy Spirit of Islam, which means a trustworthy, sacred, clean spirit free of defects, is one of the Archangels, also known as the Trustworthy Spirit. Just as he is called Gabriel in view of his power, so is he called the Trustworthy Spirit because of his being free from sin or human attributes.

It was the Archangel Gabriel (the Holy Spirit) who was charged with the breathing of God’s word into Mary.

It was not Jesus alone who was confirmed by the Holy Spirit. The Qur’ān also was revealed to the Prophet through this Holy Spirit.

Therefore, just as we deem it impossible to look upon the Holy Spirit, a created being like the other created beings, as a part of God, so do we find it equally pointless and meaningless to consider this Archangel as clothed in the person of Jesus, who is but a human being.

**Question 5:** Revelation. (Communication between God or Heaven and men or people on this earth, now or at any time. Whether direct revelation is given today as it was in ancient times.)

**Answer:** If the term revelation is used in the sense of intuition, it may occur to any person at any time. This, however, has no religious character.

If what is meant is inspiration, this also may occur now or at any time, as it did in the past. Thus God, before the time of the Prophet, had inspired into the hearts of certain righteous persons some sublime ideas consistent with the teachings of the previous prophets. Similarly, such inspirations may be vouchsafed now, as they had been before, to some followers of the Prophet.

If this term is used in the proper sense of the word, it should mean God’s sending through some angel or by other means religious laws to His prophets chosen from among men. The first revelation was given to Adam and the last one to Muhammad, the Last of the Prophets, after whom the door of revelation has been closed for ever. Since it is impossible for any mortal being to receive revelations after Muhammad, claims of prophethood or Messiahship or com-

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1 Some Muslim scholars of the Qur’ān disagree with this view. They think that, according to the Qur’ān, Jesus’s birth was no exception to the general law of procreation through the agency of a male and a female. — Editor.
munication with God through revelation are all false and devoid of foundation.

Question 6: Heaven and Hell and Paradise. Whether tangible, distinct and real places or conditions of mind and thinking. Do you believe that Heaven and Hell are actual places or merely conditions of punishment or reward? Can any individual be forgiven for his sins before he dies through any act of his or anyone else living at the time?

Answer: We Muslims believe that Heaven and Hell are tangible, material places. Although God has not revealed their actual locality, they do exist at the present.

Heaven is the place of eternal felicity, where those who believe in and pray to God without giving Him partners, who obey His injunctions and prohibitions, and who have won His forgiveness by some means or other will be rewarded for their righteous deeds.

As for Hell, it is a place of torment, where those who deny God, who give Him partners in faith and prayer, and who disregards His injunctions, will be punished for their wicked deeds.

Heaven and Hell do not imply peace of mind or pangs of conscience induced by the performance of a good act or a bad act, nor do they signify imaginary conditions of reward and punishment.

Undoubtedly God, the Creator of the Universe, administers absolute justice, and justice calls for dispensing the merited punishment or reward. Considering, however, that man, a combination of body and soul, is not, as confirmed by observation and experience, recompensed in this material world for each righteous or wicked act, such reckoning must have been evidently preserved for a world to come where Divine justice will manifest itself and where every individual will be given his or her due. Thus, reason compels us to admit the existence of Heaven and Hell.

In Islam no one may assume responsibility for the sins of others, nor is anyone authorized to forgive the sins of others or to have such sins forgiven. Each individual is responsible only for his or her own actions.

However, a sinner may take certain steps while in this world in order to save himself from the punishment his sins will bring upon himself thereafter.

If the sin is committed against God he must repent it, making a vow never again to commit it and praying God for forgiveness. If, however, one commits a sin by omitting to perform at the proper time such religious duties as the five daily services of worship, fasting, alms-giving and pilgrimage to Mecca, one must, in addition to the above-mentioned repentance, vow and pray for forgiveness, perform such omitted duties at a later date.

If the sin committed is an encroachment on another's rights, one may save himself from the punishment of the next world if he, in addition to a vow not to repeat the sin, obtains the pardon of the person sinned against, or of his heirs if he has passed away.

In Islam, therefore, confessions of a sin before a clergyman cannot rid one of his sin. Moreover, no one is endowed with authority to forgive sins on behalf of God. We believe, however, that God in the world to come will permit the Prophet, as well as the other prophets and saints, to intercede for sinners.

For a Muslim who dies without making a vow not to commit a sin again, his relatives or any of his brethren may pray, alms may be given in atonement of his sins, pious deeds may be done or charitable institutions established in his name, and God’s forgiveness may be hoped for him. God according to His divine will may either forgive that Muslim or punish him in proportion to his sin.

Question 7: Pre-Existence. Life of an individual in any form before our life here on this earth. Who, if anyone has had such existence? Also, do you believe in Predestination? Did man's soul have a kind of existence before it came into this particular body? Do you believe that no matter what a person does he will not die until his time to die comes?

Answer: We Muslims believe that, before coming into this material world, each individual composed of body and soul had a spiritual, i.e., incorporeal, existence, and that souls were created before bodies.

The question of how and where the soul had its pre-existence is not made clear in our religion, as man's mind is not capable of comprehending the truth and nature of the soul. We, therefore, refer the nature of the soul to the divine omniscience. Nevertheless, we firmly believe that each man's soul is only related to his own body in accordance with God's fore-ordination.

When its corporeal duty comes to an end, the soul goes to a place determined by God without entering into another body. There is no room in Islam for the Hindu and ancient Arab belief of the transmigration of souls into new human or animal bodies in a continuous and haphazard manner. Neither can we accept the Christian doctrine with respect to the soul of Jesus, which is in a way savours of metempsychosis.

We Muslims believe that after death, souls will keep their relationship with their respective bodies in a manner not intelligible to the living, that they will be subjected to a certain interrogation, and that in an intermediate world lying between this one and the one to come they will remain, until the Day of Judgment and according to their actions in this world, certain rewards or punishments will be administered.

As for the Muslim belief in Predestination: God's fore-knowledge to the minutest detail of how, where and when all things are to happen before they actually happen and His determining from eternity the forms in which they are to happen is called the Divine Fore-ordination; and God's bringing into existence all things that are to happen at the eternally-appointed time and in conformity with the pre-determined forms is called the Divine Decree.

Some Muslims, however, regard the Divine Fore-ordination and Diviné Decree as synonymous, defining them as God's pre-determining of all that comes to pass in the aforesaid manner.

Thus, we Muslims believe that every event in the universe happens by God's knowledge and will, and by His fore-ordination and decree.

Exertion and performance, however, play some part in certain actions for which man is responsible to God. For this purpose God has given man a will and power and made both a secondary cause in predetermining and creating the actions to be done by man.

In Islam, man's ability to choose to perform or not to perform an action is called the Total Will.

Potency is the power generated in man while each component of an action he performs is coming into existence.

Man's directing his total will, i.e., the ability to choose between performance or non-performance of an action, to the one or the other of the two alternatives in the exercise of his power of "potency", is called Partial Will, while God's bringing the action into actual existence is called Creation.

2 The verses of the Qur'ain go to suggest that Heaven and Hell are forms of reward and punishment. What these forms are is beyond comprehension in terms of this life.—Editor.
Thus, an action is related to man as regards partial will and to God as regards Creation.

Having thus given men freedom in their partial will, God has associated His Divine Fore-ordination and Decree with their partial will. Therefore, man's actions, as stated above, are related to God as regards fore-ordination and creation, while they are related to man as regards choice and partial will.

Men are not, therefore, compelled to do what they actually do, nor are they the creators of what they do.

Death: The hour of death means the time appointed and fore-ordained by God.

We believe that a man who dies or is killed in whatever manner has died at his appointed time. Neither can one die before the appointed time, nor can one remain alive after it, for God has from eternity determined the end of His creatures' lives.

Notwithstanding our want of knowledge as to when and how our life will come to an end, we are enjoined to protect it from all dangers. We are also responsible for our evil intentions or actions directed against our own life or against the lives of others.

One who kills himself or another person, therefore, deserves punishment both in this world and in the next for having disobeyed the order of God by misusing his Partial Will.

Question 8: Purpose of this life. What reasons your religion gives for our existence in this world or life.

Answer: Purpose is a weighing and planning of the consequences of an action before it has been performed. It is also called the Final Cause.

Such planning and weighing the consequences of an action, however, is a human characteristic implying a lack of knowledge, which can never be thought of an Omniscient God. Therefore, we look for a purpose in actions ascribable to man, and providential wisdom in actions ascribable to God.

In our coming to the world there is a Divine Wisdom, and a Divine Purpose.

We Muslims believe that nothing in this world has been created in vain. On the contrary, there is a divine wisdom in everything. The whole universe has been so created as to be submissive to man, serving his interests. We further believe that man, who has been honoured with such an exalted position, is charged with the performance of certain duties, such as worshipping the sole Lord of the universe with a pure faith free from the stain of imperfection, acting in conformity with the injunctions and prohibitions communicated through the last of the prophets, Muhammad, working honestly for a livelihood, protecting his life and health from danger, and thinking well of others. Only by discharging these duties can he prove that he deserves the eternal bliss which is promised him.

Question 9: Life after Death. Will there be individual identity of persons as we know each other now? Where will life exist after we die? On the day of resurrection what state or condition do you teach that a person will be in? Will he have a special body or be absorbed into another substance?

Answer: In Islam a man keeps his individual identity after death only in a spiritual manner. When he is laid in the grave, however, he will be subjected to a certain interrogation, with his soul still retaining its relationship with his body. Then, until the day of resurrection his body will remain as dust while his soul will receive certain rewards or punishments according to his actions in the world.

Believers in Islam will recover their individual human identities with all their beauty and splendour, while the non-believers, though not absorbed into another substance, will appear on the day of resurrection with their respective human identities in ugly and hideous forms. Thus, after the reckoning of the Day of Judgment, the believers and non-believers will take up their eternal abodes in paradise and hell respectively, recognizing each other in their terrestrial identities.

(To be continued)
ISLAM IN ENGLAND

Arab-Israel problem

The Imam, Muhammad Yakub Khan, addressed a group of London University students called the “Middle East Group” at the Students’ Movement House, 103 Gower Street, on 17th February 1959 at 7.30 p.m. The topic for the discourse, in which two other speakers, one a member of the weekly Jewish Chronicle, the other a Jordanian Christian, participated, was “Religious and Cultural Problems of the Middle East”.

The Jewish spokesman, who opened the discussion, surprisingly switched off to the Arab-Israeli question, on the plea that that was the main burning issue of the Middle East. Since the Israeli State was now a fait accompli, he argued, there was no point in considering any other alternative except to explore ways to bring about rapprochement between the Arabs and the Jews. The Israeli State would be quite prepared to compensate the Arab refugees who might be rehabilitated in the Arab countries.

The Jordanian speaker urged that the Arabs could not tolerate a sovereign State within their homelands. The only way to ease the tension was for the Jews to live there as a people, in which case they would find the Arabs perfectly tolerant. That was the experience of Christians, who lived in complete harmony with the Muslims. He looked upon himself as an Arab first, a Jordanian afterwards, and a Christian last, which was his personal affair. Just as Christians were a composite part of the Arab nation the Jews could any day have that status. But a Jewish nation within an Arab nation was impossible.

The Imam said the Jews, who had suffered persecutions throughout history, should have been the last people to persecute others. They were driven out of their homes by Hitler. After that bitter personal experience, it should have been unthinkable for them to have driven a million Arabs out of their homes.

Referring to the Jordanian speaker’s remarks, he said it was a compliment to the genius of Islam to have given the Christian minority a complete sense of security, and made them an integral part of the Arab nation. That was the tradition of Islam throughout history. When Jews were persecuted during the Middle Ages, it was in Muslim Spain that they found a welcome asylum and every opportunity for self-advancement.

Jews were entitled to have a home somewhere, but not at the cost of making other people homeless. The Jewish problem was the creation of the Western powers, who promised freedom to the Arabs and a Jewish home to the Jews in the same breath. The Arabs could not, in all fairness, be expected to tolerate within their heart a State which was a bridgehead of alien influences and interests.

The Israeli State, the Arabs feared, had definite expansionist designs. It was like the repetition of what we read of the Arab and the camel in the story. The camel, who, on a cold winter night, asked the Arab if he could just thrust his head in his tent, gradually wanted his neck, his forelegs and his hind-legs to go in, with the result that he had all the tent to himself and the Arab had to walk out.

The only practical solution, the Imam urged, was for the Jews to liquidate themselves as a State, and live as citizens of the United Arab Republic, which State could be expanded to include what now constituted the Israeli territory.

In answer to a question by a Jewish girl who had recently come from Israel as to guarantees to ensure full citizenship rights for the Jews in case the State was merged with the United Arab Republic, the Imam said this was a legitimate demand, but if once the Jews made up their mind to live as an integral part of the Arab nation, ways and measures could be found to allay their apprehensions on this score, and ensure them full citizenship rights. As a people, they could win the goodwill and sympathy of the Arabs, who, in keeping with their traditions of religious tolerance and history, would be only too willing to welcome them as fellow citizens of the United Arab Republic. But to insist on a Jewish nationhood within Arab nationhood was to challenge Arab sovereignty in the Arab homelands, which was a violation of all canons of democracy. Indeed, it was a violation of the Tenth Commandment, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house”.

Prayers for Turkish air crash victims

The news of the tragic aircraft crash which took a heavy toll of life — the heaviest even of all the casualties in the Turko-Greek clashes in Cyprus — came as a stunning blow to all of us.

Our deepest sympathies went out to the great people of Turkey in this great national loss, and to the bereaved families in their great agony.

Funeral (Janaza) prayers invoking God’s peace and blessing on the departed souls were offered at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, on 22nd February 1959 (first Sunday after the accident), the Imam conducting the service. The names of the fourteen victims of the tragedy, for whom prayers were to be offered, were read out to the congregation when starting the prayers:

Mr. Server Somuncuoglu (Minister).
Mr. Kemal Zeytingolu (Minister).
Mr. Muzaffer Ersu.
Mr. Serif Arzik.
Mr. Abdullah Parla.
Mr. Ilhan Savut.
Mr. Guner Turkmen.
Mr. Mehmet Ali Gormus.
Mr. Munir Ozbek.
Mr. Lutfu Biberoglu.
Mr. Sabri Kuzmaglu.
Mr. Gunduz Tezel.
Mr. Burhan Tan.
Mme. Gonul Uygur.

Thanksgiving Service

After the funeral prayers, special thanksgiving prayers, consisting of two rakats, were offered for the miraculous escape of the survivors of the crash, including the Turkish Prime Minister, Mr. Menderes. Before starting the prayers, the Imam, Muhammad Yakub Khan, in a few words, said that while their hearts were sore at the tragic loss of so many valuable Turkish lives, they were filled with gratitude that God, in His mercy, had saved a few equally precious lives.

In the present international juncture, Mr. Menderes’ life was a great asset, said the Imam — an asset as much to Turkey as to world peace — and they felt deeply grateful for the Divine protection which in the midst of that terrible crash had saved the Turkish Prime Minister’s life.

Both the ceremonies — the funeral and the thanksgiving — were attended by a number of friends from London. The Turkish Embassy in London was represented in both by a
party of four, headed by the Turkish Consul. A little afterwards another party of four Cypriot Turks, under the leadership of Mr. A. N. Sager, President of the "Cyprus-Islamic Association", also came down to the Mosque.

The BBC rendered special help in broadcasting as a news item the proposed service at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, in its Light Programme on 20th February (Friday) evening.

Lecture at the Indian Institute of World Culture

Mr. Iqbal Ahmad addressed a gathering of the Indian Institute of World Culture on Friday 30th January 1959. The meeting took place at 62 Queen's Gardens, Lancaster Gate, London, W.2, the centre of the London branch of the Indian Institute of World Culture. Mr. Geoffrey Brown, a member of the staff at Sandhurst, took the chair. The talk was on "Islam".

Mr. Iqbal Ahmad introduced Islam to the audience by saying that the largest piece of land on the face of the globe is the one that includes Europe, Africa, the Middle East, the U.S.S.R., India, Burma and China. The Middle East is situated in a very strategic place of this huge slice of land. The Middle East, apart from being gifted by huge reservoirs of oil, has also been the birthplace of all the Semitic religions. Islam is the youngest of all these religions, and is the dominant religion of this area.

The Chairman of the meeting, when introducing the speaker, said that the purpose of the meetings held by the Indian Institute of World Culture was to seek the possibilities of and work towards the establishment of inter-religious tolerance and world peace.

Mr. Iqbal Ahmad started his talk by referring to the introductory remarks of the Chairman, and said that Islam was the only religion which in its revealed scripture contained definite and unambiguous directions and ways for the creation of inter-religious harmony and universal brotherhood. Mr. Iqbal Ahmad elaborated on this theme in the major part of his talk.

The text of this talk was recorded and will be appearing in the pages of the Aryan Path.

Mr. Iqbal Ahmad at the request of the audience also gave an intonation of readings from the Qur'an. He was later asked to arrange for a talk on the Qur'an.

Lecture at Tetherdown Friendship Club

Mr. Iqbal Ahmad addressed a meeting of the Tetherdown Friendship Club, 3 Woodside Avenue, Highgate, London, N.6. The club is a subsidiary organization of the Muswell Hill Congregational Church, and consists of the ladies members of the church.

Mr. Iqbal Ahmad had addressed a youth club of the church last year, and this was his second visit to one of the organizations of the church.

The subject of Mr. Ahmad's talk was "Islam". He started his talk by saying that there was no nation or human society which could work without determining a way of life. Even Soviet Russia, which professes to deny the need for religion, would have been unable to achieve what it has today without the philosophy of Karl Marx, which maintains that there is a process of dialectical materialism working through human society. It is the acceptance of this idea of an existing process or way that gave birth to the revolution in Russia.

In his talk, Mr. Ahmad stated that what we have to find out is the best way. While doing that, one factor has to be considered. Whatever path we choose must be able to balance the spiritual and physical aspects of our lives. Islam claims to show the way towards such a harmony.

Mr. Ahmad elaborately discussed this theme and showed that Islam only determined a way which could lead to "peace within and peace without".

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Book Review


There could hardly be a more befitting and more valuable parting present to the Pathans from a Britisher to mark the termination of the long impact between the two people than this most fascinating story of the origin of the Pathans, their language, their culture, and the role they played in history as the gate-keepers of this most strategic region, for the first time pieced together in a comprehensive perspective, and told in a simple, arresting style.

This is the very first impression left on the reader's mind. The Pathans is something more than a book of history. It is like one friend pouring out his heart to another friend whom he has served, and loved and admired for long years, when parting from him — and parting for good. All the sweet memories of the days spent together, the joys and sorrows shared, the kind turns done and received, come to mind at such moments, and clamour for expression. The book under review touches some of the deepest chords of the Pathan heart. So thorough has been the author's identification with the Pathans, their land, their culture and their destiny.

That is what the author himself wants the book to be understood to be. "This is a book," he tells us in the very opening sentence, "I was bound some time to write, having had the fortune to spend half a lifetime among Pathans." Further on he says "In some sense this book is planned as a spark struck off by a century of clash and contact between Pathan and Englishman." And this is how the book concludes, bringing the 2000-year story of the Pathans to a close:

"And there, after a course extending over more than two thousand years, I must leave the argument, happy in the conviction that the last batch of Englishmen who served this people 'got to know the tribes better and better, till at the end they knew them better than ever before'.

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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
Of these, as friends still living, I may not write, except to say that they were in very deed a band of brothers, each of whom carries away in his heart as much as he poured out, or more.

"The last of them before the transfer of power was the writer of these pages, and this is his testimony."

Whatever the traditions of the British Civil Service in the rest of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent, the Britishers who served on the Frontier, as a rule, found themselves so drawn towards the people that there grew up a personal bond between them as men to men. While they could not but feel impressed with the many qualities of the Pathans — their pride in themselves, their fidelity as friends, their hospitality, their high code of honour and chivalry — the Pathans, on their side, came to look up to them as men they could always trust, and reposed confidence in.

Sir Olaf Caroe was one of this band of devoted Britishers who spent almost all the span of his official career among the Pathans, being the last British Governor of the N.W. Frontier Province before independence. The wealth of detail about places, personalities, the common people, their gossip in their _huqras_, given in the book is evidence that he knew more about the Pathans and their homeland than most of the Pathans themselves. His fulsome tributes to the Pathan national poet, Khushal Khan, should give some idea of how thoroughly he identified himself with the nationalistic throbings of the Pathan heart. I am sure he would take it as a compliment if I say that within his English bosom beats a truly Pathan heart, this book itself being an expression of the Pathan trait of fidelity in friendship.

The darkest chapter in the story of the Pathans' fortunes was when their mutual jealousies led to the domination of the Sikhs over a territory which Khushal Khan, in his poems, hated to see desecrated even by the hoofs of Moghul cavalry. How doefully the author refers to this slight to Pathan honour when the Sikh flag fluttered at the Khaibar fort, the very home of the poet:

"The breeze that blew by Khaibar, for which Khushal Khan had sighed (as a political prisoner in Hindustan) now fluttered a Sikh flag."

The author, while writing even at this distance of time, seems to chafe at the humiliation of the proud Pathans before the rising power of Ranjit Singh, and watches with enthusiasm the resistance movement organized under the leadership of Sayyid Akbar Shah of Sitana.

"The laskhar of Yusufzai and Khatak tribesmen," he tells us with much relish, "had now gathered to the number of 20,000 under the leadership of a well-known Sayyid, Akbar Shah, of the family of Pir Baba in Buner. They concentrated in a strong position based upon the small eminence of Pir Sabak, a landmark on the north (left) bank of the Landi River just east of the present Risalpur. . . .

The battle opened with a furious hand-to-hand struggle between the tribal Ghazis and the Sikh Akalis. The wild leader of the Amristar fanatics, Phula Singh, was slain, and the Sikh horse could make no impression on tribal footmen, advantageously posted among the rocks of the hillocks that here strew the plain. The battle began to go against the Sikhs. Clouds of Yusufzai and Khatak warriors fell with the utmost gallantry on the drizzled Sikh infantry and broke it up. An exultant tribal advance was then stayed on one flank by a single Gurkha battalion of the Maharaja's army, which took square and fired steadily at the advancing hordes. The Sikh artillery from the other bank made good play, and the advance was checked.

"But the tribal valour was not spent. The levies retired again among the rocky hillocks, and three attempts were made by the rallying Sikhs to carry the key position at Pir Sabak. All were repulsed. At the fourth effort the jall was carried, only through the presently-and personal exhortations of Ranjit Singh himself at the head of the survivors of his Gurkhas and his bodyguard of horse. Later, Ranjit admitted to Colonel Wade, the British agent at his court, that of his disciplined troops it was the Gurkhas alone who had stood firm under the assaults of the tribesmen."

From Pir Sabak, the scene of resistance shifted to Sitana, with the fort of Akbar Shah as its nodal centre. The levies raised by him inflicted a crushing defeat on Hari Singh, who himself was wounded, and was taken to his headquarters at Haripur by a Pathan to whose chivalry he appealed. "This brought Ranjit Singh by forced marches to his frontier," the story goes on to say, "with the object of rooting out the Sayyid's headquarters at Sitana. He failed."

The author proceeds to record the appearance of Sayyid Ahmad Shah Barelwi on the scene to take up the leadership of the resistance movement, whom he describes as having been hailed by the people as a _mujaddid_. Here is a glimpse of this new wave of Pathan might:

"The reformer who now arose was contending against the new-established Sikh power, and he was able to rally the faithful oppressed against the tyrant who was represented as an unbelieving idolator. He preached an extreme form of puritanical zealousm, by his critics regarded as Wahabism. But for many, including among them some of the most orthodox, he has been accepted as a true _mujaddid_, one who, as the pious believe, is sent by God once in a century to reinterpret the Faith and guide the believer on the path of righteousness."

"The name of the _mujaddid_ was Sayyed Ahmad Shah. He is not to be confused with Sayyed Akbar Shah, already mentioned, though their stories are closely woven. Ahmad was a Hindustani born at Bareli, and for that reason the chroniclers refer to him as Ahmad Brelwi; Sayyed Akbar, as we know, was a descendant of Pir Baba of Buner, a family rooted among the Yusufzais for many years."

Describing the hold this _mujaddid_ had on the Muslims' mind, the book tells us:

"He set great emphasis on the doctrine of the unity of God, and, denouncing what he regarded as the corrupt forms of worship then prevalent, strove to go back to the Quran alone, without reference to the interpretations of the fathers. Many of the educated followed him, while among the humbler folk, the story runs, his exhortations were so effective that they were even moved scrupulously to return remnants of cloth to their employers."

The anti-Sikh drive organized by Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi, the book rightly records, was also at bottom the stirring of the Pathan mind itself, and owed much of its vitality to that factor. I should be worth while to have a clearer picture of this development, which, though apparently extraneous in origin, was in substance indigenous to the soil, Sitana being once more its focal point, and the Sitana Sayyid family of Akbar Shah its mainstay:

"At first sight, it is surprising to find Sayyid Ahmad so able to impress himself upon the tribes, and more particularly upon those of the Yusufzai. He was after all a man from down-country, what the Pathans a little contemptuously called a Hindko (the word means not a Hindi, but a Muslim from Hindustan, or even from the Punjab). It seemed improbable that he would be taken up by the wild hillmen of the Yusufzai, even if his creed appealed to the Mandan Yusufzai of the Samah. How did he make the inroad?"

"He owed his position almost entirely to the goodwill of Sayyid Akbar of Sitana. Sayyid Akbar was not only a proved leader in tribal war, but, more important, a Sayyid of the house of Pir Baka, the Pirkhanas of these tribes. This Hindustani had come with a reputation for piety and zeal, and armed with the credentials of four years' residence in the Hejar. He must have impressed Akbar with his sincerity. Akbar and he had no blood-relationship; the fact that they were both Sayyids meant little, and in other cir-

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cumstances might well have led to rivalry. That it did not do so is greatly to both men's credit. The hatred of the Sikh terror, which they shared, no doubt helped them to soothe jealousy and work together for the common end. But there must have been some quality that each saw in the other, a selflessness that binds men in a cause.

"In a sense Akbar was the newcomer's patron. But it is clear from what his descendants say that he, and a younger brother Umar Shah, sank all pride of place, and were ready to enrol themselves under Ahmad's banner as his lieutenants. They were big enough to offer him their allegiance and loyalty, and to bring their discipHes with them. He had come to deliver the oppressed from the new oppressor, and they must have seen in him a spark of the divine. So they followed and were glad."

The part played by the Siran family of Sayyids in providing a rallying point for the Pathan's nationalist sentiments in this region of the Frontier seems to have specially impressed the author, as shown in repeated references to it as "one which in a remarkable degree and over several generations has shown a capacity to combine the qualities of thinker and man of action". Speaking of Akbar Shah's great-nephew, Sayyid Abdul Jabbar Shah, for two years the Badshah of Swat, whom he acknowledges in the Preface as a source that has given him "countless impressions of tradition and wisdom", he describes him as "a man of wisdom and prudence...deeply learned in local history and affairs", who has been "a chief actor on the stage of tribal politics in Swat an Buner".

A whole chapter has been deservedly devoted to Khushal Khan, who symbolized as perhaps no other figure in Pathan history did, the salient traits of the Pathans as a race — their manly qualities as well as some of their outstanding blemishes. The Pathans cherish his memory as the first exponent of the ideal of an independent Pathan homeland, for which he waged a lifelong struggle against the Moghul rule. The author's portrait of the warrior-poet is painted with a brush dipped in the deepest emotions of the Pathans' love of freedom and warfare. Here is a specimen he selects from the poet's poems wherein he rouses the martial spirits of his people to rise and strike a blow for their freedom (English rendering being his own):

"Now blood has dyed the hand of Pakhtun youth,
The talons of the hawk that knows no ruth;
Rosier than tulips, redder than this worm.
Gleamed their bright swords with blood incarnadine;
Aimal and Darya Khan, those champions two,
Each emulous the other to outdo,
Have stained the cleft of Khanbar red with blood,
Over Karappa pours the raging flood;
Karappa to Bajaur the mountains shake,
Beneath the tramp of feet the valleys quake,
For full five years the tribal sword has flashed
Keen-edged and bright, since first the battle clashed
Upon Tahtarra's peak, where at one blow
Twice twenty thousand of the Mughal foe
Perished, wives, sisters, all that they held dear,
Fell captive to the all-conquering Afghan spear.
Next in Doaba smote we Husain Bek,
And crushed his unclean head, that venomous snake;
Then, at Nowshera, drunk with Mughal blood,
My Khataks washed their swords in Landai's flood;
The torrent of our war spilt o'er Gandaf,
Smote down their Rajput chivalry like chaff;
Afridi hearts in Khapukh's vale beat faster,
When Aimal sent Mukarram to disaster,
In all, our gain was glory, our glory gain;
Minstrels shall sing of us — 'Yea! these were men!'"

The poet is, however, quite alive to the deep-seated blemish in the Pathan character — that of mutual jealousy and discord, even stabbing each other in the back, which has been the bane of the whole of their history. Of this the poet thus plaintively sings:

"The very name Pakhtun spells honour and glory. Lacking that honour what is the Afghan story? In the sword alone lies our deliverance, The sword whereon is our predominance, Whereby in days long past we ruled in Hind, But concord, we know not, and we have sinned. Ah God! Grant honour, concord, sweet refrain, And old Khushal will rise, a youth again!"

Before we take leave of the poet, the author gives us a last look at him and all he stood for, and symbolized. Visit-

The warrior-poet Khushal Khan, as drawn by an artist's brush.

ing his tomb in a lonely spot by a small hamlet, Sarai, he asked the custodian why it was in that out-of-the-way spot. The man replied:

"The poet wished that in his resting place he should not be disturbed by the clatter of the hoofs of the Mughal cavalry, passing on the King's highway."

The following epitaph on the tombstone sums up both the poet and the dominant trait of his people which the word Nang, untranslatable in any other language, connotes:

"Da Afghan puh nang mi utarlah turah, Nang yai da zamane Khushal Khatak yam."

"I bound on the sword for the pride of the Afghan name, I am Khushal Khatak, the proud man of this day."
The book should indeed serve as an inspiration to the Pathans to play in the modern context a role worthy of a people gifted with such an ample measure of virility, dash and go. Most of all, it should awaken them to their weaknesses which, in the past, have been responsible for their frittering away their God-given gifts, which, if harnessed to constructive purposes, could be a tremendous force to bring glory to Pakistan, now their larger homeland.

If Khushal Khan were to come back in the flesh today, he would run into raptures to see that his Khairabad, his Sarai, his Landai River are now free from all vestige of alien domination, and that the Pathan is once more walking as a free man on the sacred soil of his homeland.

M. Y. K.

What our Readers say . . .

ABOUT ELIJAH MUHAMMAD: A VOICE FROM AMERICA

Imam, Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey.

My dear Muslim brother,

It is about six years since I last communicated with the Shah Jehan Mosque. However, I am doing so now because I am somewhat disturbed concerning the Islamic faith, which is the only way of life for the Muslims who are true and devout followers of the only true and beloved Prophet of Islam, the Beloved Nabi Muhammad.

I am disturbed because in the February issue of The Islamic Review, on page 25, entitled “What Our Readers Say”, there is a photograph of a person who seemingly you are led to believe is a Muslim, and whose letter comes from a person who is a self-styled prophet of Islam in America, and who has been successful in making a number of dissatisfied Afro-Americans believe that he is the prophet of Islam.

These people are not Muslims as they claim; their leader was a convict in the Federal Penitentiary for violation of a Federal law. It was there he met a Muslim who had also violated the immigration laws of the U.S.A. This Eastern Muslim supplied some information to this so-called Elijah Muhammad and self-styled prophet, who immediately after his release from prison started a cult among the illiterate and other unfortunate members of his own people, stirring up their emotions by reminding them of slavery and other disadvantages which have constantly been their lot down through the years of suffering they have experienced in the U.S.A.

Their philosophy is one of terrible hate for all Americans of European stock; the Afro-American gets his share of hatred if he dares disagree with this hate philosophy. Every person who visits the meeting place where they gather is searched for weapons. Both male and female visitors are thoroughly searched.

During the late spring and summer, they campaign on the street corners lecturing, but never once do they attempt to tell their listeners anything about Islam; all they do is to carry the Christian Bible and lecture from it. There is sufficient proof that they know little or nothing at all about our glorious faith Al-Islam. It is for this reason that I wish to warn you and our millions of Muslim brethren not to accept as brothers those who in their ignorance have done and are still doing much harm to the Islamic faith and culture, especially when they inject so much race-hated, without which they would never get an audience, because they know nothing about the teachings of the real Islamic faith as taught by savants and scholars of Islam as represented in the Qur'ân.

As a result of their race-hated and dogmatic attitude many real Muslims were discharged from good positions and their families suffered. As a result of this philosophy of hate many liberal-minded Americans have changed their attitude towards any persons who say they are Muslims, and are immediately labelled as one of the followers of this cult.

America is a great reservoir for making converts to Islam. In spite of the many temptations and vices, there are thousands who are groping in darkness, yet yearning for a way out of this mass religious confusion of hundreds of denominations and confusions which seem endless. As a result of the overall abuses evoking out of this, the idea of freedom of worship in the U.S.A, attracts any glib-tongued parasite to further mislead and exploit his brethren out of their hard earnings.

Very sincerely yours,

New York.

RASHID ALI.

(The Islamic Review has not the slightest idea who or what kind of man Mr. Elijah Muhammad is, what he stands for or what he is up to. The first time we heard about this gentleman was through the former Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey, who has since been replaced. He visited Mr. Elijah’s Centre or Temple, as he calls it, at his invitation while he happened to be in the States in connection with a Religious Conference. Mr. Elijah’s communication found its way into these pages under the impression that he was a serious worker in the cause of Islam in that country. A glance at his organ, The Supreme Wisdom, however, which some friends have sent us, shows that the vein he talks in is too light-hearted and crude for a profound theme like Islam. His calling himself a Messenger of Allah is against the basic teaching of Islam as to the finality of Prophethood with the Prophet Muhammad. His anti-white passion may be understandable in a political leader. The white man’s treatment of his people cannot be too strongly condemned. But when he preaches hatred of the white man in the name of Islam, he does an outrage on that great Faith, of which universal brotherhood of man, white as well as black, is the corner-stone.—Editor.)

APRIL 1959
WHAT IS ISLAM?

THE following is a very brief account of Islam and some of its teachings. For further details, please write to the IMAM of the Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England.

ISLAM: THE RELIGION OF PEACE.—The word "Islam" literally means: (1) peace; (2) submission. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.—Islam provides its followers with a perfect code, whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

THE PROPHET OF ISLAM.—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last of the Prophets. Muslims, i.e., the followers of Islam, accept all such prophets of the world, including Abraham, Moses and Jesus, as revealed by the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

THE QUR’AN.—The Gospel of the Muslims is the Qur’ân. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book. Inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur’ân, the last Book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.—These are seven in number: Belief in (1) God; (2) Angels; (3) Books from God; (4) Messengers from God; (5) the Hereafter; (6) the Premeasurement of good and evil; (7) Resurrection after death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the Hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in the Heaven.

The sixth article of Faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination; he believes in Premeasurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

PILLARS OF ISLAM.—These are five in number: (1) Declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad; (2) Prayer; (3) Fasting; (4) Alms-giving; (5) Pilgrimage of the Holy Shrine at Mecca.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.—The Muslims worship One God—the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Just, the Cherisher of All the worlds, the Friend, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

FAITH AND ACTION.—Faith without action is a dead letter. Faith by itself is insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and the Hereafter. Each must bear his own burden and none can expiate for another's sin.

ETHICS OF ISLAM.—"Imbue yourself with Divine Attributes," says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His Attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine Attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature, which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels, and leading him to the border of Divinity.

THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN ISLAM.—Man and woman come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainments. Islam places man and woman under the like obligations the one to the other.

EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches and family honours are accidental things: virtue and the service of humanity are matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

PERSONAL JUDGMENT.—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion which, according to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

KNOWLEDGE.—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes man superior to angels.

SANCTITY OF LABOUR.—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

CHARITY.—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others, and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.
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