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"O ye who believe!... and hold fast to the pact of God all together, and split not"
(The Qur'an 3:103)
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Between Ourselves

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A Muslim Summit Conference

The Beginning of a Muslim Entente Cordiale

Global Thinking a prerequisite for its success

In *The Islamic Review* for September-October 1965 we took notice of the ever-growing healthy practice of convening Islamic congresses in various parts of the Muslim world. In fact they seem to have become a regular feature thereof. There are at present five Islamic conferences in existence, each working independently of its rival sister bodies. To an outsider none of them seems to be aware of the patent fact that they overlap each other in their deliberations and resolutions. What is more, they do not seem to make a sizeable impact on the day-to-day problems of the Muslim world. They give the impression of being as divergently opposed to each other as ever. We recall distinctly that when Egypt was invaded by Israel with the collusion of Great Britain and France in 1956 a member of the Israeli Parliament, the Kenesset, denigrated the very idea of the weight of the solidarity of the Arab world behind Egypt. He went on to say that to his knowledge there was no such thing as Arab solidarity and unity. Small wonder if outside observers have begun to take these regular or irregular conferences not very seriously, this despite the fact that the reason for this anomalous state of affairs in the world of Islam is not far to seek. These conferences were convened either by private organizations and individuals so that they did not have much say in the affairs of the various Muslim countries, or if they were held by some heads of governments, as was the case of the ill-fated World Muslim Congress of Cairo organized by the Heads of the Governments of Pakistan, Egypt and Su'udi Arabia in 1953, they were destined to founder in petty jealousies or rivalries which made their appearance in those countries soon after.

In this context, it was very heartening for all those who believe in the solidarity of the world of Islam to learn that the two Heads of State — King Faysal of Su'udi Arabia and the Shahanshah of Iran — at their recent meeting at Teheran from 8th to 13th December 1965, agreed to sponsor an inter-
Muslim Summit Conference after the Hajj of 1966 with a view to establishing a Muslim alliance. In the official communiqué it was stated that the Conference would give the heads of Muslim States an opportunity for the discussion of all matters of interest to them. This proposal of the two Muslim monarchs was received with enthusiasm in Arab countries like Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya and Morocco with praise for the ability of the Shahanshah and the statesmanship and the wisdom of King Faysal. The proposal was described on the morning after the communiqué, for example, by the Iraqi press as the most impressive and genuine step towards a real Islamic union since the days of the Prophet Muhammad.

In point of fact the initiative taken by the two Muslim monarchs not only gives vocal expression to the cherished desire of the emergent Muslim world in its own right as a whole which, to use the words of the Holy Qur'an, “Hold fast to the pact of God and be not disunited,” earnestly believes that these sacred words should be the watchword of its leaders, but also, it so happens, is in consonance with the spirit of the times. For in all countries the statesmen and politicians have set moves afoot which they devise to strengthen themselves against outside ideological or political onslaught either by forming themselves into a bloc of their own, or by aligning themselves with the already existing ones. The Muslim peoples have always held that their leaders should aim at creating their own bloc, for they do not stand in need of attaching themselves to any; they have their own distinct entity and destiny to fulfil.

With the step taken by Iran and Su'udi Arabia, the goal of the Muslim peoples in view has become discernible, and perhaps sooner than later will be within the easy reach of the Muslim world. For ideas are explosive and have wings. They travel fast. They only await the arrival of the right person to use them.

In our own humble way we have always thought and acted in terms of Islam and Muslims. To us the Shi'ah-Sunni denominations and other similar man-made distinctive appellations which are current in some Muslim countries are not only anachronisms but an anathema. They have done damage enough to Muslims. We have persistently and assiduously avoided even the use of these terms in the pages of The Islamic Review except when some historical context demanded it. We have always held that the survival of Muslims lies in discarding these artificial terms and nomenclatures. They have no Divine sanction. The Muslims are at the crossroads. On the one hand they have to face the challenge of modern conditions. On the other their thinking is warped by their artificial differences which tend to divide them. The time has now come when Muslims must accustom themselves to some global thinking. This can be done only if they shed the artificial barriers which they themselves have created between themselves. No outside agency is responsible for them.

That the two signatory monarchs belong to two different schools of thought which unfortunately with the passage of time assumed the appearance of two distinct religions differing from each other in fundamentals bids fair for the idea of a Muslim alliance to succeed. For above all the meeting of the two august and distinguished personalities like the King of Su'udi Arabia and the Shahanshah of Iran emphasizes the basic unity of the Muslims and for that matter of the Muslim world. We believe we are right in saying that the entire history of the Muslim peoples does not record such an accord between two Muslim monarchs with such divergent backgrounds. Although the concept of the basic unity of Muslims has persisted to exist through the centuries ever since the advent of Islam, it does not seem to have ever found for its protagonists such eminent persons as the two leaders of Su'udi Arabia and Iran. The idea of the unity of Muslims has always waited for someone to come and make it his own and exploit it to the glory of Islam and the Muslims. We hope and pray that God out of His unbounded mercy will afford these august personages an ample opportunity to see the idea take palpable form.

These considerations apart, the problems facing the world of Islam in Palestine, Cyprus, South Arabia and Kashmir can be solved when the East and the West blocs realize that they are dealing with the united front of the Muslim world. As things are at present, the weak links in the chain of the Muslim world stretching from the shores of the Atlantic to the Philippines in the Pacific can be broken as and when it suits the ends of either of the blocs. For once it is brought home to the non-Muslim world that by hurting one particular part of the Muslim world it is hurting the entire Muslim world, it will think twice before embarking on policies which will do more damage to itself than to the Muslim world. The Muslim world geo-politically occupies a unique position in the world. One will ignore it at one's own peril. The Muslims have only to be conscious of their role and ultimate destiny.
THE PHILOSOPHY OF FASTING IN
THE MONTH OF RAMADHAN

Why Muslims follow a purely lunar calendar for fasting

By Dr. M. Hamidullah

“Normally the fast should not affect the daily avocations, and it should not be a pretext for neglecting normal duties. Islam never approves — much less demands — of keeping vigil during the whole night and passing the following day in sleep and indolence. Fast means a greater effort to perform all the usual duties and something more — prayers and more charity, and all this in the absence of food and drink.”

Introduction

All religions have enjoined upon their adherents some days of fasting every year. Why did they do so? Was that a mere superstition, or had it some purpose? We are living in an age when education is available to every citizen, rich or poor, and when there is no compulsion by our governments to practise any of our spiritual duties. Therefore, it may be worthwhile studying whether this ancient duty of fasting is still in the interests of society. Such an objective study is particularly incumbent on a Muslim, since not only does reason require it, but also the Qur’ān — the basis of Islam — enjoins it. In fact, there is not a single spiritual duty imposed by the Qur’ān which is not accompanied by an appeal to reason, to meditate, to think, to ponder in order to get the certitude that this is in man’s own interest. Again and again the Qur’ān exhorts us not to follow blindly the customs of our forefathers, but to think independently, so that we may rightfully be able individually and personally be responsible for our actions. Man must not act merely on instinct as ordinary animals, but deliberatively, befitting the reason which God has given him to the exclusion of other animals. Man must also not make puzzling mysteries, separating reason from religion and believing merely for the sake of believing with no real conviction.

No doubt there are differences of temperament among individuals, and all men do not aspire to the same thing. The worldly-wise, before embarking on an enterprise, ascertain whether there is any material utility in the object. A pious hermit, on the other hand, seeks only the spiritual benefits and salvation in the Hereafter, giving up the material gain without the least compulsion from anybody. The number of extremists of both these categories is however very limited: the overwhelming majority of human beings in any part of the world aspires to well-being simultaneously in the Hereafter as well as in the present worldly life. Islam is conspicuous in catering for the twofold need of man, and the Qur’ān (2:101) praises those who pray to God to “Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter,” conveying it to us that this is the ideal which Islam inculcates. Since fasting as a duty is imposed by the same Qur’ān, it is for us to seek and find out what is this-worldly good and what is other-worldly good in this institution. More so, because man is composed neither of body solely, nor of spirit solely, but of both simultaneously; and any one-sided pursuit will upset the equilibrium, whereas the real interest of man requires a harmonious blending of body and soul and a co-ordination between the two. If we work wholly and solely for the benefit of the spirit, we may become angels and even surpass them; but God has already created angels, and He has no need to add to their numbers. Similarly, if our entire energy is spent for the material welfare and selfish interest, we may become beasts and devils and even surpass them; God has already created other beings for that purpose, and by our becoming beasts and devils we are only undoing the purpose of the creation of human beings who have been endowed with capacities for both spiritual and material achievements, and also with reason to distinguish and discriminate between good and evil. Let man, therefore, develop and harmoniously co-ordinate all the talents God has given him.

Before trying to find out the underlying principles of fasting, let us read the precise terms of the Holy Qur’ān in which this order has been promulgated:

Fasting and the Qur’ān

This is what the Qur’ān says about the fast:

“O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed for those before you — haply you may ward off evil — for a certain number of days. And for him who is sick among you, or on a journey, a similar number of other days; and for those who can afford it there is a ransom: the feeding of a man in need; but who does good of his own accord, it is better for him: and that ye fast is better for you if ye did but know. The month of Ramadhan, in which was revealed the Qur’ān, as a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of guidance, and the criterion (of right and wrong). And whosoever of you is present, let him fast the month; and whosoever of you is sick or on a journey (let him fast the same) number of other days. God desireth not hardship for you: He desireth not hardship for you: and (He desireth) that ye should complete the period, and that ye should magnify God for having guided you, and that peradventure ye may be thankful.” (2:183-5).

In the very beginning of the passage, it is stated that fasting is found in other religions also. Let us see what other
religions say about it. A comparison with Islam will not be without interest.

**Fasting in other religions**

Islam claims to be the same religion as was repeatedly revealed to mankind by the intermediary of successive prophets, the main duty of Islam being to receive the eternal truth and to purge it from later accretions not emanating from the founder of the religion, from the prophet who had received the Divine inspiration to guide his people.

**Sabaeanism**

Abraham was sent as prophet to the Sabaean of Iraq. The Sabaean of Harran observed a fast of 30 days, without food and drink, from dawn to sunset; and this in honour of the moon (cf. Encyclopaedia Religions and Ethics, Vol. 5, p. 764, and Harranians, citing Chowolson, Sabaer and Sabaertum, II, 711, 226). The Qur'an (41 : 37) has ordered to worship neither the sun nor the moon, but the One who has created them both; and it has prescribed the fasting of a whole month which is the restoration of Hanifism or the true religion of the prophet Abraham.

**Judaism**

The pious among the Jews fast every Monday and Thursday, and affirm that Moses went to Mount Sinai on Monday and returned on Thursday (cf. Encyclopaedia Religions and Ethics, V, p. 765). Islam has also ordained it as a supererogation and meritorious act (not obligatory for each and every). Again, the Jews fast for 24 hours, in memory of deliverance from the Pharaoh, on the 10th of the month of Tishri. The supererogatory fast on the 10th of the month of Muharram, called 'Aasooraa among Muslims, dates from the time of the Prophet Muhammad himself (it has nothing to do with the murder of the Imam Husayn). Of course, 24 hours were too great a hardship; and a moderation was prescribed — from dawn to sunset — so that a larger number of the believers may be able to observe it.

**Christianity**

The early Christians observed Lent, i.e. six weeks (Sundays excepted), that is 36 days were devoted to fasting and penitence in commemoration of Jesus Christ in the wilderness (cf. Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics, V, p. 769); and they thought that represented the 10th of the whole year. As a religious tax they paid a tithe in property; and also a tax on food and drink! The Prophet Muhammad also said: “Whoever fasts the whole month of Ramadhan and adds thereto six days of the succeeding month, Shawal, it is as if he fasts for the whole year”. That also makes 36 days. And the Qur'an (6 : 161) says: “Whoso bringeth a good deed will receive tenfold the like thereof. . . .” (The lunar month has 29 to 30 days; and the lunar year about 354 days. If we fast one year 29 + 6 = 35, and in another 30 + 6 = 36 days, alternately the tenfold merit will be of 350 and 360 days, and that covers, in fact, the whole lunar year of the Muslims; and not exactly so by the Christians, who follow the solar year, which is always of more than 360 days obtained by the tenfold of Lent.)

So much about the fast, which in fact is as described in the Holy Qur'an. It exists also in Hinduism, Buddhism and other religions. But apparently nowhere masses observe it as they do among the Muslims.

Another curious point in the text of the Qur'an, prescribing the fast, which strikes our attention, is the apparent tone of uncertainty: “Happily you may ward off evil . . . peradventure ye may be thankful”. Why this hesitation, and why not an assertion that this is so? This is a peculiarity of the style of the Qur'an, and recurs scores of times. It implies at least two things: firstly, the omnipotence of God, Who would do what He likes; and even by our worship He is not obliged to give us what we aspire to have. Secondly, the free-will of man: God teaches through the Qur'an that to learn or not to learn depends on each individual. The argument in the text in question — about the effects of fasting — may render some readers or listeners God-fearing, while others will continue to remain obstinate. The other instance in the same text about thankfulness may imply several things: that the real thankfulness does no lie in the outward aspect of fasting and the abstinence from food and drink. Fasting should also be stripped of ostentation, and other evils. There are other ways, all of which are to be scrupulously observed, in order to be really grateful to God and really accomplish the duty of being thankful to our Lord.

The third point that attracts our attention in the above text is the constant care the law of Islam takes to avoid hardship. Not only to the sick, but also to those on a long journey there is a concession, to the effect that they need not fast in the month of Ramadhan, but at some more appropriate occasion. In other words, the conception of fasting in Islam is not in the interest of God, but in our own interest. Forcing the sick to fast may cause aggravation of sickness, if not actual premature death. Islam is not hard and harsh, but indulgent. That is why a greater percentage of its followers observe its directions more than those of other religions.

**Kinds of fasts**

Fasting in Ramadhan is obligatory on each adult except those who are sick or travelling. It is to be observed by way of penitence or expiation by those who, for instance, violate an oath under duress. Yet at other times fasting is only meritorious and supererogatory, for instance, the six days of Shawwal, etc. The Prophet Muhammad has also forbidden fasting on certain occasions, for instance, the two annual 'Id days (on the 1st of Shawwal and on the 10th of Dhu 'l-Hijjah). The Prophet has also prohibited Muslims not to fast, even as a work of supererogation, for long periods. He said: “You have duties to fulfill even with regard to yourselves”. Our self does not belong to us, but to God our Lord; and this self is but a trust confided to our care, and we are responsible for its wellbeing.

Among Christians, a distinction has been made between the clergy and the laymen. The priests and monks probably fast to a certain extent even now, but laymen are practically exempt; for instance, those who work need not fast, a student, a teacher, a merchant, etc. Among Jews the rigour of the one long fast of 24 hours seems to be responsible for the fact that the very rare religious-minded persons observe it annually.

**The reason why Muslims follow a purely lunar calendar in the matter of fasting**

Jews, Christians and Hindus have a solar year, either directly or a lunar year with intercalation, so that the time of fasting always falls in the same season. Muslims follow a purely lunar calendar, and consequently their month of fasting, Ramadhan, rotates gradually in all the seasons of the year.
Which of the two systems is better?

The planet on which we live has not the same climate everywhere. Man suffers from every kind of excess, be it of heat or of cold. The seasons of heat and cold are only relative from one region to another. For instance, winter is a pleasant season in Mecca, but not so near the poles (in Canada and Northern Europe). Summer is the best season near the poles, but not at all so near the equator and in the sandy deserts. Spring may be midway, but many countries near the equator (in South India, for instance) do not know there are only three seasons: winter, summer and the rains.

For a world-wide religion, if we fix some season, it will thus be either a perpetual ease for some and a perpetual hardship to others, or inconvenient in some way to the inhabitants of certain regions of the earth. But if the seasons are regularly to change for the fasting period, ease and hardship will alternate, and nobody will feel dissatisfied with the Lawgiver. Further, this change of season in the matter of fasting means also that one becomes accustomed to fasting in all sorts of seasons. And this habit, and capacity to abstain from food and drink both in the chilly winter and the burning summer, gives the faithful an endurance power which stands him good stead in the adversity of different occasions — during the siege of a war, during the strike of food merchants and employees of waterworks, etc.

Further, those who have travelled outside of their homeland know that seasons are not alike everywhere at the same time. When I am writing this in January, the radio announces that there are in certain parts of France — 40° of cold, and at the same time + 40° of heat in the Argentine! The seasons above and below the equator differ. When it is winter in the Northern hemisphere, it is summer in the Southern one. If Islam had ordered a fast, say in January of every year, it will be perpetually in winter for some Muslims and in summer for others. Or, if Islam had ordered a fast say in winter, some will fast in January, others in July. This will either be a perpetual hardship or absence of unity. Having fasted in Paris for 29 days in January, I shall land after a few hours' flight in South Africa and to my bewildered no mosque there will be preparing for the 'Id festival, for it will not be the fasting season there. Again, I can simply avoid all fasting. At the end of December I shall leave Paris and pass a month in South Africa (where January will not be the fasting month), in February I shall return to Paris and quietly disregard the fast in July (which will exist in South Africa and South America, but not in the Northern hemisphere where Paris is situated).

Sense of fasting

As already seen, Islam aspires to being interested in the wellbeing of man in both worlds, with all that they imply. The next world is intended, according to the Islamic notions, for the judgment of each and every individual on the basis of what he has accomplished in the present world; the successful and the happy will be those who will obtain there the pleasure of God our Lord. Man being constituted both of body and soul, the spiritual and material effects of the fast will concern us in this study.

1. Importance of motive and intention

It is common knowledge that wilful murder is abhorred by all civilizations, and that all religions condemn such a murderer to Hell, whereas the innocent victim in question, the martyr, merits Paradise. Everybody also knows that the defence of a rightful case (against an aggressor) is a duty; and the one who kills an aggressor is considered to be a hero who merits all the rewards here as well as in the Hereafter. Is not the difference between these two that of merely the intention? Similary, if one abstains from eating and drinking only on the prescription of a doctor, will he not be doing the same act as the one who gives up eating and drinking in compliance with the command, and for the sake of God? God is our Creator, Law-giver, who will revive us after death and to demand account of our actions in the present world. Whoever will have obeyed Him, shall obtain His pleasure, even if he had not understood the secret underlying His commandment. The fasting enjoined by a religion, by a revealed law, must entail Divine pleasure if we accomplish it. And what spiritual and worldly benefit can be greater than the eternal pleasure of the Lord? Material motives, ostentation and such things, will mar the purity of the intention. Let our fast be wholly and solely for the pleasure of, and in compliance with, the commands of God. Hence the celebrated saying of the Prophet Muhammad: "The actions are judged but by their intentions" (The Sahih of Bukhari).

2. Spiritual aspects

Experience shows that a blind man has generally a stronger memory, and certain of his senses are more developed than those of an ordinary man who has his sight. In other words, if certain faculties are not utilized, they may strengthen some other faculties. Similar is the relation between the body and the soul. In weakening the body there is strengthening of the soul (spirit), even as the pruning of the branches of a tree procures more flowers and more fruit.

When an individual fasts, his conscience pricks him in the face of evil deeds, and he is the more able to resist temptations. Further, the fact makes him think of God more, develops his inclination for charity, makes him taste the sweetness of obedience to the Lord.

God Almighty has created man according to His own image,1 says a Tradition of the Prophet Muhammad as reported by Bukhari and Muslim in their Sahihis. The Qur'an (2 : 138) says: "According to the design of God! And what is more beautiful than God's design..." Let man therefore try to betake himself to the Divine design. One of the attributes of God, as mentioned in the Qur'an (6 : 14) is: "...who feedeth and is never fed..." When someone fasts, this Divine attribute reflects in him: abstaining himself from personal needs and doing charity to others, feeding the poor, helping the unhappy and the like create in a man a feeling of celestial qualities, which can be felt by everyone making the same "experiment", but cannot be described.

Again, in his weakness man sometimes commits sin, but later on his conscience may convince him that he has done a wrong, and he repents. All crimes have a corresponding punishment, be they the crimes of body or soul, civil or spiritual. It is also an experience that when the sinner tortures himself in repentance, he gets consolation in proportion to his repentance, coupled with possible repARATION of the wrong. Destruction of the self excluded, what pain and what torture can afflict man more than the privation of the essentials of existence — food and drink?

Waliullah al-Dihlawi (d. 1762 C.E.) was a predominant Indian Muslim personality of the 18th century. He was a great scholar and also a great mystic, respected on all hands. He has left us many valuable works on the philosophy of the Muslim religion. In his celebrated work al-Hujjatullah al-Balighah (2 : 36, "On Fasting") he has some penetrating remarks on the spiritual aspects of fasting. He says:

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1 This, of course, remains in line with the Islamic conception of the Divinity as indicated by the Qur'anic text, "There is nothing like Him".
“Since the excess of animality hinders the emergence of the angelic aspects, it was necessary that one should try to dominate one’s animality. Since the excess of animality and the accumulation and abundance of its stratas have their origin in food, drink and indulgence in carnal pleasures, a fast accomplishes what abundant food cannot. Therefore the method of dominating the animality is the diminishing of the causes (of the excess of animality). That is why there is a unanimity among all those who desire the emergence of the angelic aspects in man as to diminish and reduce these (eating, drinking, etc.). There is no difference in this prescription among the peoples of the world in spite of the difference of their religions and the distance between their respective countries. Moreover, the ultimate goal is that the animality of man should become submissive to man’s angelic side, so that his animality acts according to the inspirations and dictates of his angelism, takes colour from its colour, and his angelism prevents his animality from taking mean and lowly colours and getting abject impressions — like a wax getting the impression of a seal. To attain this, there is no method other than this. The angelic side of man should select something according to its own exigencies and should inspire and suggest this to the animal side of man; and that the animality should submit to this inspiration, not act obstinately or rebel against it. Angelism should continue again and again to inspire its exigencies to the animality, and the animality should continue to submit to these exigencies, so that it becomes accustomed to them and proficient in them. The said exigencies, which the angelism imposes and which the animality enforces willy-nilly, belong (1) either to the category of things which expand (delight) the animal side and contract (depress) the animal one, such as the effort to resemble — so to say — the world of God’s super-kingdom (malakut) and to regard (meditate) His super-domination (jabarut), which is an exclusive peculiarity of the angelism, the animality being away, far away, from it; or (2) to the giving up of things which are the exigencies of the animality, whereby it is delighted, and wherefor it craves in its extravagance. It is this latter category which constitutes the fasting.”

The virtues of fasting are numerous, and many a saying of the Prophet Muhammad has referred to them. Suffice it to mention that the minimum and lowest grade of fasting is to abstain from eating, drinking and carnal desires from dawn to sunset. The more elevated degree is to abstain from all acts, words and thoughts of carnal, bestial or ignoble nature. Otherwise there is no difference between a fast and starvation with no spiritual significance whatsoever. What a great difference between the two!

3. **Material aspects**

Students learn for several months continuously, then they get a summer vacation. Employees work for six days of the week, the seventh day being a holiday for leisure and rest. Men expend mental and physical energy the whole day, whereafter the repose of sleep renovates their faculties for the next day. Even machines and tools require relaxation, and we observe this for motor cars, aeroplanes, locomotives, etc. Is it therefore not reasonable to think that the stomach and the digestive organs also require rest? In fact modern medicine has also reached the same conclusion, and a large number of doctors in Switzerland, Germany, etc., prescribe, for various chronic diseases, forced hunger and thirst for longer or shorter periods according to the exigencies of the sickness and the physical capacities of the sick person.

They have also found that various glands secrete certain acids in the stomach on account of hunger and thirst, and that these acids kill many a germ which produce different diseases. Statistics have also shown that several digestive and other diseases are less abundant among people who have the habit of fasting every year.

We know that man requires a change of climate, air and water from time to time. Patients recovering from illness are sent away for convalescence to a place other than their habitual living place. The more fortunate among the Westerners pass a month of summer vacation outside their home. In other words, it is necessary to change the normal habits from time to time. This is also a kind of rest. We see, for instance, that cultivators use their fields alternately and give “rest” to the soil. Continuity being harmful, Islam has forbidden fasting during the whole year, even for those who want spiritual benefits thereby. Experience has also shown that if one fasts for ever, it becomes a habit, and a second nature, and does not profit by it as does he who fasts with intervals. In fact, if one fasts for more than 40 days consecutively, it becomes a habit; and if one fasts for less than a month, it has not much effect.

There are even possible military advantages from the habit of fasting, for the soldier sometimes does not get food or drink, and still he has to fight during the whole day and even late into the night. One who has the habit of fasting the whole month (of Ramadhan) and of the additional prayers, the tarawith, during the night, gets naturally greater aptitude for the said emergencies than the soldier who does not undergo these “exercises”. The strength of character these “exercises” help to establish should not be underestimated. Many are those who are cruelly hurt, sometimes completely smashed, under the complicated economic risks and crises. Unemployment and strikes become more and more frequent and difficult to deal with. Curfew orders for 24 hours are also not unfamiliar.

To terminate this discussion, those who fast on medical prescription or even under compulsion as a discipline do get the material benefits inherent in fasting; but there being no intention of a spiritual search, they do not benefit thereby spiritually. Muslims fast with the intention of complying with the command of God. They therefore have its reward for their piety, while not losing the physical and material benefits of the fasting.

In short, from whichever point of view one may study the Muslim way of fasting, it compares favourably with its counterparts in other civilizations.

**Some practical details about the Islamic fast**

1. **Why the Hijrah calendar, which is lunar**

   We have already referred to the fact that the Qur’ān ordains the fast during the whole month of Ramadhan, the ninth month of the Hijrah calendar.

   The Hijrah year is based on a calendar which is purely lunar. Every month begins with the appearance on the horizon at sunset of the new moon, which phenomenon repeats itself every 29 or 30 days. This makes the Hijrah a year of 354 days in round figures. The Christian year is solar, and normally of 365 days. The result is that the month of Ramadhan begins every year about 11 days earlier in the year.

   Thus, for instance, if the 1st of Ramadhan 1380 A.H. corresponded to 17.2.1961, in the succeeding year 1381 A.H. will correspond to 6.2.1962. However, there may be a difference of one day between the countries of the East and the
West, since all depends on the formation of the moon and its birth, that is, its appearance on the horizon of a country just at sunset. Since the moon forms in the course of its revolution round the earth, if that does not take place before the appointed time, the new month begins a day later. Since nature itself does not intend uniformity, Islam does not require that all Muslims of the world should fast on the same day, much less to begin the fast at the same moment. In fact, if it is day in Switzerland it will be night in America, and vice-versa. Every 1,000 miles makes the difference of about one hour.

Owing to the same reasons, the month of Ramadan falls in all the seasons of the year. This entails another complication. Owing to the spherical and the tilted axis of the earth, we observe two phenomena. First, if it is winter in the countries above the equator, at the same time it will be summer in the countries below the equator. Secondly, if the length of the day and night is practically the same on and near the equator, it is not so when one moves towards the poles. The abnormal conditions in Northern Europe and Canada have required special solutions and the theologians have found them. Further details about them may be found in my work The Introduction to Islam, published by the Centre Culturel Islamique of Paris.

Method of fasting

The first thing is the formulation of the intentions of the action of fasting and abstaining from eating and drinking from dawn (about one hour and a half before sunrise) to sunset.

Between sunset and dawn there is no limitation to our normal needs and desires. Even family life is not forbidden. As to meals, the recommendation of the Prophet Muhammad has been that one should take a normal dinner (called iftar) at sunset, and another light meal just before the dawn (called suhur). Just as for beginning the fast, an intention is to be formulated for breaking it at sunset. The Prophet is reported to have said upon breaking the fast: “O God, for Thee have I fasted, in Thee have I believed, and with Thy nourishment do I break the fast. Accept it from me, O Lord!”

It may happen that through forgetfulness one may eat or drink, involuntarily. That does not affect the validity of the fast of that day. As soon as one recalls that it is a fasting day, one should give up food, drink, etc.

During the course of the fast, bathing does not invalidate the fast, and it is even recommended for the Friday prayer. While making ablutions, one must rinse the mouth with water. Its moisture also does not make the fast null and void.

Minors are exempt from fasting. The infirm (physically weak because of age) if rich, should instead feed a poor man for each day of the fast. Apart from that, every adult Muslim has the religious obligation to fast during the whole month of Ramadhan. The sick and the traveller are allowed to postpone the fast until a more convenient time.

Normally the fast should not affect the daily avocations, and it should not be a pretext for neglecting normal duties. Islam never approves — much less demands —of keeping vigil during the whole night and passing the following day in sleep and indolence. Fast means a greater effort to perform all the usual duties and something more — prayers and more charity, and all this in the absence of food and drink.

Miscellaneous

As cited above, the first revelation of the Qur’án came to the Prophet Muhammad in the month of Ramadhan; so it is befitting to spend more time, while fasting, in studying the Holy Qur’án. For those who do not know Arabic, there are translations available in practically all the important languages of the world, a translation by an orthodox and pious Muslim being preferable for its being more faithful. If possible, one should complete the reading of the whole text at least once in the course of this month.

At the end of the fasting month there is the grand festival, on the first day of the month of Shawwal. Early in the morning a special congregational prayer is offered, followed by a sermon by the Imam. As it is the end of the fasting month, the Prophet has recommended that people should take their breakfast before going to the place where the congregational prayer is offered. On the occasion of this festival, called ‘Id al-Fitr, it is also a religious duty of the Muslims to provide food for the poor. In classical times not only dates, dried grapes and similar things were distributed for this purpose, but even uncooked wheat, rice, etc. The idea is to encourage charity, which should in no way be ostentatious.

Says God: “For every act of charity I have prescribed a reward (according to the sincerity in its accomplishment) from ten to seven hundred times its worth, fasting excepted, which is for me and I shall recompense it Myself, since one gives up his desire and food for only My sake.”

GLIMPSES OF THE LIFE OF THE IMAM ‘ALI continued from page 12

that he often practised charity secretly, distributing food to hungry orphans and widows without their knowing the source from which they had it. Thus, when he died, victim of a cowardly blow administered by a traitor in the mosque at Kufah, many needy persons suddenly found to their astonishment that their unknown benefactor had been none other than their ruler and spiritual leader, ‘Ali.

Truthful and courageous, with a deep love of mankind which found practical effect in his many works, and especially in his generous treatment of captives, ‘Ali was an indefatigable upholder of the ideals of human dignity and equality. He did not discriminate between rich and poor, or people of higher and lower degree; nor could the power or riches of office tempt him away from the path of simplicity and rectitude he had chosen for himself. His was a life dedicated in full to the practice of the ideals and the fulfilment of the values inculcated by Islam and taught by the Prophet Muhammad. It is the firmness of purpose of ‘Ali which demands of us some answering echo today; it should bring us also much encouragement in our own humble endeavours to serve the cause of Islam, “Make moral and righteous use of your mental capacities,” he says. “He is wise who carefully meditates on what he hears and then accepts only the truth, who tries to see things in their real and actual perspectives and who takes warning from the happenings of the world. He is blessed who selects a true and noble path and guards himself against the deceptions of doubt, scepticism and wrong opinions. You should not allow misguided people or unbelievers to take control of and subjugate your minds. O listeners, wake up! Come out of the stupor of your ignorance; do not hurry after the vicious world, but deliberate carefully on the message of God delivered to you by God’s Prophet. It is imperative upon you to understand and obey these commands. None can escape this obligation and responsibility.”
Glimpses of the Life of the Imam ‘Ali
(d. 661 C.E.)

THE GREAT MUJAHID (STRIVER) FOR ISLAM

By A. Baines-Hewitt

Lt.-Col. ‘Abdullah Baines-Hewitt

‘Ali’s services to early Islam

The Imam ‘Ali is a unique figure in the history of Islam, a personality the vital freshness of whose memory has not been dimmed by the passage of time. A man of great integrity, in whose character great personal bravery was balanced by tenderness of feeling and an exemplary humanity, who combined patience and forbearance with a strong sense of justice, who was always ready to play his part in the struggle for the realization of the truth and ideals of religion, and whose outstanding intellectual gifts were ennobled by a singular purity of spirit; this was Amr al-Mu‘minin (Commander of the Faithful) ‘Ali, who also earned for himself the appellation Imam al-Muttaqin (Leader of the Godfearing). To millions and millions, for generation after generation, the Imam ‘Ali’s has been a name to conjure with. It has never failed to bring profound solace to the heart and upliftment to the soul. ‘Ali was the magnanimous humanist who advised people to “live in such a good, gentle and noble way that folk will love to flock to you when you are alive and will weep for you when you are dead.” And how well he put this precept into practice in his own life is attested by all those generations of human beings who have found inspiration in his example and teaching.

Islam was not established without a struggle, and whoever has heard the name of ‘Ali, has, of course, known of his valour as a warrior for Islam. Not only did he figure prominently in nearly all the early battles of Islam, but his qualities as a fighter were of an almost legendary order. In those campaigns which the Muslims had to undertake against their Meccan foes, in which the infant Muslim community was struggling for its very existence against heavy odds, their victory — the triumph of truth over falsehood — was due to the indomitable will of the Prophet Muhammad, and ‘Ali was among the ablest of his lieutenants. On more than one occasion ‘Ali’s bravery and skill saved the Muslims from defeat.

‘Ali’s remarkable physical strength was fully matched by his skill as a fighter and his capacity for rallying others and leading them in the fight. Thus, at the Battle of Uhud (624 C.E.), it was through the instrumentality of ‘Ali that Islam was saved from what might have turned out to be its early end. The tide of battle was going against the Muslims, owing to their own over-eagerness. Suddenly it was rumoured that the Prophet had been killed, and fear and terror entered the hearts of the Muslim warriors. But ‘Ali and those who were with him fought valiantly on. From a point of vantage, and led by ‘Ali, they rushed into the midst of the host of the idolaters, rescuing the Prophet, who had indeed been wounded, and retiring with him to the comparative safety of the mountain-side. There ‘Ali fetched water from a hollow in the rock and bathed Muhammad’s wounds. And the Quraysh, by then exhausted, broke off the engagement and returned to Mecca.

At the battle of Khaybar (628 C.E.) it was ‘Ali’s skill and courage, as well as his immense powers of endurance, that carried the day and won victory for the Muslims and for ‘Ali the proud title of Asad Allah (the Lion of God). Again, after the conquest of Mecca, it was ‘Ali who saved the day at Hunayn (630 C.E.), when the Muslims’ ranks were wavering under the arrows of the Hawazin marksmen, and all might have been lost had he not rallied the few faithful warriors who stood firm in the Prophet Muhammad’s defence. Ordering the manner of their resistance, and setting them a bold example by killing the commander of the hostile army in hand-to-hand combat, ‘Ali so steadied their nerve that they fought back vehemently and broke the enemy’s onslaught. The rest of the Muslims, encouraged by what they now saw, re-entered the battle; and thus was the danger of defeat turned into a brilliant victory.

‘Ali more than a mere warrior — a true Mujahid

‘Ali was more than a mere warrior, more than just a mighty man at arms, for he understood the real nature of jihad — the struggle (for the realization of the truth and ideals of religion). This is an all-encompassing struggle — a struggle against those who are bent on destroying the faith, and, at the same time a struggle against the disruptive impulses in human nature which militate against the vital teachings of religion and are repugnant to its ideals. It is as much a battle against an internal as against an external foe. On the second day of the fighting at Khaybar, when no result of the battle was yet in sight, this is what the Prophet Muhammad had to say: “Tomorrow I will give my banner to one who loves God and His Prophet and whom God and His Prophet love. He is indeed a valiant fighter and no runaway. And God will conquer by his means.” It was ‘Ali to

1 Being the text of a lecture delivered at a meeting of the Shi‘ah Islamic Society, London, to celebrate the Birthday of the Imam ‘Ali on 13 Rajab 1385 A.H. — 7 November 1965 C.E.
whom the flag was entrusted on the following day, and it was under his leadership that they conquered, and to whom the last of the forts fell. The Prophet's mention of “one who loves God and His Prophet and whom God and His Prophet love” is a reference to those higher values which distinguish the greater jihad and to which he wanted to draw attention. Therefore he refers to the love of God and of the Prophet before making mention of any martial ardour or fighting qualities.

A true mujahid (striver for Islam) must live his life for the cause of Islam, and give his life for it. He must fight, and also, when necessary, refuse to fight. He must forbear and forgive. He must turn always to God, to serve Him and praise Him — in prayer and act. He must toll ceaselessly fi Sabîl Allah — “in the way of God” — enjoining good and forbidding evil, and he must observe the limits set by God. This is what the Imam ‘Ali did, and his whole life from beginning to end was a continuous jihad.

‘Ali’s elucidation of the fundamental beliefs of Islam

The fundamental beliefs of Islam have been summarized in various ways, but the following five principles must not doubt be included in any list that we could make: the One-ness of God; His revelation of Himself through His creation of the universe and all that is contained therein, and also through the medium of divinely communicated messages entrusted to His prophets and culminating in the splendid message of Islam — a message for all time and to all mankind, committed to the Prophet Muhammad, the Last and Seal of the Prophets (God’s blessings and peace be upon him!); the possibility and necessity of Justice; the continuity of God’s Guidance to those who turn to Him in purity of heart and with trust in His beneficence and mercy; and the accountability of man for his deeds in this life — an account to be rendered before God on the last day, the Day of Resurrection.

These principles, like all else that is basic in Islam, are deduced from the Qur’anic message itself. Their elucidation, however, in the teachings of ‘Ali is more than worthy of attention. Everything proceeds from, and in the end comes back to, the central idea — the Reality and Oneness of God. ‘Ali well knew that One to whom man looks when none can help him, who is begged of, and loved too, especially in times of stress when nothing material comes to man’s aid. “O my Lord,” he says, “Eternal, Ever-existing, the Cherisher, the True Sovereign, whose mercy and might overshadow the universe; the Regulator of the world and Light of the creation . . . He existed before all things, and will exist after all that is living has ceased. Thy knowledge knows everything; Thy beneficence is all-pervading; Thy forgiveness and mercy are all-embracing. O my Lord, Thou art the helper of the afflicted, the reliever of all distress, the console of the broken heart. Thou art present everywhere to help Thy servants: Thou knowest all secrets, all thoughts, art present in every assembly. Fulfiller of our needs. Bestower of all blessings, Thou art the friend of the poor and the bereaved. My Lord, Thou art my fortress; a castle for all who seek Thy help. Thou art my refuge; . . . I seek Thy knowledge and love.”

But ‘Ali thoroughly understood the predication in which we are placed with only the resources of human language to fall back upon in composing our thoughts on God. Hence his insistence that, when we speak of God as Seeing, Hearing, Speaking and Loving, we must clear those terms of all human associations implying sensation, affection or emotion. Of God’s knowledge he said: “He is knowing before the origination of knowledge and causality,” thus implying that God’s knowledge is something quite above and beyond what we commonly understand by the word “knowledge”.

A page of the Holy Qur’an in Kufic writing (top portion) reputed to have been written by the Caliph ‘Ali on deer skin. The bottom portion is its reproduction in the script with vowel and diacritical points are not similarities of Himself who is without compare. There is “a definite difference between the Maker and the made, between the Sustainer and the sustained, between the Infinite and the finite”. Thus God is beyond the reach of human sight or hearing, but not beyond the bounds of human knowledge, because out of His compassion He has revealed Himself to His creation through His messengers.
‘Ali has explained how God is present with His creation, but without “contact with it”, and that He is “apart from it, but without (intervening) space”. “Knowledge of God,” he says, “is ingrained in every mind”; and he reminds us that God’s mercy extends to every creature, and that He provides even for those who deny Him. But God’s attributes and qualities are not to be thought of as having any separate entity; they are neither before nor after Him; the qualities are Himself alone.

Finally, ‘Ali insists that we have to conceive God by and through Himself. There is nothing that by analogy could supply the elements of His conception. Whatever we can imagine with our human imagination, and however subtle the concept, that is something other than God.

The Imam ‘Ali was once asked to comment on the words la hawala wa la qawwah illa bi-lah-i- ‘Adhim (there is neither power nor strength except in Almighty God). “It means,” he said, “that I am not afraid of God’s anger, but I am afraid of His purity; nor have I the power to observe His commandments, but my strength is in His assistance.” In other words, we are furthered by God’s help and grace in our efforts to act uprightly, and we are in danger of transgressing because of our neglect of His commands, or because we mix unworthy motives into our actions and so destroy the purity which would be their proper inspiration. And ‘Ali went on to remind his hearers that God has said: “We will try you to see who are the strivers (after purity and truth), and who are the forbearing and the patient, and We will test your actions;” and “He will help you by degrees to attain what ye know not.”

‘Ali on the theme of human accountability

On the theme of human accountability — the individual responsibility of men and women for their actions, and their freedom to choose a course of action, ‘Ali has explained that there are no grounds for supposing that God behaves towards His creation in an arbitrary or capricious way. Quite the reverse; and our study of nature shows how beautifully ordered and proportioned are all things in the whole universe, and how wonderfully balanced are all the works of creation. To inject an element of caprice into this would be to spoil the whole, and ultimately to render it meaningless. As regards God’s guidance to human beings, God has pointed out to us the way to truth and right conduct, and He lets men choose as they will. We are under compulsion in some matters, but we are not compelled towards right or wrong in our ethical conduct; and, if it were so, it would do away with all responsibility for human action. A man may make a wrong choice, and God knows that it is wrong, and that the man will choose that way; yet God will not stop him or prevent him in matters in which human choice has been ordained. But God’s guidance is available to all; and who turns to Him in purity of spirit, sincerely seeking the betterment of his ways, he will find what he is looking for.

From what has been said so far it will, I think, be sufficiently clear that ‘Ali’s intellectual reach and spiritual insight were indeed fitting counterparts to his other outstanding qualities. His knowledge and wisdom have been widely and justly praised, and his fame as a man of letters had spread even to Europe in the Middle Ages. Among his many services to Islam and to learning, special mention should be made of his early systematization of Arabic grammar.

‘Ali’s ideas on public morality

‘Ali’s ideas on public morality were no less profound than in other spheres, and he worked very hard to lay down a critique and rules for the proper conduct of public affairs when the responsibilities of government passed into his hands. Here again he continued his jihad for the establishment and strengthening of a true concept of Islam in the social and economic fields. His ideas on the complementary nature of human rights and obligations were perhaps in advance of his times. In these days, however, after the lapse of many centuries, they still provide us with considerable food for thought. I should like to quote something from one of his public speeches, in which he is speaking, in a broad context, on the subject of social rights and obligations. He says:

“God has assigned to some people certain rights over others, but He made them complementary to the rights of each other, so that one will not be enforceable without the other one. The greatest of these rights is the right of the ruler over the ruled, and the right of the ruled over the ruler. It is God’s injunction for everyone. He has made it a rule for their good relationship and mutual pride of place.

“There can be no improvement of the people if the ruler be not improved, and no rulers can be improved without the good behaviour of the people. When people give their rulers their rights, and the rulers give the people their rights, then justness will have the place of pride among them. Religion will have a clear way, and justice will be met. All will wish such happy conditions to continue, and enemies will be disappointed.

“If those who are ruled revolt against the rulers, or the rulers create hardships for the people, then it will be a different situation. Signs of oppression will appear, and right action will be left behind. Orders will be disobeyed, and the maladies of the people will increase. Noble persons will go down, and bad characters will rise up, and the burden of people’s sins will grow heavy.”

‘Ali’s theory of government

‘Ali’s theory of government laid great stress on the interest of the people. “The interest of the people,” he said, “should be above any other interest,” for this would bring into being a state of contentment. A contented people will be an industrious people, and an industrious people will make a strong community. On the treatment of workers ‘Ali declares that employment should be based on good conditions. Good wages should be paid, enabling people to live well and preventing them from becoming corrupt. If then they do wrong, the ruler or employer cannot be held responsible for their act. In an age long before the world had heard of “industrialism,” the Imam ‘Ali emphasized the importance of “social production.” “Social production,” he said, “should be the foremost aim (of government) and not taxation of the people: for, if the people produce a great deal (sufficient in) taxes can automatically be raised from them. If, on the other hand, people are in pecuniary difficulties or are poor, the government too will automatically be in difficulties. The decline and fall of a State is brought about by the poverty of its people.”

‘Ali, the man

In private life ‘Ali trod the road of purity and self-denial, and he continued to live in utter simplicity when he became Caliph. In all this, as in everything else, he followed the example set by the Prophet Muhammad himself. ‘Ali was by no means a stranger to manual work in the fields and gardens, to the drawing of water from wells, to the mending of his own clothes and shoes, and, having tasted poverty himself, he was the better able to appreciate the lot of the poor and destitute. He was deeply sensitive to their needs. Generous and charitable, he so disliked any suggestion of ostentation

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Islam and the Emancipation of Women

The Qur'an, the only world scripture that does not contain expressions of contempt for women or regards them as base-born creatures

By Malika Citrine

It is generally accepted that the Muslim world of today is in a state of considerable flux, due partly to the regaining of independence by many Muslim countries, and partly to the accompanying upsurge of national and religious feeling, which is sometimes regarded as evidence of a world-wide revival of Islamic ideals and culture. The emancipation of women is one of the many welcome aspects of this revival, and since this is a question which affects about one half of the human race directly, and the other half very closely through the influence of family relationships, it is doubtless one of universal importance.

The General Status of Women

Islam is a practical faith which pays due regard to the position of women in society, and lays down the ideals and standards to which they should endeavour to conform if they are to fulfil, not simply themselves, but also their duties to God and to society. Yet these Islamic principles are broad as well as noble, for they are designed to cover the conditions of women of all times and places, thus leaving room for minor adaptations in regard to practical detail. Put briefly, these principles require a woman to be mindful of family duty and careful of her personal conduct, and with these fundamentals assured, they are not in any way restrictive of her activities, and endow her moreover with equal human rights. They are thus not only compatible with feminine emancipation, but form the basis for the finest example of its kind which the world has yet to see.

In the Western world the modern freedom of women has not come about through the influences of the Christian religion, but on the contrary, has occurred at a time when such influences were on the wane. At the same time the forces of industrialization, democracy and universal education were coming to the fore, and demanding emancipation in the name of social justice. The religion of Islam, however, contained at its very inception, in the Holy Qur'an, a charter for women's rights and legal equality such as the world had never seen before. Here indeed is to be found the very origin of the movement for feminine emancipation, centuries before the Western world had even thought of it.

It is well to recall that the Qur'an is the only world scripture which does not contain expressions of contempt for women, or regard them as base-born creatures. On the contrary, expressions such as "the believing man and the believing woman..." are frequently repeated, constantly linking man and woman together on a basis of personal equality in regard to their duties, rights and merits.

The Prophet himself gave several glowing tributes to women, whose burdens he knew and understood so well, for he said that: "Paradise lies at the feet of mothers". He even gave women a potential superiority over men when he said, "The most valuable thing in the world is a virtuous woman". He is also reported to have said that "Women are the twin-halves of men", which is surely as plain a statement as anyone could wish of the basic equality of the sexes.

Many modern authors have continued this theme, while Syed Ameer Ali, in his book The Spirit of Islam, was able to go back even to the Middle Ages to find outspoken support on this subject in the work of the great Muslim philosopher, Ibn Rushd, whom he quotes as saying that "If women were placed in the same position as men and received the same education, they would become the equals of their husbands and brothers in all the sciences and arts".

The Qur'an is the First and Only Scripture to stipulate the Basic and Legal and Personal Rights of Women

It is nevertheless a fact that Muslim women, in common with women throughout the world, have only in recent decades gained many of their educational, political and social rights, which had been denied to them throughout the ages. The reasons for this go back to the earliest beginnings of history, when bodily prowess and physical conquest were regarded as the highest criterion of superiority, and these being masculine accomplishments, women were considered to be inferior creatures destined to be kept firmly in subjection to man. This concept had been supported and preached by all the older religions and cultures, being finally reiterated by St. Paul in the New Testament. The Qur'an was the first and only Scripture to stipulate the basic legal and personal rights of women, elevating them to a plane of perfect equity, while its general injunctions in this respect paved the way to a gradual attainment of complete equality of man and woman before God and His Law.

Before the coming of Islam, however, the Arabian peoples had regarded women with extreme contempt, treating them as chattels virtually at the level of slavery. It could hardly have been expected that a sudden transformation of these attitudes would take place, and in the event, alongside the immense improvement in the position of women wrought by Islam, the inherited concept of the innate inferiority of
women continued to hold considerable sway, sometimes resulting in plain disregard of Qur'anic injunctions in this respect, and sometimes so interpreting them as to lend support to such attitudes, which persisted for many centuries. Indeed, they have survived in some regions even to the present day, where they characteristically attempt to block the way to the rightful emancipation of women.

Two verses of the Qur'an examined with regard to the alleged inferior status of women in Islam

The claim has sometimes been made, in support of these attitudes, that certain Qur'anic verses, notably 2:228 and 4:34, do in fact lend some support to the concept of feminine inferiority, but the falsity of this claim may be clearly demonstrated by an analysis of these verses. The translator of the Qur'an, 'Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali, translated the first of them as follows:

"...and women shall have rights similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable. But men have a degree (of advantage) over them" (2:228).

The last two lines of this verse are sometimes taken from context and interpreted in a generalized form as "Men have a status above women," thus investing them with a quite different significance. The context of this verse, which deals with the question of divorce, would simply suggest that women must be protected against unfair treatment in this matter on account of the greater degree of physical and economic strength which men possess by contrast. Similarly, in the case of verse 4:34:

"Men shall take full care of women with the bounties which God has bestowed more abundantly on some of them than on others, and with what they spend out of their possessions" (Muhammad Asad's Translation of the Qur'an under the title of The Message of the Qur'an, Mecca, 1964).

There is nothing in these lines to suggest any fundamental or overall superiority of man over woman; they are simply a statement of the fact that it is the duty of men to be the breadwinners and protectors of their families by reason of their greater strength and earning power. These are simply relative superiorities, which are counter-balanced by other relative superiorities to be found in women. Even at the physical level, for example, the latter have been stated to possess greater biological strength, since they not only tend to live longer than men, despite the considerable demands made upon their physique by all the vital functions relative to child-bearing and motherhood, but perhaps even more significantly, female infants are known to have greater natural capacity than male children to survive the health hazards of early infancy — as indeed was so tragically witnessed in the life of the Prophet himself, who had no surviving son.

The natural and traditional role of women and Islam

The natural and traditional role of woman is that of wife and mother, in which she excels by nature and disposition, and the satisfactions and joys of which every woman wishes to experience. This natural role of woman is moreover as important and valuable to society, and presents as great a challenge to superb achievement, as any work of note which men may accomplish in other spheres. In fact, the supremely high status of wise and noble motherhood is clearly demonstrated by the Hadith quoted earlier, which places Paradise even at the very feet, as it were, of such mothers.

Yet in addition to their God-given gift for physical creativity, women also share in the possession of those uniquely human faculties of mind and soul which differentiate humanity from the animal world. The Prophet recognized this when he said that "The acquisition of knowledge is a duty incumbent on every Muslim, male and female," thus indicating that both are equally capable of acquiring and using knowledge. This must imply equal opportunities for both sexes in education and all intellectual activity. It is, however, a sad fact that the claim which is sometimes made to the effect that women are inherently inferior in this respect is often simply a direct reflection of a lack or insufficiency of educational training in the case of the women concerned.

Modern women of all nations have proved, by their competence in practically all professional and academic fields, that women have basically the same intellectual faculties as men, when they have the desire and the opportunity to develop them. On undertaking the duties and responsibilities of marriage, however, a woman's time and energies will naturally and rightly be concentrated largely upon her home and family, and in these circumstances even highly gifted women will generally cease to be in a position to achieve so much as men, particularly at the higher levels of creative genius, which demand undivided concentration. The fact, therefore, that women's names do not figure to any extent in the annals of human genius, cannot with justice be claimed as proof of an intellectual inferiority.

It is perhaps not without interest in this connection that the annals of great crime and evil are also virtually devoid of feminine names, yet it would likewise be unjust to claim on this account that men in general are morally and spiritually inferior to women. A more rational view of the matter would simply suggest that a greater degree of practical accomplishment in both good and evil spheres is possible to men, by reason of the wider opportunities and more powerful incentives and temptations which operate in their case, while seeking to support their families to the best of their ability.

While Islam regards woman as queen of the home, and demands loyalty and devotion to her family as her primary duty, yet she is not forbidden to undertake work outside the home if she has an economic or vocational necessity to do so, for the Qur'an says: "Men shall have the benefit of what they earn and women shall have the benefit of what they earn" (4:32). The only condition which is placed upon her is that the work she undertakes shall not result in the neglect of her family responsibilities, and she is at liberty to delegate her domestic tasks to others if she wishes. It is of course a commonplace fact that since the dawn of history the wives of wealthy men have handed over such duties to servants and nurses without condemnation for so doing, even though the leisure they gained thereby may have been passed in idleness or frivolous pleasures. A woman would therefore be entitled to take the same course in the event of her necessity to follow a socially valuable occupation.

Marriage

The Islamic ideal of marriage is beautifully described in the Holy Qur'an: "And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from among yourselves that you may find quiet of mind in them, and He put between you love and compassion" (30:21), and "He it is Who created you from a single being, and of the same did He make his mate, that he might find comfort in her" (7:189). No other scripture has so eloquently depicted the love and mutual assistance which
God intended should exist between a man and his wife. Such a union forms the basis of a truly religious and united family life, which is a prime essential for a spiritually healthy society, and the ideal environment for the training and upbringing of children. The Islamic ideal of marriage was given to the world as a corrective to the two preceding extremes, namely, the licentious immorality of pagan times — and early Christian asceticism, which even looked askance at the normal physical joys of married life.

**Polygamy**

While the marriage of one man to one woman has been the general practice among the great majority of Muslims, a limited degree of plural marriage was permitted by the Qur'an to meet the difficult conditions of the early Muslim wars in defence of Islam, when large numbers of widows and orphans were left homeless, with no other possible means of support apart from marriage — or prostitution. This Qur'anic permission is given only once, in connection with the welfare of such women, and does not therefore appear as a general licence under normal conditions. In regard to the practice of polygamy at the present day, Syed Ameer ‘Ali says in his book The Spirit of Islam that “With the progress of thought, with the ever-changing conditions of the world, the necessity for polygamy disappears, and its practice is tacitly abandoned or expressly forbidden,” and speaking of the more advanced nations of today he concludes: “It is earnestly to be hoped that before long a general synod of Muslim doctors will authoritatively declare that polygamy, like slavery, is abhorrent to the laws of Islam.”

Nevertheless, the view is sometimes expressed that plural marriage need not be restricted to those conditions under which it was permitted by the Qur'an, since it is claimed that men are polygamous by nature in a true biological sense. Yet this claim is not supported by the Qur'an, for it says: “But if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with women) then marry only one” (4: 3). Such a course would certainly not have been advised if it were against the true nature of man. It is of course also well known that the Prophet himself passed all the years of his physical prime with only one wife, the noble Khadija, his marriages in later life being contracted mainly to provide a home for helpless widows of war.

It can also be seen that since the Qur'an enjoins marriage upon all who can undertake it, and since there are approximately the same number of men as women in the world, the practice of polygamy is actually made impossible for the vast majority of men. It cannot therefore be correctly claimed as a natural need, since God does not mock His servants by endowing them with physical necessities which cannot be legitimately and universally fulfilled by all mankind. All these considerations therefore point clearly to the fact that Islam regards monogamy as the normal and ideal form of marriage for man, as indeed it has always been for the vast majority of Muslims since the earliest times. Modern Muslim States have accordingly placed severe restrictions upon polygamous marriage, while a few, in consideration of present-day conditions, have declared it illegal. In the former case, additional measures have been passed to safeguard the position of women in this respect, and varying procedures are available in different countries to ensure that a woman's right to opt for monogamous marriage is duly protected by law.

**Divorce**

Women's rights are similarly being safeguarded in the matter of divorce, to ensure that modern legal practice remains in conformity with the injunctions of Islam. The Qur'an clearly states that couples wishing for divorce shall first appear before a tribunal representing both families, whose task is to attempt reconciliation. Should this fail, then divorce may be finalized after a waiting period of three months, and must be duly executed with witnesses. Divorce is regarded as a last resort and a very grave matter, and according to a saying of the Prophet, “Never did God allow anything more hateful to Him than divorce.”

The Qur'an does not restrict the right to claim divorce only to men, for on this subject it says: “And women shall have rights similar to the rights against them according to what is equitable” (2: 228), and even more specifically, “There is no blame on them for what she gives up to become free thereby” (2: 229). It is also recorded that the Prophet granted divorce to certain women who requested it, as in the Sahih of Bukhari 68: 11. The ancient practice of entirely withholding this right from women has sometimes been defended on the grounds that a woman's nature would predispose her to a frivolous use of such power. Yet this strange claim runs counter to the plain facts of feminine nature in this respect, for it is undeniably true that a woman's home and family are the very heart and centre of her life, and she will generally prefer to suffer untold miseries rather than become a party to its final dissolution.

No doubt the conditions as to divorce procedure which are laid down clearly in the Holy Qur'an, and the warning of God's anger upon those who disregard them, would alone suffice to form a perfect deterrent against abuse, in the case of righteous men. But not all men fall into this category, and one of the main purposes of the law in a complex modern society is to protect the possible victims of transgressors against the suffering which the latter may inflict, if left to their own devices. It is in such interests that modern Muslim States have extended the legal proceedings applicable to divorce, and have made it available to women on terms of equity. Nevertheless, it is worthy of note that women's movements in the Muslim world are still endeavouring to improve the position of women in regard to the questions of polygamy and divorce.

**The veil and feminine seclusion**

Islam rightly places great emphasis upon the importance of the virtues of modesty and chastity, demanding the same standard from both men and women in this respect. The custom of feminine veiling and seclusion, which has been widely practised in the Muslim world, was not Islamic in origin, having been observed in various older cultures since very ancient times. It was adopted by the early Muslims as an additional precaution against the grossly immoral conditions prevailing in pre-Islamic Arabia.

It is worthy of note that the veiling of the face is nowhere prescribed in the Holy Qur'an, neither is “Purdah” enjoined by Islamic law. Today this custom is being abandoned in many parts of the Muslim world, due to the demands and necessities of modern life, in which women are called upon to take an active and important part. It is now also recognized that the dress of all civilized nations can be so worn or adapted as to conform with the requirements of Islamic modesty, as set forth in the Qur'an.

While Islam requires the equal observance of modesty and chastity in the case of both sexes, it does not demand the rigid segregation of men and women, as is sometimes
suggested. The very fact that the Qur'an demands careful behaviour in the presence of the opposite sex presupposes that they will have occasion to be in each other's company. Islam does, however, point out the obvious dangers to virtue which may arise when a man and woman, who are not closely related to each other, associate in private and informally; but there is no Islamic reason why men and women should not meet and co-operate, under proper conditions, for religious, cultural, social or occupational purposes.

The admission of women to the mosque

Perhaps the last of all their rights which Muslim women in general have yet to obtain is one of the most important of them all. This is the right to attend congregational prayer in the mosque, from which they are still generally debarred by social custom in most Muslim countries. A notable exception to this is modern Turkey, where the writer recently had the pleasure of seeing considerable numbers of our Turkish sisters attending Friday prayer in the beautiful mosques of Istanbul.

The reason usually given for debarring women from mosque worship is that the Prophet was reported to have said that it is preferable for women to pray at home. Yet he also said, "Do not prohibit the handmaids of God from going to the mosques of God" (The Sahih of Bukhari, 11:12). There is in reality no fundamental contradiction between these two sayings, as they simply represent two sides of the same picture, as it were. In saying that it is preferable

for women to pray at home, the Prophet was recognizing the difficulties of mosque attendance for women with babies and small children, and meals to prepare. But by saying that women were not to be forbidden to attend the mosques, he made attendance perfectly permissible for those who might be in a position to go when opportunity offers, particularly, perhaps, on a Friday, or 'Id festivals.

In his book The Path of Islam (Durban, 1962), Ataooollah A. S. K. Joommal makes an impassioned plea to Muslim women in this connection, in which he says: "I appeal to my sisters-in-Islam that they should exercise their legitimate rights and come to the mosque. . . . The right and honour that Islam has given to woman cannot be taken away by anyone!" And he concludes the chapter with a moving passage which might well give inspiration to women's movements in the Muslim world which are endeavouring to rectify the position in those countries where women have not as yet been granted all the rights which were bestowed upon them by Islam:

"In these changing times the Muslim woman can play a great social and spiritual role in the life of her community. In order to do so she must throw off these shackles that bind and enslave her; she must be courageous and intrepid, and bring her menfolk to book for having placed artificial barriers in her path of progress. The women of Islam must not forget that God and the Prophet Muhammad are on her side — even if she finds her husband and the Moulvis are against her!"
Islam’s Toleration and Liberalism in Practice

By NUR AHMED, M.A., B.L.

"Whether you contemplate a religious observance or the prayers in a mosque or a formal or solemn partaking of food in common, the lowest is equal to the highest in Islam, the beggar in tattered rags gives the call for prayer and the Sultan follows. No other creed except Muhammad’s has been the illumination sufficiently in practice. I do not mean the theory to get rid of race complex, the inferiority complex, the white — the brown — the black complexes. It is only in Islam that there can be no such problem as those presented by the Boers in South Africa, as those prevalent in White Australia, or in the Southern States of the United States of America, or even in England among the several strata of society.”

The Muslim rulers’ toleration towards their non-Muslim subjects

No religion, no nation has been so maligned and misrepresented and misinterpreted as Islam and the Muslim nation by the writers of other nations, especially by Christian and Hindu writers. Islam, which is the most tolerant religion on earth, not only in theory but also in actual practice, has not escaped the most malicious and biased distortion at the hands of these early writers about Islam and Muslim people. The mist of prejudice and clouds of accumulated misrepresentation are now disappearing before the refutation of truth about Islam and the Muslims. The great writer Carlyle, the great historian Gibbon, and the like, and some of the modern orientalists, have tried to reveal the truth about Islam and its founder and followers. In this brief narration, only one aspect of Islam and the Muslim nation will be dealt with, namely, the toleration and liberalism of the Muslim rulers and the Muslims in actual practice as enjoined by Islam.

History is replete with many shining examples of tolerance towards non-Muslims by the Muslim kings and sultans and the Muslim divines and qadhis (judges). I relate some such instances of extraordinary tolerance of the Muslim people from historical records of great authenticity.

During the reign of al-Muwahhid King al-Mansur (d. 1199 C.E.), who was a very pious Muslim, a Jew named Moses Maimonides adopted Islam, at least feigned conversion to Islam. Subsequently he fled to Egypt and declared himself again to be a Jew. A Muslim jurisprudent from Spain denounced him for apostasy and demanded that the extreme penalty of law should be inflicted on him for this offence. This case was referred to al-Qadhi al-Fadhl ‘Abdul Rahim Ibn ‘Ali, one of the most eminent Muslim judges and the Prime Minister of the great Sultan Salaluddin, who after proper and authoritative enquiry declared that a man who had been converted to Islam by force could not rightly be considered a Muslim according to Qur’anic injunction, which says, “There is no compulsion in religion” (2: 221). So he quashed this case and allowed the Jew to live a free life as before and the Caliph al-Mansur gladly accepted this verdict of the Muslim judge.

History records when Sultan Ghazan of Transoxania (d. 1304 C.E.), a very pious and jealousy Muslim king who was very eager to spread Islam in the world, set another example of Islam’s great toleration and liberalism. At the beginning of his reign (1295 C.E. to 1304 C.E.) some Buddhist monks became Muslims but he subsequently found that these monks made a pretence of being converted to Islam but they were not Muslims at heart. He did not punish them for their apostasy and allowed them to go to Tibet and live there and practise their Buddhism freely again.

Evidence of non-Muslim travellers in Muslim countries

The famous traveller Tavernier has cited another illuminating instance of the Muslim spirit of toleration and liberalism. During the reign of the famous Shah ‘Abbas of Persia (1642-1677 C.E.), some Jews of Isphahan who had been forced to accept Islam. When the Shah ‘Abbas found that only power and fear had constrained them to turn Muslims he allowed them to return to their own religion and live in peace in his kingdom as free Jews.

Many earlier travellers have also mentioned similar instances of Muslim toleration and prevention of forcible conversion. An Armenian merchant of the city of Tabriz was murdered by a Muslim Haji for his refusal to become a Muslim. When the Governor of the city learnt it, he arrested the culprit and put him to death and cast his body to the dogs declaring — “What! Is this the way in which the sacred religion of Islam spreads?”

Makin cites instances how the Caliph al-Muqtadir (908 to 932 C.E.) ordered the rebuilding of churches at Ramleh and other places. “It is not the propagation but the permanency,” cries the famous historian Gibbon with admiration, “that deserves our wonder about Islam—the same pure and perfect impression which Islam engraved at Mecca and Medina is preserved, after the revolution of twelve centuries, by the Indian, Turkish and the African proselytes of the Qur’an.” “The winningness to embrace Islam, a new religion after a foreign conquest by the Muslims,” says the historian Von Grit Schmidt, “is a fact rarely figures in antiquity: Islam stands alone in this in history.” The famous Dutch historian Dozy in his Moslem Spain says, “This phenomenon (the conquered’s willingness to accept Islam) appears at first a striking mystery especially when we know that the new

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religion was not imposed on anybody.” In his account on the conquest of Spain, Dozy extols the importance of Islam’s toleration and says, “The condition of the Christians under the Moslem rule was not the cause of discontent if compared with the past. The Arabs were very tolerant. They did not harass anybody in matters of religion. For this Christians were grateful to the Arabs; they praised the tolerance and justice of the Moslem conqueror and preferred their rule to that of the Germans and Franks.”

The teachings of the Qur’án are responsible for Muslims’ toleration towards non-Muslims

The unique spirit of tolerance found in the Muslim rulers and other Muslim people was due to the teachings of Islam. The Holy Qur’án commands, “And if any one of the idolators seek thy protection (O Muhammad) then protect him so that he may hear the words of God and convey him to his place of safety” (9 : 6). In this verse the Qur’án commands the highest form of tolerance in the shape of protection to those who do not even believe in God. Islam really represents a revolution against racial intolerance and lays great emphasis ethnologically on the unity and equality of all races, thus putting an end to the colour, race and creed bars.

It ordains one immutable standard of virtue and excellence having nothing to do with the colour of the skin, birthplace, family or genealogy, Fear of God, good deeds, and selfless work for fellowmen have been laid down by Islam as the criterion of excellence and superiority of men on earth and in the hereafter. The Qur’án further says, “O, mankind, surely We have created you from a male and a female and made you different nations and tribes (clans) so that you may know one another (by such designations). Surely the noblest of you is the best in conduct. Surely God is Knowing, Aware” (49 : 1).

Some modern non-Muslim writers on the toleration of Muslims

The Indian writer Mr. M. N. Roy, in his well-known book *Historical Role of Islam*, writes, “The ancient religion of Zoroaster with its pernicious doctrine of the dual principles of good and evil, both equally eternal, was particularly obnoxious to the stern worshippers of one God, yet even the magician creed did not altogether forfeit the toleration of the conquering Arab nation. As late as the third century of the Hijra, ancient temples of fire stood splendidly overshadowing the modest mosques by their side.”

The German scholar Adam Mez

“The most amazing feature of the Muslim Government,” says Adam Mez, “is the number of non-Muslim officers in State services. In their own empire the Muslims were ruled by Christians. Old is the complaint that the decisions over the life and property lay in the hands of the protected subjects. Twice in the third century of Hijra, equal to ninth century, even the War Ministers were non-Muslims, with the result that the defenders of faith (Muslim Mujahids) had to kiss their hands and obey commands. Legally no calling or profession was closed to the non-Muslims. In those lucrative occupations such as banking, large commercial ventures, linen trade, land ownership and the medical profession, the Christians and Jews were thickly represented and firmly established. They so arranged among themselves that in Syria, for instance, most of the financiers were Jews and most of the physicians and scribes were Christians.”

In Islam in the eyes of law, the protected ones (i.e. non-Muslim minorities in an Islamic State) are equal to the Muslims. The Prophet Muhammad has said, “He who enjoys our protection, his blood is like our blood and his blood-money is like our blood-money.” It is not a fact that jizya or poll-tax was invented by the Muslims for non-Muslims. The poll-tax or jizya was a common phenomenon in every civilized state during the time of the rise of Islam. Islam had adopted this system with some salutary changes. It was not one of the teachings of Islam but a system of taxation which was in vogue in the Roman and Persian Empires. It was not true that all non-Muslims were subjected to jizya. This tax was levied for exemption from military service, which was compulsory on every Muslim. Those non-Muslims who agreed to do military service or to pay other taxes such as Zakat like the Muslims were exempt from payment of jizya or poll-tax. The Christian tribe of Banu Taghlib refused to pay jizya and agreed to pay Zakat as levied on Muslims and the tribe was allowed to pay Zakat as levied on Muslims in place of jizya.

Two Indian scholars, Sir C. R. Reddy and Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyer

Dr. Sir C. R. Reddy, an authority on political science and philosophy (*vide the Twentieth Century, London, for May 1943*) writes: “The age-long problem of racial equality, according to American socialist Stone, has not been solved by any religion or ethics except Muhammadanism (Islam). Only among the Muhammadans do we find all the Faithfuls whatever their race or colour enjoying absolute prandial and matrimonial equality. In every other polity and religion the surd of race and colour has never been resolved. Reason, ethics, and spiritual ideals have broken on the rock of race or colour.”

Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyer in the *Eastern Times* of 22 December, 1944, writes, “What does Islam stand for? I regard and all thinking men recognise Islam as the one and only truly democratic faith that is actually functioning in the world today. Being a Hindu, firmly entrenched in the Hindu faith, I yet make bold to say so. My own religion has not succeeded despite its fundamental philosophy in putting into practice the oneness of humanity. No other religion, whatever its theory may be, has brought into practice the essential idea of oneness of man before God, and man, as Islam has done. Whether you contemplate a religious observance or the prayers in a mosque or a formal or solemn partaking of food in common, the lowest is equal to the highest in Islam, the beggar in tattered rags gives the call for prayer and the Sultan follows. No other creed except Muhammad’s has been the illumination sufficiently in practice. I do not mean the theory to get rid of race complex, the inferiority complex, the white —- the brown — the black complexes. It is only in Islam that there can be no such problem as those presented by the Boers in South Africa, as those prevalent in White Australia, or in the Southern States of the United States of America, or even in England among the several strata of society.”

“The Muslim rulers in India showed in practice the unique spirit of toleration. The customary honour and deference due to Brahmins and their 1½% share in the land revenue was maintained,” says the German writer Von Kremser. “The Hindus were allowed to build temples, traffic with the Muslims, live without fear and strive to better themselves in every possible way. There cannot be a better example of toleration than that which the Arabs granted to the Hindus in Sind.”
ISHMAEL SPEAKS

By Norman Lewis

Alone I stand upon the darkened plain
And lift my thoughts to Thee, O God!
Among those worlds and lamps of worlds
That gleam above me in the desert night,
In that vast stillness of the starlit skies,
Thou art.

The care of many worlds
Weighs heavily on Thee, and Thou art Judge
Of all the deeds of many kinds of men.

My father, Abraham, once learned,
Afar in Ur among the wise Chaldees,
Of distant worlds that fill the sky of night,
The web beneath Thy fingers, Mighty One.

My mother, Hagar, often spoke to me,
Before her voice was stilled long years ago,
And said: "God sees thee, little though thou art
Among His many worlds. He cares for thee.
Although His rule is firm, He is Compassionate."

The tent that looms so dark upon the pallid plain
Beneath the silent stars is all my home,
Within its yielding walls my children sleep,
And thought of them has brought me here
To talk to Thee as once my father talked,
For he had love of Thee and always strove
To know Thy will.

How far he journeyed
From that distant place of men
Where the Euphrates pours its golden flood
Across a fertile land. And he believed
That Thou wouldst guide his steps.

Now, Father gone and Mother gone
These many years into the silence of the stars,
And I, Ishmael, Thy chosen one
To lead a race to worship Thee, left all alone.
No man feels this aloneness as I do.
Upon the sand and rock of this vast barren land
I worship Thee. No priest will intervene
To speak of Thee, for I have known Thee well,
Beneath the stars or in the heat of day,
Gazing above to see Thy face,
The Face all kindly, filled with holy light,
The wise, all-seeing One. No city shrine
Enfolds Thy presence, but the spacious sky,
All gemmed with stars by night
And filled with flame by day,
Thy chosen home, Thy great unchanged abode.

Now hear my prayer: My children sleep
And I alone am restless and awake.
Last night I slept the sleep Thou gavest me
And dreamed a dream: this was my dream:
I saw vast lands that reached from here
In the direction of the sinking sun
Across dry lands immensely far away.
And then I saw my children move,
Through many generations to those lands
Until the water stopped them.

Mr. Norman Lewis

Thundering day and night upon a sandy shore,
And seemed to say: "Thus far
And no farther will I let you go."
My children prospered in the many years
And built great cities in those western lands
Lifting large buildings of a strange design
Upon the margin of a smaller sea.
The desert at their backs and far across
The shining waters other lands unknown.

Now this distressed me as I dreamed my dream:
New nations rose, and then my many sons
On swift steeds moved against their very kin
And shed each other's blood on many battlefields.
These are my sons and sons of Abraham,
And the widowed women my own daughters,
Sharers of my blood, the blood of Hagar and of me.
And the men were filled with enmity
And smote each other on the sandy plain
And boasted of their kingdoms and their wealth.

This is not good. Long, long ago
Did not Thou promise Abraham a multitude of sons?
And these will come to be. But hear my prayer.
Rising this silent night out of my deep concern,
As I stand here beneath Thy gleaming worlds,
That enmity will cease among my many sons.

Some distant day may all I call my own
Clasp hands as brothers, Hagar's sons and mine,
And on some promontory of the Eastern Sea
Build Thee a city, meeting there
From all these distant western lands
To make good government for all,
Insuring peace, the rule of equity.

And if Thou grant me this, then I can sleep
Deep sleep in the darkened desert night,
Knowing Thy power and Thy love will join my sons
In government the best for all.
And unity beneath the reign of law.
SOME BRAIN COBWEBS

Mostly by Early Jewish and Christian Initiates and partly by viewing of which MUSLIMS have been

Removed by MUHAMMAD ASAD’S

(an English translation of the

Published by the Muslim World League (al-Raah))

few distinctive features of Mr. Asad’s ‘The Message of the Qur’ân’

he Qur’ân should be studied

by Mr. Muhammad Asad from his Foreword to The Message of the Qur’ân

Firstly, the Qur’ân must not be viewed as a compilation of individual inclusions and

fictions but as one integral whole; that is, as an exposition of an ethical doctrine in

verse and sentence has an intimate bearing on other verses and sentences, all of

meaning and exemplifying one another. Consequently, its real meaning can be grasped

we correlate every one of its statements with what has been stated elsewhere in its

and try to explain its ideas by means of frequent cross-references, always subordinating

just to the general and the individual to the intrinsic. Whenever this rule is faithfully

we realize that the Qur’ân is — in the words of Muhammad `Abduh — “its own

monument”.

condly, no part of the Qur’ân should be viewed from a purely historical point of

at is to say, all its references to historical circumstances and events — both at the

the Prophet and its earlier times — must be regarded as illustrations of the human

and not as ends in themselves. Hence the consideration of the historical occasion on

particular verse was revealed — a pursuit so dear, and legitimately so, the hearts of

the early commentators were the most important to the ethical teaching which the Qur’ân, taken as a whole.

specimen verses to show the excellence of the translation. The English

tering of the verses quoted below makes comments superfluous

1 Of Conscience

here shall be no compulsion in (anything that pertains to) religion” (The

2: 256).

npic idea of relationship between man and woman is governed by the idea

t rather than domination

en shall take full care of women with the bounties which God has bestowed

udantly on some of them than on others and with what they spend out

ossessions” (The Qur’ân, 4: 34).

above by Mr. Muhammad Asad

xpression qaawwaam is an intensive form of qa’am (“one who is responsible for”
care of “a thing or a person.”) ... The grammatical form of physical maintenance

t as well as moral responsibility: and it is because of the last-named factor

t rendered this phrase as “men shall take full care of women”.

Qur’ân

o abrogation — Naasikh-Mansuks — of verses in the Qur’ân

v message which We annul or consign to oblivion We replace with a

similar one. Dost thou not know that God has power to will anything?”

in. 2: 106).

above by Mr. Muhammad Asad

inciple laid down in this passage — relating to the supersession of the Biblical

by that of the Qur’ân — has given rise to an erroneous interpretation by many

Muslim theologians. The word ayah (“message”), occurring in
denote a “verse” of the Qur’ân (because every one of these

Taking this restricted meaning of the term ayah, some scholars

passage that certain verses of the Qur’ân have been “abrogated”

the revelation of the Qur’ân was completed. Apart from the fam

which calls to mind the image of a human author correcting, on

of his manuscript, deleting one passage and replacing it with ano

a single reliable Tradition to the effect that the Prophet ever de
to have been “abrogated”.

At the root of the so-called “doctrine of abrogation” may the

early commentators to reconcile one Qur’ânic passage with another

was overcome by declaring that such verses had been “abrogated” —

explains also why there is no unanimity whatsoever among the up

“doctrine of abrogation” as to which, and how many. Qur’ânic verses

furthermore, as to whether this alleged abrogation implies a total

question from the context of the Qur’ân, or only a cancellation of

the “doctrine of abrogation” has no basis whatever in historical

On the other hand, the apparent difficulty in interpreting the abo

immediately if the term ayah is rendered, correctly, as “message”

in conjunction with the preceding one, which states that the Jews

accept any regulation which might supersede that of the Bible.

the abrogation relates to certain laws contained in the earlier din

part of the Qur’ân itself.

IV The Prophet Jesus Christ

(a) Jesus did not die the death of the Cross.

The meaning of the Qur’ânic expression Raif — “elevated

“Jesus was not raised bodily unto heaven.”

“And for their refusal to acknowledge the truth, and

which they utter against Mary, and their boast, ‘Behold, we

Jesus, son of Mary, (who claimed to be) God’s apostle!’

“However, they did not slay him, and neither did they

only seemed to them (as if it had been) so; and, verily those

views about this matter are indeed confused, having no (re)

and following mere conjecture. For, of a certainty, they did not

exalted him unto Himself — and God is indeed almighty

4: 157-8).”

Note on the above by Mr. Muhammad Asad.

Thus, the Qur’ân categorically denies the story of the crucifixion

among Muslims, many fanciful legends tellings that at the last moment

Jesus a person closely resembling him (according to some accounts,

who was subsequently crucified in his place. However, none of these

support in the Qur’ân or in authentic Traditions, and the stories pro

by the classical commentators of the Qur’ân must be summarily rej

more than confused attempts at “harmonization”, the Qur’ân states

crucified with the graphic description, in the Gospels, of his crucifixion

such as has been succinctly explained in the Qur’ânic pl

jahann, which I render as “but it only appeared to them as if it ha
TRODUCED INTO ISLAM

by viewing the Qur’an from ‘a purely historical point of view’
been Prisoners for centuries

SAD’S The Message of the Qur’an

tion of the Holy Qur’an

gue (al-Raabitah al-Islamiyyah), Mecca, 1964

MESSAGE occurring in this context is also used to
use every one of these verses contains a message),
term ayah, some scholars conclude from the above
have been “abrogated” by God’s command before
After the fancifulness of this assertion —
As author correcting, on second thought, the proofs
and replacing it with another — there does not exist
that the Prophet ever declared a verse of the Qur’
line of abrogation” may lie the inability of some of
a Qur’anic passage with another: a difficulty which
ses had been “abrogated.” This arbitrary procedure
whatsoever among the upholders of the “doctrine of
any, Qur’anic verses have been affected by it: and,
abrogation implies a total elimination of the verse in
and not only a “cancellation of its meaning”. In short,
sis whatever in historical fact, and must be rejected
in interpreting the above Qur’anic passage disappears
1, correctly as “message”, and if we read this verse
which states that the Jews and the Christians refuse
pervade that of the Bible: for, if read in this way,
stained in the earlier divine messages and not to any

(b) The verses in the Qur’an about the Miracles of Jesus are metaphorical rather than literal.

“I have come unto you with a message from your Sustainer. I shall fashion for you out of clay, as it were, the shape of (your) destiny, and then breathe into it, so that it might become (your) destiny by God’s leave; and I shall heal the blind and the leper, and bring the dead back to life by God’s leave, and I shall let you know what you may eat and what you should store up in your houses. Behold, in all this there is indeed a message for you, if you are (truly) believers” (The Qur’an 3:48-49)

Note on the above by Mr. Muhammad Asad.

The word tayy is a plural of ta’ir (“flying creature” or “bird”), or an infinitive noun (“flying”) derived from the verb tara (“he flew”). In pre-Islamic usage, as well as in the
Qur’an, the words ta’ir and ta’ir often denote “fortune” or “destiny” whether good or evil (as, for instance, in 7:131, and still more clearly in 17:13). Many instances of this idiomatic use of tayy and ta’ir are given in all the authoritative Arab dictionaries (see also Lane V, 1904f. Thus in the parabolic manner so beloved by him, Jesus intimated to the children of
Israel that out of the humble clay of their lives he would fashion for them the vision of a
soaring destiny, and that this vision, brought to life by his God-given inspiration, would
become their real destiny by God’s leave and by the strength of their faith (as pointed out at
the end of this verse).

It is probable that the “raising of the dead” by Jesus is a metaphorical description of his
giving new life to people who were spiritually dead: cf. 6:122 - “Is then he who was dead
(in spirit), and whom We thereupon gave life, and for whom We set up a light whereby he
can see his way amongst men (is then he) like unto one (who is lost) in darkness deep, out
of which he cannot emerge?” If this interpretation is as I believe - correct, then the
“healing of the blind and the leper” has a similar significance: namely, an inner regeneration
of people who were spiritually diseased and blind to the truth.

1 The first volume comprises chapters 1 to 9.
V 
Woman in Islam

No concubinage in Islam. The meaning of polygamy in the Qur'ān

"And if you have reason to fear that you might not act equitably towards orphans, then marry from among (other) women such as are lawful to you — (even) two, or three, or four; but if you have reason to fear that you might not be able to treat them with equal fairness then (only) one — or (from among) those whom you rightfully possess. This will make it more likely that you will not deviate from the right course" (The Qur'ān, 4: 3).

Note on the above by Mr. Muhammad Asad.

Lit. "whom your right hands possess" — i.e., from among the captives taken in a war in God's cause (regarding which see chapter 2; notes 167 and 168, and chapter 8, note 72). It is obvious that the phrase "two, or three, or four; but if you have reason to fear..." etc., is an interpolated clause relating to both the free women mentioned in the first part of the sentence and to female slaves — for both these nouns are governed by the imperative verb "marry". Thus, the whole sentence has this meaning: "Marry from among (other) women such as are lawful to you, or (from among) those whom you rightfully possess — (even) two, or three, or four; but if you have reason to fear that you might not be able to treat them with equal fairness, then (only) one" — implying that, irrespective of whether they are free women, or originally slaves, the number of wives must not exceed four. It was in this sense that Muhammad 'Abdul 'Azīz (an authority on this verse) says: "This is, moreover, supported by verse 25 of this chapter, where marriage with female slaves is spoken of. Contrary to the popular view and the practice of many Muslims in the past centuries, neither the Qur'ān nor the life-example of the Prophet provides any sanction for concubinage.

As regards the permission to marry more than one wife (up to the maximum of four), it is so restricted by the condition "if you have reason to fear that you might not be able to treat them with equal fairness, then (marry only) one", as to make such plural marriages possible only in quite exceptional cases and under exceptional circumstances. Still, one might ask why the same latitude has not been given to women as well; but the answer is simple. Notwithstanding the spiritual factor of love which influences the relations between man and woman, the determinant biological reason for the sexual urge is, in both sexes, procreation: and whereas a woman can, at one time, conceive a child from one man only and has to carry it for nine months before she can conceive another, a man can beget a child every time he cohabits with a woman. Thus, while nature would have been merely wasteful if it had produced a polygamous instinct in woman, man's polygamous inclination is biologically justified. It is, of course, obvious that the biological factor is only one — and by no means always the most important — of the aspects of marital love; nor is it a basis in itself and, therefore, decisive in the institution of marriage as such. With the wisdom that always takes human nature fully into account, Islamic Law undertakes no more than the safeguarding of the socio-biological function of marriage (which includes also care of the progeny), allowing a man to have more than one wife and not allowing a woman to have more than one husband at one time: while the spiritual problem of marriage, being imponderable and therefore outside the scope of law, is left to the discretion of the partners. In any event — since marriage in Islam is basically a civil contract — recourse to divorce is always open to either of the two partners.

"And (forbidden to you are) all married women other than those whom you ourselves rightfully possess (through wedlock): This is God's ordinance, binding upon you. But lawful to you are all (women) beyond these, for you to seek out, offering them of your possessions, taking them in honest wedlock, and not in fornication" (The Qur'ān, 4: 24).

The term mulkūfah signifies literally "a woman who is forti@gmail.comd against unchastity", and carries three senses: (1) "a married woman"; (2) "a chaste woman"; and (3) "a free woman". According to the majority of authorities, al-mulkūfah denotes in the above context "married women". As for the expression malakat aymānūkum: "those whom your right hands possess", i.e., "those whom you rightfully possess", it is often taken to mean female slaves captured in a war in God's cause (see in this connection 3: 67, and the corresponding note). The commentators who choose this meaning hold that such slave-girls can be taken in marriage irrespective of whether they have husbands in the country of their origin or not. However, quite apart from the fundamental differences of opinion, even among the Companions of the Prophet, regarding the legality of such a marriage, some of the most outstanding commentators hold to the view that ma malakat aymānūkum denotes here "women who you rightfully possess through wedlock": thus Razi, in his commentary on this verse, and Tabari in one of his alternative explanations (going back to 'Abd Allah Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid, and others). Razi, in particular, points out that the reference to "all married women" (al-mulkūfah min an-nasab), coming as it does after the enumeration of prohibited degrees of relationship, is meant to stress the prohibition of sexual relations with any woman other than one's lawful wife.

The Conception of God — continued from page 38

to work in, and their whereabouts, and know the proportions in which they are to be used, we cannot hope to achieve success. Then come three other Attributes, al-Jaami' al-Jabbaar and al-Fattaah: the first means Combiner and Collector of things that lie separate from each other. Al-Jabbaar is one Who compels others to work according to His will. Similarly, the man who works under us should do so according to our direction, and we should use our material in such a way that it may work out our design. Thirdly, al-Fattaah — The Opener of hidden qualities. We should know how the things we use will exhibit their inherent qualities according to our design.

Al-Haaddīy — He Who puts others on the right path. Whether in regard to the material we use, or to the people who serve under us, we must see that they function as they should. Al-Raqeeb — He Who watches keenly. We should mark vigilantly the progress of things, with a view to helping them on and protecting them from harm and danger. In fact we have here to follow three other Divine Attributes, that is to say, al-Maazi — One Who keeps things separate and prevents them from harming each other. We must do the same even when dealing with lifeless material. Things possess properties contrary to each other and unless vigilantly dealt with are liable to do immense harm. Al-Qayyüm — He Who is the maintainer of things and enables them to subsist. We must act in this way concerning everything we use in our business in order to preserve it and keep it in working order.

In fact, the word al-Rabb is very rich in its meanings, and here I would refer to one in particular. Al-Rabb is He Who brings the faculties latent in things to perfection and looks to the completion of the work in His hand. All these Attributes inspire us with the desire for full knowledge of the properties of everything in the universe, and the ways under which they are disclosed. It also demands from us that perseverence and constancy which alone can secure perfection and bring success to our business. In this connection I may refer to two other names, al-Mubdd — He Who Creates things for the first time, and al-Mu'eez — He Who knows how to repeat the creation in our occupation. We ought to know precisely what we intend to do, how to begin a thing properly and how to repeat the process if necessary.

Let us examine, for example, the process we adopt in our work. Do we take heed of all the caution and vigilance disclosed in these attributes? We often encounter failure but rarely achieve success, and the reason of it is that we do not act in accordance with the Divine ways.

(To be continued)
Socialistic Reform Laws in Muslim Countries with special reference to Egypt
(An interview with the Shaykh al-Akbar the Rector of al-Azhar, Hasan al-Ma'amun)

Question

Some Muslim friends have asked me to enlighten them about the view that is being broadcast on the radio programmes of certain Muslim countries, namely, that the socialist legislation promulgated by the United Arab Republic in July 1961 is contrary to the Muslim religion.

Answer

Islamic Law respects Private Property as long as it is NOT in clash with public interests

Really, I was amazed to hear such statements coming from Muslim countries. We all know quite well that questions about religion must in no way be dealt with so superficially. Further, it is unthinkable that anyone opposing the interpretation of a question in the light of the precepts of God should put forward his own ideas, while disregarding or misunderstanding the Qur'an, the Sunnah (Traditions) and the spirit of the Islamic law. For what is permissible and what is not permissible is stated quite formally and clearly, while between the two there are doubtful cases. I therefore made a special study of these laws, referring back to the principles of Islamic legislation which I already knew. My researches led me to the following decisions:

1. No doubt exists that Islamic law respects private property acquired in a lawful manner, and forbids its unlawful seizure. It obliges the one who damages another's property or goods to replace them with similar goods, or to compensate him financially, according to the circumstances.

The role of the Zakat institution in Islamic polity

2. Islamic law lays down that those who possess wealth have obligations towards their fellow-men. To ensure social equity and to maintain the fraternal sentiments which bind Muslim to Muslim it has ordained the collection of the Zakat (the poor man's share in the property of the "haves"), which is levied on net wealth, commercial profits and the products of the earth. He who is under the obligation to contribute the Zakat must do this voluntarily, otherwise the authorities will oblige him to pay it, and they will distribute it in conformance with Muslim law.

In the time of the Prophet Muhammad, the collectors of funds for pious works encashed the Zakat and the Prophet distributed it to those entitled to it. After the death of the Prophet, his successor, the Caliph Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, learned that certain Muslims had refused to pay the Zakat, and that others had renounced Islam. The Caliph took action against these two factions, making no distinction between those who opposed the payment of the Zakat and those who had renounced their faith, and did not stop until he had put an end to this sedition and those who were responsible had submitted to the law of God. They agreed to pay the Zakat which was owing to the Bayt al-Mal (Treasury) of the Muslims, as they used to do during the lifetime of the Prophet.

Islam's view of wealth

Apart from the Zakat, other obligations are laid down by Muslim law. It lays on the rich the duty of contributing from their own wealth towards the support of their poor relations. Similarly, in order to ensure social equity, it lays on the authorities the duty of providing for the needs of those poor people who are unable to earn their living because of old age or sickness, in cases where they have no well-to-do relatives to help maintain them. In this connection the Caliph 'Umar made no distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim. In fact, in his book al-Kharaj (The Tribute), Abu Yusuf says that one day 'Umar saw an old man asking for alms. The man attracted his attention and he asked him who he was. He turned out to be a needy Jew. 'Umar said to him, "We have not been just to you. We have made use of your youth and now we are making you lose your old age." He then took him to his house and gave him what he could lay his hands on. Then he went with him to the treasurer of the Bayt al-Mal, saying, "Look after this man and his relatives, and make them a grant from the Bayt al-Mal sufficient for their needs and those of their children. For I know that God has said that charity is for the poor and the unhappy." The word "poor" refers to Muslims and the word "unhappy" to those who believe in other religions of divine origin, and the old man belonged to the latter category.

In his book, Futuhat al-Buldan, al-Baladhuri tells how 'Umar, on the way to Syria, met a group of Christian lepers. He gave orders that they were to be assisted financially from the common fund and that a person was to look after each one of them. The law also orders that money is to be spent on works of charity. God says in the Qur'an (2:125): "They (the believers) ask thee (O Prophet) as to what they should spend. Say: Whatever wealth you spend, it should be for the parents and the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, and whatever good you do, God surely knows it." And God says again the same chapter (verse 195): "And spend in the way of God, and cast not yourselves to perdition with your own hands. And do good to others: for God loves the doers of good." And again in 2:254: "O you who believe, spend (in charity) out of what we have given you, before the day comes in which there is no bargaining, neither any friendship nor intercession, and the unbelievers are unjust." And yet again, 2:267: "O you who believe: Give in charity of the good things that you possess and of what We have brought forth for you out of the earth. Do not aim at giving what is bad in charity, while you would..."
not take it yourselves unless you connive at it. Know that God is Self-sufficient, Praiseworthy.”

If we were to attempt to quote all the verses in which God orders the spending of wealth on works of benevolence and charity, there would not be enough space in this article. The law has also forbidden the hoarding of wealth and the depriving of those who have a right to a share in it. God says in 9: 34-35: “To those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend in the way of God (is announced) a stern warning of bitter torment, on the day when these metals shall be brought to incandescence in the fire of hell, when (by these metals) they will be marked on their foreheads, their sides and their backs, when they will hear (cried to them): Here is what you hoarded! Now enjoy what you hoarded!”

Some commentators are of the opinion that the throat in this verse is addressed to those who hoard wealth and refrain from spending it in the way of God by the act of refusing to pay the Zakat which is due. As justification they refer to these words of the Prophet, quoted by Ibn ‘Umar: “Wealth on which the Zakat has been paid is not considered as hoarding.” Another quotation which is used are these words of Abu Dharr al-Ghaffari: “Hoarding means the acquisition of all kinds of wealth in the hands of the one who holds it and who pays none of it to give satisfaction to God.” This bears out and justifies the Qur’anic text.

3. Muslim law authorizes the possession of private property insofar as the owner fulfills the duties that God demands of him. If he neglects these duties, it is lawful for the authorities to put into effect the regulations and the decrees which will oblige him to fulfill them. Supposing a father omits to provide for his children, whether of tender age or adult: if these children are in need because they are unable to earn a living, the authorities will oblige the father to support them. If he refuses, they will automatically take what is necessary for their upkeep. God says in 65: 7: “Let him who has abundance spend out of his abundance (for the suckling of a child): and whoever has means of subsistence straitened to him let him spend according to what God has given him. God does not lay on any soul a burden except so far as He has granted it (the means): God will bring about ease after difficulty.”

4. Some verses of the Qur’án on wealth and the acquisition of wealth

The law considers wealth as a blessing after which every Muslim should strive, and which he should earn by working in a legitimate and authorized way. The Muslim has not the right to acquire wealth by methods which God has prohibited, such as usury, the wrongful taking of the property of others, bribery, swindling and theft. We read in the Qur’án (2: 188): “And do not swallow up your property among yourselves by false means, neither seek to gain access thereby to the judges, so that you may swallow up a part of the property of men wrongly while you know!”

The law considers riches as a blessing bestowed by God. For God is the Creator of all things and it is He who helps man to acquire them. God has made man His deputy on earth, so that he may inhabit it and use it to his advantage and that of others. We read in the Qur’án (2: 30): “And when thy Lord said to the angels: I am going to place in the earth a deputy: (They said): What! Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood, while we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness? (The Lord) replied: I know what you do not know.” Again, the Qur’án (24: 33) has it: “And give them of the wealth of God which He has given you.” And again in the Qur’án (22: 64-65): “His is whatsoever is in the earth and surely God is the Self-Sufficient, the Praiseworthy. Dost thou not see that God has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the earth and the ships running in the sea by His command? And He withholds the heavens from falling on the earth except with His permission: truly God is Compassionate, Merciful to men.”

In the Muslim soul the effect of these words is to banish all sentiment of vanity and all perverse temptation which might lead him to think that having become rich, he is free to do as he pleases with his wealth. On this assumption he might forget the claims that others have on his riches, or use them to harm others and to satisfy his own purposes, his passions, and his personal desires.

Here is yet another verse in the Qur’án (7: 31): “O children of Adam! attend to your embellishments at every time of prayer, and eat and drink and be not extravagant; God does not love the extravagant.”

These words remind the believer that he must not forget that he is a member of Muslim society, throughout which reign affection and friendship, in an atmosphere of equality and fraternity. And God says in 49: 10: “The believers are but brethren, therefore make peace between your brethren and be careful of (your duty to) God, that mercy may be had on you.” And in verse 13 of the same chapter: “O you men! We have created you of a male and a female and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; the most honourable of you with God is the one among you most careful of (his duty): surely God is Knowing, Aware.” In this connection one must not forget the words of the Prophet Muhammad: “None of you is a believer unless he wishes for his brother that which he wishes for himself.”

Lack of wealth according to Muslim Law should not be the cause of any prejudice towards a member of human society

Muslim law esteems that the lack of wealth must not be detrimental to anyone, or the cause of any prejudice towards him. That is why it prohibits the acquisition of foodstuffs and any other vital necessity of life, so as to form a monopoly. The books containing the Sunnah recount the words of the Prophet: “Men are partners in three things: water, pasture and fire.” And in another text it is said that to these three necessities be added salt. For these things are necessary to everyone and it is inadmissible that a person or group of persons should have the exclusive ownership of them and deny access to others on the ground that, being their own property, no one can use them without their permission. These things are necessary to everyone and it is inadmissible that a person or group of persons should have the exclusive ownership of them and deny access to others on the ground that, being their own property, no one can use them without their permission. These things cannot become private property, and everything that is necessary to human life must be common property. The legislators prohibit the monopolistic buying-up of foodstuffs and things that are necessary to life, so that if people are in need of these necessities they are not at a disadvantage. As a basis for this they take the subject-matter of the aforementioned tradition of the Prophet Muhammad.

So that we can safely say that the nationalization of the water supply, electricity, public transport and all the public services of which people stand in need in their daily lives is in conformity with this tradition of the Prophet Muhammad.
And these services must be available to all, so that all may use them.

Some socialist laws (Agrarian Reform Law) promulgated in Egypt examined in the light of Islamic laws

In the light of these findings, for the authority and sources of which we have had recourse to the Qur‘an, the Sunnah and the actions of the Prophet and his Companions, we can examine the subject-matter of the socialist laws promulgated by the United Arab Republic in July 1961. And these are our conclusions:

The socialist laws in question do not aim at abolishing private property, which Muslim law recognizes and on the subject of which it has promulgated numerous regulations governing the relationships between man and man. They do not deprive the owner of that which he owns, but they extend the law regarding Agrarian Reform by limiting to 100 feddans per person (1 feddan = 1.038 acres) the area of agricultural land which he can possess, instead of the 200 feddans maximum fixed by the 1953 law on agrarian reform. These socialist laws do not oblige a landowner to submit to this reform an area of land exceeding the maximum limit without his being indemnified. For they stipulate that he is entitled, as compensation, to State securities repayable within a period of time fixed by law. These securities bring in a fixed rate of profit which indemnify the landowner for the usufruct or productive benefit which his land would have brought him if it had remained in his possession.

The socialist laws have thus limited the individual ownership of agricultural land so as to allow small farmers and agricultural labourers owning no land at all to become landowners as well. At one time it was an exclusive minority who enjoyed the ownership of land, and these landowners were unwilling to sell any part of it, however small, to those who were without. If perchance they agreed to sell, they raised prices to such a level that would-be buyers were unable to meet them.

Muslim law agrees that in the general interest those who work and cultivate land should also be entitled to own it. In fact, this is what happened in the early days of Islam. Al-Awza‘i records that ‘Umar and the Companions of the Prophet, when they made their entry into Syria and Iraq, decided that the peasants should stay in their villages, and further, that the land they occupied should become their property, so that they could get crops from it and pay the appropriate tax. The sale of this land, whether by compulsion or agreement, was forbidden, in order that it might remain in the possession of those who cultivated it, and not pass to others.

The limitation on the ownership of farmland has no other object than to transfer its possession to the small farmers who have no land of their own. This is a measure aimed at the general good of all. It is clear that the minority who possess farmland, and have no need to do other than collect the income from the workers who cultivate it, would never have agreed to sell it except at prices both exorbitant and unjust. Can anyone therefore maintain that the limit on farmland ownership is contrary to the Muslim religion, its laws, and its morality? Our religion is not opposed to a measure of this kind, which is in conformance with the spirit of Islamic law and with the decisions taken in the past by ‘Umar and his companions. The latter in fact decided not to take land from the possession of those who lived on it and farmed it, in order to distribute it to those who had just conquered the country, and whose occupations were in no way connected with agriculture.

It should be noted that no land exceeding in area the maximum limit has ever been expropriated without payment. The owners have been indemnified both equitably and advantageously, and the Government has been able to distribute such land at reasonable prices to those who were in need of it.

Agrarian Reform Law of Egypt and the example of the Prophet Muhammad

The Agrarian Reform Law has raised the status of small farmers and farm workers, and has enabled them to earn their livelihood in a respectable way by working land which belongs to them, without the need to sell their labour to others.

Here there is a parallel with an incident in the life of the Prophet Muhammad, who had asked the Jews to evacuate the territory of the Banu Nadir. God, in His infinite wisdom, gave a revelation on this matter. In the Qur‘an (59 : 7) we read: "Whatever God has restored to His Messenger from the people of the towns, it is for God and the Messenger and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, so that it may not be a thing taken by turns among the rich of you, and whatever the Messenger gives you, accept it, and from whatever he forbids you, keep back, and be careful of (your duty to) God: for God is severe in requiting (evil)."

Commentators say that the Prophet reserved a part of the property of the Banu Nadir for his relations and his entourage, and distributed the larger part among the poor Refugee-emigrants. But he gave nothing to the Ansaar ( Helpers) — except to three of them, on account of poverty. He said to his Helpers: "You can if you wish share the property of the Banu Nadir between you and them, and you can provide for them out of your crops. Or you can let them have all the property, and not provide for them." They replied: "Give them the land and the property, and we will continue to help them just the same." On this, the Prophet gave the property to the refugees and not to his Helpers, and everyone was satisfied: the Refugees with what they had acquired, and the Helpers with the crops which they retained.

We see, therefore, that the sharing of wealth between poor and rich, so that it does not become the exclusive possession of the latter, is something which is approved by Muslim law. This sharing ensures justice between man and man. What the Agrarian Reform Law has accomplished goes no farther than to distribute a part of the landed property among the poor who have no private means, who till the soil and gather the crops by the sweat of their brow, and who have no other trade. This law is unjust to nobody; it is not opposed to the idea of private property; it does not encroach on it; it does not expropriate it. It is reasonable to suppose that if justice had prevailed in the conduct of human affairs, the landowners would not have been strongly attached to their property, and would have agreed to sell some of it to those in need at prices which were reasonable and within the legal limit. Which means to say that if the owners had agreed to sell all or part of their land to those who cultivate it in order to get their living and support their children and parents, the legislators would not have been obliged to intervene. They would not have had to expropriate a part of their property, and transfer it to the landless on equitable and reasonable terms.
BAHRAIN’S NEW CURRENCY

£385,000 Water Supply Scheme for Bahrain

(Seventy per cent of all houses in Bahrain have piped water)

The 16th October, 1965, saw the official introduction in Bahrain of a new currency, the Bahrain Dinar, worth 15 shillings. The Bahrain Dinar replaced the Indian external rupee, which until then had been the official currency of the State. The Dinar is divided into 1,000 Fils.

When in June 1964 the Bahrain Government announced its intention of introducing the Bahrain Dinar, it said it was doing so in order to enable Bahrain to control its own currency affairs. The Bahrain Dinar is issued by the Bahrain Currency Board, the Chairman of which is His Excellency the Shaykh Khalifa Ibn Sulman al-Khalifa, Bahrain’s President of Finance.

The new notes of 10, 5, 1, ½ and ¼ Dinars are printed by Thomas De La Rue & Company Ltd., and incorporate all the most modern security features. They are notable for a delicate rainbow colouring which is pleasing to the eye.

The front of all the notes carries the Bahrain coat of arms and a traditional sailing boat, through the sail of which appears the falcon water-mark. The reverse side of the notes depict aspects of modern and traditional life in Bahrain: an artist’s impression of ‘Isa Town (the new modern town under construction in Bahrain), Mina Sulman (the port of Bahrain), a 900-year-old mosque, pearl diving and an oil rig.

Six coins, which have been minted by the Royal Mint, have also come into circulation. They are 100, 50 and 25 Fils in cupro-nickel and 10, 5 and 1 Fils in bronze with a palm tree design.

The Bahrain Government has announced plans for a £385,000 scheme to supply some 15,000 people in Bahrain with piped water.

The main part of the scheme, work on which began in February 1965, will provide piped water for about 7,000 living on Bahrain’s Sitra Island. It will involve, in addition to the drilling of a well, the construction of a pump house and a massive storage tank of 330,000 gallon capacity, which is already being built in Bahrain. The water will be carried in 12-inch pipes from the central tank to the various villages.

The tank, which will look like a giant golf ball balanced on a tee, is the first of its type in Bahrain and has been brought in by Chicago Bridge, contractors for this construction.

Initial part

The initial part of the project will cost some £60,000, whilst the total project for Sitra Island will cost in the region of £180,000. It is due for completion in January. The two remaining sections of the Bahrain Government Water Department’s overall plan, on which work began last July, will include a water supply for the Suq al-Khamis area and the replacement of existing water pipes in Bahrain’s third largest town, Rifaa, by considerably larger pipes.

The census undertaken in Bahrain earlier this year showed that some 70 per cent of all houses in Bahrain now have piped water. The latest project being undertaken by the Bahrain Government will bring this figure considerably nearer 100 per cent.
SU‘UDI ARABIA
Abundance of Mineral Wealth

GOLD

The ancient gold mining activity in Su‘udi Arabia was widespread in the north-western Hijaz and Central Plateau regions of the Arabian Shield. Over 154 ancient gold mines developed within the shield area attest to the once prosperous gold mining industry of Su‘udi Arabia. The majority of these mines have produced over 25,000 tons of gold ore, as judged from the mill tailings or the slag dumps left by the ancients. Although the production from individual mines has been small, the cumulative production must have been considerable.

The more promising gold mining districts are Mahd al-Dhabah, al-Wajh, al-Suk, Duwadami, Halaban and al-Zaffir. Twenty-eight mines are located in al-Wajh district, of which Umm al-Rarayat, al-Arja and al-Qubbah mines were the most productive.

The most significant gold mines located in Zalim, Duwadami, Halaban and al-Zaffir districts are the al-Amr mine south-west of Ouwayiyah, the Fawwarah mine near Jabal Idas and the ‘Aqiq mine north-east of al-Zaffir. Location of the gold mines is presented in the accompanying map.

Throughout these districts the quartz veins of three distinct generations are emplaced in faults, fractures and similar zones of weakness. The first and the last stage veins of white, granular-massive quartz are large but barren.

The second generation veins of greyish-white quartz are productive; these contain elemental gold in association with slight base metal sulphides.

The fissure gold veins of al-Wajh, al-Suk, Duwadami and al-Zaffir districts are well-developed and exhibit lateral continuity. These were exploited by primitive methods which preclude deep mining. The possibilities of economically exploiting the deep-seated ore shoots are therefore good.

Mahd al-Dhabah

Mahd al-Dhabah is by far the largest known ancient gold mine where tailings and sorting dumps approximated 300,000 tons averaging 0.70 oz. gold per ton.

The mine was reworked during the period 1939-1954 by the Su‘udi Arabian Mining Syndicate, producing 765,768 oz. of gold and 1,002,029 oz. of silver from a small-scale operation. The aggregate mine production is over 35 million dollars, with gold being the chief source of revenue.

A preliminary integration of the technical data available on the Mahd al-Dhabah mine indicates a strong vein fabric which is exposed by erosion, in a small productive area of an otherwise large district. The auriferous grey quartz veins transect a rhyolitic flow rock within the “zone of mineralization”. It is probable that a similar geological environment is duplicated within this large unmapped hydrothermally intensely altered district. In all probability, judicious exploration of the Mahd al-Dhabah area should result in discovering substantial gold deposits.

Regional geologic survey and geochemical prospecting of the Mahd district have been completed. Exploratory drilling is in progress. Compilation of the recent information on the district is pending the results of analytical research.

SILVER

Sidria and Samra were the most important silver-producing areas of the ancient times.

Sidria is situated 3 km. north-west of the town of Duwa-

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1 Courtesy, the Editor, Mid-East Commerce, Beirut, the Lebanon, for 15 September 1965.
dami at Latitude 24° 30' N. and Longitude 44° 15' E. The ancient mine workings of Samra are located 12 km. south of Duwadami (see location map).

The ore mined was silicified fault breccia and vein quartz containing finely disseminated argentite in association with other sulphide minerals. The ore veins form a strong network in micaceous schists that have been intruded by granites.

Samples of the tailing dumps from Sidria and Samra respectively average 3.41 and 12.31 oz. silver per ton; the dumps aggregate about 35,000 tons.

A general geologic survey, some detailed mapping and sampling of the vein systems of Sidria and Samra mines have been completed. Exploratory drilling has been projected in order to explore the sub-surface extensions of the veins.

IRON DEPOSITS

The most significant iron deposits of Su'udi Arabia are (1) Wadi Fatima — oolitic-hematite; (2) Sawawin — magnetite-magnetite; and (3) Jabal Idas — magnetite. Another deposit of magnetic has recently been discovered in the Jizan area.

1. Wadi Fatima: Sedimentary iron deposits

General geology

Pre-cambrian complex comprising meta-sediments which are intruded by granite, granodiorite, diorite represents the bedrock. Sedimentary formation of probable Eocene age mostly consists of clastics which are intermittently exposed over a distance of about 15 kilometres in Wadi Fatima area. The formation trends in a north-west-south-east direction and hosts two beds of oolitic hematite. Basalt overlies the sediments.

The general area is completely faulted as a result of diastrophic movements which resulted in the development of the Red Sea graben. The sediments are, however, only locally displaced by gravity faults which apparently represent the last phase of tectonism in the Wadi Fatima region.

Physiographic features of the area are chiefly controlled by the tectonic movements and partially by differential erosion. The iron-bearing sediments form narrow, camel-back ridges that have a long dip slope. The sediments were probably deposited in shallow elongated basins which experienced oceanic transgressions and regressions.

The oolitic iron deposit

The iron deposit is of siliceous oolitic hematite interbedded with sandstone and shale that dip 20-30 degrees to the east. The deposit comprises two beds of the oolitic hematite, the upper and the lower; respectively the beds have an average thickness of about 10 feet and 7 feet. These beds are separated by about 20 feet of clastics.

Exploratory drilling indicates that the beds persist below a vertical depth of over 200 feet. Six out of seven holes drilled in the area have interested both the beds. Core analyses show that the iron content of the beds averages over 45%, Fe.

Siliceous oolitic hematite and geothite are the principal iron minerals. Assays of many samples of the iron deposit average over 45% Fe.

The available reserves of the iron deposit are estimated at 50,000,000 tons. Following is a typical average analysis of the Wadi Fatima iron deposit:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iron (Fe)</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulphur (S)</td>
<td>0.073%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phosphorous (P)</td>
<td>0.445%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumina (Al)</td>
<td>3.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arsenic (As)</td>
<td>0.008%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcium (Ca)</td>
<td>0.743%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnesium (Mg)</td>
<td>0.242%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silica (SiO2)</td>
<td>14.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titanium (Ti)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above assay indicates that the studied deposit is of siliceous iron.

Work completed

Geologic mapping, partial gravity survey, trenching, sampling and stage exploratory drilling and assaying have been completed. Feasibility studies, including mining, beneficiation, have been finalized. Remunerative exploitation of the Wadi Fatima iron deposit appears feasible.

2. Sawawin iron deposit

General geology

The iron deposit, which is made up chiefly of hematite with interlayered red-brown jasper, occurs in the upper member of a series of bedded but highly faulted sedimentary and flow-rocks designated as Silesia Formation. The iron-bearing silesia formation imperceptibly extends in a north-west-south-west direction across the surveyed area for a distance of almost 80 kilometres. The iron beds are steeply inclined (70°) and locally are much folded and faulted. The thickness of the hematite-jasper beds ranges between 43 to 200 metres.
Reserves and assays

Preliminary geological-geophysical surveys of the Sawawin area indicate that the deposit contains approximately 1,500 million tons averaging 40% Fe. Of this cumulative tonnage, about 912 million tons are available from an area 2 kilometres wide and 26 kilometres long at the confluence of Wadi Sawawin and Wadi Sadar. The deposit is amenable to bench and cut method of mining.

Beneficiation

The Sawawin iron ore, according to the findings of one of the laboratories, is termed "Jaspilite". The samples of the deposit have been tested by competent test laboratories abroad in order to study the means of concentrating the ore to marketable grade. Milling, heavy media and electromagnetic tests do not give too encouraging results. Beneficiation is the only problem regarding this extensive and ideally situated iron deposit.

Work completed

1. General geological mapping 1:50,000.
2. Sampling (several tons of samples collected).
3. Preliminary test work.
5. Some ground geophysical survey.

3. Idasas iron deposit

General geology

The country rock is diorite, which is locally much metamorphosed and traversed by numerous faults. A north-south thrust fault represents the major tectonic element of the area. Numerous transverse faults displace the host rock as well as the magnetite bodies.

Ore reserves

Geological investigations, geophysical surveys and preliminary drilling indicate about six to seven million tons of magnetite ore which averages about 66.00% Fe. The iron deposit comprises magnetite lenses that are erratically segregated in the dioritic host rock.

Exploratory drilling has reasonably established the downward continuity of the surfacial lenses of magnetite.

Work completed

1. Geological mapping.
2. Airborne magnetometric survey.
3. Ground magnetometric and gravity surveys.
4. Surface sampling.
5. Laboratory research, partially completed.
6. Exploratory drilling: four to five drill holes completed.

COPPER DEPOSITS

Many copper mines are located within the north-western Hejaz and the Central Plateau region of the Arabian Shield. Generally the copper mineralization is confined to extensive shear zones and or laterally persistent faults developed in schists and other rock types.

Preliminary evaluation of the more important copper mines points to the possibility of finding economically feasible copper deposits below the zone oxidation. Controlled diamond drilling is essential to fully evaluating these deposits.

In the event of potential copper districts being discovered, the copper-bearing (over 1% copper) smelter slags and mine dumps left by the ancients can also be worked economically.

Following is a brief description of the more important copper districts:

'Aqiq or Um al-Damar district

The 'Aqiq district is located 420 km. north-east of Jeddah and is readily accessible to four-wheel drive vehicles.

At this locality, the malachite-limonite staining, pervasive alteration and numerous ancient stopes are confined mainly to north-west trending shear zones. The country rock is schistose metandesite, which is intruded in many places by diorite plugs and dykes.

The ancients left an extensive (approx. 80,000 tons) slag dump averaging about 1% in copper values. The samples of the mineralized country rock assay over 1% copper.

Mussaina district

The district is situated 450 km. north-north-east of Jeddah in the Hubayfa region.

The mineralized veins containing limonite, malachite, azurite near the surface, and chalcocyprite (copper sulphide) and specularite at depth, are fairly persistent laterally. The veins are localized in an altered fractured andesite. Extensive ancient workings and a large slag dump attest to large-scale ancient operations.

Initial samples of the waste dumps and of the veins average about 1% copper. Well-directed exploratory drilling should materially aid in economic development of the district.

Al-Safra district

Safra is situated 400 km. north-east of Jeddah. Copper mineralization here is confined to parallel fissures formed in a calcareous schist.

The mineralized zone is large and many ancient workings are located in it. The total tonnage of the slag dumps is estimated at 50,000 tons assaying over 1% copper. The future of the district can be determined only through a well-directed diamond drilling programme.

Cennaida-Ain Khathamah area

This area is located 450 km. south-east of Jeddah in the Mahaweya district. The district is exceedingly difficult of access.

Widespread copper mineralization occurs in a sheared quartzite inter-bedded with schists which are also partially mineralized. The average copper content of the mineralized zone is over 1%. The discovery of minable copper deposit is likely upon deeper exploration.

Al-Amar district

Al-Amar copper-gold prospect lies about 250 km. southwest of Riyadh. The mineralized quartz veins principally containing gold-copper values were developed along north-westerly trending faults in a metasedimentary series. Preliminary evaluation of the area by diamond drilling and sampling indicates a sufficient tonnage of mill grade ore with gross value of the average assays of drill core totalling 27.21 dollars. However, the entire al-Amar district with numerous mines located in it should be thoroughly evaluated prior to initiating its large-scale development.

Numerous other copper prospects are known within the Shield area, but these need to be fully explored and evaluated before establishing their economic significance. Based on the foregoing it can be concluded that the copper deposits within Su'udi Arabia, upon adequate evaluation, should prove to be of potential economic value.
"ISLAM—The Secret Weapon of Satan"


A book, entitled *The Shape of Power in Africa*, has been published in Nelspruit, Transvaal, South Africa, mainly for the “enlightenment” of Africans. The book is a “Fellowship Missionary Books” publication and is “produced by David Newington and Hubert C. Phillips”.

On page 56 of this book there appears a chapter called “Through the Back Door to World Dominion.” The authors have made a despicable attempt to discredit Islam in the eyes of the Africans and to represent this religion as the Devil’s machination.

Among the many venomous and naïve things said against Islam are:

1. “Allah whom all the world of Islam worships was not the Almighty God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth. Allah was an ancient Arabian god whom Mohammed borrowed from the pagan gods of his country to provide a name for the Almighty Creator.”

2. “The Koran contains a dangerous mixture of truth and error which confounds thousands of simple people.”

3. “Mohammed steps into Christ’s rightful place as the Co-Equal and Co-Existent One. This is blasphemy.”

4. “Mohammedans have an angel-deity who approximates to a false Holy-Spirit and they also teach the second-coming of Messiah. This Moslem teaching is ready-made to fit the New Testament prophetic picture of the Satanic deceptions of the End-Times.”

5. “African Christians must KNOW about these startling facts! It is dangerous to be ignorant of what the Devil is planning. Moscow and Mecca represent the two centres of Satanic delusion in the modern world. Communism with the blatant anti-God creed of the Kremlin is the Devil’s ‘Front-Door’ propaganda. The eyes of the whole civilized world are fixed upon Moscow. Communism is producing a gospel of power and fear and death, but whilst the world watches the Front-Door of the Kremlin, the Devil is bringing in his secret weapon, ‘Islam’, through the Back-Door.”

6. “Mohammedanism with such a close and sinister parallelism to Christianity is Satan’s secret and camouflaged approach to world conquest.”

The above, in brief, constitutes the main onslaught on Islam by these two great defenders of Christianity. Needless to say, every single statement is nothing short of distortion. The writers display scant respect for truth, and their ignorance on the subject of Islam is abysmal. They leave one open-mouthed in astonishment when they say things that are so irresponsible and so childish as to border on the ridiculous. They have tried to create mischief among Africans regarding Islam. This whole chapter on Islam is motivated by fear and jealousy. They are jealous that Islam is spreading with such devastating rapidity on the continent of Africa—destroying all the falsehood preached by people like Newington and Phillips. Their fear, of course, is futile, because they simply cannot do anything about it: the only thing they can do is to write muck, dirt and poppycock of the kind that appears in this book.

The authors cannot help but admit that “next to Christianity, Mohammedanism is the quickest growing missionary religion in the modern world, with many thousands of new converts annually embracing Islam, especially in the continent of Africa.”. The words “next to Christianity,” however, are deliberately used by the authors to mislead and misinform the readers. It is, of course, a well-known and a widely-publicized fact (as admitted by all newspapers in South Africa) that for every 10 heathens that get converted to a recognized religion, 9 accept Islam and I (ONE) goes over to Christianity. Islam, thus, cannot be “next to” Christianity, nor can Christianity be “next to Islam, as this simple, beautiful religion of God has left Christianity way behind. Islam does not even regard Christianity as a serious contestant in Africa for the souls of Africans because, as already mentioned, for every one soul that Christianity “saves” for Christ, nine Africans see the true light of God and embrace the peace, tranquillity and comfort of Islam.

Messrs. Newington and Phillips say further: “Within one hundred years of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ practically the whole world had heard about Christ and His glorious Gospel. This was unique in the history of religion until six hundred years later when after the death of Mohammed, the Islamic gospel swept around the world and within one hundred years had penetrated Persia, India, Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, Egypt and North Africa and Spain. The Mohammedans almost brought also within the boundaries of the world of Islam. Thus the false gospel of Mohammed duplicated and almost equalled the missionary achievement of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

A gospel that within a relatively short period of time conquers almost half the world, is regarded as “false” by these authors. If Islam was a false religion, it would not have made such a deep impression on the minds of all those who came into contact with it. A false religion dies a natural death and does not amass followers to the staggering figure of some 560,000,000 Muslims as we find today in the world, with converts to this faith increasing daily in all parts of the world.

Continued on page 33
Alcoholism, a cancer eating away the foundations of Family Life

By Duane Valentry

“However, with total costs of alcoholism, which must include poverty, broken homes, juvenile delinquency, vice, crime, political corruption, wasted manpower and highway accidents, zooming out of all proportion everywhere on earth, the world’s governments, great and small, are being forced to find answers to this complex riddle.”

Around the globe all nations fight a common enemy. Each year the battle gains in intensity as this common foe gathers new recruits by the millions in a no-holds-barred contest. The foe is alcohol.

From Los Angeles to Hong Kong, governments gird to do what they can to even an uneven struggle, from near prohibition in India to shooting of drunken drivers in the Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan.

In Warsaw, Poland, thirteen anti-alcohol clinics are so inadequate that over 100 patients committed for compulsory treatment have “been waiting for years”, according to the newspaper Dziennik Ludowy.

“The Warsaw sobering-up station has been enlarged to care for 200 patients instead of 50. It will have plenty of guests since 130,000 persons have spent a night there since the opening in 1956.”

Police detained over 12,000 for drunkenness and disturbance of the peace in Warsaw in 1963. In Stockholm the number sentenced for drunkenness the first quarter of 1964 was 16,917; in Los Angeles in 1963, 100,000.

Prisoners serving time for drunk driving in Helsinki, Finland, built the new jet airport there, with bankers, merchants and government workers all doing six months with sledge hammers. When rationing ceased in Sweden, liquor consumption jumped by 47 per cent (120 per cent in Stockholm). From Norway, the Agder Court of Justice announced: alcohol was responsible for 80 per cent of the crimes committed by state prisoners.

Everywhere, a main concern is youth. Tipsy Red youths get a public scolding in a Russian periodical because they are more concerned in getting drunk than in attending Communist youth clubs.

“It is reported that 60 per cent of Polish youth of school age drink alcohol,” says an alcohol-education journal, “They often spend scholarship money on drinks. Small children buy beer and wine, collecting money by selling bottles and wastepaper, and alcoholic poisoning among children is steadily increasing.”

Japan notes an “alarming increase” in drink-caused juvenile delinquency: about 70 per cent of those convicted for drunkenness in Stockholm are under 25; and in the U.S. and Britain, surveys show over half of high school students drink.

In France, a vigorous anti-alcoholism programme seeks to reclaim young people from a traditional “way of life” which has put that country in the alcoholic lead.

Costs force action

“Alas, we cannot say that the ravages caused by drunkenness are decreasing,” comment Jean Rostand and Paul Bodin in Life, the Great Adventure. “It is one of the crying scandals of our time that, in the face of the awful biological peril to our race, nearly all governments show themselves careless and negligent to the point of complicity.”

However, with total costs of alcoholism, which must include poverty, broken homes, juvenile delinquency, vice,

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1 Courtesy, the Editor, The Lion Magazine, Chicago, U.S.A., for February 1965.
France has found education the key — education "that alcoholism is a condition of drinking bottle after bottle of France's bounty".

France has had the dubious honour of leading among nations, with 5,200 alcoholics to every 100,000 — the U.S. not far behind with 4,300: Sweden, Chile, and Switzerland next. French expenditure is said to be in the neighbourhood of one billion dollars a year just to treat alcoholics, another 20 million a year dealing with them in the courts. Frenchmen consume 200,000,000 gallons of alcoholic beverages a year.

The French campaign against alcoholism, which has won wide publicity, is conducted by the government's Committee on Alcoholism, and the government-sponsored First Committee for Study and Information on Alcoholism, founded in 1954, which is comprised of many of France's most distinguished physicians and scientists, industrialists and former government figures.

Attractive and eye-catching posters all over France today advocate "sante sobriete" and "securite, sobriete". This advertising campaign is a major public effort, including highway billboards, brochures, stamps and magazine articles. Specific warnings are given in press and poster against drinking by mothers, pregnant women, and drivers. New decrees now in effect:

- Limit bars to one for each 3,000 citizens (formerly one to every 180), and also regulate the location of bars.
- Impose new controls for private distillers and home distillers.
- Prohibit liquor posters in sports stadiums, and bar liquor interests from sponsoring sports events.
- Begin change from hard cider and applejack orchards to orchards for eating apples and fruit juices.
- Require that cafes and wine-ships cannot be left to heirs unless transformed to soft-drink establishments.
- Specify that workers in industries may no longer be "paid" in alcoholic drinks. (Agricultural workers once received up to 7 quarts of wine a day: some factory workers up to 6 quarts a day.)
- Have encouraged production of non-alcoholic drinks through reduction of taxes.
- French youth is now drinking less as a result of new laws and the all-out medical and propaganda campaign. Consumption of wine and beer has dropped about 10 per cent, while soft-drink sales increased 140 per cent. The total number of deaths due to alcohol is down 25 per cent.

No national alcoholism programme exists in either the U.S. or Canada, but states and provinces have been active. 1944 was the first complete year of operation of state programmes in the United States, with Canadian provinces taking up the work soon after. Today, the Alcoholism Research Foundation in Ontario is a world leader. Widely known private organizations include the Yale Centre of Alcohol Studies, the National Council of Alcoholism, Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon Groups and many others, with some, like A.A. International. Typical is the National Committee for the Prevention of Alcoholism, founded in 1950, and comprising clergymen, judges, business men and educators. Its purpose is to foster institutes of scientific studies for the prevention of alcoholism through educational programmes, using publications, films, forums, radios and television.

"Alcoholism costs the U.S. more than the entire budget for the Defence Department," says W. A. Scharffenberg, Executive Secretary of the NCPA. "If we do not do something to halt the alcoholism epidemic, we soon will be over-

whelmed by these problems in our society. We claim to be living in the Space Age, but actually we are still in the Dark Ages as far as solving alcohol problems is concerned."

State and province programmes follow four steps: treatment, research, education and "co-ordination" (explained: "to meet the needs of existing organizations and institutions, develop new methodological approaches, and facilitate treatment, research and education"). The North American Association of Alcoholism Programmes was formed when ten states decided a medium was needed for exchange of ideas and information on the problem.

Claiming that at least 75 per cent of the entire Canadian population uses alcohol to some degree, Montreal's Catholic Welfare Bureau calls alcoholism "a cancer eating away the foundations of family life".

The 1955 Winnipeg "Bracken Report", result of a two-year study by the Commission on Liquor Inquiry, won international attention and spurred interest in alcoholism problems in Canada. Commented Dr. J. K. W. Ferguson, of Ontario's famed Alcoholism Research Foundation:

"At this stage in our history, most people are reluctant to look very hard at the one necessary causal fact, access to alcohol. It seems that most of us don't want to abolish the problems of alcoholism at any cost. We would rather live with it, particularly when for most of us it is somebody else's problem."

Canada's two major airlines serve no liquor on domestic flights. In Saskatchewan, alcoholics are treated by the province's psychiatric research group, often with LSD, a hallucinogenic drug.

When former Prime Minister Diefenbaker served coffee and cakes at the "cocktail party of the year" for M.P.s, senators and press, it was a precedent-setting occasion. The first such "dry" function the abstaining Prime Minister was to give, it started a trend of liquorless parties. Canadian editors suggested he be thanked "for providing cases of relief in what often has seemed an ever-creeping desert of so-called fashionable thirst."

Death spares no nation and takes no holiday when driving and drinking combine. In Norway, anyone in an accident with liquor on his breath takes a routine test, and if his system contains the equivalent of more than a bottle of beer, automatically gets 21 days in jail.

In Denmark, a bartender calls police when he has a customer who tries to drive after consuming two beers. The law requires all bottled beer and liquor sold in restaurants to carry a label warning that 0.10 per cent alcohol in the blood of a motorist involved in an accident may lead to imprisonment.

The Supreme Court of Mexico has ruled that if a pedestrian hit by a car is drunk at the time of the accident, the driver is absolved of blame. Australians overwhelmingly favoured a blood test for drivers under the influence. In India, one must have a licence to buy liquor and no one known to be a drinker is allowed a driver's licence.

Czech figures show an increase of drunk driving problems of 33 to 50 per cent. As in the U.S., where liquor is involved in over half of all highway accidents, with last year's 43,000 deaths the highest ever, so around the world, those wild wheels are another compelling reason governments desperately seek answers.

Behind the Wet Curtain

Long ago in Sparta, a warrior too drunk to fight incurred the death penalty. When Communism was young, a man too
drunk to work was thrown into a work camp and worked to death.

Most governments today seek to help the alcoholic and his family.

Did the problem also exist in Iron Curtain lands, and if so, how was it handled? Little was known until in 1960, Dr. Morris E. Chaftetz, of Harvard Medical School, was permitted to observe alcoholism treatment in seven Eastern European countries.

An "overwhelming problem" existed in Poland, he found, with insufficient facilities, contrasting with Czech handling of the situation which he termed the best of these nations. A "self-defeating attitude" exists towards the problem in Poland, where heavy drinking was common during the Nazi occupation, and alcoholic drinks cost more zlotys than housing construction last year.

Although no statistics were available for Hungary, a national programme in operation since 1925 "has kept pace with psychiatry elsewhere". The Budapest trade union daily reports that Hungarian drinkers are spending as much for liquor as for meat, milk, butter and eggs combined.

Bulgaria had a low incidence of alcoholism but, like everywhere else, it was increasing, and a new approach to its handling was begun in 1952. In Yugoslavia, where children are brought up to drink plum brandy, it has greatly increased since the war (400,000 alcoholics in a population of 18,500,000). Dr. Chaftetz found fruit juice products had been introduced and were being pushed. So far, only volunteers are treated. He terms Roumania the "least enlightened" of these countries in secretiveness as to alcohol statistics, lack of national or local programmes or any organized approach. Treatment is by individual doctors as each thinks best.

Czechs spent $100,000,000 on alcohol in 1955, the last available reported year. With much social drinking, consumption has increased one-third in recent years. "Alcoholic excesses" here call for treatment, and are defined as the use of alcohol at "unusual times such as at work, unsuitable age (childhood), unstable times of life (pregnancy and illness)"., reports Dr. Chaftetz. The Ministry of Health directs efforts, with out-patient clinics free and in-patient, long-term care in psychiatric institutions. The fact is stressed that the alcoholic is ill, rather than delinquent. This is not so in Russia.

"The Soviet Union attitude towards the alcoholic tends to be moralistic and punitive, as in the U.S.," says Dr. Chaftetz. "Although the Soviets do not achieve the sophistication, interest and extent of Czechoslovakian efforts on alcoholism, their programmes are more advanced than in Poland."

"Environmental manipulation" is common — removing a drinker from drinking associates or atmosphere. Other treatment includes education against alcoholism, post-hypnotic suggestions and "aversion" type treatment with Emetine or apomorprine.

Elsewhere — answers?

In Egypt, where alcohol was used by the ancients to placate the gods, and drinking was prohibited with the spread of the Islamic doctrine, alcoholism is on the rise also.

"The Ministry of Social Affairs is working to integrate the various interested departments in the government toward the 'eradication of alcoholism',' says a recent report. "Special emphasis is put on educational programmes."

Portugal, the world's fifth largest wine-producer and second only to France in consumption of wine, has a high incidence of alcoholism but little so far in the way of organized programmes for its handling. On the other hand, another small country, El Salvador, began to take active steps on the problem. With his inauguration as President, Lt.-Col. Jose Maria Lemus aroused public conscience and economic changeover as well as legislation. Immediate results were a sharp decline in crime and arrests for drunkenness.

Probably the most drastic governmental answer to alcoholism is India's, where the ideal is total prohibition as envisioned by Gandhi. Two states, Madras and Bombay, have had prohibition for some time, and despite economic pressures, phased prohibition is in effect in many other states under a central prohibition committee. That this is not yet entirely successful was brought out in a Time Magazine item comparing New Delhi today to the United States in the '20s, with speakeasies, bootleggers and illegal brewing. "India's busiest cottage industry."

Throughout the world, governments today are at least making efforts towards dealing with alcoholism realistically, sums up Dr. Chaftetz.

"There are no simple answers. Though no nation can claim to have ultimate answers to alcoholism, certain effective attitudes exist. . . . A spirit of scientific inquiry is the necessary criteria for success. Programmes at best will be slow and steady. Our initial goal is to reduce the rate at which alcoholism is occurring."

**"Islam—the Secret Weapon of Satan" Continued from page 30**

It seems, therefore, that there must be truth in this "falsehood"! It redounds eminently to the credit of Islam that since 570 C.E. right into 1965 C.E. its message is being proclaimed in all the corners of the globe with resounding success in spite of obstacles and bitter hostility.

Apparently Phillips and Newington are ignorant of the fact that the African regards Christianity as the "White man's religion". He knows that if he embraces Christianity, he will never be allowed to pray in the same church with his fellow-Christian of white colour.

Islam is happily free from this hypocrisy. There is no "White" Islam and no "Black" Islam. But there is most certainly Black Christianity and White Christianity, a Black Christ and a White Christ, so to speak. A black Christian dare not even dream of praying in a "White" church. Can Phillips and Newington honestly and truthfully say that they are prepared to sit next to an African in a church and pray to the same Christ? Are they prepared to kneel side by side with the African in prayer? Of course not! How could they? Pious, righteous Christian guard themselves against contamination, and they keep their holy church atmosphere free from any pollution by an African's presence therein!

"We are one in Christ." "The black man is the white man's brother — in Christ." Such pious platitudes sound very sweet and beautiful — on paper. Let Newington and Phillips put this present of equality into practice and thus vindicate the honour of true Christianity. This is a challenge of Islam.

Christians are themselves to blame for this state of affairs. They have sown the wind of a discriminative Christianity, and are now reaping the whirlwind of a mass exodus of Africans to Islam!

In Islam all Muslims of various colours are true brothers and are one in the eyes of the Almighty. Islam is the only religion in the world that practises the universal brotherhood of man.
An appeal to the Muslim World to realize the danger to
the future of Islam in Cyprus

Turkish Cyprus Community Centre,
October 1965.

Dear Sir,

Please publish the following appeal in the Islamic
Review.

Yours sincerely,
Secretary.

We, the 20,000 Turkish Cypriots in London, appeal to
all Muslim leaders of the world, all Muslim statesmen and all
organs of the Muslim press to do all they can to help the
Turkish community of Cyprus to free itself from the tyranny
and dictatorship of Archbishop Makarios.

Turks in Cyprus are fighting to end Makarios’s tyranny,
head of the Greek Orthodox Church in Cyprus and also head
of the State. Makarios wants to see the end of Islam in Cyprus,
where our religion has survived for centuries, where hundreds
of mosques and the sacred tomb of ‘Umm al-Haram, the aunt
of the Prophet Muhammad, have been kept by Turks as
symbols of their Muslim faith all through the centuries.

But despite the persecution, destruction of our holy
places, the loss of life and property, we are determined to
continue the struggle to exist honourably as an entity with
our own religion, institutions, traditions and culture within
the principles of Islam.

In more than one hundred Turkish villages all houses
and property have been destroyed as well as places of wor-
ship and schools. 25,000 Turks have been made homeless;
56,000 Turks live on Red Crescent help; 4,000 Turkish
officials have been denied their salaries since January 1964.
The persecution is endless and the desecration of our holy
places shameless. The Bairaktar mosque in Nicosia has been
totally destroyed and so also have been the holy relics of our
Prophet Muhammad which were kept there.

Makarios’s aim: Enosis

Makarios might visit the U.N. and address the General
Assembly. In his speech he will promise guarantees to the
Turks. But who can believe such a man after what he has
done to the Turkish community? He has dishonoured his
own signature on international treaties, abrogated them uni-
laterally and destroyed Constitution of the land over which
he presides. His promises are worthless.

His real aim is well-known: Enosis — Union of Cyprus
with Greece. His lifelong ambition has been to unite Cyprus
with Greece and to extend the Greek frontiers to North
Africa and to see Western Turkey in a Greek Orthodox
Empire”. This he has declared publicly on frequent occasions
— the last only a few months ago. To achieve this he began
a campaign of violence and terror against the Turks of Cyprus
on the eve of Christmas 1963. Turkish Cypriots resisted this
barbaric attack and have continued to resist Greek Cypriot
efforts to take away their Constitutional rights. The sacrifice
and loss of life has been enormous but our cause is just and
we will continue to fight on in the name of freedom and
human rights.

Self-determination for both communities

We appeal to you all to support us in our sacred cause
and to try to prevent Makarios’s crusade against Islam. We
urge you to convince your colleagues in the U.N. that in order
to establish long-lasting peace in Cyprus and the Eastern
Mediterranean, both national communities, who have lived
separately for many hundreds of years with regard to
administration, religious, educational and cultural affairs
without the one dominating the other, should, in the light of
what has happened, be given the right to determine their
respective futures separately.

We are glad to see that many non-aligned Muslim
countries now realize Makarios’s real aim and the truth of
the fact that self-determination applied to Cypriots as a whole
will mean the end of an independent State and the annexation
of the island to Greece.

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Let The Islamic Review remind your friends of YOU throughout the next year.
The Conception of God in the Qur’ān

Its influence on Human Behaviour

By the late al-Hajj Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din

The “Excellent Names” of God in the Qur’ān

Religion, in Islam, was not merely the worship of God, with forms and ceremonies. Its chief object was the moulding of man’s character. The worship of God, under Islam, is to follow such of His ways as are exhibited in the processes of nature. Natural theology is in fact a commentary on Qur’ānic theology. It speaks of God — Whose attributes, when possessed by us, make us good citizens. We, of course, know nothing of God. He is inconceivable, but if the working of nature has proved His existence from the point of view of science, it has also displayed some of His prominent attributes. The Holy Qur’ān collected them in its pages and called them the “Excellent Names of God” (59: 24), and these are no other than His Ways in the governance of the universe. No one can object to our following them, for if we did not, civilization would for ever remain incomplete. Islam makes our initiation into the Divine ways an essential part of our religion. If we follow Him, our faith, so the Qur’ān says, becomes perfected, and I do not see how, in the interests of good citizenship, even the most agnostic mind dare deviate from the requirements of these names. As rulers of the universe, we need knowledge and wisdom, greatness of mind, excellence of character and purity from defects and error; we want ability and efficiency to make the things necessary for our sustenance; and we must know how to control the various forces of nature. These things should come within the scope of our ability. The Qur’ān makes it our religion, and for this reason it sums them up as Divine Attributes, because almost all of us make God our exemplar and regard it as our religious duty to follow Him. They provide us with the highest code of morality and ethics, under the name of Divine Attributes, and order in its most sublime form.

The Seven Names of God speak of the knowledge of God

First of all I speak of knowledge, which in fact comprehends all other things. If we attain knowledge, all other things will come to us. The Qur’ān enumerates various ways of acquiring knowledge and makes reference to them under Seven Names of God. They are as follows:

1. ‘Aalim ‘l-‘Ithb ─ The One who knows hidden and unseen things. Our knowledge of secrets cannot hope to come to Divine perfection in this respect; but our learning and attainments in the various branches of science will enable us to read the unknown things of nature. Many hidden things can come to our knowledge through our calculation, our mental eyes can perceive that which the naked eye cannot, and our mental eye can read many astronomical truths. We can read the thoughts of others and master clairvoyance by cultivating our occult powers. The Qur’ān speaks of them.

In fact, we worship ‘Aalim ‘l-Ghayb when we try to follow this Qur’ānic injunction. This is what the Book calls the Adoration of God.

2. Al-‘Aleem — the All-Knowing. The second name of God. One whose knowledge comprehends every other thing. One who possesses knowledge as his inherent quality. The holy name makes it obligatory upon us to master the various sciences and perfect ourselves in all branches of learning.

3. Al-Latuff — the One who possesses more minute insight into other things: one who knows how to unravel the more complicated and intricate problems of life. In short, the worshipper of al-Latuff is one who reads things that do not come within the knowledge of others.

4. Al-Hakeem. The word is derived from the substantive Hikmah, which means science and wisdom. It also means the using of things in the most efficient and best way. Only one who knows the properties of things can achieve this quality.

5. Al-Basir. One who sees things with an open observant eye, whose observation and knowledge of his surroundings enable him to come to right conclusions concerning them. The word is derived from the infinitive noun Basar, which means to see things in order to acquire knowledge and experience.

6. Al-Samee’ — the All-Hearing. One who hears every sound and voice uttered in the space of the universe. We cannot achieve the Divine ability to hear, but the telegraph, wireless messages, telepathy, clairaudience and other methods of hearing are some of our achievements in this respect. Espionage is an unpleasant thing, but a department whose duty is to detect crime is a necessity for the administration of justice.

7. Al-Khafeer. One who possesses all the news of the world and is kept informed of everything that takes place on the earth; in fact, his sources of information know no limit.

Though possession of these seven forms of knowledge are the religious duty of every votary of God, making him a true Muslim, they are also in the highest degree necessary for those who aspire to bring other nations under their rule; we ought to know what is really going on in various countries. The Qur’ān, when speaking of the Kingdom of God, makes this a special requirement of the rulers of the earth. It should not be forgotten that the Qur’ān does not speak highly of God simply to extol Him, but the Book makes mention of those of His ways which should also appertain to us in the management of our mundane affairs.
Nine Names of God in the Qur'an that go to perfect the acquisition of knowledge

Western nations can claim to possess a portion of this power and knowledge, which gives them a certain superiority in the world. The Qur'an also suggests some of the ways that will help us to perfect that necessary knowledge. They are as follows:

1. The cultivation of the art of reading and writing. It was, as it were, something unknown before Islam. In fact, our attention was drawn to it in the very first revelation of Muhammad, which, when speaking of God, says: “Read in the Name of God . . . Who teaches man to write with the pen, who teaches him things he knew not before” (The Qur'an, 96: 1-4).

2. To keep an ear open; to make a right judgment on everything we hear (The Qur'an, 16: 65).

3. To remember things for our future guidance (The Qur'an, 16: 13).

4. Observation of the universe (The Qur'an, 16:15-16).

5. To study history and biographies that we may learn therefrom (The Qur'an, 43: 6-8).

6. To travel with an observant eye of the relics and remains of those nations that rose and fell in days gone by (The Qur'an, 6: 11).

7. To learn lessons from hardship and trials (The Qur'an, 3: 139-141).

8. To study the Divine Revelations (The Qur'an, 2: 4).

9. Contemplation and meditation.

Contemplation and meditation according to the Qur'an

The Qur'an speaks of four ways of contemplation. It uses four different words to convey each sort of contemplation, and the words have different shades in their meanings; but unfortunately languages other than Arabic do not possess appropriate synonyms for them. I will, however, try to explain them here. These four aspects of contemplation are called:

1. Tafaqquh; (2) Tadabbur; (3) Tajakkur; (4) Tadaqqul.

Tafaqquh means to use all organs of knowledge to acquire the truth of things. Those who did not do so have been described in the Holy Qur'an as blind, deaf and dumb. They have also been condemned as worse than animals. The Qur'an (2: 155-157; 48: 15; 49: 12) speaks of those who use their physical organs aright and then make a right judgment on them and add each new experience to their knowledge.

Tadabbur means to observe things, or acquire knowledge about them that may enable us to find out the object that has brought them into existence; in other words, to understand the ins and outs of things that come within our cognizance.

Tajakkur refers to our constantly pondering over a matter to ascertain what will enable us to reach the root of it. It also refers to our observation of nature in order to find out the ways of God, under which things come into existence and exhibit their properties. Tajakkur is the first and necessary process of a mind engaged in scientific research. In fact, Tajakkur means the observation and study of things in the universe to find out the laws of nature. This second characteristic is referred to in the fourth aspect of contemplation, which is Tadaqqul. It means to acquire that kind of knowledge about things around us which will enable us to make a right use of them in life. It demands from us not only a knowledge of the properties of things but also of the proportions to which they are to be used. Our knowledge under this aspect should qualify us to make use of things for the purpose for which they are intended. How can one take exception to a religion that makes the acquisition of knowledge under these three headings an article of faith?

I have read many religious books and writings of eminent authors on the subject, but I fail to find the above nine points tabulated in any book. Again, the Qur'an does not read homilies in this respect. It is one of its special features to elucidate its truths and principles by referring to the various manifestations of nature; it then draws lessons for its reader so that he may follow its principles, and admonishes him to do so. Nature does not exhibit these forms of knowledge as possessed by its Creator, but they should be acquired by man if he wishes to bring the universe to perfection.

The Qur'an on the use of the quality of power, might and strength, etc.

Next to knowledge comes greatness in its different forms that are within our scope. Power, strength, might, eminence, superiority are synonyms for greatness, but though they are necessary for a man they are liable to abuse. Unfortunately, we often use them to harm others. This quality, therefore, required proper guidance, and that guidance came in the following terms of God: (1) Al-Yal'; (2) Al-Qa'a'; (3) Al-Mut'addal; (4) Al-'Azeem; (5) Al-'Azeez; (6) Al-Kabir; (7) Al-Mutakabbir; (8) Al-Jabbar; (9) Al-Qa'ba'; (10) Al-Qawiy; (11) Al-Qa'dir; (12) Al-Muqaddad; (13) Al-Qadeer; (14) Al-Majeed; (15) Al-Ma'ajid.

Other languages, English included, are not so rich as Arabic. Their paucity of vocabulary disables them to convey through their words the different shades of Greatness that we find in the above Names. I will, however, try to give some explanation. The first three names in the above category come from the same root, 'Alw, which means “greatness”. The word 'Alisy or Al-iaa' refers to the Highest Eminence that may come within one's reach, so much so that there remains no other degree of greatness. Like al-'Azeem and al-Kabir, the fourth and fifth names, all of the five names are more or less generic in their connotation. They comprehend all forms of greatness. Al-'Azim and al-Kabir, however, come next in intensity to 'Alisy and those derived from the same root. They refer to greatness as an inherent quality. They also include an idea of comparison. Al-'Azeem is one who is held great in the estimation of others. Al-Kabir speaks of the greatness belonging to someone in comparison with others. Al-'Azeez is a word very rich in significance, which may include mighty, potent, powerful or strong in its absolute sense. It is the direct opposite to everything that is low and mean. It also means noble, honourable, glorious or illustrious. On the other hand, it means one who is invincible and rough in his dealings with his enemies. But wisdom and knowledge are also the necessary adjuncts of al- 'Azeez, i.e. one who uses his power and strength with wisdom and knowledge. Al-Mutakabbir, the seventh of the above-mentioned names, refers to the measure of our excellence in goodness, beauty and sublimity, excluding altogether the idea of pride and vanity. How strange is it that the very word, when used in Hindustani, signifies haughty, overbearing and proud; yet in Arabic it means that al-Mutakabbir should neither be proud nor overbearing nor vainglorious in the display of his
power. Al-Jabbaar and al-Quwaara, the eighth and ninth names in the above list, signify the power and influence which is exercised by their owners in bringing others under their control and making the latter subservient to the former’s will. Such prominence should be accompanied by firmness and justice. It should help the subordinate to bring out all that is best in himself. The subordinate may, for instance, be compared to a blind force and energy. The ruler, the possessor of this particular kind of greatness, should guide that energy into its proper channels.

Al-Qawwiy is one who possesses both physical and spiritual strength in the highest degree, and uses them for the good of others. Al-Qadir and al-Miqta-dir and al-Qadeer, the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth, come from the same root, meaning might and power. But al-Miqta-dir refers to the possession of such power as enables man to face the hard things in life and succeed in campaigns that demand ability, perseverance, and courage. He encounters and surmounts all the difficulties that may arise in the performance of great things. Al-Qadeer refers to a man’s highest achievements in wisdom and knowledge which he has, with power enough to surmount all the opposition that may come in his way. Al-Jaleel (14) refers to such works performed by us as induce others to praise and glorify us for our achievements in the world. It necessitates the doing of something that may excite the wonder and surprise of others. Al-Ma’lid makes generosity and liberality of mind a special feature of the man. He is Ma’lid, whose work is profitable to others.

It should, however, not be forgotten that these words sometimes convey the evil aspect of greatness. Nevertheless, when used as attributes of God they refer to something good. For this reason the definite article Al is used as a prefix before every such word. The article indicates that the word has been used as a Divine Attribute. Greatness, as I have said before, is a necessary accompaniment of our character, but if it is not exercised according to the requirements of the Divine Attributes, it brings brutal force into play and causes oppression and tyranny in the world. Greatness is a blessing, but it becomes a curse to anyone with whom it goes beyond its prescribed limits. The Qur’anic attributes of God specify these limits, which, being observed, contribute to universal happiness and become a necessary constituent of our civilization.

The Qur’ân and those who hold the sceptre

After knowledge and power we require all attainments that may enable us to leave a memory behind us that may remain ever-living and green. We must do something to secure self-determination in its best form, to the race to which we belong. Those among us who have been blessed with a position to rule others, such as kings, or persons possessing sovereign political authority, stand in special need of such qualities. The Qur’ân, however, has not left us without an exemplar for our limitation in this respect. Al-Haqq (Ever-living) and al-Qayyum (Self-subsisting) are two names of God, and the well-known “Throne Verse” (The Qur’ân, 2:255) gives the following characters of God as such:

“God is He besides Whom there is no god, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting, by Whom all subsist; slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is He that can intercede with Him but by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend any thing out of His knowledge except what He pleases; His knowledge extends over the heavens and earth, and the preservation of them both tires Him not, and He is the Most High, the Great.”

This verse speaks of seven qualities which should belong to those who aspire to keep their memory green. The quota- tion refers, first, to an unusual vigilance of awakening where slumber does not overtake a person. In our case it does not mean that we should deprive ourselves of that blessing of God, sleep, which is essential to our mortal existence, but that those who wish to attain an exalted position should ever remain watchful over our affairs, whether these be large landed proprietors or captains of industry. The verse, secondly, speaks of the extensiveness of the country that is under one’s rule. In an individual case it may mean large estates or extensive business. The following five qualities, however, should attach to rulers as well as to those in positions of responsibility. These are as follows:

(1) Accessibility to intercession. No favouritism to be allowed in the management of affairs: no one to be encouraged to intercede in the interests of those who do not deserve any attention or regard.

(2) Vastness of knowledge concerning everything.

(3) Secrecy of affairs from those unconcerned, only such to be taken into confidence as are tried and indispensable.

(4) Not to feel fatigued in the preservation or maintenance of things necessary to existence. One so placed should always remain active in the discharge of his duties.

(5) Possession of greatness in every form.

The verse is a lesson for the rising nations in the East. Western people possess those qualities and therein lies the secret of their success. If Almighty and Omnipotent God has to remain ever-living and watchful and upright in the rule of the universe, what of us who are decidedly weak and powerless? If the Qur’ân speaks thus of God, it is only to inspire us to do those things.

A commentary on a verse of the Qur’ân which describes such attributes of God as belong to God

Here I may quote another verse from the Holy Qur’ân that gives such attributes of God as belong to a king. It means that those who have been given the responsibility of rule and government should walk humbly with the Lord, imitating His attributes. The verse is as follows:

“He is God, besides Whom there is no god; the King, the Holy, and free from all defects, the Maintainer of Peace, the Grantor of Securities, the Mighty, the Subduer of others to His Will, the Possessor of every greatness; Glory be to God from what they set up with Him” (59:23).

The quotation is too eloquent to need any commentary. I will, however, say a word concerning two of the attributes mentioned. First, al-Salām — the Maintainer of peace. It does not only require a king to maintain peace among his own people, but to keep peace with every other person, whether among his subjects or not. In fact, he should help to maintain universal peace in the world. The second attribute is al-Jabbaar — The Supreme Being who subdues others to His Will and makes their actions subservient thereto. This sub- jection on the part of the ruled should always be conducive to their own good and not made a means of pampering their rulers’ self-indulgence. Unfortunately, subject-races under
foreign rulers are always exploited to satisfy the extravagances of the ruling nations, who seek their strength in the others' weakness.

Al-Jabbaar refers to that kind of ascendency that prohibits people from indulging in things that are injurious to their own interests and compels them to remain on the right path.

Some Divine attributes which will guide us to success in our daily occupations

Now I will speak of such of the Divine Attributes as may guide us to success in our daily occupations. Big concerns often fall on account of some error on the part of those who manage them. It is the duty of a revealed Book from God to guide men to a successful career in their earthly affairs as well as to spiritual excellence. I have said many times before that religion does not come from God merely to supply us with things that have no bearing on our daily doing. Our Creator has equipped us with faculties which come into play when we are engaged in the management of mundane business affairs. We have also been given various appetites and desires, which set in motion the whole machinery of civilization, and if God has bestowed upon us the power to perform great things in this life He will surely teach us the morals and ethics which will enable us to accomplish the great task. In this respect the Divine Attribute al-Rabb is most comprehensive in its significance. It means the Creator, the Nourisher, the Maintainer, the Law-giver, the Regularizer, the Bringer of Things to Perfection. It appertains, without doubt, to Him Who is Omnipotent:

"And His Command when He intends anything is only to it, 'Be', and so it is" (The Qur'an, 36: 82).

But He is pleased to work out His Will in accordance with methods which should be ours when attending to our daily business. All the attributes of God disclosed in the pages of the Qur'an are meant to serve this same purpose. They are as specimens for our imitation. Within the scope of its meaning, the word al-Rabb includes some twenty attributes that explain the different methods adopted by God when He acts as al-Rabb in the universe. I give them here in the order in which I presume them to work, when things are created and brought to perfection.

Al-Baari — the Maker; al-Badeer — He Who creates things out of nothing. We cannot make things out of nothing, but the two attributes in us, the spirit of invention and the urge to discovery, enable us to organize great things and find out means and processes hitherto unknown.

Al-Mussawwar — the Fashioner. He Who designs things beforehand. He performs them and then fashions them in His mind and puts them, as it were, on canvas. Before we engage ourselves in any task we should have a clear idea as to what we have to do. We should estimate and design things before beginning to put them into concrete shape.

Al-Khuwaliq — the Creator of things from other things: He Who combines different things so that they make a new thing. Such work we ourselves undertake. Nay, our sole task is either to unite things or separate them from each other and thereby lies our efficiency. But before we set to work we ought to acquaint ourselves with all the qualities inherent in other things, and for this we have to follow three further Attributes. First, al-Baatin — He Who knows the inner or intrinsic state of things. Secondly, al-Muhsiy — He Who comprehends all that is in other things and the different measures in which things act. Third, al-Waajid — He Who knows where to find the things necessary for His work. Unless we qualify ourselves with the proper knowledge of the materials we have

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Mr. Zahir Ahmed spent twenty years as a District Officer in the Hyderabad Service, joined the Indian Foreign Service after the Nizam's capitulation to Nehru's police action and later worked for the United Nations. His book, Dusk and Dawn in Village India, is mainly an account of his life as a District Officer, containing vivid descriptions of village life and his attempts to bring improvements to it. The latter part of the book describes his return visits to the village communities, some of which are now suffering from Communist terrorism, and also includes a moving account of the decline of the aristocratic Hyderabadi families. It is a fascinating and an important book which India cannot afford to ignore, though Indians are hardly going to be pleased or flattered by it, being a nation particularly sensitive to criticism.

Mr. Zahir Ahmed is something of a Plato. He has invented a character called Rihaz (who is his own self objectified) who acts as his Socrates, going from village to village, questioning the nature of justice and attempting to ennoble the communities. True to the Socratic method, he makes his companions utter the truths for him. When, for example, one of his friends remarks, "The new men of this generation are vandals, with no manners and no culture," and when another says "Politics and piety are two of our great curses," Mr. Ahmed permits himself no comment, letting aphoristic statement to speak for itself. This stark way of stating his point lends emphasis to the statement, the point is driven home with force.

The first part of the book, describing his visits to the villages where he is seen busily to be settling disputes among the people, bringing the moneylenders and the Deshmukhs to their senses and introducing ideas of fundamental hygiene and education, has considerable charm. One admires Mr. Ahmed for his patient handling of rural problems and for the generosity of his spirit — once, seeing a pile of rubbish in an alley and noticing that the villagers living near it were doing nothing, he took off his jacket, asked for a broom and cleared the mess himself. And since the description is objective and in the third person, the character of Rihaz acquires much dignity from Mr. Ahmed's account which unfolds almost like fiction.

Fine reading though the first part is, the second part of the book is even better. Here is a powerful statement of a decaying, disintegrating India. Although Mr. Zahir Ahmed mentions no dates (this in itself lends point to the timelessness of the country's poverty), one gathers that his return takes place during the early 'fifties. He sees desolation around him: the country is being ravaged by Communist terror. Not satisfied with what he sees in the villages, he courageously goes into the jungle to meet the Communist leaders. He records with pathos the lives of the people who, made wretched by inadequate government on one hand and reduced to misery by the Communists on the other, have turned to rueful silence. But Mr. Ahmed enters their hearts, makes them talk, as he also does some of the Communists: he presents the variety of conflicting arguments, leaving an impression on the reader of tragedy and anarchy.

The most tragic reading is the account of the ruined Hyderabads. Here, Mr. Ahmed describes the splendour in which these families originally lived and then outlines the wretchedness they have been reduced to. He describes here a Minister called Anjiah Patel, an opportunist, one of many who have found power and wealth in the new India: had Mr. Ahmed's book been a novel, Patel's portrait would have been one of the best drawn of a villain. The man has neither taste nor intelligence, an utterly detesable character, one of the generation of vandals.

I doubt if India will like this book, for it is too horribly true and there are too many people in power who will see themselves in the depiction of Patel. Certainly, the present complacent mood of India, following September 1965, a mood which has banned Ronald Segal's innocuous book, is not likely to take kindly to Mr. Ahmed's honest intelligence.
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