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Between Ourselves

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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
Thoughts on the Confused Mind of the Muslim World

We need not belabour the vexed point that a pressing need of re-orientation of many of the traditional ways of life in the world of Islam exists and is long overdue. But while this desideratum as a rule is conceded to, prejudices against any suggested or contemplated reform baulk it. At present the mental attitudes of the Muslim world are such that even simple questions on which there cannot or should not be two opinions receive so much attention and time that its creative energy is dissipated and rendered sterile. Things are so bad that there is hardly a social or economic problem, apart from the religious formalisms, on which the Muslim divines and scholars seem to have one definite opinion to serve as a guide to the man in the street in his daily business, despite the patent fact that today as always the Muslims are the only people who are most closely knit socially, more than any other section of mankind. But if an opinion is sought on some important social problem, then unfortunately more often than not the seeker finds to his amazement that the learned are divided and in some cases diametrically opposed in their views. A brief account of the proceedings of the World Muslim Congress organized by the Majma’ al-Buhuth al-Islamiyyah of al-Azhar University held at Cairo from 13 to 22 May 1965 will serve to give an idea of the point we are trying to make.

At this Conference eminent Arab and non-Arab Muslim scholars read their erudite papers on some important problems facing the world of Islam. But the views and opinions expressed therein were so opposed to each other that one of the delegates from Jordan, the Shaykh Rafid al-Qassar, who read a paper on al-Masaarif al-Maaliyyah (Public Expenditure), was condemned as a disbeliever (zinda) by a fellow delegate, the Shaykh `Abd al-Haleem Mahmud, the Principal of the Kulliyah Usul al-Din, Cairo, for his heterodox views. The Jordanian delegate left the hall of the meeting to enter his protest. A similar incident took place when the Shaykh ‘Ali al-Kharif read his paper on ‘Iqd al-Ta‘meen (Insurance), in which he held that all forms of insurance were lawful. But no sooner had he expounded his views than they were rejected out of hand by no other eminent scholar and orator than the Egyptian delegate, the Shaykh Muhammad Abu Zahr, who held that insurance, etc., came under the heading of Ribaa (Interest), which was condemned by an explicit verse of the Qur’an. From this it would become clear that the learned of the world of Islam are agreed only upon some formalities and not on the modern fundamental economic problems. Thus an average Muslim of today lives a “divided” personality-life. He wants to obey the commands of his religion but finds that the interpretations of the learned of Islam run counter to the demands made by modern social and economic conditions. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that the world of Islam is sterile intellectually and why it lags so much behind in the march of science. While other nations are thinking of reaching the moon, the world of Islam is bogged down in useless wastage of its productive energies. Here is yet another illustration.

Recently the Mufti of the Muslims of Yugoslavia had the opportunity of attending the World Muslim Congress held at Mogadishu, Somaliland, at the end of last year (26 December 1964 to 2 January 1965). While on his way back to his country, so he writes in the monthly journal the Glasnik (Nos. 3 and 4 for January and February 1965), the official organ of the Supreme Muslim Authority, Sarajevo, Yugoslavia, “I left Mogadishu on Monday 4 January 1965 without observing the month of Ramadan; for in Somaliland 4 January 1965 had
not then been established as the first of the month of Ramadan. The Somalis started their Ramadan on Tuesday 5 January 1965. But when we reached Aden within a matter of a few hours we found that the people of Aden had started fasting on the Sunday, 3 January 1965. We were told that in Aden Sunday 3 January had been established as 1 Ramadan 1384 A.H. ! On the same day we passed through Jeddah and we learned that the people there also had started their month of fasting on Sunday. When we reached the United Arab Republic we observed the self-same thing. But when we reached Yugoslavia we learned that our Yugoslavian Muslims had only started their month of fasting on Tuesday 5 January 1965 on the strength of their astronomical calculations. Thus we saw there were three different dates on which the first of the month of Ramadan was started: Sunday, Monday and Tuesday (3, 4 and 5 January 1965). Each one of these Muslim countries had a different day for the first of the month of Ramadan.”

After making these observations the Mufti proceeds to appeal to the various prominent Muslim bodies to make some definite proposals to stop the middle of the Crescent Moon and to put an end to it once and for all, and to see to it that uniformity in the first of the months of the Muslim calendar is established. The learned Mufti wonders why the Muslims of today are not taking advantage of the great strides made in all fields of scientific knowledge, especially astronomy. He believed that he should not be a difficult task for the ‘ulema to fix the firsts of the Muslim months, the dates of the ‘Ids and the Pilgrimage to Mecca.

The late Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahman Taj, the Rector of al-Azhar, Cairo, appointed a committee to study the problem of the Crescent Moon in 1955 and wrote the following words, which we which back are a sad commentary on the confused mind of the Muslim world of today. He said:

“Thus the Muslims have appeared to the outside world to disagree among themselves on matters relating to two of the five fundamentals of Islam — the fasting of Ramadan and the Pilgrimage (Hajj). The confusion has become more confused every year, and this is a harmful thing indeed. It is true that this kind of confusion is no new thing in the Muslim world. It is true that the teachings for Islam originally imposed the duty of fasting during the month of Ramadan only on those who saw the crescent moon. Those who did not see it were required to complete the thirty days of the month of Sha’ban and afterwards to start the first day of the month of Ramadan. But this is how Islam makes its teachings easy for Muslims. The Muslims have through the centuries followed this way of ease because it was difficult to be quite sure of the appearance of the crescent and also because it was impossible at one time to correlate the attitude of the Muslims in the far and wide corners of the world of Islam, and to adopt a uniform date as to the time of the appearance of the Crescent.

“Today, however, science has made such progress that it is possible to observe the Crescent and to determine a long time ahead the exact time of its appearance. The matter has thus ceased to be one of speculation, or one on which informed people can have different opinions: science has also made it possible to establish easy contact between one Muslim country and another, whatever be the distance separating them. Modern communications have made the wide parts of the world as near to each other as the members of one family were in ancient days.

“The Muslims should march with the times, and they should adopt a uniform attitude in the questions of faith, especially in matters which are as important and fundamental as the matters of the Fast of Ramadan and the Pilgrimage to Mecca. And they cannot hope to achieve solidarity on these matters unless they base their attitude on modern scientific knowledge which is now available to all.

“The world of Islam today is in the greatest need of unity and solidarity. If the Muslims of the whole world show solidarity in adopting a uniform date for the beginning of the Fast of Ramadan and the date of the Pilgrimage to Mecca, and in joining together in celebrating the important Muslim festivals, they would be brought nearer together in other respects. It may not be long before this unity and solidarity in the spiritual sphere would mature into unity and solidarity in the material aspects of life...”

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The Text of the

Speech

of His Majesty King Faisal

at the Inauguration of the

General Islamic Conference

held in MECCA on

15 Dhu 'l-Hijjah 1384 – 17th April, 1965

“Our policy in the policy of brotherhood, love and co-operation within the framework of the Arab League”

This Islamic conference is opened in the name of Almighty God. We wish it every success.

My Muslim Brothers: Peace be upon you and the mercy and blessings of God. You are holding your conference in the neighbourhood of God’s house, in His own holy city, from which the light of Islam emanated and the Divine Revelation was ordained to Muhammad, may God bless him.

This, Brothers, is not an ordinary conference. It is unlike any other conference because in this conference you will be studying the conditions of Muslims in every part of the world. Muslims everywhere will be looking up to you with hope, praying that this conference may mark the beginning of a new era in which the Muslims march forward in the path of righteousness, and in which there will prevail true Islamic guidance, and in which also the call to God’s Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet will be made.

The difficulties besetting the Muslim world today

Dear Brothers: The Muslims today are exposed to trials unprecedented in history. In the past, the Muslims used to fight and struggle against open and apparent enemies. But they are today afflicted by tribulations of their own doing. You are aware, no doubt, of the present state of Islam and the Muslims. You, Brothers, are the hope of the Muslims in every country. It is the duty of all of us to cure our afflictions and to take advantage of this opportunity given to us by God Almighty, namely, the opportunity of the Hajj every year, in order to look into our affairs, to diagnose our maladies and to cure them, to put right our affairs, to get a better command of our religion, and to perform all God’s ordinances in the service of our nation. We in this country, Government and people, welcome you and pray to God to make us all among those whom God Almighty described in the Holy Qur’an as “those who if we establish them on earth perform their prayers, pay their Zakat and call to good deeds and the abandonment of abomination.” It is an honour to the people and Government of the Su‘udi Arabian kingdom to be an active member of your organization, to participate in the call to the book of God Almighty, the service of our Islamic nation and the struggle to raise its standard and illuminate its path to justice and the truth.

The cause of disunity, quarrels and disagreement of Muslims

Dear Brothers: Today we find the Islamic nation suffering from disunity, quarrels and disagreement — a state of affairs portending grave dangers. Why is there disunity? Why should we disagree when we are called upon to refer to God’s Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet? It is our duty, all of us, to make God’s Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet our arbiter, our judge in all our affairs. As you know, Brothers, Islam is the religion of wisdom, the religion of progress, of strength and of justice and equity. In its ability to organize, regulate and meet the requirements of man from the day Adam was created to the day of Judgment, Islam stands unequalled and a long way ahead of any man-made law or regulation. Why then, Brothers, do we, who are Muslims — believers in God and followers of the Sunnah of His Prophet — resort to temporal laws and constitutions which contradict the principles of our religion? Islam has no objection to the organization of the affairs of Muslims, but this organization must be based on God’s Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet. We must therefore organize our affairs in line with God’s Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet. We may be at a disadvantage in that we have for long neglected to study God’s Book and the Sunnah, and failed to understand in full their true meanings and examples. We must, therefore, study this problem, and I am sure that the Muslim ‘ulemas will fulfill their duty to enlighten the Muslims about the teaching of the Prophet for the well-being of Muslims.

Brothers: I do not intend to speak in detail about the different currents and subversive principles besetting Islam and the Muslims these days, or about certain principles which run counter to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. What aggravates the catastrophe is that we find among the Muslims some who adopt such principles and try to spread them and, through them, to dominate the Islamic people.

JULY–AUGUST 1965

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Brothers: I am well aware that in the implementation of our Islamic mission we are bound to be opposed, criticized and perhaps even attacked. All the same, we, who have dedicated ourselves to the service of the true faith, shall remain undaunted, thanks to the help of God. He who wants to antagonize us let him do what he likes, and he who wants to attack let him attack, for neither shall we pay attention to them nor answer them in kind, and our reaction will be guided by the saying, "God Almighty, do lead my people into the right path for they do not know".

Brothers: The Kingdom of Su'udi Arabia — Government and people — will support our Muslim brothers in every country. We ask our Muslim brothers to support one another and to cooperate in what is beneficial to their religion and life.

The Muslims are of two groups. First there is the group who govern themselves by themselves. They are required to apply the Book of God and the Sunnah of His Prophet, and to do all that is necessary for the welfare of Muslims — whether in their own countries or in other countries. The other group are the Muslim minorities in non-Muslim countries. These people should do their duty in the service of their religion and obey God's orders. We do not ask these brothers to rebel or act against law and order. But they must make God's Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet their guide in all respects. They must befriend those who befriend them, and they must not become a subversive or destructive element.

Policy of the Kingdom of Su'udi Arabia

Brothers: On this memorable day, which we hope will, by God's might and strength, be the springboard of an Islamic revival, I should like to explain the policy of the Kingdom of Su'udi Arabia. Our Islamic policy is in line with what I have already said. We are at one with our Muslim brothers everywhere. We try with all our power to unite the Muslims, bring them nearer together, and do away with any disagreements or influences that might mar their relations. We support the call for a summit Islamic conference to make it possible for the supreme power in the Islamic world to discuss Muslim affairs and, by God's will, take decisions in their interest.

Our Arab policy is the policy of brotherhood, love and co-operation within the framework of the Arab League. We support our Arab brothers in everything that is in their interest. We shall, by God's will and might, be in the forefront, and not lag behind. All that we ask of our Arab brothers is that they look upon us with brotherhood and love and not be the source of harm to us.

Our international policy is based on the fact that our country is a member of the United Nations. We respect the United Nations Charter and hope to expect justice in all matters referred to this Organization. We observe strict neutrality with regards to problems and disagreements of the Big Powers. At the same time we support what we deem is both fair and just, especially with regard to the interests of mankind and world peace.

Our internal policy is based, first and foremost, on the Qur'an and the Sunnah as our guide, and the exploration of all that may serve our interests and protect our affairs, on condition that we do not transgress the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. We, Brothers, would like to raise the standards of our people and our country by all kinds of reforms, construction and progress. We are going ahead with this policy and shall continue in it by God's might and will, regardless of obstacles or problems that may lie in our way. I do not want here to explain all reforms and construction projects introduced by our Government. You can see that for yourselves.

Palestine is the Muslims’ problem

Brothers, I do not want here to expound any particular point of policy, but I cannot ignore or neglect a problem which is yours as well as ours. This problem I shall not discuss from any special political angle, but merely as an Islamic problem which concerns every Muslim all over the world. It is the problem of usurped Palestine. It is not merely a political or economic problem but a human one. It is a human Islamic problem, the problem of a people who were the victims of aggression in their own country. They were uprooted from their homes and homeland and scattered in all parts of the world. They were reduced to begging their mere sustenance for no reason other than the satisfaction of the greed of a clique of vagabonds who in their search for a homeland have chosen Palestine and received help in this from all the great Powers of the world. This choice has been made at the expense of your Arab brothers who lost their homes and land and took refuge in many countries, trying to gain a living by any means.

Dear Brothers: In Palestine there is the third sanctuary of Islam as well as the history of Muslims and Arabs for thousands of years. We are not prejudiced against any people or race, but at the same time we cannot be the victims of any race. This is your problem. It is in your hands. We refer it to your conscience to take such action as shall fulfil the hopes of Muslims and Arabs in a problem which is considered unique in the whole world since the beginning of creation.

The duty of Muslims in respect of Islam

Forgive me if I have spoken at length, but we stand in such a position and at such a time that it is imperative that we explain all that is vitally important to us, so that we may be fully aware of our present and ready for the future, to fulfill our duty firstly towards God and then towards our conscience and our people and countries. You, honourable brothers, are expected to raise the banner of Jihad in the cause of God. Jihad is not merely to carry a gun or brandish a sword, but it is the call to God's Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet, the persistence in this course in spite of all obstacles, problems or difficulties. Every Muslim individual is duty-bound within his own domain and in his own house to act and do what pleases God, to preach God's Book and the Sunnah of the Prophet, and to participate in Jihad according to his power and capabilities. We hope that you will, at this conference, look into all matters which are of interest to Muslims in this world, and into matters of religion, and to look also into matters which may be subject to criticism by non-Muslims as a result of their failure to understand Islam or Islamic legislation.

There are social, economical and organizational problems of importance to Muslims and requiring your attention and your decisions in line with the Book of God and the Sunnah of Muhammad. All this is necessary so that we may prove to the world that our religion is the true faith which cannot be affected by falsehood, and so that we may refute the allegations of those who claim that Islam lacks the capacity for social, economic or educational organization.

Brothers: I pray to God Almighty to guide us all to fulfill our duty, to purify our hearts, intentions and beliefs, to guide us to follow in the right path of God, and to make our future brighter than our past. God surely is all-powerful and mighty.

May God's peace, mercy and blessings be upon you!
SECEALISM AND ISLAM

A study of the clashing Trends
A search for a happy balance by modern Muslim thinkers like Iqbal

By Dr. M. KURBAN

I. The challenge of secularism to Islam

Secularism, whether antithetic to Islam or not — in some significant respects it certainly is so — set itself long ago into the Muslim community. It is even gaining momentum with the passage of time. This indeed threatens the very existence of religion. Internal discontent with the traditional institutions and external pressure exerted by two diametrically opposed worlds, the Western and the Communist, join hands in producing cracks in the religious system, some very dangerous while others somehow tolerable. The foundations of the system as a result may be undermined. The challenge is not to be underestimated. What to do with secularism, or with religion, if you so prefer, becomes, then, the question of the day. This seemingly innocent and neutral question is in fact overcharged. It implies reference to questions of the clash that exists, or may exist, between reason and faith (i.e., philosophy and religion); of the clash that exists, or may exist, between science and religion; of the possibility and significance of individual freedom; of the meaning and consequences of nationalism; of the possibility of progress; of the nature and function of the state; of truth; of loyalty and law; and of the implications of such notions as tradition, tolerance, power, immortality and God.

To deal satisfactorily with all these issues is obviously a life-long enterprise. A reference, in an outline manner, to some of them will, in the course of this discussion, be made only to make clearer and more intelligible both the basic problem of this essay and the positive suggestions made towards meeting it. The strict statement of this basic problem required some preliminary clarifications.

II. The subtle differences between Modernism, Westernism and Secularism

Modernism, westernism and secularism are very easily confused, and more often than not, identified with one another. Strict scholarly discussion, however, must show their differences — subtle as these differences are.

(a) Modernism refers to a way of life and a set of beliefs that have been recently (comparatively recently) discovered or practised. The emphasis of this word is on newness as compared with the old and the ancient. In this sense it is obvious that something may be modern but not secular. Existentialism (as compared with idealism) is a modern trend of supposedly philosophic flavour. Yet, as most of us know, some existential “philosophers” are religious, others are not. The latter only can be called secular.

There are also secular movements of old times — e.g. Democritus’ atomism.

It follows that modernism is not to be identified with secularism. Not everything modern is secular, nor is everything secular modern. To pay attention to this elementary rule will, as we shall see, save us much confusion in our treatment of the subject.

(b) Nor does westernization mean the same as secularization. Westernization refers to transferring essentially Eastern ways of life, whether old or new, into their corresponding Western categories. The comparison here is with the East, not with the old or ancient. And since Western culture itself could be divided into secular and religions (and this is quite obvious), it follows that not every Western notion or practice is secular.

To westernize, therefore, is one thing, and to secularize is another thing.

Secularism and Islam

(c) But what do we mean by secularism?

Secularism is the emphasis on the worldly regardless of what happens to the other-worldly; the material (or even profane) rather than the spiritual (or even sacred); the natural regardless of the supernatural. This is to be held with regard to all aspects of life:— economic, political, cultural; and with regard to the types of mentality and habitual attitudes of the people.1

The comparison here is neither with the ancient (or new) nor with the Eastern (or Western); rather is it with the heavenly.

In this sense it is obvious that secularism does not necessarily have to be either modern or Western. Nor does everything modern or Western have to be secular.

(d) One more key notion, in the title of this essay, needs to be limited before we are able to state our specific problem. This is “Islam”.

Among many other things Islam involves an unshaken belief in God and the immortality of the soul. It offers the Muslims a set of final, sacred, immutable, infallible, eternal,

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1 “... Secularism is a feature observable not only in the specific forms of the relationship between Church and State, but in the differentiation of the pattern of social values in terms of sacred and profane.” Prof. Nivzi Berkes, P. 43, Islam and the West, Mouton and Co., 1957. (Recordings of the Harvard Summer School Conference on the Middle East, 25-27 July, 1955.)
sufficient, superior\textsuperscript{2} and absolute truths, governing all aspects of man’s life.

It is these beliefs and values that are challenged by extreme secularism. Some of them, secularism implies, are unnecessary notions; and others are false. Let us see how this claim squares with the facts of history and the basic rules of logic.

III. Confusions

Before this, however, clearing the ground of a linguistic point, and hence getting rid of a possible criticism against what we have already said, will contribute a great deal towards clarifying our intention.

Islam, no doubt, involves doctrines and practices that are natural and worldly. Hence Islam has some aspects that can be called legitimately secular. If someone chooses to say “Islam is secular” then, he is justified in doing so. But he has also to remember that Islam is secular not in a very important sense. By reference to its basic doctrines (Sec. II (d) above), Islam is not secular. In itself this remark is of no great significance.

Failure to remember it, however, may lead to a very dangerous confusion. One might be tempted to claim that Islam is secular for an ulterior motive, namely, either to deny or avoid the clashes (Sec. V below) between Islam and secularism. Anyone who does so must necessarily be confused. His is, as a matter of logic and fact, a triple confusion — namely (1) failure to distinguish between the basic fundamental doctrines of Islam and the secondary relatively unimportant doctrines; (2) failure to identify Islam with its more fundamental rather than with its less fundamental elements; and finally (3) failure to recognize the challenge of secularism to Islam. This is not solving the problem. It is simply avoiding it — and how? In the easiest and simplest way.

The case of this person is similar in a very important respect to the case of a man who, when called upon to do something about his house on fire, simply closes his eyes. Could our friend claim that he did something responsible to save his wife and children from being caught in the fire? His claim to having done something would be regarded as invalid. Equally invalid must be the claim of our friend who says: “There is no distinction, and therefore no clash between secularism and religion in Islam.”\textsuperscript{3}

The same critical remarks will be urged with equal force against those who in the same vein and with the same intention, claim that there is no conflict in Islam between science and religion;\textsuperscript{4} or between reason and faith;\textsuperscript{5} or between nationalism and religion.

“But these criticisms,” one might say, “are invited by the definitions of Islam and secularism (Sec. II (c) and (d)). Change these definitions and the criticism will automatically collapse.”

But, we answer, mere change of names or concepts will not solve (except very superficially) specific and critical problems that really exist and must be clear to any responsible thinker. And it is with these problems and more or less satisfactory answers to them that we are primarily concerned.

What are these problems? They are the result of secularism.

IV. Why Secularism?

There is little point in arguing in support of the existence of secularism in the Muslim world. I know of no responsible thinker who denies it. Nor is there any value in searching for the exact time it started — some hold the view that it came into existence with Islam itself.

A reference to the reasons that invited the Muslim

\textsuperscript{2} (a) “The traditional attitude of the Muslims to the outside world is one of superiority.” Islam and the Theory of Arab Nationalism, Sylvia G. Hains, Middle East in Transition, p.

\textsuperscript{3} (a) “There is a differentiation of the nature of Islam and it is perhaps for this reason that even well-intentioned persons sometimes take it upon themselves to urge the need of what they call the ‘modernization’ of Islam. . . . There is no distinction between religious and secular education.” — Dr. Khalfi Shuja’uddin, op. cit., p. 45.

\textsuperscript{4} (a) “There is therefore no conflict between science and religion in Islam.” — Dr. Khalfi Shuja’uddin, Colloquium, p. 46.

\textsuperscript{5} (a) “These truths (religious), when fully grasped are not at variance with scientific truths.” — Gamaluddin al-Affahni, The Arab World by Naja Izzidine, Chicago, 1953, p. 8.

\textsuperscript{6} “The conflict between the two (religion and science) is due not to the fact that the one is, and the other is not, based on concrete experience, both seek concrete experience as a point of departure, their conflict is due to the misapprehension that both interpret the same date of experience. We forget that religion aims at reaching the real significance of a special variety of human experience.” — Muhammad Iqbal, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought, p. 38.

\textsuperscript{7} “It has been suggested that modern education is irreconcilable with Islam. This objection seems to be based on a misapprehension of the nature of Islam and it is perhaps for this reason that even well-intentioned persons sometimes take it upon themselves to urge the need of what they call the ‘modernization’ of Islam . . . . There is no distinction between religious and secular education.” — Dr. Khalfi Shuja’uddin, op. cit., p. 45.
Community to open its doors for secularism (or more and more of it) are of some importance. What are some of those reasons and what is their importance?

The Turks were forced to admit secularism for many reasons: one of them, perhaps the most important, is the 1774 war with Russia;7 another is their failure to draft legal provisions necessary for the efficacious regulation of legal relationships throughout the country in 1923. Either the workings of the appointed committee, lasting a whole year, “resulted in an ‘absolute dead-end’”, “or the newly introduced law proved inadequate.”8 Iranian upper classes turned away from Islam because the religion did not change and the religious group was antagonistic towards any new idea.9 The stories behind the abolition, by the Egyptians, of the Shari‘ah Courts;10 the establishment in the Near East of courts of appeal,11 the Ottoman Law of Family Rights12 — the stories behind these and other instances13 have the same moral and implication.

Of course these and similar considerations do not prove in any sense (as Professor Hifi Timur seems to think) that Islam is insufficient to meet the developing needs of society. They do, however, raise the question, as Professor Kenneth Cragg puts it, as to whether or not Islam is self-sufficient. This question will soon be answered (Sec. IV).

As regards the presence of pragmatic thinking among Muslims the weight of the above-mentioned considerations enjoys more respectability.

The promotion of the pragmatic trend of thinking and the acceleration of secular movements in the Muslim community, hence, are encouraged by the circumstances of the time. Military, legal, economic, and social needs made it clear to the Muslims that unless these forces of pragmatic secular tendencies are appropriated life for them will become more and more difficult and complicated.

Arab Nationalism, Islam and Communism

The study of Arab nationalism, a unique case in this context, will open other and wider vistas of vision and interpretation.

Arab nationalism, to look at the same issues from another angle, a nationalism which owed its inception14 to

Islam, and for some time the terms “Arab unity” and “Islamic unity” were synonymous and recognized as such,15 even the nationalism is freeing itself, little by little, from the predominance of Islam. Whether “an innate and material force” or not,16 the Arab Revolt resulted in providing a living history inspired by national rather than predominantly religious universalism as a foundation of policy.17 This movement towards secularization reaches a high level of development in the fact that the constitution of the United Arab Republic does not grant any privileges to its citizens on the basis of their “Islamicity”.

This does not mean that Islam is thrown overboard or that it is no more a significant force. No. It means, however, that Islam is no more the predominant force that permeates the channels of the State. Secular nationalism is gaining more and more ground. External pressure in a diversity of forms from the two great camps of the modern world exerts itself upon Arab nationalism in such a fashion as to accelerate its secularistic trend.

It is exactly here that the greatest problem of Arab nationalism chooses to locate itself. The Communist East and the democratic West — two diametrically opposing powers — seem to force Arab nationality along the road of secularism. But the more of secularism, the less of Islam. The less of Islam means more and more either of the West or of the East.

The attitude of Arab nationalism has changed with time. The failure of the British18 to fulfil their promises to the Arabs at the end of the First World War, the establishment of Israel, and what the Arabs call “Western imperialism” make it very difficult for the Arabs to side wholeheartedly with the West, with which they have plenty of common cultural elements, deep religious feelings and spiritual aspirations. Hesitancy, if not suspicion, constitutes then the major element in the attitude of the Arabs towards the West. Psychological complications in this attitude (due to the claim of the West to superiority both on cultural and technical levels) have made it very difficult (on some levels more difficult than on others)19 for them to take a definite and positive friendly stand.

The same elements of suspicion and hesitancy must characterize the attitude of the Arabs towards the Communist camp. Materialistic, anti-religious, imperialistic Communism scares some, not all, Muslims. The intellectuals20 and the

15 “The terms Arab Unity and Islamic Unity were synonymous and recognized as such.” Jurji Zaydan, History of Islamic Civilization, London, 1907, p. 33.

16 Lowell Thomas in his With Lawrence in Arabia suggests that the Arab revolt of 1916 is not an innate material force because it failed.

17 When the Kemalist Turks abolished the Ottoman Caliphate in March, 1924, they merely acknowledged in theory what the Arab Rebellion had established in fact, namely, the principle of Arab nationality as a foundation of political life.” Nuseibeh, p. 54.

18 “If we won the war the promises to the Arabs were dead paper. Yet the Arab inspiration was our main tool in winning the Eastern war. So I assured them that England kept her word in letter and in spirit. In this comfort they performed their fine things; but, of course, instead of being proud of what we did together, I was continually and bitterly ashamed.” Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, pp. 275-6.


20 “The strength of Marxism lies in its appeal not to the stomach but to the intellect.” p. 197, Social Forces in the Middle East, “The Intellectuals in the Modern Development of the Islamic World” by W. C. Smith.
common people.\(^{21}\) On the contrary, are, consciously or unconsciously, attracted to Communism. Whether because of decay in Islamic values,\(^{22}\) or because of the inherent authoritarian tendencies in the Arab nationalist movements,\(^{23}\) or because of other reasons, Communism most likely will not fail to appeal to the Arabs. Yet Communism, and some Muslims know this very well, carries with it the seeds of destruction of many of their basic and cherished values.

Arab nationalism, in short, is caught in a double whirl. The clash between secularism and Islam, and the East-West struggle constitute the most challenging double problem it faces.

The doctrine, once mistakenly\(^{24}\) called positive neutrality, offered to the minds of most Arabs a satisfactory solution to the East-West part of this problem. The second part of the problem (secularism v. Islam) does not seem to worry them too much. Whether it worries them or not, certainly they have not reached a satisfactory solution concerning it.

Will the study of the reasons which make Siyasa al Taharrur (Ibid.) a satisfactory answer to the political, military and economic aspects of the problem of taking an attitude towards the East-West struggle help suggest some criteria which a satisfactory answer to secularism v. Islam will have to satisfy? We venture to take a positive stand on this question. This article, however, will not undertake the analysis and defense of that stand.

Though relevant to the basic issues of this essay, the analysis and defense of this stand will prove to be beyond our present scope of research.

Furthermore its intelligibility and significance depend on raising and analyzing the following controversial questions.

V. A controversial question — clashes

The controversial question that forces itself upon us at this point of the argument is whether or not secularism clashes with Islam. And if it does, at what points do they collide? A positive answer to the second question implies by the logic of the case a positive answer to the first. The following arguments will concentrate on pointing out and showing the implications of some of these points of collision.

In the field of politics we shall refer to two doctrines — separation of religion from politics and nationalism. In the field of education reference shall be made only to the aim of education. Finally, some of the implications of the scientific method will be worked out together with their relevance to religion. We shall start with the first of these items first.

A. Politics

(1) Granted that Islam is a theory both of religion and of a State,\(^{25}\) still the question can be raised as to the plausibility of separating them, within its framework.

From the practical point of view, opinions differ on this. Some, among whom are Muhammad Rashid Rida, an Egyptian modernist, and Dr. Muhammad Nizamuddin, Dean of the Faculty of Arts of the ‘Osmania University at Hyd harbud, India, argued against the plausibility of separation. An even stronger attack against this movement was expressed by Al-Islam\(^{26}\) an independent exponent of Orthodox Islam (Karachi, Pakistan). This, however, is only one form of reaction to the issue of separation.

The Turkish reformers, on the other hand, took an opposite stand. They argued in favour of separation.\(^{27}\)

Mere separation is, however, only one step in the direction of secularism. A further step is taken when religion is made subordinate to the State. This was tried in the recent Turkish political experience. The Presidency of Religious Affairs and the Directorate of Pious Foundations, established on 3 March, 1924, joined hands with the Ministry of Education to effect the State’s “formal and close control of Islam.” When one comes to evaluating the results of the

21 “... one finds a race between modern Muslim writers and Communists, aimed at showing which sector offers more of the fruits of this temporal world, which can better bring about social justice, security and solidarity. These writers are more concerned with solidarity than with freedom, with the welfare of the Jami’a than with that of the individual.” By placing most of their emphasis on the temporal, modern Muslim writers, Sayyid Kobi ’al-Adalah al-Ridma’iyyah fi ‘l-Islam’ (Social Justice in Islam), Cairo, 1950, have in effect refused Islam to a social programme.


23 “The Decay of Islamic Society and its values, together with the absence of its leaders and democratic-socialist forces, made Communist success easier than it was in Europe, where it had to face political and spiritual competition.” The Appeal of Communism by Walter Lauer, The Middle East in the Cold War, ed. Grant McElliric, New York, 1956, p. 72.

24 (a) “In point of fact, except for the early Caliphate, when the anarchic individualism of tribal Arabia was still effective, the political history of Islam is one of almost unrelieved autocracy. I say autocracy not despotism since the sovereign was bound by subject to the Holy Law, and was accepted by the people as rightful ruler, maintaining and maintained by the authority of the Holy Law. But still it was authoritarian, often arbitrary, sometimes tyrannical. There was no parliament or representative assembly of any kind, no councils or councils, no chambers of nobility or states, no municipalities in the history of Islam, nothing but the sovereign power, to which the subjects owed only, and unwavering obedience as a religious duty imposed by the Holy Law.” B. Lewis, “Communism and Islam”, p. 318, Middle East in Transition, ed. by W. Z. Lauer.

(b) “In this essay I should like to suggest that the assimilation and Arabization of Communist techniques and ideas by Arab national movements was not accidental, a product of the Muslim or personal idiosyncrasies of one or two leaders, nor was it the fruit of Western mistake ... on the contrary, it resulted from the inherently authoritarian tendencies of the Arab nationalist movements themselves.” H. V. Shuman “Nationalism and Communism in the Arab World — A reappraisal.” Ibid, p. 449.


26 “Muhammad Rashid Rida (d. 1935 C.E.) has reaffirmed the inseparability of Islam as a religion and Islam as a political entity by stating that Islam is not fully in being as long as there does not exist a strong and independent Muslim State that is able to put into operation the laws of Islam.” G. E. Grunbaum “Problems of Muslim Nationalism”, Islam and the West, p. 10.

27 “The intelligentia wants to separate religion from political life because by doing so they have no moral scruples. It is only in a society where such separation exists that you find bribery and nepotism, black marketery and smuggling.” Al-Islam, Karachi, Pakistan, January, 1955, V. III, No. 1, p. 1.

28 “The reformers’ major problem was to impose the view that several matters related to welfare in the worldly life could be separated entirely from other worldly matters. Their efforts obviously led, even if gradually, to the secularization of several sectors of social life.” Niyazi Berkes, “History Background of Turkish Secularism,” Islam and the West, p. 53.

29 (a) Howard A. Reed, “Religious Life on Modern Turkish Muslims” Islam and the West, p. 109.

application of this programme, however, one must be careful not to pass hasty judgments. 29

The bearing of these practical considerations on our main theme is nothing new. Secularism, in the form of subordinating religion to the State, already exerts quite a pressure on the Muslim community.

Carried to the extreme, both theoretically and practically this trend may destroy religion.

(2) The analysis of another political notion, namely, nationalism, will lead us to a similar conclusion.

One essential element of nationalism30 is the attainment of independence and the exercise of sovereignty. If the question of the source of this sovereignty is raised, one possible answer to it may be given by reference to the will of the people. The search furthermore may end here. If it does, preference to the will of God is rendered hereby secondary, if not unnecessary. Thus secular nationalism may push into the shadow of oblivion this basic tenet of religion.

As a binding force, nationalism may have the same effect on another religious belief, namely, faith. It is not primarily faith but national feeling that cements the different classes into one more or less harmonious whole. Religious faith may play a role in this national feeling, but not the primary rôle. Thus nationalism tends to push aside faith by taking over one of its pragmatic functions. It may even go as far as replacing faith.

Thirdly, nationalism flatly negates the universality of religion. By delimiting a certain area occupied by a certain people with some more or less common characteristics, nationalism divides the community into many nations.31

The nature and reference of loyalty is also affected by the secular nationalistic movement. In religion loyalty is necessarily to faith or God. Within the national framework loyalty is necessarily to the State or nation. Loyalty to God, hence, shifts places in terms of importance with loyalty to the nation. These two loyalties do not have to clash,32 though they may. National loyalty, however, makes of religious loyalty an arbitrary optional value. The latter ceases to be a primary obligation.

Nor is law, its nature and existence, outside the sphere of influence of secular nationalism. The law in the Islamic politico-religious context is the will of God, which is, accordingly, necessarily true, final and eternal. In order to be adapted to new conditions, it can be interpreted only by a certain group in accordance with definite rules. So we have here both the Divine Law and its interpretation.

In the national political context the law is man-made. It is passed to serve some particular interests of particular people at a particular time. It is operational in nature and pragmatic in function. What sanctions this positive law is not necessarily the will of God. Rather, it is the will of the people. Recourse is possible to the natural law which, in one sense or another, connects the will of the people and God's will or purpose in His creation of the world and of man in it. But reference both to the natural Law and to God's will may very easily be forgotten. This is encouraged by the fact that forgetting to refer to God's will is not considered a heresy in the national secular context of modern legislation.

Thus the nature of law, what sanctions it, and the possibility of adapting it to conditions of life are greatly affected by the national trend of thinking. Man's responsibility is extended from the field of mere interpretation to the field of law-making.

This leads us directly into the possibility and rate of change. Obviously practical change is possible in both systems. Only its rate differs. It is easier to make in the national semi-secular or completely secular than in the religious context.

But mere change is not progress. Progress is change for the better. For a nationalist progress is an open possibility both theoretically and practically. For a true Muslim progress on the theoretical level, i.e. in terms of doctrines, is an impossibility. For if your rules are perfect, how could you, without contradicting yourself, talk or even think of improving them? This is heresy. On the practical level, however, progress is not only a possibility but also a desirability for a true Muslim. This means that his practical life is approaching closer and closer to his ideal. Professor Grunebaum's following judgment needs, in the light of this, a serious reconsideration. "This (i.e. immutability) goes for doctrine and conduct as well as for institutionalization."33

To conclude this section on the theory of nationalism and to recapitulate some of the basic conclusions of this discussion, one cannot but stress the fact that progress is a plausibility for the Muslim community. It is only improving on the doctrine that is out of the question. This extreme secular nationalism will necessarily negate. Also this latter will clash with the notion of universality in Islam. In consequence the notion of Muslim citizenship is affected. Political mobility of Muslims within the Muslim community will be either minimized or eliminated completely. It seems to substitute loyalty to the nation for loyalty to God; to substitute the feeling of national belonging for religious faith as a binding force; and to substitute the people for God as a source of sovereignty.

Secular nationalism develops an attitude of mind that

30 "A nationality may be conceived of as a people who, because of the belief in their common descent and their mission in the world, by virtue of their common cultural heritage and historical career aspire to sovereignty over a territory or seek to maintain or enlarge their political or cultural influence in the face of opposition. Nationalism refers to the social movements, attitudes and ideologies which characterize the behavior of nationalists engaged in the struggle to achieve, maintain or enhance their position in the world." Louis Wirth, American Journal of Sociology, XLI, 1935-36, p. 723.
31 "Islam has always stood for one universal spiritual community of believers which transcends the limitations of race and geography." A. L. Tibawi, "Philosophy of Muslim Education," The Yearbook of Education, 1957.
32 "The traditional Muslim's first loyalty is to his faith and the community of the true believers; attachment to family or local group would usually follow, with dedication to the third place.
makes of religion, if not an incompatible doctrine, at least a something that is very loosely connected, if connected at all with the paraphernalia of daily life. It encourages man's venture into the field of law-making and opens for him the vistas of progress both in theory and in practice.

B. Secular Education

Nor does the dangerous effect of secularism end at this point. The national State, if secular enough, will encourage secular education. Like the concept of the "national State", "secular education" is alien to the Islamic philosophy and system.34

This point and hence the challenge to Islam that follows from it, are not admitted by all responsible Muslim thinkers. Thus Dr. Khalifa Shuja'uddin in the Colloquium held at Princeton in 1953 (p. 44) states: "There was no rigid line of demarcation between 'secular' and 'religious' education in the early days of Islam and it is difficult to understand why there should be one now."

After quoting al-Zarnooji and al-Ghazzali, who move in line with Muslim tradition when they emphasize the fact that the aim of Islamic education is "to attain the pleasure and goodwill of the Almighty and win eternal life" or "to serve God", Dr. Khalifa adds: "modern education theory also tends to regard the perfection of the individual as the proper end of educational effort." (Ibid.)

There is no significant difference, to Dr. Khalifa's mind, it seems, between the aim of education as stated by al-Ghazzali or al-Zarnooji and that of modern education. It is true that in a very important sense religious doctrines are emphasised at least in some of the programmes of modern education. Hence the perfection of the individual involves, in this context, reference to God. But is there not a difference between thinking of religion as "one of the cardinal factors in the development of man and as such it occupies an important place in the whole educational enterprise" as Dr. Khalifa holds: and thinking of religion as the supreme aim of this enterprise, as al-Ghazzali and al-Zarnooji hold?

Nor is this all. Modern education is not necessarily secular education. The latter can afford to ignore all religion. That is why it is dangerous for religion.

As a matter of historical fact there is a difference between secular education and religious education in Muslim countries. "Difficult to understand" it may be, especially from the angle of a Muslim who thinks that the separation between "secular" and "Islamic" is not permissible. The distinction in itself, however, is not either interesting to discuss or dangerous. The clash that one of these enterprises creates for the other is of great importance. The way of how to solve this clash is of even greater importance.

Modern education, by aiming at perfecting the individual, may over-emphasize his importance at the expense of God's. Secular education, any extreme form of it, will most likely end up in the cult of the worship of man.

This result will be greatly enhanced by the mental tendencies and habitual attitudes which result from the scientific approach to the problems of mankind.

C. The Scientific Method

The natural sciences, and these represent the most important part of secular education, have succeeded in showing to a more or less respectable degree that the world we live in could be both explained and controlled without any reference to God. There are, and perhaps there will always be, many mysteries left for science to explain. The scientific method does not allow the scientist even here to take recourse to the notion of God. Of course this does not prove the non-existence of God. Far from it. It has shown, however, somehow satisfactorily to the scientists, that God is not a necessary concept for the formulation of their laws or for their application.

"Immortality of the soul" suffers from the same fate at the hands of the scientists.

Scientific method, furthermore, implies something quite alien to religious thought concerning the nature of truth. Truth is relative. Absolute truth is a notion that lacks empirical significance for scientists.

Similarly the notion of absolute law finds an uncomfortable place, if any, in the scientist's system. The laws governing the universe are mere statistical generalizations.

What sanctions laws and truth is nothing but the set of empirical evidences that are found in their support. Origin of ideas has nothing to do with their validity or truth. Whatever their origin, these laws stand or fall on the account of the relevant confirming or disconfirming data. Since these are possibly infinite and hence at no time are to be legitimately assumed completely exhausted, it follows that no scientific truth or law is final.

In addition to these evidences only reason and the techniques it uses are needed. Reason supported or checked by empirical evidence becomes the safest guide for man. Revelation either recedes to the background or disappears completely from the scene. The limitations of reason as applied to experience are its limitations of man's knowledge. What lies beyond these limitations is whether an unknowable thing — i.e. a thing about which we do not even have the right to speak or a thing of possible experience. Progress is the venture of reason and experience into the jungles of this unknown dark area. The responsibility of success or failure here becomes that of the individual or of society.

The starting point of every investigation here is the I. The I's fate is determined by the I's reason and experience, actual or possible. Every discovery is to be referred back to the I one way or another, sooner or later. Every piece of information is to justify itself to the I if it is to be accepted and respected. It is true that others, too, are points of reference and courts of justification. But they are so considered by the I only as helpers whose function is primarily to save the I both time and trouble. Thus reliance on authority is justified but not as a final judge, as religion would have it, but only by virtue of a right and power delegated to it by the I to which alone belongs the power and the right of occupying the office of final judgment.

When the I occupies the centre of the picture, then God's place is either eliminated or shifted to the periphery. As a matter of fact, then even the belief in God requires justification. In the case of lack of satisfactory justification agnosticism becomes the expression of wisdom.

This is, in short, an outline form, the picture science presents to us. Only a glance at it will show the threat

secularism offers religion in the field of philosophy of science. So deep is this threat that the basic dogmas or doctrines of religion — God, immortality, absolute truth and laws — become futile notions — if significant at all. Reason and experience (individual or collective) assume the greatest importance at the expense of revelation. Secularism is then a transvaluation of religious values.

In the fields of politics, education, science, and philosophy of science the threats of secularism to Islam (or for that matter Christianity) are of such consequences that the consequence of the success of secularism means the extinction of the dogmas of religion. This means in effect the extinction of religion itself — so long as religion is identified with these dogmas.

VI. Reactions

Thus we are face to face with the most challenging problem of modern thought: What to do with secularism? Or, to put the same problem in different words: What to do with religion? I take it that these are two sides of the same coin.

Religion established itself in the depths of man’s being a long time ago as a very essential source of comfort. Science, not to talk of philosophy and politics, though more recent in man’s history than religion, was able to prove its worth and prestige as a tool of success. Both seem to be here to stay with man — at least for the time being. Yet they do foster antagonistic attitudes and notions. Happy are those, in this context, who do not feel the clash between the two. Often do dullness of the senses and/or ignorance prove to be short cuts to easy, carefree and relaxed living.

Less happy are those among us who sense the contradiction but do not give it too much attention. They will suffer, due to it, of a little itch every now and then. But a little scratch of the skin will take care of that; then life is normal again.

Most unhappy are those who sense the clash, give it attention, and assume the responsibility of doing something about it. The reward of these, however, will match both with the degree of their unhappiness and with the amount of trouble they endure during their search for the happy balance between the clashing trends.

The school of those who search for the happy balance between the clashing trends

This school, however, is sub-divided into many groups:

(a) One of these groups is a very practical one and hence follows a very practical way of solving the clash. They simply ignore theorizing. They follow secularism in their behaviour wherever it leads. Their religion is Islam (or for that matter Christianity). That is what they say. But their behaviour is a good testimony to the fact that secularism is their guide in life.

Norn is this limited to individuals. This policy is also followed by governments. Bypassing the Shariah law is a well-known practice. For the common man, who does not care about the theoretical implications or for an intelligible explanation of his and his friends’ behaviour, this approach is an excellent one. It reduces to nothingness the intellectual troubles of the mind and the psychological disturbances of the heart. The remorse of the religious conscience hence disappear. What better solution do you ask for?

Once you raise questions of intelligible explanation of behaviour — i.e. putting empirical respectability for one’s actions — once you raise such questions, we repeat, you expose the fatal weakness of this approach. Hence, though this approach satisfies many Muslims, it should not satisfy all! It certainly does not satisfy us.

(b) Another group pays much more than lip service to Islam. If the first group goes to the extreme of sacrificing Islam for secularism, this second group upholds Islam in the face of secularism. Real understanding of Islam as such, or Islam with little internal modification, or, finally, Islam liberated by its own principles, will, to the members of this group, solve all troubles. Thus there are three variations on this theme. Let us have a look on each of them.

Some feel that a correct understanding of Islam will, by itself, take care of the problem. To say so is very easy. To support their claims, the members of this school of thought have to answer the specific questions that this essay raises concerning the specific points of collision. This will involve either showing that the set of doctrines and dogmas (Sec. II (d)) stated above are not basic to Islamic or demonstrating that the implications of science and the scientific method as stated in this article are sham or false. Neither of these enterprises, we think, can be carried out successfully.

To emphasize or over-emphasize the flexibility of Islam will not solve any of our specific problems either. That Islam is adaptable is a well-known historical fact. But does the malleability of Islam reach to that extent which Islam is willing to abandon or change the specific dogmas (Sec. II (d)) again around which the conflict(s) centre(s)? No one of those who talked of the flexibility of Islam meant, I am sure, to go so far!

36 (a) "To me, therefore, the problem is not how to introduce scientific and rational elements to Islam and to make them compatible with, but rather how to educate the students and the masses, so as to make them understand the religion of Islam in its true perspective, as a force to stimulate the intellect. It is not a question of how to re-interpret Islam, so as to make it compatible with modern movements, but how fully to grasp and understand Islam as it was understood during the Golden Period of Muslim history." Dr. Mahmoud F. Hohballah, "Trends of Muslim Philosophy and Ways of Meeting Modern Ideas", Colloquium, p. 89.

(b) "All legislative power . . . Law vests in God." The Qur’an 12:4; 3:154; 5:93; 5:79. "Al Ikhwân al-Musulûmûn were not content that the constitution should stipulate, as does the Egyptian Constitution, that the religion of the State is Islam, but insists that legislation in its entirety should be first of all Islamic, and further that practical and applied legislation should also be Islamic." "The Islamic Community and Communism." Jkwan Musulûn, Paris, N. Middle East in Transition, pp. 354-355.

37 (a) "Religious reform, to Afghan, meant a thorough understanding of Islam and a sincere conformity to its truth and fundamental principles." "Islam and Communism", The Arab World, Najia Izeddin, p. 81.

35 (a) Modernism — "The tendency now is to repudiate the teaching of the past on fatalism, the inferiority of women, blind obedience to authority, lack of healthy spirit of scepticism and a low public morality." Islam, Guillaume, p. 189.


(b) Eclectic method of revising Shariah, p. 169.

(c) Innovation, e.g. courts of appeal, p. 169.

(d) Setting it aside, e.g. Egypt’s Civil Code; Code Napoleon. Ibid., pp. 168, 170, 166.
Also it might very well be true that “Islam contains within itself principles of its own liberation”. Still, Mr. Mazheruddine Siddiqui has not yet shown how it is that those principles (some of them are well-known) help Islam liberate itself from the specific troubles secularism serves. Nor did others. This is a suggestion towards a programme of constructive thinking for the present and future Muslim philosophers.

Iqbal and the clashing trends

c) This brings us very close to the third group—a group that cares, unlike the first one, for intelligible explanation and theoretical implication of behaviour, a group that though it values the teachings of Islam, yet unlike the second group, feels that grafting Islam with external values would do it more good than ill. The theme of this group is reconstruction.

Reconstruction of Islam, a very serious enterprise to Iqbal’s mind, requires borrowing or learning from the experience of the West. The need for self-criticism and the necessity for modification in the system and for evolving fresh principles are values involved in Iqbal’s attempt. That is why it commands some respect from both Easterners and Westerners. Nor does Iqbal stand alone on this issue. Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, to mention another prominent figure, agrees with Iqbal on the necessity of those values. So do we. But agreeing on these values is only part of the first step along the road, long and tedious, leading towards a happy and satisfactory solution of the critical questions raised by the interaction of secular and religious trends of thinking in this modern world. Iqbal, Muhammad Ashraf and others have contributed a great deal along this line. Much more, however, is needed before the goal is reached.

Honest and courageous as it is, Iqbal’s approach does not prove to be completely satisfactory. One of its basic specific weaknesses will very shortly be exposed. As a whole, however, the approach is ingenious, we must admit.

(d) Equally ingenious is the approach of the fourth group. This divides man’s experiences into two (or more) compartments, and assigns religion to one of them and secularism to another. This device obviously seems to eliminate the conflict. Of course, if two opposing forces are arranged in such a way as never to meet they would not ever collide.

Iqbal’s solution of the conflict between religion and science is a good illustration of this approach. Dr. Mahmasani’s suggestion at the Princeton Colloquium of separating secular from religious law assumes the validity of the same approach. Many other great thinkers of Muslim as well as of Christian affiliations took the same measure of “separation of powers”, to borrow a term from politics, to meet the same difficulty. Al-Ghazzali, Kant, and W. T. Stace are only a few among many illustrations of the application of the same method.

Admittedly the clash in the field of interpretation of experience between secularism and religion is avoided this way. But at what expense? At the expense of dissecting man’s experience. Any living organism suffers from such an operation. Sometimes such operations are fatal. Luckily enough this operation is not so fatal. This is so perhaps because it is performed only on the theoretical level. It can never be applied in practice. Try, if you can, to divide your experience into essentially different compartments. On my part, I fail to do so. I take it you can’t either. Whether you can or not, however, is an empirical question with which we cannot concern ourselves any more here. Suppose, furthermore, you can. Still, we argue, the problem of the conflict is not really solved. It is merely transferred into man’s being, i.e. experience. For then instead of asking: “How could I harmonize between the interpretations of my religious and secular experience?”, one can very legitimately ask: “How could I bring together into one unified whole my religious experience and my secular experience? Of course if I am so built or created that these two compartments of experience are essentially different in me, then I would have to learn how to live with this fact. Then I would not even have the right to ask the latter question. On my part I don’t think I am so built. So I raise the question, and hence reject the approach under discussion.

Not only is this approach rejected because it draws artificial lines on the map of man’s experience. It also raises the question(s) of interaction(s) between these two kinds of experience. “Separation of powers” without “checks and balances” results into a very dangerous dualism.

c) One further approach suggests itself as capable of taking care of the clashes created by the meeting of basically religious trends with essentially secular modes of experience. Consider religion not as a set of dogmas but as a complete

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38 “Thus Islam contains within itself principles of its own liberation. It is only a question of progressive interpretation and application of Islamic principles.” Mazheruddine Siddiqui, “Trends and Muslim Thought in Pakistan.” Colloquium, p. 89.

39 “Reconstruction is a more serious process than mere adjustment to modern conditions; reconstruction of social life in the light of ultimate principles, and evolve that spiritual democracy which is the ultimate aim of Islam.” Iqbal, Reconstruction, pp. 169-170.

40 “With the reawakening of Islam therefore, it is necessary to examine, in an independent spirit, what Europe has thought and how far the conclusions reached by her can help us in the revision and, if necessary, reconstruction, of theological thought in Islam.” Iqbal, Reconstruction, p. 17.

41 “Surely it is high time to look into the essentials of Islam.” Ibid, p. 8.

42 “Prominent figures agree that re-examination is necessary, Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf concludes ‘What we should do is to evolve fresh principles of historical and rational criteria, re-examine and re-code the existing corpus of traditions, and then proceed on the basis of the Holy Qur’an and the Hadith so selected and codified towards a modification of the existing body of Islamic Laws’.” Guillaume, Islam, p. 166.

38 See note 4 (c).

44 “The remedies to these causes, and the conditions for renaissance may be summarized as follows: Liberty of Ijtihad, and thought, concern for learning . . . revival of the principle of the evolution of law according to time and social circumstances, distinction between mandatory religious rules and optional worldly provision, and consequently between Religion and Law.” Dr. Sobhi Mahmasani, “Muslims: Decadence and Renaissance — Adaptation of Islamic Jurisprudence to Modern Social Needs”. Colloquium, p. 63.

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

14
We Print

Recommendations of the Arab Litterateurs' Conference

Held at BAGHDAD (15-21 February 1965)

With a view to emphasizing the need of a similar Conference of the Litterateurs of the World of Islam

The main subject discussed at the Arab Litterateurs' Conference was the role of literature in the battle of liberation and construction. Detailed studies of this subject were made by the following committees: the Committee on Literature and Revolution, the Committee on Literature and Construction, the Committee on Literature and Heritage, the Committee on Literature and Palestine, the Committee for drafting a constitution for the Arab Litterateurs Federation, and the Committee on Copyright and Publications. The following were the recommendations made by the Conference and its Committees:

The Conference considers Arab litterateurs and thinkers to be the vanguard of the revolutionary forces working for the development of Arab society in the various fields. For this reason it is only natural that their achievements in the spheres of literature and thought should be closely connected with reality so that they may have an opportunity to change and develop this reality in such a manner as to meet the aspirations of the Arab people in their greater homeland. The Conference therefore believes that genuine revolutionary literature should not confine itself to meeting the new trends in the life of the Arab nation but should also pioneer a new and better life. The Conference also is of opinion that our literary efforts at this revolutionary juncture in our life should be founded on a thorough understanding of the heritage and values of the Arab nation, so that it may retain its distinct and characteristic identity which would enable it to continue to fulfil its human and civilizing mission. The Conference likewise believes that in its present renaissance our literature must benefit from human experience in the spheres of literature and art, adopting whatever would enrich it and enable it to strengthen itself. For the realization of all these objectives, the Conference makes the following recommendations:

I. Literature and guidance

1. The litterateurs should devote their attention to the popular base, and should strengthen it in order to awaken Arab consciousness on the widest scale so that the Arab nation may face its various problems with a greater sense of understanding and truth and reinforce the new unitary and socialist Arab structure.

2. That litterateurs should continue their support for liberation movements in the various parts of the Arab homeland, particularly in the occupied Yemeni South and in Oman and the Arab Gulf, and should also support Arab liberation movements in the usurped parts of the Arab homeland.

3. That litterateurs should devote attention to liberation movements outside the Arab homeland, particularly in Africa, on the ground that the problem of freedom is an indivisible world problem.

4. That Arab scholars should co-operate to bring out a comprehensive work on Arab and Islamic civilization, and to evaluate works written on these subjects, for the purpose of supporting good ones and warning against those which are slanted or tainted.

5. That the masterpieces of world literature should be translated into Arabic, and that there should be co-operation and co-ordination among the various sections of the Arab nation in the matter of translation, through the setting up of a joint organization, in order to eliminate waste of effort or unnecessary repetition.

6. That the literary works of Arab authors in other languages, and which serve the nationalist aim, should be translated into Arabic as part of the national heritage.

II. Literature and Palestine

The Conference supports the Arab Governments in their active steps to regain the full rights of the Arab people to Palestine. It recommends the preparation of effective means for this purpose, such as the allocation of necessary money and the appointment of specialized committees to realize the following objectives:

1. That the history of Palestine in the political, spiritual, literary and archaeological aspects be recorded in order to prove the indisputable Arab character of this Holy Land and to affirm its Arab personality.

2. That a modern gazetteer of Palestine be written with the object of preserving its identity.

3. The publication of the literary works of Palestinians from the beginning of the renaissance.

4. The collection of Palestine folklore.

5. The study of the literary works of Arab litterateurs on the subject of Palestine.

6. To encourage creative literature and art on the subject of Palestine.

7. The selection of the best poetry written on the Palestine tragedy and the translation of humanitarian pieces into foreign languages.

8. The setting up of a headquarters for Palestinian studies which would have branches concerned with the collection of all documents relating to the Palestine question, and the co-ordination of work with existing centres.
9. The commissioning of writers in foreign languages to write on the Palestine problem and its humanitarian aspects.

10. To encourage writing on the Palestinian question for Arab readers and for foreigners both in the Eastern and Western countries in order to acquaint them with the truth about the problem and its latent aspects, and to reply to the allegations made by Israel.

11. To follow up problems concerning Palestine in the religious, political and journalistic spheres, particularly those which favour Israel, in order to explain these problems and the truth about them, and to benefit from the Islamic and the Christian religious heritages in this regard.

12. To support foreign litterateurs and journalists sympathizing with the Palestinian cause against the various kinds of pressure and persecution to which they are exposed in those spheres in which world Zionism is active.

13. To supply the Arab and the foreign press with documents about Palestine, and to follow up their writings on this subject in order to verify it and comment upon it, and to give them financial support if necessary.

14. To produce cinematograph and television films on the humanitarian aspects of the Palestine problems. Such films should be of a standard which would permit their showing in various parts of the world. Furthermore, to surmount all obstacles and to provide all means to make possible the showing of such films.

15. To publish on a high Arab level a journal on Palestine.

16. To make efforts to raise the standard of the Palestine programme in all Arab radio stations so that this programme would fulfil its purpose, and to utilize the services of Palestinians for this purpose.

17. To recommend the introduction of the subject of Palestine in the educational curricula in all schools and higher institutions of learning.

18. To devise textbooks and other educational aids on the Palestine problem on the most modern lines and at all levels.

19. To devote attention to the inclusion of the subject of Palestine in children’s books.

20. To examine foreign atlases, maps and geographical and historical works in use in private and governmental schools in order to prevent the infiltration of harmful or distorted information about the Palestine problem.

21. To collect the best in poetry and prose on the Palestine tragedy for use and preservation.

22. To devise written, oral and artistic competitions in schools about the Palestine problem and the Zionist menace.

23. The Conference recommends that the Palestine Liberation Organization be supported in its positive activities.

24. The Conference recommends the acceptance of the proposal made by the Palestine Liberation Organization for the observance throughout the Arab world of 28 May as Palestine Day.

25. To request the Arab States to treat the Palestinians resident therein in all respects as citizens until such time as the Palestine problem is solved.

III. Literature and construction

1. The Conference supports men of letters and thought who defend Arab nationalism and Arab unity, and who dispel doubts and misconceptions on these subjects.

2. The Conference supports the steps being taken by the Arab Governments in the building up of Arab socialism as a means of realizing social justice.

3. The Conference urges the need for explaining the spiritual framework of Arab socialism and emphasizing the Arab and Islamic heritage in Arab socialism, and also for distinguishing between our socialism and other forms of socialism.

4. The Conference recommends that the Arab Governments should encourage literary and scientific works which serve the cause of nationalism, socialism and unity.

5. The Conference urges men of letters and thought to devote attention to literature which serves the cause of Arab nationalism, socialism and unity in every age and every country, for the purpose of collecting and studying such works.

6. The Conference recommends that men of letters and thought should avoid using the term “Arab peoples” (Arabic: shu’ab ‘Arabiyyah), to designate the Arab nation or the Arab people.

7. The Conference recommends the carrying out of modern scientific studies on the various aspects of the life of Arab society in order that these studies may assist men of letters and thought in their call for Arab socialism and unity.

8. The Conference recommends the study of Arab and Islamic culture for the purpose of demonstrating the link between our past and our present, and in order to show the way for the future.

9. The Conference urges the Arab States to endeavour to implement the resolution adopted at previous conferences regarding the production of a comprehensive Arab encyclopedia befitting the Arab nation.

10. The Conference recommends the encouragement of literary and artistic works designed for the consumption of youth on the subjects of Arab socialism and unity.

IV. Literature and heritage

1. That the Arab Governments should promulgate laws to protect the written sources of our heritage against loss or theft, and to promote the following objectives:
   (a) To set up a centre in every Arab country to make a record of manuscripts in private, public and waqf libraries.
   (b) To require the owners of private libraries and those in charge of public libraries and the libraries or universities, waqfs and other institutions to register with the appropriate official authorities all manuscripts in their possession.
   (c) To fix a period during which such registration should take place, and to impose upon defaulters penalties, such as the confiscation of the unregistered manuscript.
   (d) The centre for the registration of manuscripts in every Arab country should contact the Manuscripts
Institute of the League of Arab States which would issue serialized bulletins on these manuscripts with the necessary description thereof and information about the place where the manuscripts are to be found. Such bulletins to be offered for sale at cost price in all the Arab countries.

(c) The centre for the registration of manuscripts in every Arab country should spend freely on the purchase of material offered for sale by its owners, without, however, exerting any pressure.

(f) The law should prohibit the sale of any manuscript until after the centre for the registration of manuscripts has been notified in writing of the name of the proposed purchaser and his address. There should be proper safeguards to prevent such sale from being a means of the removal outside the Arab homeland of the manuscripts on our heritage.

2. To recommend that the Secretariat-General of the Arab League should follow up the preceding recommendations until such time as legislation is promulgated in every Arab country, and subsequently to follow up measures taken for the implementation of the law until the desired objectives are realized.

3. To recommend that the Arab Government should staff these centres with a sufficient number of scholars and experts in this heritage, including experts in indexing and copying, and to allocate sufficient funds to make possible the carrying out of this objective.

4. To recommend that there be established in the Manuscripts Institute of the Arab League a centre to offer training in the handling and preservation of manuscripts.

5. The Conference recommends that the Secretariat-General of the Arab League should pursue with the Arab Governments the question of the promulgation of a law which would require every publisher and printer to submit five copies of every book issued to be deposited at a special centre, such as the national public library. A special card with the necessary information, on a standardized basis, should be completed and sent to the centre for the registration of Arab documents at the Arab League, in order that this may serve as a means for co-ordinating research and translation and promoting information about our heritage. Such laws have already been promulgated in some Arab countries, and efforts must be made to ensure that this is also done in the other countries.

6. To recommend that the Ministries of Education in the Arab countries should revise their curricula and syllabuses at the various stages of education on a sound basis of religion and the utilization of beneficial aspects of our heritage.

7. To recommend to the Arab League the following:

(a) That care be devoted to the scientific study of our heritage, and to the training of scholars for this purpose.

(b) That care be devoted to the study of our heritage on a sound and liberal basis in order to attain the twofold objective of ridicing this heritage of the distortions inflicted upon it, and of presenting it to the younger generation and to the scholars in a more acceptable manner which would inspire pride in our nation and its civilizing heritage, and would restore the younger generation's confidence in themselves and their hopes for the present and the future.

V. The draft Constitution of the Arab Litterateurs Federation

The Conference requests the Secretariat-General of the Arab League to submit the following draft law of the Arab Litterateurs Federation to the Council of the Arab League for approval. It also recommends that the Governments of States members of the Arab League, as well as the Governments of Arab states not members of the Arab League, should endeavour to strengthen the Arab Litterateurs Federation and its local committees to be set up in the various Arab countries in accordance with the Federation's constitution.

Article 1

(a) There shall be established in the Arab homeland an organization for Arab litterateurs to be known as the Arab Litterateurs Federation.

(b) There shall be set up in every Arab country a local committee comprising representatives of literary organizations and litterateurs in that country; such committee to be the official representative of the litterateurs in that country at the Federation. This measure to be carried out within a year of the promulgation of the Constitution.

(c) The Federation may appoint correspondents in foreign countries with resident Arab minorities.

Article 2

Until such time as local committees are established, the Arab Litterateurs Federation shall consist of the following:

(a) Local literary federations;

(b) Literary committees, associations and clubs in those cases where there is no literary federation established;

(c) Such members of the Arab Litterateurs Federation in the countries where no local federations are established, at the suggestion of the Federation's headquarters.

Article 3

The Federation shall carry out its functions through the following organs:

(a) The Secretariat-General;

(b) The Headquarters; and

(c) The Congress.

These activities shall be in accordance with the Federation's Standing Orders.

Article 4

The delegations of litterateurs and the representatives of literary organizations in the following countries are deemed founding members of the Federation: Jordan, Tunisia, Algeria, the Sudan, the Kingdom of Su'udi Arabia, the United Arab Republic, Iraq, Palestine, Kuwait, the Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the Yemen, Bahrain, Oman and Qatar.

Article 5

The aims of the Federation shall be as follows:

(a) To work for the liberation of the Arab homeland and the realization of its nationalist aspirations, and
bolster up its cultural and spiritual heritage and explain its role in the building up of human civilization.

(b) To bring about closer relations among Arab litterateurs and to promote a spirit of friendship and cooperation among them.

c) To preserve the Arabic language and to raise its standards within the Arab nation.

d) To publish literary masterpieces, both manuscripts and other works, and to ensure a wide circulation for them among the public.

e) To hold regular conferences and literary rallies and meetings throughout the Arab homeland.

f) To formulate guidance for facilitating the task of the litterateurs in the building up of an Arab society in which creative human forces would co-operate.

g) To endeavour to protect the rights of the litterateurs to freedom of expression within the framework of Arab national standards and human standards.

(h) To endeavour to protect the litterateur and his right to a dignified life.

(i) To participate in international or regional conferences and seminars by sending representatives.

(j) To establish relations between the Federation and similar organizations throughout the world, and to facilitate co-operation with such organizations for this purpose.

(k) To co-operate with the appropriate bodies to translate Arab works into foreign languages and vice versa.

Article 6

The Headquarters of the Federation and its Resources:

1. The permanent headquarters of the Federation shall be at Cairo, and during the time of the holding of a conference the headquarters shall be transferred to the place where the conference is being held.

2. The resources of the Federation shall be the following:

(a) Contributions from the Governments of the Arab States or territories whose litterateurs are represented at the Federation in the proportion assessed for contributions to the budget of the Arab League.

(b) Grants and gifts from Governments, organizations or individuals, provided these are accepted by the Federation's Council.

(d) Income from publications.

Article 7

This Constitution may be amended by a resolution accepted by a majority of two-thirds of the members of the Arab Litterateurs Federation upon a proposal submitted by the Council on a recommendation by a majority of two-thirds of its members.

Article 8

This Constitution shall come into effect upon approval by the Council of the Arab League. The Standing Orders of the Federation shall be deemed part of this Constitution.

VI. Publication Rights

1. The Conference recommends that facilities be provided for the wider circulation of Arabic works by the removal of customs restrictions on the raw materials needed.

2. The Conference recommends that the circulation of Arabic publications within the Arab countries be facilitated by the removal of customs restrictions, the reduction of transportation charges, and the simplification and expediting of procedures relating thereto.

3. The Conference recommends that the Federation of Arab Writers should endeavour to set up an Arab publication organization which would ensure the publication of Arabic books on the widest basis in collaboration with the appropriate authorities.

4. The Conference recommends the protection of the financial and literary rights of the writers of original literary works rendered by other artistic means, such as singing or acting.

5. The Conference recommends that literary works should not be subject to taxation of any kind.

SECULARISM AND ISLAM

Continued from page 14

(iii) a sense of awe and respect, which follows upon man's honest admittance of lack of knowledge of some of the marvels of nature, and upon his recognition of the artistic, complex and harmonious composition of the wonders of the world and everything or almost everything in this world, is an object of wonder!

The logical philosophical strength of this solution of the clash that exists between secularism and religion can very easily be defended. Could it satisfy or ever be made to satisfy the religious and psychological needs of man? This is the acid test for its respectability and hence final acceptability.

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
THE STATE OF KUWAIT

Its History, its Progress and Rise under its benign Ruler

Independence Day 14 May 1963

Some important dates in the development of the State of Kuwait

Ever since the Aal Sabah family was elected to rule Kuwait, in the middle of the seventeenth century C.E., they have played a leading role in the affairs of the Arab Gulf. Although Kuwait is situated on the fringe of the basin of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, it has always belonged in the past to the desert of Arabia. There has been no settled population in it. The nomadic Arabs used to camp there for a few months in the oases when there was rain and the oases turned green. A number of families of the 'Unaizah tribe from the interior of Arabia in the beginning of the 18th century settled on the Arabian shore of the Gulf. This marks the beginning of the present Kuwait nation.

In 1776 war broke out between Iran and Turkey and the Iranians captured and held Basra until 1779. During this time the British East India Company changed their overland mail route to Aleppo from Basra to Kuwait, and much of the trade of Basra was diverted to Kuwait. The British recognized the suzerainty of Turkey over the territory in return for recognition of British trading interests over the route from the Mediterranean to India through the Gulf. The Shaikh of Kuwait, 'Abdullah al-Sabah, who was paying tribute to the Ottomans, accepted the title of Qaima'am (agent) under the Turkish Governor of Basra in 1871. His successor, the Shaikh Mubarak, fearing that the Turks would occupy Kuwait, signed an agreement with the British in 1899 and came under British protection. According to this Agreement, the Shaikh was not to cede, mortgage or otherwise dispose of parts of his territories to anyone except the British Government, nor to enter into any relationship with any foreign government without British consent. The reign of the Shaikh Mubarak from 1896 to 1915 marked the rise of Kuwait from a Shaikhdom to an autonomous State. In 1904 a British political agent was appointed and in 1909 there were negotiations between Turkey and Britain which secured the autonomy of Kuwait.

The Shaikh Salim, who succeeded the Shaikh Mubarak in 1917, supported the Turks in World War I, which resulted in a British blockade of Kuwait. The Shaikh Salim was succeeded in 1921 by the Shaikh Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, who was a friend of Britain. After considerable prospecting, a concession was granted by the Shaikh Ahmad in 1934 jointly to Gulf Oil Corporation of the U.S.A. and the Anglo-Persian Oil Co., who formed the Kuwait Oil Co. Deep drilling was started in 1936 and before there could be any promising results the Second World War broke out. After the war, the search for oil was resumed and in a few years the character of Kuwait was changed from an old-fashioned port to a thriving modern town supported by the revenues of the oil industry.

The Shaikh Ahmad, who could be termed as the architect of modern Kuwait, passed away and was succeeded in February 1950 by the present ruler of Kuwait, His Highness the Shaikh 'Abdullah al-Salim al-Sabah, the eleventh Sabah ruler of Kuwait. They ruled on paternal lines and on the principle of Shuraa (consultation with the people) based on the teachings of Islam. The ruler was assisted in the administration of the country by a Consultative Council and the Heads of Government Departments. This arrangement was abandoned in June 1961 when the treaty with Britain (which in 1899 imposed a protectorate on Kuwait) was terminated and Kuwait became fully independent. Elections for the Constituent Council subsequently took place upon a decree of the ruler. This marked the beginning of a transitional stage of government during which the Council deliberated over a draft of the country's constitution in preparation for the introduction of modern constitutional principles. After one year the Council produced a draft constitution which was approved in its entirety by the ruler.

On 23 January 1963 the people of Kuwait elected fifty members for the country's first National Assembly. The elections took place in an atmosphere of complete freedom and healthy national competition, and in unbroken calm. Although there are no political parties in Kuwait, the Constitution guarantees very wide powers to the National Assembly. The franchise was given to all male adults, with the exception of the members of the armed forces, the police and public security. Membership of the National Assembly is for four years. The Constitution sets out in 183 Articles a

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CELEBRATIONS AND
THE FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY
(25 FEBRUARY)
His Highness the Shaikh 'A
25 February is one of Four National

Illuminations

The Saif Palace at Kuwait

Illuminations

The buildings of the Kuwait Municipality and the Kuwait National Assembly

Reception

The Heir-Apparent, His Highness the Sabah is receiving Mr. Sabri Sam'aan, Office

A view of the interior of the Saif Palace of the State of Kuwait who have co-
AND FESTIVITIES ON
DAY OF THE EMIR OF KUWAIT
EVENING 1965)

1 Abdullah al-Salim al-Sabah
National Days in the Annals of Kuwait

Reception

His Highness the Shaikh 'Abdullah al-Salim al-Sabah, Chief of the Public Relations Office

The principal offices of the Kuwait Oil Company

The Saif Palace thronged with dignitaries who have come to offer their best wishes

The township of Ahmadi, Kuwait, is bedecked with arches and flags, above which the National Flags of Kuwait are hoisted
modern system of government, the liberties of the people, the basic conception of society, and the powers of the three organs of government — the Legislature, the Judiciary and the Executive.

Kuwait's role in the international field

In a speech delivered at the opening of the Kuwait National Assembly, the Amir of Kuwait outlined the policy of the Government in the domestic and foreign spheres. In regard to domestic affairs, the Government undertook to devote great attention to the development of industry and commerce, and to proceed with the implementation of projects to advance the country's progress in the cultural, health, educational and social spheres. In the Arab sphere, the Government emphasized its determination to pursue a policy of full cooperation with the sister Arab countries in all fields. It also announced its determination to give assistance to the countries of the Arab Gulf and the Yemen, and to continue with plans to build schools, hospitals and roads and to provide other essential services. The Government also said that it would give Arab countries money in sufficient amounts in accordance with their needs in order to enable these countries to carry out development projects. The speech also emphasized that the Kuwaiti Government will continue its efforts to play an effective role in the international sphere towards the maintenance of world peace and the safeguarding of the integrity of Arab territory. In regard to the Palestine problem, the Government promised special attention, and declared its determination to take positive steps to achieve a just solution of the Palestine problem based on the restoration of Arab rights. It also proclaimed its firm resolve to devote all its resources and potentialities for the attainment of this objective.

With Kuwait making such tremendous strides in the path of modern and scientific progress in all spheres it was natural that it should have an effective communications system and a powerful medium for information and national guidance. The radio, the cinema, television services and the press were all accorded priority in development plans.

Kuwait first became known to the outside world as a rich oil-producing country. It also quickly achieved prominence as an independent Arab country. By becoming a member of the United Nations on 14 May 1963, Kuwait began to play an able and independent role in the international arena. There have been many feature films and books on Kuwait. Its powerful broadcasting services have carried its message far and wide in the Arab world and outside.

The Kuwait Government devotes particular attention to maintaining the essentially Arab character of Kuwait, and it has spent a great deal of money on preserving and fostering Arab culture for the benefit of the people of Kuwait and of the Arab world generally. The Government's printing press has been engaged in the production of many books on Arab affairs. The Government also published an Arab journal called al-'Araht, which is considered to be the best produced and the most popular journal of its kind throughout the Arab world. The Kuwaiti press has also produced numerous Arab literary publications and reprinted several well-known and rare Arab classics.

The Kuwaiti printing press is the biggest and most up-to-date in the Middle East. It has about 160 modern machines, some of them electronic.

Kuwait's Economic Aid to the Arab and African countries

In pursuance of its policy of co-operation with the Arab countries and of rendering economic assistance to them in their development projects, the Government of Kuwait has set up the Kuwaiti Fund for Arab Economic Development. The Fund offers short, medium and long-term loans to the Arab countries. It also offers direct participation in Arab development projects, and provides other assistance by way of guarantee or survey and study facilities. The Fund offers its assistance in Kuwaiti currency or other foreign exchange.

The fund was set up in 1961 with a capital of 50 million Kuwait dinars,¹ which was increased to 100 million in 1963. It has so far made a very valuable contribution towards Arab economic development projects: 40 million dinars have already been advanced to five Arab countries. In addition to this some 80 million dinars have been advanced by special agreements to seven Arab countries who did not satisfy requirements under the conditions applicable to loans granted by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. This gives a total of 120 million dinars advanced to the Arab countries by Kuwait. The Kuwait Government is now considering advancing money to some of the developing and progressive African countries in an effort to help the progress of the African continent.

In all its activities Kuwait has sought to foster the bonds of friendship and solidarity between countries and peoples and to increase fruitful co-operation within the Arab world. It has devoted special attention to the problems of the countries of the Arab Gulf, and has so far given more than 3 million dinars as grants to aid these countries and the Yemeni Republic. This money has been used for the building of hospitals and schools, and the financing of educational missions. Kuwait has also given substantial assistance to Algeria.

Kuwait has contributed a third of the capital of the Arab-African Bank which is primarily devoted to the financing of African development projects. Kuwait also contributed 50,000 dinars towards the setting up of the United Nations' training and research centre which is devoted to the training of nationals of the developing countries to fill administrative and technical posts in the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies, and also posts in the governments of these countries.


A technical agreement of far-reaching significance has been concluded between Kuwait and the United Arab Republic. There has also been a similar agreement with Yugoslavia. The agreements provide for the exchange of technical missions and the provision of facilities for technical training.

A review of the intellectual developments in Kuwait

Oil wealth

There are some 40 clinics in Kuwait, all completely modern and fully and lavishly equipped.

There are also 12 hospitals and sanatoria with a capacity of 3,000 beds.

There are numerous health, mothercraft, children's and guidance centres.

Over a period of ten years the budget for education in Kuwait rose from 31,129 dinars in 1943 to 11,676,412 dinars in 1961. These figures give a very clear indication of the wise and realistic policy pursued by the Government of Kuwait.

In 1949 there were 21 schools in Kuwait. This rose to 39 in 1954, to 74 in 1958, to 103 in 1960, and to 140 in 1963. In other words, there was an increase of 120 schools in 14 years. Now, the Ministry of Education is engaged in plans to establish

¹ Dinar = £1.

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lish a university in the country to meet the needs of students from Kuwait and the neighbouring countries of the Arab Gulf.

In 1960 Kuwait radio broadcast for only six hours a day. Now it broadcasts about 18 hours. The Kuwaiti Broadcasting Service maintains its own orchestra and presents various cultural, religious and entertainment programmes, and special features are devoted to children, women, the army and Palestine. The radio has several very powerful transmitters for both medium and short waves, and the Kuwait radio is received very clearly over a large part of the Arab world.

Kuwait also started a television service in 1961, and Kuwaiti productions have earned high awards at Arab television festivals.

The discovery of oil in Kuwait was nothing less than a revolution which changed all aspects of life in the country. Kuwait suddenly emerged as a very important trading centre, and firms of all kinds came to the country to start projects. The country's laws positively encourage foreign investments, and the Kuwaitis are hospitable to foreigners. Import duties are not high, and taxation generally is very low. Foreign organizations with agencies in Kuwait are required by law to be represented by a Kuwaiti, while firms with headquarters in Kuwait must have a proportion of Kuwaiti partners or Kuwaiti capital invested.

Oil wealth
The whole economy of Kuwait is based on the income derived from the exploitation of vast oil deposits. Kuwait has 63 billion barrels proved oil reserves. The proved oil reserves were estimated in 1962 at 8,690 million tons, which was 20.3 per cent of the world reserves. The annual royalty that Kuwait receives from oil is 400 million dollars. Concession was given in 1934 to the Kuwait Oil Company for 75 years; this was extended in 1951 and will now expire in 2026.

The Burgan field, one of the largest in the world, was discovered in 1938 and drilling continued until 1942. Oil was first exported in 1946. The production increased so rapidly that by 1953 Kuwait had become the fourth largest oil producing country in the world. By December 1959, an eight-berth loading pier and refinery at Mina al-Ahmadi, the tank farm and the connecting pipeline system had been constructed. In 1951, drilling was extended to Magwa and in 1953 to the Ahmadi ridge. Oil was discovered at many parts of the country and production began while development drilling is still proceeding besides many projects completed.

In 1948, concession over Kuwait's half-interest in the Su'di Arabia-Kuwait Neutral Zone was granted to the American Independent Oil Company for a period of 60 years; the company works jointly with the Getty Oil Company. Oil in commercial quantities was discovered in 1953 in the Wa'all field; the total production of oil was 8.2 million tons in 1961.

The ruler of Kuwait's concession for his half-share in the offshore area of the Neutral Zone, granted to the Arabian Oil Company, a Japanese concern, grants a 57 per cent minimum share of the profits to Kuwait. Oil in commercial quantity was struck in 1959. Production in 1961 was approximately one million tons.

The oil industry of Kuwait was resumed after the war, and in a few years the character of Kuwait was changed from an old-fashioned port to a thriving modern industry, making the country a welfare state, supported by the revenue of oil.

Agriculture
Apart from the cultivation of date palms, there is no agriculture in Kuwait except for limited amounts of vegetable, cereals and fruit. The country has to rely largely on imports for food. There are two experimental farms in Kuwait, to grow plants by irrigation and in water.

Water problem
The first section of the Kuwait Sea Water Distillation Plant was completed in 1954, capable of producing up to one million gallons of water per day. Further units have been completed, bringing the total supply up to six million gallons a day, and it is now the largest salt water distillation plant in the world.

Industrialization
The rate of imports per capita in Kuwait is the highest in the world, and the country relies on imports for meeting the essential needs of the population. The chief import is oil.

Economic planning in Kuwait had been based chiefly on the assumption that the country must always rely on imports. This was changed in 1960 when a policy of self-sufficiency was initiated. This required studies on a very large scale and meticulous and far-reaching reorganization. An industrial and economic survey was carried out to determine the country's potentialities and provide the necessary data for long-term planning. The Government aims at making the country self-sufficient, but realizes that this will only be achieved in stages over a fairly long period. But many significant strides have so far been made in this direction. The industrialization of Kuwait and the fuller utilization of its resources in the various spheres will be encouraged by the Government directly and indirectly. The Government, however, will not in many cases undertake projects itself but promote opportunities for enlightened private enterprise or semi-public organizations.

Kuwait has very good trade relations with many countries. She gets 23 per cent of her imports from the European Common Market countries. She has a substantial trade with other countries. But there are no direct or indirect relations of any kind with Israel which is very strictly boycotted in conformity with general Arab policy on this subject.

The population of Kuwait is 500,000 and is 99 per cent Muslim. The area is 9,375 square miles.

In the township of Shuwaikh, games are organized to celebrate the auspicious occasion

JULY—AUGUST 1965
The Kurdish Struggle for Autonomous Existence

The 1960s

By B. A. MISRI

Part 3

The magnitude of the tragedy at Kirkuk made even the fire-eating Barzani quiet — at least for the time being. Towards the end of 1961, however, Barzani renewed the attack on the government, which was greatly intensified early in 1962. Attempts were made on the lives of government officials, particularly the police personnel. Kurds did not hesitate to spare even their own brethren. As many as 25 Right-Wing Kurds were massacred when they tried to cross the frontier into Turkey. A number of public buildings were also destroyed. Things were carried to such an extreme that in June 1963 the Government of Iraq gave a 24-hour ultimatum to Barzani and his followers to lay down their arms or take the consequences. The ultimatum was rejected by the Kurds. The Iraqi army began operations on 11 June 1963. The Government offered an award of £100,000 to anyone who would produce Mulla Barzani — dead or alive. Measures were also taken to ease the otherwise tense political situation by placating the pro-Nassir elements, many of whom had been arrested for having attempted a coup.

The Government then took measures to appease even the Kurds. On 3 March 1963 it published a plan pledging itself to decentralize the administration and thus meeting half way the Kurdish demand for autonomy. The plan offered to divide Iraq into six provinces — Sulaimaniya, Mosul, Kirkuk, Baghdad, Hilla and Basra. The first three provinces constituted the Northern Region and the last three the Southern Region. What is important, Kurdish was to be the language of instruction in majority Kurdish areas. This offer was improved upon and repeated in the following June. But General Barzani considered the offer ("national rights on a basis of decentralization") as vague and rejected it. The Government then sent a deputation to wait on the General. Barzani made it plain to the deputation that nothing short of an "administrative autonomy" and "a share in the oil revenues" would satisfy the Kurds. That was too much — and understandably so — for the National Council of the Revolutionary Command at Baghdad to accept. But the Kurdish position as represented by Col. Jalal Talabani (a young guerrilla commander and a trusted follower of Barzani, since promoted to the rank of General) to Mr. Peter Mansfield of the Sunday Times, London, 2 June 1963, gives altogether a different slant to the Iraqi offer. Talabani maintained that the offer, embodying "Administrative Decentralization", as made by the National Council of the Iraqi Revolutionary Command to General Barzani, did not concede anything to Kurds beyond what they already possessed. He obviously implied that the offer did not come anywhere near the minimum Kurdish demands. But he made it plain that it was not the Iraqi Kurd’s aim to seek a separate State.

Different conceptions of autonomy

If Talabani meant business and Mansfield’s coverage of the interview was accurate, there had incidentally emerged what might be described as a position of basic importance. It was probably for the first time that Kurdish demands were enunciated in definitive terms. Talabani asked for an "internal autonomy", of the type conceded to "Nigerian regions" or enjoyed by the "Indian States", with "legislature and executive". He further added that "the Iraqi Government would still control defence, foreign policy, oil affairs, customs and airports". The Kurdish position had been stated without ambiguity, without ambivalence. One may not agree with that conception of autonomy but one knows what Talabani meant by "autonomy", a term still then interpreted by different people in different ways. Talabani maintained that barring "a few Iraqi chauvinists" a great majority of Arabs favoured Kurdish autonomy presumably of his conception.

In an interview with Alan Shadrake of the Sunday Express, General Talabani complained that the Baghdad authorities did not really mean to settle the Kurdish problem; they were "carrying out a policy of systematic annihilation just as Hitler did with the Jews". He said that if driven to desperation the Kurds might sabotage the British oil plant at Kirkuk — the one which yields a fabulous royalty of £95,000,000 to Iraq.

It is doubtful if Talabani’s interpretation of Kurdish autonomy was ever officially adopted. But when General Barzani "demanded an autonomous status", it was rejected outright, on the plea that "no Central Government could be reasonably expected to concede (it) since it would amount to virtual independence destroying the integrity of the State".

The Iraqi and Kurdish conceptions of autonomy being different, it is difficult to say how the two can be rationally compromised. The Ba’ath leaders, however, believe that if at any time autonomy of the Kurdish conception gets materialized it would mean the creation of "another Israel".

1 The Sunday Express, 30 June 1963, p. II.
3 The Economist, 15 June 1963.
The Kurdish demand for autonomy is considered as a "blatant challenge" to Iraq and that "under cover of autonomy, the Kurds were really planning for secession".\(^4\)

The measures that the Iraqi Government adopted had little effect on the conduct of the war. The Kurdish insurgents then took the extremely unwise step of damaging some of the oil wells. This caused such a panic in Baghdad that a greater part of the army was ordered to move against the Kurds. As the Iraqi units moved deeper into the mountains the more difficult did the government position become in maintaining the supply line. The resultant conditions suited and Iraqi Communists. The Soviets naturally felt that they were indirectly responsible for damaging the cause of their friends. The measures taken against the Kurds were therefore deeply resented by Russia. An implied threat was administered through Pravda that in the event of war being continued against the Kurds the Soviet authorities would consider stopping aid to Iraq.\(^5\) An amusing story is told by Gavin Young of The Observer "explanatory" of the Soviet policy of supplying arms to both belligerents, Iraqis and Kurds. At a social function in Baghdad, the American military attaché asked his Russian opposite number as to why his

![Etnic Map of Kurdish People](image)

*Courtesy, the Editor, Orient, Paris, Nos. 32-33, 1965*

the Kurd guerrillas ideally, and they made the government position almost untenable. The Ba'ath government thus committed the major part of its army against the Kurds. The Ba'athists have thus learnt little from a situation that constituted one of the important causes of Kassim's downfall.

**Soviet help**

Soviet Russia has been giving substantial help, both military and economic, to Iraq since 1958. But neither Kassim nor Ba'athists hesitated to use Soviet arms against the Kurds country supplied arms to Iraqis to the detriment of its friends, the Kurds. The latter good-humouredly answered: "But this is the best way for us to supply the Kurds. They capture our weapons — the Iraqis foot the bill."\(^6\)

Of late, however, the Soviets have begun to "support the concept of a self-governing Kurdish State" rather blatantly.\(^7\) The powerful radio transmitter presented by Russia to Barzani and set up in East Germany broadcasts highly

\(^4\) Ibid.


\(^6\) The Observer, 29 December 1963, p. 4.

\(^7\) The Times (second editorial), 11 June 1963.
inflammatory propaganda to the Kurds against the Ba'ath government of Iraq. That was done to punish Baghdad for having suppressed the Communist Party of Iraq — “the only really formidable Communist organization in the Middle East.”

To escape purges of the Ba'ath Government hundreds of Iraqi Communists fled to the north and took refuge with the Kurds. The fear that Iraqi Communists and Kurds would form a devastating combination deterred the Government of Iraq from conceding autonomy to the Kurds in any form or shape. Iraqis feared that an autonomous Kurdistan “could become the base for a Communist counter-attack.”

The quantum of Soviet help to Iraq is gradually decreasing, and it may be withheld altogether in the near future. An article published in Pravda on 20 June 1963 warned Baghdad that if Russian military equipment was continued to be used against the Kurds, it might compel the Soviet Government to revise its policy in respect of the aid it had been giving to Iraq. It was the first time that a warning in definite terms was given to Iraq. In the event of the threat being carried out, “the Iraqis would be badly caught out for spare parts for equipment already supplied.”

Arab unity

The rift between the two governments is likely to get still more acute. The Arabs have a firm belief in Arab unity — in fact, it is an article of faith with them. The Soviets, on the other hand, are dead-set against Arab unity. They set great store by Independent Kurdistan, which they hope will militate against Arab unity and thus facilitate Communist penetration of the area. These considerations apart, Kurdistan is an area of unique importance for Russia: it is her shortest route to the Middle East.

The anti-Communist and anti-Kurdish policies of the governments of Iraq and Syria are naturally condemned by Russia. The combined military operations of the two governments against the Kurds were deeply resented. The Syrian Yarmouk Brigade fighting alongside Iraqi units had failed to make any appreciable mark in the Kurdish campaign.

The uncompromising anti-Kurd Ba'ath leadership did no good to Iraq at the moment. It was widely believed that, with a milder man at the helm of affairs, such as President Aref, the situation might have improved. “We live with the Kurds in this country,” Aref feelingly observed, “and are going to live with them until life ends”. He was anxiously waiting for the day when Iraqis could “warmly shake every Kurdish hand extended to them”.

Syrian attitude to Kurds

Of all the neighbouring Muslim countries, Syria had treated the Kurd with a singular kindness. The Syrian has always shown a deep reverence to the blessed memory of the great Kurd hero, Salah-ud-Din Ayyubi. His sneaking sympathy for the Kurd is too pronounced. In spite of the fact that the Syrian Kurds formed their National Independence Committee as early as 1927, and have since campaigned for autonomy, the various Syrian governments continued to treat them with a characteristic consideration. Kurds have always held high positions in the public services of Syria. A Kurd, named Husni Berazi, became Prime Minister of Syria in the forties. By and large the various Syrian governments have continued to show marked sympathy to the Kurdish demand for sustaining their culture and language. But the poor Kurd is now facing as hostile an atmosphere in Syria as he is confronted with in Iraq. The Ba'athists who came into power in March 1963 are unfortunately toeing the Iraqi line. The consideration and understanding shown by Syria to the Kurd comes in sharp contrast to the less than kind treatment he has had at the hands of Iran, Turkey and Iraq. Only in Soviet Armenia and Syria did the Kurd, whose numbers were small in both countries, meet with a really liberal and sympathetic attitude towards their culture.”

The Kurdish problem affects not only Iraq: it may affect any of the four Muslim countries at any time and just as virulently. The Kurdish demand for autonomy is no doubt vague; its content has varied from time to time. But if General Talabani’s definition of autonomy as given to Mansfield is taken as a basis of discussion there is a possibility that a solution acceptable to all concerned is ultimately hammered out. There is no earthly reason why the Kurdish demand to foster their culture, language, custom and creeds be not accepted. The Kurd’s demand for a fair share in the oil wealth of Iraq is far from wild. Given understanding and sympathy an equitable adjustment is possible.

A perennial trouble in the backyard of as many as four Muslim States is a terrible omen. The Muslim Middle East is bound to lose much valuable ground. The only two Powers likely to exploit and benefit from this unfortunate situation are Russia and Israel. Nothing is more favourable for the spread of Communism than the kind of troubled conditions that obtain in Kurdish territory. This is the time to stem the tide and contain Communism in the upper reaches of Muslim Middle East. It may otherwise be too late. In the event of Kurdish success “Krushchev could use a newly-proclaimed Kurdish State as a constant irritant to the rest of the Middle East. And within its frontiers he could build up bases outflanking Turkey, menacing Syria, covering the oilfields on Northern Iraq and peering down towards Persia.” By fighting this ruinous war Kurds, Syrians and Iraqis were conjointly albeit inadvertently promoting the aims of Israel whom they consider as “a dagger pointed at the heart of Islam”. The Kurds fought brilliantly against Israel in the war of 1948.

The members of the Arab League who met at Cairo in January last year considered what steps to take if Israel diverted the course of the river Jordan towards Negev. It was obvious that in the event of a clash, the Arabs would not only lose the services of the Kurd, a tenacious fighter, but they would not be able to deploy some of their best units against Israel, for the simple reason that they would be already bogged down in Kurdistan. The latest reports show that as many as 40,000 Iraqi troops have been deployed in Kurdistan.

Recent developments

There did come a short pause, in the winter of last year, when a sort of settlement between the Iraqis and the Kurds seemed possible and a cease-fire was declared. But unfor-

15 Pierre Rondot, p. 88.
16 Cf. ante, Part III, pp. 2-3.
fortunately the negotiations soon broke down. Those who had believed that President Aref was the only man who could achieve a settlement with the Kurds have been greatly disappointed by his renewed operations started about a month ago. The only noticeable change in the strategy of Aref seems to be that he is confining his pressure to the lower parts of the country, e.g. Khanaqin, Kirkuk and Arbil. Perhaps this restraint is due to the influence of President Nassir, who is not in favour of the Kurds being published in their mountain hideouts.

The Iraqis, however, are denying any recent fighting against the Kurds. Their version is that their troops are there for security reasons only, to contain the Kurdish guerilla activities aimed at harassing the Iraqi administration. But the nature of a recent encounter at Taqtaq, where the Iraqis are said to have suffered about 100 casualties, does not permit one to believe that.

The most dismaying aspect of the present situation is that, instead of coming any closer to an amicable settlement, the gulf between the Kurds and the Iraqis is becoming wider and wider. Mustapha Barzani’s demand for autonomy is as firm today as it was in 1961. He has renewed his efforts, with still greater vigour, to establish his own administration, independent of Iraqi authority. Under the present circumstances there does not seem to be any hope of a settlement in the near future.

Not only Arab but Muslim unity

Any layman with a bit of common sense can see how this tug-of-war amongst the Muslim nations is weakening each one of them individually to the advantage of others. The Kurdish situation is just one example.

The Zionist Israel, a tiny speck on the vast Arabian peninsula, is making a mockery of all the combined forces of the Arab world. Malaysia and Indonesia are out to annihilate each other. The miserable lot of the Muslims in Cyprus is deteriorating each day. The Kashmir problem is defying any solution. The pathetic struggle of the Black Muslims in America has fallen into the usual pattern of internal squabbles. The Muslims in Ethiopia, in spite of being almost in majority, are leading a life of second-class citizens. Millions of Muslims in countries like Africa and India are there without anyone to help them stand on their feet.

The reason for all this misfortune in the Muslim world lies not so much in the material weakness of the Muslim nations as in their mental attitudes — in their forgetfulness of the lesson which the Qur’ān teaches us to the effect that we should be “strong against the enemy (atheists) while compassionate among themselves” (48 : 29).
Economic Development of Turkey

By Ahmed Na'im Malik

It is now more than forty years since Turkey as a Republican State came into existence. Among the Muslim countries Turkey was the first which directed its attention to economic development. It is therefore not only interesting but also instructive to note what she has achieved over the past forty years.

To appreciate the progress Turkey has so far made it is necessary to see in what condition she was before the inauguration of the Republican era. It would be no exaggeration to say that the Ottoman Turkey was one of the most backward States in Europe at the turn of this century. Before the First World War she was still regarded an imperial power, but subsequent events — the wars in the Balkans, the struggle with Italy and the confrontation with Britain in the Middle East — painfully disclosed the truth “that the Ottoman Empire had long ceased to be a single and united body, and had actually become a conglomerate of a weak Turkish metropolis with various rather dependent or (semi-independent) border countries”.

Agriculture

The Turkish agriculture was in a most depressed state. Turkey, which had been exporting cereals for a very long time, had become a net importer of wheat by the end of the last century. It was not due to the natural conditions prevailing in the country; on the contrary, there were in existence all the factors necessary for cheap production of agricultural commodities, viz., cheap labour, land potentials and a long agricultural tradition especially for items like fruit, tobacco and wheat. Turkey failed to utilize the comparative advantages of the local economy because of

1. land tenure system;
2. exploitation of peasants;
3. the limitation of domestic markets; and
4. the indifference of the Ottoman administration to agriculture.

The land and civil codes operated in favour of the big landowners and consequently created extreme inequalities in the rural areas. The land reforms of Mahmud II and of the “Tanzimat” period had a very limited success even in destroying the power of feudal landlords and of mülazım. Instead of distributing the waqf estates among landless peasants whose number was constantly increasing, the Sultans and their favorites used them to obtain revenues for their own comforts and luxuries. At the same time they showed complete disregard for improving the condition of those lands.

“The Republic found the waqf properties in a state of desolation and neglect.” Similarly the big landlords did not make any effort to make agriculture more productive and efficient.

The poor peasant was hardly in any position to invest anything in the land. Indeed, after paying excessive taxes to mülazım and exorbitant interest to moneylenders on inevitable debts there was very little left for himself. His income could have risen if there were adequate marketing facilities. The inadequate transport facilities prevented the growth of developed urban markets which in turn kept the prices of agricultural commodities at a very low level. The same factor also hindered the development of export trade and made the supply of industrial goods inaccessible to the villages. It was therefore not surprising that the peasant lost interest in increasing his productivity.

Industry

Agriculture was not the only sector in the Turkish economy which lacked appropriate measures for its growth and development. The Ottoman Turkey hardly paid attention to the industrialization. One cannot help wondering why the Turks, who were quick to borrow the techniques of shipbuilding in their earlier history and of military engineering in the eighteenth century, ignored industrialization, particularly when the paramount concern of major European powers in the nineteenth century was the industrial growth.

True, the Sultans tried to set up factories as early as 1816 and the State initiative continued till 1855, but “the State factories were ill-conceived, inefficient, often irrelevant to the country’s needs and were only able to sustain a parasitic life
on constant government subsidies. Most of them were closed or abandoned, sometimes after only a few months’ work.” The Sultans did not realize that one of the chief requisites for any sustained economic activity is the existence of a code of laws which is not arbitrarily changed. In the Ottoman Empire the legislative and executive powers were concentrated in the person of the Sultan. There was very little security against sudden changes in the law and against its arbitrary administration during the nineteenth century. Property rights could be created or eliminated by the Sultan’s decree.

In addition to the legal and political system the social structure in the Ottoman Empire was a serious handicap in the setting up of industrial enterprises. Social esteem was given only to those who were either big landlords or held positions in the army and government or associated with religious thought or jurisprudence. Commerce and industry were regarded as degrading occupations. Consequently the middle class necessary for the building up of industrial structure did not come into existence. It was the minorities, the Armenians, the Greeks and the Jews who carried on trade and commerce and their loyalties lay outside Turkey. Additional difficulties were caused by the low level of income of the majority of the population. It obviously did not allow private capital accumulation in large proportions. On the one hand the population was forced to live on an extremely meagre standard of austerity, which was the only way to secure investment funds, and on the other hand it had a dampening effect on entrepreneurship, if there was any.

Foreign capital

Instead of taking positive measures to correct the situation, i.e. the improvement of agriculture, the Sultans sought the assistance of foreign capital. The foreign investors were not interested in the industrial development of Turkey. One reason was the low effective demand and poor profit, secondly, they did not want to create industries which might compete with finished goods produced in their own countries.

“Here, the national economic interests often proved stronger than individual interests of actual or potential investors,” says Dr. Z. Y. Herschel, the Israeli economist, in his book Turkey: An Economy in Transition. The European capital, therefore, went into enterprises which were least competitive with home economies and which also gave quick and high or secure returns. In 1924 the foreign investments stood at more than £63 million. But out of 94 companies maintained by foreign capital only 12 were engaged in manufacturing. The rest were railway companies (7), mines (6), banks (23), municipal concessions (11) and commercial enterprises (35).

Foreign investments even in non-industrial sectors could prove beneficial to the country in which they are made provided the foreign investors do not enjoy the concessions which they did in the Ottoman Empire. For instance, the monopoly of tobacco was granted to a Franco-Austrian company in 1884. “By 1914 the company had made a profit of £30 million Turkish gold pounds, of which £23 million were paid in tax to the Council of Public Debt.” Commenting on the role of foreign capital in the Ottoman Empire the Mission of International Bank for Reconstruction and Development said in its report in 1951: “Although through these concessions Turkey obtained certain facilities which it would not have otherwise obtained, the country paid a high price for them.”

Congratulations

Foreign influence and interest in the form of “capitations” and debts were other millstones around Turkey’s neck which dragged her down in the previous century and hampered economic growth. “Capitations” were concessions granted by the Sultans to foreign nationals trading in Turkey. These concessions meant exemption from or low rates on taxes and customs duties, franchise and the right to be tried in special courts under foreign jurisdiction. The Sultans had been granting such concessions for a long time. As long as they were strong the capitulations did no harm to Turkey, but in the nineteenth century, when the Ottoman rule became weak, they were grossly abused. Turkey could not, when she wanted to, raise the tariff duties without the consent of powers enjoying the capitulations. In other words, it was the foreigners who controlled commerce in Turkey and it was obviously not in their interest that Turkey developed her industries.

Foreign debt

Inability to raise more revenue, radical decline in tribute money from imperial possessions and costs of waging a modern war made Turkey short of financing the government expenditure, and forced her to borrow from overseas on unfavourable terms. In 1854 for the first time the Ottoman government floated a loan of £3 million on the money markets of London and Paris. The interest rate was 6 per cent, the amortization 1 per cent and the issue price £80. After paying the underwriters’ commission Turkey received not more than half the nominal amount! The second loan in 1855 was on somewhat better terms as it was guaranteed by the British and French governments. In 1858 the Ottoman government borrowed again; on this occasion to cover the withdrawal of “Kaimé” — a kind of treasury bond which made havoc of the general price structure. From 1858 borrowing from overseas became a regular feature of the Ottoman finance, sometimes to meet the public expenditure, sometimes to service the earlier loans and sometimes to cover the reckless extravagance of Sultan Abdul ‘Aziz. It continued till 1875 when Turkey could not effect the repayments. And in 1881 when the foreign debt amounted to £200 m. the Ottoman government had to hand over control of certain State revenues to the “Council of Public Debt” which represented the European bondholders and which “was to ensure servicing of the debt.”

The effect was that Turkey had second-rank collecting a large part of national revenues, exercising considerable power of control over national finances and responsible only to foreign interests. By 1911 the “Council of Public Debt” had a staff of 8,931 persons, as against 5,472 in the Imperial Ministry of Finance. What little degree of economic sovereignty the Ottoman government possessed was further reduced by the operations of the foreign-owned Ottoman Bank which had exclusive right to issue currency and to act as paymaster and depository for the Turkish government.

War and Greek invasion

As if all these developments were not enough to paralyse the country, further devastation came in the wake of World War I. And when the war ended Turkey found herself defeated, without her empire, with foreign troops on its soil and with a government quite willing to dismember the country. On top of this came the Greek invasion with the connivance of the Allied powers and active support of Britain in May 1919. This new onslaught effected great damage. “The waves of destruction progressed from Izmir to Cilicia in the East.” And whatever came in their way — human beings, houses, villages, towns, bridges, animals — were destroyed. It would be an under-statement to say that Kemal Atatürk’s undertaking to free the country from foreign occupants and from the Ottoman rulers was a formidable one. It was a herculean task to renew the military efforts when the agricultural and already meagre industrial production had been severely affected, the transport facilities (inadequate as they were) destroyed, the domestic and foreign trade had almost
collapsed and when anarchy and demorazilation were reigning supreme. Nevertheless, after more than three years' hard and bitter struggle the Greeks were finally defeated. In 1923 Turkey joined the comity of nations as a Republican State.

The true greatness of Kemal Ataturk does not lie in achieving military victories, extraordinary as they were, but in laying the foundation of a modern State which was overwhelmingly to concern itself with the problem of improvement in material condition of the Turkish people.

Ataturk was fully aware of the situation which Republican Turkey was facing. He firmly believed that Turkey as a modern State could not survive without a modern economy at its base. The fall of the Ottoman Empire had taught him a very important lesson: political sovereignty is meaningless in the absence of economic sovereignty, without which political and military victories, however great, are empty and transitory. He warned the jubilant Turkish people that the successful defence of the country by the Turkish army and its victories were only the beginning of the important task of nation building. He said:

"The success which our army has gained up to now cannot be regarded as having achieved the real salvation of our country. These victories have only prepared the ground for our future victories. Let us rather prepare for new victories in science and economics."

But the victories in science and economics could be achieved only if the evil influences of the past had been removed.

Lausanne Treaty

The first step was obviously to make Turkey sovereign in her economic affairs. An attempt had already been made to abolish the capitulations in 1914, but the interested European powers would not have it, and even after the war they were determined to retain these privileges. But at the Peace Conference which opened in Lausanne in November 1922 Ismet Inonu, Turkey's foreign minister at the time, made it quite clear to the delegates of the Allied Powers that Turkey would not accept anything limiting her sovereignty and certainly not the capitulations which had come to be regarded as a symbol of inferiority and servitude.

If Lord Curzon, head of the British delegation, had had his way, he would not have allowed Turkey to be sovereign in her economic affairs. But the existence of the Friendship Treaty between Soviet Russia and Turkey proved a great deterrent for the Allied Powers in enforcing their terms on Turkey. They had to concede to the abolition of the capitulations and along with it went the extraordinary concessions enjoyed by the foreign firms, though liquidation did not complete till 1930. No final solution was reached regarding the Ottoman debt at Lausanne. The Allied Powers fixed the total debt at 129 million Turkish gold pounds. Turkey was asked to pay 84.5 million, the annual payment being 5.8 million. As a result of Turkey's constant protest a new agreement was reached through the League of Nations in 1933 when her share of the debt was fixed at 8 million Turkish gold pounds; in Turkish paper pounds it amounted to 79.8 million. It took Turkey 11 years to unload this huge burden. Turkey was not so successful in resisting the demands of the Allied Powers in the sphere of customs tariffs. As a result of the Commercial Convention, incorporated in the Lausanne Treaty, the Turkish Government was unable, until 1929, to develop a trade policy which was in accordance with the needs of the country. The terms of the Lausanne Treaty may not have made Turkey absolutely sovereign in her economic affairs, but the Turkish stand at the conference made it quite clear that the days of the Ottoman rule had gone, never to return again.

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Cultural Revolution Brought About by the Kalimah

A bird’s eye-view of the life of the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad

By Abul Hashim

“The philosophy of the Kalimah is a philosophy of unity, harmony and balance and so the culture of the Kalimah deprecates development of one or some aspects of human existence in excess of or at the cost of others but insists on harmonious and balanced development of all the aspects of life. Some philosophy of human existence interprets life by economic struggles of man, some make sex or power interpretation of history and some preach complete renunciation of the pleasure and joy of material life for the culture of the spiritual aspect of man’s being with the tragic result that they equally fail to produce the complete man. Since life is the sum-total of developments of all the faculties of man it can be interpreted by any of the component elements of human life, but such interpretations do not interpret the complete man but merely give a partial and incomplete view of man and his affairs. The Muslim Arabs, fully conscious of this, endeavoured with honesty, sincerity and devotion to implement the teachings of the Kalimah uniformly in all the spheres of their everyday individual and collective existence. The culture of the Kalimah thus created out of the wild children of the desert a beautiful and lovely society of living models of the complete man.”

Spiritual culture of the Kalimah

Culture is the development of the faculties of man both external and internal, and is its manifestation in his behaviour and in his immediate material environment. Culture of a society is, therefore, found in the everyday business of life and actual living conditions of its people. So the cultural revolution of the Kalimah is seen in the pristine Muslim Arab society of Medina. Great historians and writers on the Oriental culture have made a common error in associating the cultures of the imperial Arabs of Damascus, Baghdad, Alexandria and Cordova, of the imperial Turks and of the Great Moghuls of Delhi and Agra with the culture of Islam. These cultures bear only a faint impress of the long-forsaken culture of Islam, but they misrepresent rather than represent the culture of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions. Hence these cultures must not be taken as Muslim culture without reservation.

The plain and simple way of living of the early Muslims, even when they were actual rulers of Persia, Egypt and the whole of the Arabian peninsula, led some to think that Islam is a philosophy and culture of poverty. These critics have failed to get into the spirit of Islam. The philosophy and culture of the religion of the Kalimah is not a philosophy and culture of poverty but is a philosophy and culture of poverty of material wealth. The Kalimah does not deprecate or minimize the value of material wealth in the making of man but on the contrary lays the greatest stress on the solution of man’s material problems and satisfaction of his material needs; the Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said, “Poverty leads to revolt against God”. But it does not give more importance to material wealth than it actually deserves and does not make man a creature of his material environment. Man has been created not as the slave to but the master of material wealth of the creation and has been given the status of the creator of his own material environment. When man is overpowered by the influence of material conditions of living, he slowly becomes the product of his material environment, but when he overpowers the influence of material wealth and comfort then he really becomes the master and creates his own environment according to his needs. The Kalimah, therefore, puts its whole attention to the culture of the human materials of man and simply utilizes material wealth and comfort only so far as they are needed. But it definitely discourages luxury and affluence, which have a dominating influence upon the habits and character of man.

In the typical Muslim society of Medina the grandeur of the man always appeared in bold relief in the context of his material environment, but in the so-called advanced and civilized societies of man the man fades into insignificance in the glow of the grandeur of his material environment. Secondly, the Kalimah stands for a uniform and harmonious development of the whole and abhors extravagant growth of a part in a generally pale and anaemic body. Hence the people of the Kalimah maintained a uniform standard of living in their society. This explains their simple and plain living. The Kalimah is not indifferent to material wealth but knows precisely both its virtues and vices and takes full advantage of its virtues but carefully avoids its vices. It was in this latter sense that the Prophet said, “My poverty is my pride.” To exhibit the magnificence of the Caliphate the Muslim Arabs required no palace, no army of liveried attendants or costly Persian carpets and fresco paintings on the walls of their houses. Visitors, diplomats and ambassadors from the lands of the peoples of thrones and palaces, when they visited Medina and sat with the Arabs in their low and thatched huts, felt themselves very small before the magnificence of the personality of their hosts and all pride and vanity of thrones and palaces vanished into thin air. Dignity and prestige were maintained by the nobility of character of the Caliph and his people and not by the material prosperity of the ruling class, which does not represent the actual living conditions of the common man. This is Islam and this is the spiritual culture of the Kalimah.

Moral culture

The now prevalent customs of the confinement of the womenfolk in some Muslim countries is not Islamic

Since both law and morality of the Kalimah are founded
on the knowledge of the law that determines the behaviour of nature, law and morality of the Kalimah coincide and command spontaneous obedience of the believers. The Kalimah recognizes no internal or subjective morality but it cultures and develops a high-leveled external or objective sense of right and wrong. In the details of everyday behaviour of the early Muslim Arabs, a highly-developed natural morality of the Kalimah is clearly visible. They never tolerated any wrong or any anti-social activity. “The strongest is the weakest so long as he does not discharge his obligations and the weakest is the strongest so long as his just rights are not violated” was the motto of their everyday business of life and their dealings with one another. If in some weak moment they committed any offence, they at once confessed and on their own initiative took the judgment of law to purify themselves. Not only an actual immoral act but thought and action which create tendency to do wrong and as such are a remote approach to sins and crimes were uncongenial to their taste. So in the name of art and culture they do not encourage drinking, gambling, vulgar and sensual dance, music and painting, which have a corroding influence upon the character of man and are approaches to grave anti-social activities.

The now-prevalent custom of confinement of the women-folk within the four walls of their houses is the creation of the imperial Arabs of Damascus and Baghad under the influence of the culture of the aristocracies of Byzantine and Persia, and as also of the imperial Pathans and Moghuls under the influence of Persian and Rajput culture. In the Muslim Arab society women moved freely and participated in the daily business of life of their men folk as equal partners of their life, but they strictly preserved their modesty and never made public display of beauty and elegance. The rules of conduct regulating social intercourse between the sexes were equally applicable to men and women. The relevant verses of the Holy Qur'an on this point are, “O ye who believe! Enter not houses other than your own, until ye have asked permission and saluted those in them; that is the best for you, in order that ye may heed. If ye find no one in the house, enter not until permission is given to you: if ye are asked to go back, go back: that makes for greater purity for yourselves; and God knows well all that ye do” (24: 27-28), and again “Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty that will make for greater purity for them: and God is well acquainted with all that they do. And say to the believing women that they should not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands’ fathers, their sons, their husbands’ sons, their brothers or their brothers’ sons, or their sisters’ sons or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O ye believers! Turn ye all together towards God, that ye may attain Bliss” (24: 30-31). They were honest and truthful both in thinking and action and never committed fraud and hypocrisy. They fulfilled to the letter and spirit their covenants and commitments. In their hands life, property and honour of all were absolutely safe. They knew that performance of duties to God was a mockery so long as duties to man were not duly performed.

Intellectual culture

The Prophet's famous dictum, “The ink of a learned man's pen is more precious than the blood of a martyr” was fully implemented in the everyday life of the Arabs. They gave utmost importance and encouragement to learning. They had free education centres and they freely exchanged knowledge and learning with one another and they were always ready to learn and to teach. Prisoners of war who knew how to read and write were set free on condition that they would teach a number of Muslims the art of reading and writing. They showed the highest respect to their teachers, so much so that the Prophet Muhammad is reported to have shown respect to a sweeper by rising from his seat for he had learned from him signs of a dog's adolescence. They had no prejudice or superstition against knowledge and wisdom of other people and had no conceit for their own. They recognized freedom of conscience and discussion as one of the fundamental rights of man and had perfect tolerance for disagreeable views of others. They could never think of administering "hemlock juice" to thinkers and philosophers who did not agree with their philosophy of life. They travelled far and wide to acquaint themselves with art, science, law and custom of other people and taught them with the devotion of a missionary their newly-acquired knowledge — the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an. Believers in revelation as they were, they cultured intellect and intuition in equal measure. They had active faith in the reality of a living God and performed their duty to God with the purity of faith. They bowed to God five times a day and fasted during the month of Ramadhan; this was mandatory for all. But after the toils of the day when the world retired to rest in sleep they would often sit till late in the night and develop in the solitude of the night their supersenses with prayer and meditation.

Social culture

Nowhere else in the history of man past or present can be found such a brilliant example of equality or brotherhood of man as is found in the culture of the Muslim Arabs. The equality and brotherhood of man was not a mere theory or a distant ideal but was the very foundation of their immediate social life. They were not merely comrades but brothers. They contributed to the social welfare each according to his genius and had a high sense of dignity of labour. No honest labour, however humble, was considered mean and low. Brothers were not divided from brothers on the basis of their vocation of life. The Prophet Muhammad would often be seen mending his own shoes, sweeping the floor of his house, and he was one of those drawing water from a deep well for a Jew to earn a small wage for repayment of a debt. The Caliph Abu Bakr would often be seen in the streets of Medina with a heavy burden on his back going to the market to sell his commodities without any sense of loss of prestige.

In their society there was complete absence of jealousy and hatred which breed invidious distinction between man and man and class and class. Their relation with one another was not one of exploitation but of love and affection and they always helped one another like brothers. They hated sins but not the sinners. If they ever hit anybody they did so not in a spirit of vengeance but without malice, only by way of performance of a duty. Their sense of equality and brotherhood of man was so real that they had no sense of difference between the Caliph and a slave. The Caliph 'Umar, the victor of Jerusalem, made his historical triumphant entry into the fallen city leading his camel while his tired slave was seen comfortably seated on the back of his camel. Once at the dead of night the Caliph 'Umar and 'Abbas, an uncle of the Prophet and the ancestor of the Caliphs of Baghdad, were seen mounting the hills with heavy loads of foodstuffs on their shoulders to feed a hungry sister and her children; at that
hour of the night they would not disturb the tired servants of the Caliphate to do this job. They had no separate mosque for the rich and the poor or for the black and the white; they all as equals and brothers stood shoulder to shoulder in prayer and fell prostrate before the One God Whom and Whom alone they worshipped and from Whom and Whom alone they sought help.

Political culture

Their behaviour in the field of politics was determined by the political precepts, concepts and ideals of the Kalimah. They did not accept the sovereignty of man. To them the Caliph was like himselfs, a servant of God with only this difference, that he was entrusted with special duties peculiar to his office. The rule of law was strictly observed and in the name of public interest and dignity or security of the State he Caliph and other high officials of the Caliphate got no immunity against the operation of the law. On one occasion the Caliph ‘Umar was summoned before one of his judges like a common offender for trial on the petition of a common man who felt himself aggrieved by an act of the Caliph. During the caliphate of ‘Uthman (d. 656 C.E.) the Governor of Kufa was brought to Medina and given forty stripes, which was the punishment allotted for drinking, for the governor was found guilty of leading a congregational prayer in a state of intoxication. On another occasion during ‘Umar’s Caliphate the Governor of Syria had to tend sheep in Medina like a common shepherd for building a palace in contravention of the edicts of instruction of the Caliph forbidding Governors to raise their standard of living higher than the living conditions of the common citizens of the caliphate. They enjoyed absolute freedom of discussion of political issues and criticism of administration of the caliphate without any apprehension of incurring the displeasure of the Caliph and other leaders of the caliphate. The rulers of the caliphate never cared to worry is to who was their friend and who was their foe, but on the contrary their own everyday behaviour was always under the spotlight of public vigilance and even a trivial irregularity did not go unnoticed and uncorrected. The rules of war and peace were strictly observed. They never made aggressive attacks and when they were obliged to meet violence with violence they took particular care to see that the intensity and duration of violence did not exceed limits. In war and peace they never allowed the spirit of vengeance and reprisal to vitiate the cause which inspired them to take arms. When the city of Mecca fell before the Prophet, a proclamation for general amnesty to all was immediately issued; they forgot a moment all the accumulated grievances against their enemies in Mecca and embraced them as brothers, for they offered peace. They were happy that they had done their duty well.

Economic culture

True to their faith in the ownership of God of the wealth of the earth, the Muslims did not create an absolute interest in what they possessed. They used and appropriated material resources in their possession with moderation and held them as long as others more needy did not require them for the satisfaction of their needs. Whenever a needy brother approached or was found in need they at once placed their resources for his use and if such offer was not accepted they felt insulted and aggrieved. To them charity was not a luxury of the rich for it was their faith that every needy brother had a real share in their assets which belonged to God. They assembled five times a day in the mosque for congregational prayers and before they stood before God for prayer they very carefully took stock of the circumstances of their neighbours and made necessary arrangements to satisfy the wants of their needy brothers and sisters, for they knew that their performance of duty to God would be playing false and be a mockery, and as such would be unacceptable to God so long as they did not perform their duties to their fellow men. When resources were needed for public response they voluntarily contributed their quota to the society, for they knew that the society had superior right of possession.

The venerable Abu Bakr laid before the Prophet his entire assets when money and materials were needed for the battle of Tabuk (628 C.E.) on the Syrian front. Every Muslim home strictly observed the principles of the economic universalism of the Kalimah. The head of the family satisfied his own needs not before the needs of his guests, servants, children, wife and other dependants of the family had been satisfied. The Prophet and his faithful companions were seen starving for days together with pleasure, for satisfying the hunger of others and so long as they had anything in their possession their indigent brothers and sisters were not deprived of the share they had in their resources as common children of the common Father. It was not very rare that the young children of ‘Ali were made to starve for the satisfaction of others’ needs. They possessed wealth but they themselves were never possessed by wealth. They hated idleness and indolence for they knew that their right to possess and to enjoy the material resources of the earth for their nourishment in common with similar rights of others was derived from their right to work and live. Any Muslim society or State which does not make sincere and honest efforts to develop this culture of collective economic existence is by no means entitled to call itself a Muslim society or State.

The complete man

The philosophy of the Kalimah is a philosophy of unity, harmony and balance and so the culture of the Kalimah deprecates development of one or some aspects of human existence in excess of or at the cost of others but insists on harmonious and balanced development of all the aspects of life. Some philosophy of human existence interprets life by economic struggles of man, some make sex or power interpretation of history and some preach complete renunciation of the pleasure and joy of material life for the culture of the spiritual aspect of man’s being with the tragic result that they equally fail to produce the complete man. Since life is the sum-total of developments of all the faculties of man it can be interpreted by any of the component elements of human life, but such interpretations do not interpret the complete man but merely give a partial and incomplete view of man and his affairs. The Muslim Arabs, fully conscious of this, endeavoured with honesty, sincerity and devotion to implement the teachings of the Kalimah uniformly in all the spheres of their everyday individual and collective existence. The culture of the Kalimah thus created out of the wild children of the desert a beautiful and lovely society of living models of the complete man.
Scientific Truths in the Holy Qu’ran

By Al-Hajj Dr. Zohurul Hoque

The Holy Qur’án was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad fourteen hundred years ago during the dark age of the world. The world in general and the Arabs in particular were then sunk in illiteracy, ignorance and superstition. Those proclaiming any scientific truth contrary to the prevalent superstitious beliefs were opposed, tortured, persecuted and even put to death. At such an age, the Holy Qur’án was revealed to an unlettered Arab who did not have any schooling, yet his Scripture depicted the best wisdom and knowledge. The scientific truths contained in it have been corroborated by the modern scientific researches carried on in advanced countries. This testimony is proof enough of the Divine origin of the Holy Qur’án. A few verses dealing with scientific truths are recorded hereunder.

God is the Rabb, i.e., the Creator, the Evolver, the Nourisher and the Maintainer of all the world around us, and His creation is innumerable and unrecordable even with oceanfuls of ink:

Say thou (O Muhammad!): “Were the sea to become ink for (the writing of) my Lord’s Kalimaat (or) Words (everything created being a Word of my Lord, and things created having no end), surely the sea would be exhausted before the Words of my Lord could be exhausted, and even though we brought another (sea) like it to add (thereto)” (18 : 109).

“And (whereas there is as if no end to the extent of the starry creations, your earth being only a sand in the beach, and things created in the earth itself being innumerable), if every tree in the earth were (turned into) pens and the ocean combining with seven more oceans after it (were to be ink), the Words (i.e., the creations, 18 : 109) of God would not be exhausted (to write them all therewith; similarly, although thou, O Muhammad! dost not know reading and writing, 29 : 48, and living in a country where pen and ink are scarce, 62 : 2, yet there will be abundant use of pen and ink in transcribing the Holy Qur’án, even then the expounding of its glory will not be completed). Surely God is Exalted in Might, most Wise.” (31 : 27).

God has created everything and He is keeping the universe to a set order:

(“The Great Geometrician) Who has created the seven, 2 : 29, heavens in harmony. (Nature being the art of God, it is a volume of which God is the Author, hence thou (O Muhammad! with thy general knowledge of astronomy) cannot see any incongruity in the creation of the Rahman. Then (after thy thorough knowledge, cast a second thought and) turn thy gaze once more (to heaven, and look!). Dost thou see any crack (in the laws of nature)? And then (for thy conviction) turn thy look once more and yet again (to trace out any variation in Our law), (thy) look will return to thee defeated — while it is fatigued (due to thy vain effort); and thus the existence of only One Supreme Being, 21 : 22, is proved by the prevalence of only one law in the universe” (67 : 3, 4).

The original condition of heaven was nebular or gaseous in nature:

“Then He directed Himself towards the space, whilst it was a gaseous matter (or a nebular mass, 21 : 30, and not a vacuum), so that He said to it and to the earth:

“Come ye both willingly or unwillingly (to give shape to you as I wish).”

They said (in reply): “(The whole universe being subjected to Thy law), we both come (to Thy command) willingly” (yet alas! the proud unbelievers dare to transgress His command, and accept not One God, even when they see one law, 21 : 22, operating in the universe” (41 : 11).

The earth was created out of the heavenly bodies:

“Do not those who reject faith see that the heavens and the rotatory-earth (i.e. the whole universe, particularly the solar system, which has developed out of a nebular mass, 41 : 11), were both closed up (and joined together as one unit of creation), then We rent them both (separating the starry creation and throwing off the planets from the solar system),” 21 : 30.

“Are you stronger in creation, or the heaven?

He (God) has created it. He has raised its height (to a very great extent, thereby placing the heavenly bodies at very great distances) . . . And the earth —

He cast it out after that (i.e. the earth was thrown off from a starry creation, the sun, after the latter, 41 : 9-12), had been created” (79 : 27-30).

The earth has undergone six stages of development in coming to the present condition:

“And We have certainly created the heavens and the rotatory-earth and what is between the two in six, 7 : 54. 41 : 9-12, periods, 1 : 3, 22 : 47; and no weariness touched Us (so, in contrary to Gen. 2 : 2, nor did We rest on the seventh day to recoup Our energy)” (50 : 38).

“Say (O Muhammad! unto the polytheists): ‘What! will you indeed deny Him Who created the rotatory-earth in two periods [or stages, e.g. (i) the throwing off the cosmic matter called the earth, 21 : 30, and (ii) the cooling of its surface to make it fit for life], and do you ascribe unto Himicompeers? That (and none else) is the Rabb of the worlds.' And (iii) He put therein mountains on its surface (through upheaval and sinking of the crust during its cooling from the bubbling-hot stage), and (iv) He put blessings therein (in the form of water, without which life cannot exist in the earth)” (24 : 25).

“and measured therein its diverse sustenance [in the form of (v) plant life and (vi) the animal life, which culminates in the creation of man] (all these are accomplished) in four (other) stages (to make it fit for Man, the vicegerent of God)” (2 : 30).

Water is the source of all life:

“And out of water We made all things living (because water is the source of all life, and protoplasm, which is the original basis of all living matter, is watery in character, 24 : 45). Will they not then believe (in the truth of the Qur’án)?” (21 : 30).

Animal life is undergoing three stages in its evolution:

“And God creates all terrestrial out of water (because protoplasm which is the physical basis of life is watery in character, 21 : 30). Then there are amongst them (three classes of animals), viz., (i) those that go upon their bellies (i.e. the creeping, crawling, and the swimming things — the lowest and the first form of animal life); and amongst them are (ii) those that go upon two feet (such as birds — the second form in the development);
Man can conquer even space and undertake space-travel:

"And we were to open an entrance in space (revealing to them the new vistas of other worlds), and they were to climb therein all along (in their space travels, 55:33; i.e., though the clearest evidence of the Qur'an may be brought before them),
they (being determined to reject the Truth, in spite of more and more light and knowledge being given to them), would surely say:
"Our eyes have been merely bewildered (by our achievements and the conquests of nature).
rather have we been mesmerised (by our own power, and it is undignified for us to go for any Supernatural Power)"
15:14, 15.
O ye collective body of the jinn and the men (i.e. the Capitalists of America and the Socialists of Russia)!
if you can (conquer the space and launch an expedition to push your way beyond the control of the earth, and then) penetrate (all) the regions of the heavens and (also of) the rotary-earth, 2:29,
then do pass through (them, 15:14, 15)
You will not be able to penetrate
except by means of (Our) authority (and by utilising Our law operating all over the universes)." 55:33.

Embryology or the process in the creation of a human child is mentioned in detail in conformity with the most modern scientific knowledge:

"And (to speak of the seven stages in the physical growth of man, 6:2) We have certainly created man (i) from an extract (or essence) of clay (because the spermatozoa are produced from the seminal cells which are derived from the food drawn from the earth in whatever form it may be, 22:5).
then We make him (ii) a sperm (of the semen and place him) in a firm resting-place (inside the mother's womb).
Then (iii) (stage by stage, in the embryonic evolution) We make the sperm (after its fertilising the ovum) a clot,
then (iv) (in the embryonic stage) We make the clot a lump of flesh,
then (v) (the foetal stage cellular differentiations start becoming prominent and) We make (in) the lump of flesh bones,
then (vi) We dress the bones with muscles;
thereafter (unlike other animals) (vii) We evolve him (endowing with certain other faculties through Divine inspiration, 15:29)
into another creation.
Therefore blessed be God, the Best of creators." 23:12-14.

The original seat of testes, according to embryology, is high up in the abdomen:

"He is created out of (ordinary semen, 32:8, 11) a liquid poured forth,
coming out from between the back-bone (which is the symbol of a man's strength and personality) and the breast-bone (symbolising the love and affection attached to it, 7:189; anatomically also, the original seat of testes where spermatozoa are produced is high up inside the abdomen close to the backbone (the first lumbar vertebra, wherefrom they descend into the scrotum with the growth of the foetus))" 86:6, 7.

Man lives and dies in the earth, so he need not aspire to establish settlement in the planets:

"And We have indeed given you (mankind) an abode in the earth,
and We have made for you therein the means of livelihood (for your material advancement and refinement, and thereby point you to a higher spiritual destiny).
Little it is that you give thanks (for all this) !" (7:10).
"He (also) said: 'In this (very earth) you shall live,
and in it you shall die (hence every man, not excluding any saint or nabi, must live and die in this earth), 77:25, 26.
and from it you (in spiritual form) shall be brought forth (20:55),
therefore the covenants of certain terrestrial figures having been transplanted to the heaven to pass their lives there, must be rejected)" (7:25).
Though mankind are created only in the earth, the heavenly bodies are not devoid of life. There must be living creatures present in the other worlds:

“And (remind them of) the Day when the figures are breathed into (and the Trumpet is blown, 6:74),
those (manlike creatures, 27:65; 39:68) in the heavens and
those (mankind) in the rotatory-earth shall be in a terror,
except those whom God pleases (to exempt)” (27:87).
“And of His signs are the creation of the heavens and the
rotatory-earth,
and (leaving aside the so-called beasts in heaven, Rev. 4:6-10; 5:6) what He has spread forth in both of them of terrestrials,
16:49.
And He is Capable of gathering them together (before His
tribunal) when He pleases” (39:68; 42:29).

All animate creations have males and females and they multiply therethrough:

“(He is the) Originator of the heavens and the rotatory-earth.
He has appointed for you mates from among yourselves,
and mates of the cattle (also).
He multiplies you thereby (and never does He produce an off-
spring, not even a saint or a nabi, without the union of a
male and a female)” (7:189; 42:11).
“Nor is It Who creates you (from a single being, 4:1; the
male and female both being created from the same essence, 16:72),
and makes therefrom its mate that he (or she, i.e. man in general)
may find comfort in (and incline to) her (or to her spouse).
Therefore when he has covered her (in conjugal relation),
she bears a light burden
(and) then moves about (unnoticed) therewith (this being the
process of conception of each and every mortal, no saint or
nabi being an exception to it);
then (because happy is he who is happy in his children), when
it grows heavy,
they both (in their natural anxiety) call upon God their Lord:
“If Thou givest us a rightly-moulded one (a godly child, having
a sound mind in a sound body),
we will surely (ever) be of the thankful ones”” (7:189).

The vegetable kingdom is also created in pair — male and
female — in every species:

“And it is He Who has extended the earth,
and placed therein mountains and rivers.
And of all fruits (or plants) He has placed therein pairs (for the
sake of reproduction, 20:53; 36:36; 42:11; 43:12; 51:49;
53:45) in twos (the male stamens and the female pistils)”
(13:3).

Everything, living and non-living, is created in pairs:

“Glory be to Him Who creates pairs (of opposite nature, like
day and night, light and darkness, males and females in both
animal and vegetable kingdoms, 20:53, and so on) amongst
all things (in nature) that the earth grows,
and amongst themselves (by forming male and female sexes),
and (also) among (the various sorts of) things of which they have
no knowledge (as yet, like positive and negative electricity,
north and south poles in a magnet, oppositely charged
protons and electrons in every atom, pairs of opposite
energies in every matter, and even every action having
always an equal and opposite reaction — which fact the
world does not know now, and so this serves as a proof of
the Divine origin of this Qur’an)” (51:49; 36:36).

The earth is in a state of motion:

“He it is Who has made the rotatory-earth (2:29) of moderate
motion to you (steadying it from its primitive quick motion
with the formation of mountains, 16:15; 41:9, 10, and thereby
making it fit for your existence)” (67:15).

The earth has its gravitational pull by which everything is
drawn towards it:

“Have We not made the earth drawing to itself (by the law
of gravitation) —
the living and the dead (alike, hence no one, even in space travel,
15:14, 15, 55:33, can totally go away beyond the sphere of
the earth; and thus no one of the earth, not even a saint or
a nabi, can be spending his life in the heaven)” (7:25;
77:25, 26).

The heavenly bodies move on along their orbits:

“Consider the space filled with the (numerous) orbits (of
the moon round the earth, of various planets which resolve
round the sun, and of stars with their individual systems like
the Solar System, that move along these orbits, 21:33, 22:17,
35:13, 36:40 — a scientific truth unknown to the world in
this seventh century C.E.)” (51:7).

The sun and the moon have also their orbits along which they
move on incessantly:

And it is He Who has made the night and the day,
and the sun and the moon:
all (the celestial bodies) are floating on in an orbit (of their
And the sun (on its revolution in space) moves on to its destina-
tion (along orbit).
That is the ordinance of the Exalted in Might, all Knowing.
And as to the moon:
We have ordained for it (certain) stages (in its revolution round
the earth),
until she becomes again like a dried-old palm-stalk (during the
new moon).
It is not for the sun to overtake the moon (in her course, as
they cannot slip away from their orbits, 35:41),
nor can the night outstrip the day.
And all (these luminaries) float on in an orbit (of their own,
and all this knowledge of cosmology serves as a proof of the
Divine origin of this Qur'an” (36:38-40).

The moon has no light of its own, it only reflects the light
of the sun:

“Consider the Sun and its (glorious) forenoon brightness (as it
proceeds towards the zenith, 55:7),
and the Moon when she borrows light from it” (91:1, 2).

An atom, though thought to be indivisible, can be split into,
even those fragments of an atom are known to God:

“And not anything of the weight of an atom in the earth or
in the space above can be hidden from thy Lord,
and there is nothing smaller than that (i.e., the fraction of an
atom) nor greater (than that)
but the same is (leaving reflection in the universe, and is recorded)
in a manifest Book” (10:61).

“There cannot be an atom's weight (of good or evil) hidden from
Him in the heavens nor in the rotatory earth,
neither (anything) less than that (even after breaking a supposed
unbreakable atom into pieces) nor greater (after formation of a
molecule) —
but (all) is in a perspicuous Book (of His knowledge)” (34:3).

There are many more verses in the Holy Qur'an which
are impregnated with scientific truths. Only a few outstanding
ones have here been presented to the readers. They are enough
to show that the Holy Qur'an contains food not only for the
orthodox class of theologians, but also for the scientifically
trained modernists; and every class of people will be spell-
bound at the wonderful beauty of the Holy Qur'an, provided
they keep an open heart while studying the Divine Scripture.
The Qur'an itself says:

“What! do they not then ponder on the Qur'an :
or, are they on the hearts locks thereof?” (27:24).
Thoughts on the Qu’ran (13:30):
‘For without doubt hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of God’

Gods and Lesser Gods

By Norman Lewis

Most people who believe in God have retarded their spiritual progression by being devoted to God and something else, God and my career, God and my work. God and many other things which are not God.

Live for God alone, and you will find the right work; your career will be guided by Him. Might He not change your work? Might He not some day give you another career?

People who are passionately devoted to “God and my country” have given the world its most devastating wars.

Even “God and my family” can retard a man. The man who truly loves God will not uphold his brother in what he knows to be wrong.

We must eliminate the “and”, because there is no word that can be placed after the “and” which will not weaken our devotion to God.

There are people who worship “God and the Bible” or “God and the Qur’an”, people who worship God and a church. But God is above all books and statements, above all buildings and organizations.

“But my feeble mind cannot comprehend...” Stop trying to comprehend, and stop calling your mind feeble. We approach God in stillness, not in forensics.

“I am not strong enough to reach Him.” Who said that you were? Is He strong enough to reach thee? Hold out thy hands and ask for God. No such request will ever be denied.

Do you desire God above all else? Countless men and women on Earth have God as their possession. But they are humble people, not famous. They live in obscurity, with very little of this world’s goods. They do not value them. If they valued them, they would not value God.

Nor do they speak of their experience of God. It is too sacred.

Will they change the world? Not likely. The world has no desire to be changed. Such people exist for God and with God.

The humblest people are most apt to reach God. They know that they can approach God anywhere. A kitchen, a dining room, a parlour, a bedroom, a tent, a hillside, a mountain-top — any such place is a good place to become aware of God. His light penetrates even the darkness.

It is true that the man who dwells close to God will see the world as God sees it. This being so, he can scarcely stifle a cry against injustice, and it is likely that such a cry will be heard. He may even write, although not all such men are literate.

Hypocrisy amazes him. He will be very apt to denounce the hypocrites.

Throughout history, the prophets have been at war with the priests. But to whom did the people listen?

The prophets have warned, and the priests have reassured.

The prophet warns because he cannot abstain from warning. Yet no man is responsible for another man’s decisions. The Godly man grieves than the world is Godless, yet he is powerless to change it. He grieves if he sees cruelty to animals, yet how many can he persuade that the birds and animals are God’s creatures and loved by Him?

The true prophets have proclaimed that this world goes to destruction. The false prophets have said that the world is getting better and that there is no cause for alarm.

Nothing but God! These mansions we covet will crumble into dust, these fine garments will be moth-eaten and threadbare, these honours will cool and our popularity be forgotten. No goal has value except God. Only in Him does the soul find rest; only in Him does the mind discover certainty; only in Him is eternal life.

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JULY—AUGUST 1965
ISLAM IN AFRICA by Professor Mahmud Breli. Published by the Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore, Pakistan, 1964. Pages XXXVI + 657. Price £2.

Professor Mahmud Breli, in an imposing volume of 657 pages, has fulfilled a very important task in giving the Muslim and the non-Muslim world a chance of reading a history of the Muslims in North Africa written, for a change, by a Muslim who has had considerable experience of this continent. Hitherto, Muslim writers and their non-Muslim sympathisers have had to refer almost exclusively to works written by Christian Europeans. Now at last a gap in contemporary Muslim political and historical literature has been filled.

The book has a useful appendix which tells us that in 1962 there were approximately 126,688,000 Muslims in Africa, who formed 50.4% of the total population of that continent and that Africa provides 22% of the total Muslim population of the world.

It is unfortunate that the Nigerian Government had not disclosed the result of the 1963 census by the time of publication of this book, as according to this, the population is 55,620,268 as against “over 40 million” the figure given to Professor Breli, who has in every case made a pains-taking effort to get the latest available figures and who has shown great scrupulousness in attempting to give as accurately as possible the real number or percentage of Muslims in each country. As very few Muslim countries give these figures, his task has been rendered particularly arduous. Unfortunately Christian missionaries and colonial officials have shown more interest in these statistics than many African Muslims.

It is refreshing to see a frank account of the machinations of the Christian missionaries in such places as Uganda, Madagascar and especially in the Portuguese occupied parts of Africa. Only recently missionaries tried to blame the Sudanese Muslims for the revolts in the southern part of that country from which Muslim missionaries were excluded during the period of British administration.

In this work a vast amount of detail is given about the political parties and personalities in Africa, Muslim and non-Muslim. Of the latter, Tom Mboya, the brilliant Kenyan ex-trades union leader, emerges as one of the most important modern African personalities and the author uses his unique personal knowledge to give a very full and detailed account of the recent developments in Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda.

The overthrow of the Sultan of Zanzibar came just in time for mention in a footnote but on reading the details given of the uneasy period preceding independence it is understandable that outside intervention could turn the tables against the existing régime.

As to Somaliland, it is surely a Muslim country which has suffered the most from the fragmentation of its population stretching over its present borders into Ethiopia and Kenya, while part of its territory with the port of Djibouti is still under French rule. Professor Breli gives a very detailed account of the different Somali tribes and shows how the British by handing back the Haud to Ethiopia did a great disservice to the Somali nation. The Somali people deserve the support of the Muslim world in their fight for unity. The most useful function of this book is that it gives accurate details of the Muslim peoples of Africa so that Muslims and non-Muslims in the outside world can, after reading Islam in Africa, have access to the true facts when such countries as Somalia and the Sudan, Nigeria, Ghana, etc., are mentioned.

Professor Breli, in discussing the persecution of the Muslims in Ghana, states that the Muslims of the northern territories of Ghana feel, “That they have not been fairly treated by the anti-Muslim government of Accra. Obviously the northern territories are the most neglected and under-developed part of the country. The opposition leaders are most sincerely disturbed over the tremendous power of President Nkrumah and the ruling ‘Convention Peoples Party’... The government had not dealt with the Muslim citizens correctly and fairly, and has deported several Muslim leaders and religious heads, including a number of opposition party leaders! It has changed the constitution so that it can be amended by a simple majority and without reference to the regions, abolished the regional assemblies, and passed the ‘Preventive Detention Act’, which has given the government the right to arrest and imprison for five years without trial any person viewed by the Cabinet as dangerous to the security of the country.”

Yet the Gold Coast Muslim Association had given its support to the Convention Peoples Party in 1951 and thus helped pave the way of Kwame Nkrumah to power. It is well that this well-documented modern history should remind us of the ingratitude of the Gold Coast leader to the Ghana Muslims. The author tells us that President Nkrumah is carrying out the delicate balancing act of trying to be friendly with President Nasir and Israel at the same time.

Some of the Muslim States mentioned form parts of West Africa, formerly French administered, and have received little prominence in the English language press; notably Premier Ahmadu Ahidjo of the Cameroons and President Hamani Diori of the Republic of the Niger. Curiously enough the Presidents of the almost entirely Muslim countries of Senegal, the Chad, are not Muslims, nor is the President of the Central African Republic, which has a million Muslims out of a total Muslim population of about 1,500,000. Professor Breli seems to err on the side of modesty when he gives the percentage of Muslims for Gambia, the small West African State which became independent in 1965. A British survey of August, 1962, states that 90% of the people of this country are “Muhammadan” peasants and a Central Office of Information of Great Britain pamphlet gives this figure as over 80%.

But this is a very trifling detail in a vast compilation of
accurate information in which sources are drawn from African and European languages, complicated by the transliteration of names from Arabic, which are spelt quite differently by French, English, German, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese writers.

The United Arab Republic comes under fire for not supporting the United Nations resolutions on Kashmir, as does Ghana. Professor Brelvi considers that the Palestinian Arabs were also the losers as a result of this attitude as United Nations resolutions are inter-related.

Amongst the North African politicians mentioned in Islam in Africa an appreciation is made of the balancing act of President Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia, who for many years appeared to be pro-Western while entertaining in his country 150,000 Algerian refugees and a well-equipped Algerian army of 20,000.

Apart from detailed examination of the individual countries of Africa, attention is also paid to the attempts at regional federations and groupings by the newly emerged African states but it is pointed out that the Arab World had never been more divided than it is today, in spite of the lip service paid by its leaders to unity. But in this connection it must be stated that progress has been made by Mali and other African states to mediate in the frontier dispute between Morocco and Algeria. But this took place after this book was written and unfortunately a very serious difference of opinion has arisen between President Bourguiba and the other members of the Arab League over the Palestinian question. Also there is no solid Muslim African support for Somaliland against Ethiopia. Opportunism has led to the sacrifice of principle.

A great many maps are included in this admirable book and it is gratifying to see that frequent reference is made to The Islamic Review and its campaign for North African independence has not gone unnoticed.

In the concluding chapter the missionaries come in for rough treatment, for their campaign of denigration and misinformation about the Muslim world.

It is to be hoped that this invaluable work will not only be consulted by all teachers of Muslim history and geography but that it will have a popular appeal and be brought up to date in future editions. The emergence of China in Africa (as in Tanzania) will no doubt furnish a topic for future additions.

What our Readers say...

WEST AFRICAN MUSLIMS

London, S.W.1.

Dear Sir,

I read with great interest Mr. Ikram’s letter commenting on my article on Mali, Senegal and Guinea in The Islamic Review for May 1965.

At the very time of his writing, I was in the process of getting together the material for an article on Gambia, which is unquestionably a predominantly Muslim State, and now that its High Commission in London is operating, I am able to consult it about the material available, nearly all of which comes from British sources (including one of the excellent brochures published by the British Central Office of Information in London).

It is not for me to comment on the fact that the Premier of this State is a Christian. I have frequently called attention to the fact that Islam is spreading in West Africa and that during the period of British and French administration according to leading French political and religious authorities, Islam was considered as progressive in the fight against imperialism and race and colour prejudice.

Mr. Ikram draws the obvious conclusion that the Muslims must emulate and outdo the Christian missionaries in sending missionaries and building schools and setting up hospitals.

I have shown Mr. Ikram’s letter to the Press Attaché of the Sierra Leone High Commission, who says that he will answer it if I can obtain for him the article referred to by Mr. Imam.

Mr. Imam notes that the Muslims hold 5 out of 22 seats in the Sierra Leone Cabinet, but I am not sure if he has been given the right percentage of Muslims in that country, as the noted Pakistani authority Professor Mahmud Brelvi in his definitive work Islam in Africa states on page 400 that the Muslims in 1962 number over 300,000 or 11 per cent of the total population. If this is the case, then the Muslims have twice the number of cabinet seats they are entitled to, if one is going to base these offices on religious proportional representation.

I must say that this proportion of Muslims in Sierra Leone seems to be very low. Some time ago when I started to collect material for an article for The Islamic Review on this country, I was given an approximate figure of 50 per cent. I hope that Professor Brelvi will help us to clear up this matter.

With regard to Senegal I showed in my article how President Senghor, a brilliant writer, was originally elected to the French Assembly with the votes of the powerful Muslim marabouts, who were at that time influenced by the French Administration which wished to displace the powerful veteran Muslim Socialist Deputy and Mayor of Dakar, Maitre Lamine Gueye. At the time of the arrest of the former Premier, Mr. Mamadou Dia, there were five more Muslim ministers than at present. In collecting my material for this article I was unable to discover a direct attack on the Muslims in Senegal. Mamadou Dia was a far more radical African socialist and less under French influence than President Senghor, but I think that it was a clash of personalities and political rather than religious ideas. President Senghor, a practising Catholic,
seems to remain on excellent terms with the vast Muslim brotherhoods. The Muslim Foreign Minister and the President of the National Assembly, Maitre Lamin Gueye, now support him. Personally I felt a great deal of sympathy for Mamadou Dia, who with his Muslim associates is condemned to life imprisonment. However, it should be stated that Mamadou Dia played a great part in the regrettable breaking-up of the Mali Senegal federation.

As far as I can make out, there were 13-14 Muslims and three Christians, including a naturalized Frenchman, in President Seckou's Government in March 1965. The Foreign Minister and Vice-President, Doudou Thiam, is a Muslim, as is the Minister of the Interior. Christians hold the ministries of Finance, Commerce, Industry and Artisanat and Technical Education.

I am trying to get some material on the Chad and the Upper Volta and Niger. Unfortunately, most of the reading matter available is written from a French Christian angle.

With regard to Liberia, Professor Brele states on p. 363 of his Islam in Africa: “The total population is estimated to be over 2 million, of all the African race, including over 200,000 Muslims (10 per cent).” This is a very different figure from the 45 per cent quoted by Mr. Ikram, and again Professor Brele gives the percentage of Muslims in the Ivory Coast as 15 per cent, not 55 per cent. But his estimate of 40 per cent for the Muslims in Ghana is not far off the 45 per cent quoted by Mr. Ikram. Professor Brele gives an account of the fate of the Muslim leaders in this country.

It is extremely difficult to get information of a religious nature from the representatives of all these countries in England. I think it would be true to say that they are told to concentrate on politics, economics and the social side of life, and whatever is of interest to the British political press and the public. But I am repeatedly assured that there is no attempt to exclude the Muslims from political leadership.

Under the Abboud régime the Sudan has been under fire following the revolt of the non-Muslim tribes in the south, but as I pointed out years ago in The Islamic Review, these people were attached to the Sudan by the British under General Kitchener when he succeeded in holding off the rival French imperialists at Fashoda in 1898 and the Sudanese Muslims repeatedly complained that British missionaries prevented them from carrying out Muslim missionary work in these territories during the British occupation.

I hope that The Islamic Review will soon deal in detail with Somaliland, which is almost 100 per cent Muslim.

One of the best ways to help the Muslims would be to send copies of The Islamic Review to all the reading rooms and establishments where English is spoken in Africa. A grant to this effect by Muslim countries or charities would be most beneficial, for it would give the Review the opportunity of carrying many more articles on this subject. Many important Muslim countries such as Guinea have no embassies in the United Kingdom, and as a result information is slow to come by and costly to collect.

Yours sincerely,
G. NEVILLE BAGOT.

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MUSLIMS IN ETHIOPIA

Karachi, Pakistan.
20 March 1965.

Dear Sir,

Assalamo aleykum!

The other day I read the letter of Mr. Assefau Leggeese (The Islamic Review, March 1965), which was an answer to the article “The Lot of Muslims in Ethiopia”, published in the December 1964 issue of your magazine. The arguments and comments advanced by the First Secretary of the Ethiopian Embassy are hollow and misleading. In fact, he has failed in his attempt to raise a smoke-screen over the factual position in Ethiopia, for the lot of Muslims in Ethiopia is even worse than that presented in The Islamic Review article.

I would request you to champion the cause of helpless and isolated Muslims in Ethiopia. The tragedy of the Muslims in Ethiopia is our own tragedy; for Muslims are one brotherhood.

I would request you to write a powerful editorial to this effect deploiring the apathy and indifference of world Muslims towards their unfortunate brethren in Ethiopia. How tragic it is that in a country like Ethiopia, where the life, honour and religion of over 12 million Muslims is at stake, the Afro-Asian Islamic Conference held at Bandung in February 1965 thought fit to sit on the matter, thus encouraging the rulers of Ethiopia to go ahead with their evil plans of exterminating Muslims and wiping out Islam from that part of the world!

The plight of Muslim minorities whether they are in Ethiopia, India, Kenya, the Congo, Ghana, Madagascar, Cambodia or Yugoslavia, should be of particular concern to The Islamic Review, for there is no other organ better placed than The Islamic Review in this vast world which could ventilate their grievances or expose the policies of physical and cultural extermination to which they are subjected in many parts of the world. By giving them regular coverage, you will be doing a thing of paramount importance.

Yours sincerely,

MUHAMMAD SAMIUULLAH.

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THE CHALLENGE OF THE SECOND RENAISSANCE

903 Skyline,
Carbondale,
Illinois, U.S.A.
1 April 1965.

Dear Sir,

I was much impressed with the editorial which appeared in the March 1965 issue of The Islamic Review and entitled “The Challenge of the Second Renaissance of Islam.”

I am interested in knowing about a more substantial theory or basis in support of this thesis. The article is true for all practical appearances; but I am wondering how Muslims are going to go about facing the challenge. I am in contact with several Muslims here who are aware of this problem, but who have no idea of how to solve or even what steps to take in the establishment of some kind of analysis of the situation.

As I am a Muslim myself and also aware of the problem, I would appreciate any further ideas or thoughts on the subject. This is a problem facing Muslims today and a step must be taken now so that future generations will have a guide and so that Islam will truly confront the “Challenge of a Second Renaissance”.

Yours sincerely,

ZAHRA AHMED.

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