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June 1967
THE
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AL-HAFIZ BASHIR AHMAD MISRI, B.A. [Hons.]

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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
Our Problems

In the words of our Arab Contemporaries

"The Muslims are facing new problems in their life today, and they want to know what their religion has to say on these problems. They are no longer satisfied with the reiteration of the principle that Islam is suitable for all times and places — they want practical implementation of this principle, in which they believe" — al-Wa'y al-Islami, Kuwait.

"Is it not a shame that although the Arabs number one hundred million and possess all the potential needed for defeating their enemy, the Jewish hordes in the Arab land, who number only 2.5 per cent of the total Arab nation, have nevertheless managed to get the upper hand, and to establish a Jewish state against the Arab will, expelling a million Arabs from their homeland and usurping their places?" — al-Bilad, Jeddah, Su'udi Arabia.

We reproduce below the views of two of our contemporaries from two Arab countries — one from Kuwait, the other from Su'udi Arabia — on some of the pressing problems facing the world of Islam. We have in the past often expressed views on these problems on similar lines, and we have asked the same questions in order to elicit answers. The Muslim world is still anxiously waiting for satisfactory solutions to its problems. Islamic conferences are being held in all the principal Muslim countries, and Islamic institutes have been opened in the major Muslim countries to study their various problems and crises confronting the modern world of Islam. But it must be said that so far there has been no crystallization of views and no clear or definite stand on many of the issues involved. To give but one example — at the last conference of the Academy of Islamic Research held in Cairo in October 1966 a renowned Egyptian scholar read a comprehensive paper which emphasized that the Qur'an and the Shari'ah of Islam supported the institution of the "veil" for women. When in the course of the discussion that followed some of the members of the audience suggested that the exposition of the learned scholar was not in accordance with the verses of the Qur'an in the chapter "The Light" (al-Nut), the speaker stuck to his views. But when another member of the audience, who knew more about the family affairs of the speaker, remarked that if what the speaker had said was correct, how would he account for his own daughter studying at an English university, unveiled. The only answer that the speaker could give was that that was no concern of his, and all that he had said was the Islamic standpoint!

This instance shows how great is the gulf between the theoretical viewpoints of the scholars of Islam and the practical daily life of an average Muslim. No conference and no Islamic institution has as yet gathered enough authority to make the scholars and the law-makers of Islam take a definite and unambiguous stand on any of the important daily problems affecting the life of the Muslims. No effort is as yet being made by our scholars to bridge the gulf between what they, the scholars, believe to be right, and what our average Muslim man-in-the-street is practising. What is worse is that if any resolution on the social problem of Islam is passed, more often than not the Muslim man-in-the-street seldom hears
about it. One has to visit some of the fast developing Muslim countries of today to see how tragically true it is.

From Kuwait

Our problems — insurance, interest, the sighting of the Crescent Moon

Here is the text of an editorial which appeared in al-Wa‘y al-Islami, Kuwait, for October 1966 (Vol. 1, No. 19) (Editor: ‘Abd al-Mun‘im al-Nimr), translated from Arabic.

“This issue of al-Wa‘y al-Islami appears as the third Conference of Muslim Scholars (‘ulemas) meets in Cairo, in the halls of the venerable al-Azhar, and to contribute towards finding a solution to these problems in line with Islam’s way for the building up of society and in conformity with the general interests of the Muslims.

“I attended the first Conference of the Muslim Scholars, and I closely followed its discourses and discussions. I got to know a great deal about the scholars who took part in the Conference. I perceived in every one of them a genuine zeal for the preservation of the aims of the Conference and a keen desire to attain these aims. I also felt the great hopes which the people had pinned upon this Conference for the solution of their problems, for the people clearly perceive a great deal of contradiction between the course of their ordinary life and the provisions of their religion, and they yearn for a solution to these contradictions.

“When I left Egypt for Kuwait, in order that I may make my humble contribution towards implementing the noble mission shouldered by the Ministry of Waqfs and Islamic Affairs, I realized more than ever before the extent of the hopes which the Muslims have reposed in the Conference of the Muslim scholars, and the great need which people have of its resolutions. Whenever I took part in any discussion upon any of the problems of modern times — whether the problem be one connected with a way of life that we had adopted from the West, or the product of our environment — I sometimes found it difficult to express a decisive opinion. Our minds would immediately turn to the Conference — the Conference of the Muslim Scholars. Did the Conference decide on this matter, or is it still under discussion and study? We realistically appreciated the magnitude of the aspirations and the responsibility laid upon the shoulders of the brilliant scholars who had been chosen from the various Muslim countries in order that, in the light of the Shari‘ah and the practical realities of the life of the Muslims, they could devise a clear path which would satisfy their conscience and in which they would find no conflict between their beliefs and the dictates of their religion, on the one hand, and the imperative requirements of their life which has become involved with life throughout the world as a whole on the other.

“If our leaders and colleagues at this Conference permit us to participate, at a distance, in promoting the realization of their aim — which are in fact the aims of every Muslim — we would say that we hope, as we had hoped at the first Conference, that they tackle the problems posed and find solutions thereto free of any conservatism that would precipitate impatience or halt the progress of life, and free also of any radicalism that would savour of abandonment of Islamic concepts on the pretext of the recognition of realities and surrender to them.

“We would like every scholar to tackle the subject of his specialization sincerely and in an enlightened manner, without adopting any attitude that would bring him applause from either the conservatives or the radicals. We are facing problems that require such sincerity and far-sightedness. Time marches on, and the hopes remain unfulfilled, and the people are anxiously waiting. We do not want the hopes to wither, nor the people to become impatient. The tide of life brooks no mercy, and does not stop.

“A section of the scholars of a Muslim group have issued clear fatwaa (dicta) on some problems, such as interest banking. Tens of millions of Muslims follow these fatwaa. Some of the scholars of this group are attending the Conference. What does the Conference think of these fatwaa without it being traditionalist or radical?

“There are certain obvious religious innovations which many people are practising, and which require strong denunciation by the Conference, and a final verdict.

“There are differences in regard to certain matters among Muslim jurists. The jurists may have had excuses for such differences at one time, but now that all the Hadith and the various sources of the evidence have been clarified it has become possible to determine the viewpoint which conforms with the better evidence.

“There are viewpoints and fatwaa in juristic matters, particularly in regard to business transactions, which were expressed and recognized at one time because they were in line with the public good at that time. But things have changed, and certain viewpoints have become unreasonable and are not in line with the general interest. Why, then, do these viewpoints and fatwaa subsist? And why do the educated and the scholars continue to waste time studying them and using them as a source of future fatwaa?

“There are differences between the Muslims regarding the start of their fast, the fixing of the dates of their ‘Id (festivals), and the performance of the rites of the pilgrimage. These give rise to trouble, confusion and bitterness every year. Why do these differences continue, despite the harm they do?

“Is it possible to rely on astronomical calculations in regard to the fast and the ‘Id, as has been the case in regard to the times of prayer? Can the Conference, in collaboration with the Arab League, find means for reaching agreement on the unification of the date of the start of the fast, the celebration of the ‘Id, and the performance of the rites of the Pilgrimage.

“In the editorial of the first issue of this Journal I said something which I would wish to reiterate on this occasion: ‘The Muslims are facing new problems in their life today, and they want to know what their religion has to say on these problems. They are no longer satisfied with reiteration of the principle that Islam is suitable for all times and places — they want practical implementation of this principle, in which they believe. New matters have arisen, and new principles governing the conduct of life have appeared, and all these were not known when the old jurists and the legislators wrote their treaties or formulated their rules seeking to cover all the problems of life which they had experienced and
formulating solutions for problems which they had envisaged. The modern mentality is no longer satisfied with the proposition that the door of ijithad (the development of rules based on established general principles) has been closed for ever, and that the early scholars have left nothing further for present-day scholars to say. Muslim scholars are convinced of the need for ijithad, even if in collective form, for the purpose of encountering the ways of modern life and orientating these ways in the religious aspect. But where is the ijithad? And where are the attempts by the specialist scholars to devise solutions for our modern problems? That is what I would like our writers to tackle, and that is what I shall welcome in this Journal and submit to discussion, in the hope that we shall thereby take a step which would lead to other steps towards the realization of what we hope for.

"At that time I made this appeal to our contributors, some of whom are attending this Conference. I now make the same appeal to our respected scholars, the repository of our hopes and aspirations, at a time when the hearts are directed towards al-Azhar where this Conference is being held, and where decisions will be taken in the light of the message of the Qur'an, the eternal message of Islam.

"Let God be the purpose, and God is the source of success and help."

FROM SU'UDI ARABIA

Condemnation in words not enough against Israel

In elucidation of the problems of the Muslim world, and in confirmation of the views which The Islamic Review has consistently held (see, for example, our editorial for December 1966, following the Israeli raid on the Jordanian village of Sam' in November 1966 — our comment was entitled "Sticks and Stones may Break my Bones, but Words will never hurt me" — Action, no words, to Liberate Palestine”), we publish hereunder comment by a leading Su'udi Arabian writer, 'Abdullah al-Su'd, which appeared in the daily al-Bilad, Jeddah, Su'udi Arabia, for 30 Dhu al-Hijjah, 1386 A.H. (10 April 1967 C.E.), on the occasion of an Israeli air and land attack on Syria. The attack — the biggest since 1956, and lasting about eight hours — took place on Friday 7 April 1967. A Military Defence Pact between Syria and Egypt was signed in November 1966.

"Jordan has forcefully supported Syria's stand against the latest Israeli attack on the Syrian southern front and over the skies of Damascus. King Husain placed the army of Jordan and its air force at the disposal of Syria all along the front. Iraq, the Lebanon, Kuwait and Algeria also supported Syria's stand against Israel. The Su'udi Arabian army in the northern front, in Tabuk, is in a state of alert at the disposal of all the Arabs against Israel at any moment; and it is substantial in number, and fully equipped.

"But solidarity alone is not enough. Israel can only be deterred by striking force: and the surprise raids against the Arabs which Israel mounts as it pleases can only be prevented if Israel were made to realize that the four Arab fronts surrounding it are in fact a single front, capable of being immediately activated into battle, deploying all the land, air, sea, psychological, political and economic weapons at their command, supported by all the Arabs, without exception, be they near or far.

"If Israel felt that Egypt, Syria and the Lebanon were capable of making an immediate move, and that they would participate in a comprehensive war against Israel's four frontiers, with the assistance of all the Arab states, Israel would not have seen fit to commit aggression against the Jordanian village of Sam' three months ago.

"If Israel felt that such an immediate and collective Arab deterrent would co-operate it would not have dared to strike against Arab Syria the day before yesterday. And if the Arabs were serious and sincere in regard to the Palestine problem, Israel would not have found a foothold in our occupied land.

"Is it not a shame that although the Arabs number one hundred million and possess all the potential needed for defeating their enemy, the Jewish bands in the Arab land, who number only 2.5 per cent of the total Arab nation, have nevertheless managed to get the upper hand, and to establish a Jewish state against the Arab will, expelling a million Arabs from their homeland and usurping their place?

"Some Arabs say that imperialism created Israel — Britain gave birth to it, America weaned it, Russia nurtured it, France helped it, and Western Germany gave it sustenance — and that it is impossible to put an end to Israel when all these gigantic forces are behind it. Our answer to this is that if the Arabs were to unite over a single purpose, and to have faith in it and remain steadfast, and if, by means of their tremendous resources and their strategic capacities — which those who help Israel cannot dispense with — the Arabs were to exert pressure against all the evil forces that support Israel, the Arabs would eventually get what they want and succeed in attaining their aim. But the Arabs — all the Arabs — are weak-hearted, they are disputing with one another. They are getting at one another, and forgetting their enemy. They are stabbing each other from all directions, thereby providing their enemy with the opportunity to flourish and prosper and to build its military caste upon their heads with the assistance of evil world forces. These evil forces applied their energies against the Arabs, warping some of them and instilling rancour in their ranks. The trick worked against the Arabs, and the evil forces indulged in practising this trick. The Arabs became a pliable tool, submissive and easy to conquer; and the evil forces thereby paved the way for Israel's existence and provided the means for its survival against the wishes of the Arabs.

"I would repeat: Israel's continued existence on Arab soil is more the responsibility of the Arabs than of Britain, America, Russia, France and Germany. If Israel were to know that the Arabs would unite over anything against it, it would never trifle with them or repeat its raids against them — raids which the Arabs have sought to repel only by words that evaporate into thin air."
Reflections on Contemporary Islam

By HISHAM JU’AYT

The eminent modernist thinkers in Islam, both in the East and the West, at first endeavoured to exert some influence on religious thought and behaviour. They were aware of the close connection between the temporal and the spiritual factors in the Muslim world. The various currents of orientalism did but reinforce their conviction that the decadence of Muslim civilization is closely bound up with the “sclerosis” of religion and religious institutions. Orientalism, in fact, bears the distinguishing mark of Christianity. It developed and became influential at a time when religious faith in the West had already become weakened. Orientalists were thus interested only in the outworn and the retrograde forms and structures of the East. Further, many orientalists today exaggerate the importance of these matters when, in reality, although they are important, they are less important than other matters.

If the decadence of the Islamic institutions is the natural decadence of a civilization, the decadence of Western Europe is equally foreseeable and inevitable. This is a normal phenomenon in the history of humanity. It would, therefore, be wrong to attribute to Islam something of which it may be innocent.

All reflections about the various religions will inevitably be linked with a philosophico-historical theory to the role of religion in human life and its present-day importance on a world-wide scale. It is easy for us to perceive the present decadence of the religious factor and the degeneracy, if not the decrepitude, of the ancient religious systems. Christians try in vain to rebuild the foundations of their religion—even some of their efforts have met with success—since the successes of Christianity in society remain very limited. Contemporary positivism and relativism have dominated people’s minds: and man is now on the threshold of a new “biological” leap forward, in which the religious spirit might be completely effaced.

This is a tragedy, because of the fact that religious truth, and in our special case Islamic truth, is an absolute truth. On the one side there is truth and on the other side there is error. Although the advocates of religion are in possession of truth, the difficulty lies in finding a solution to the problem of harmonizing the religious systems with modernity and its demands. In reality the true believer is much less interested in the earthy life; compared with the state of his soul on the day of resurrection, economic progress is of secondary importance to him. The fasts of Ramadan, for example, from the temporal point of view, slow up the vital economic effort. The religious factor, however, is only one of a number of social factors. Each of the two groups explains away the other, so that, on the theoretical level, conciliation between the two different attitudes becomes difficult.

Arising from this are what we may describe as modernist errors, which we can in fact put into two vastly differing categories. The first one, the “conformist” error, endeavours to treat the patient with hopes, promises and fables that are devoid of all substance and foundation. The second category, which is really unreligious (or non-religious), aims at overriding the religious factor and appeals to secular sense on the grounds of reconstruction and reform. Both sides are in violent opposition, to the accompaniment of flagrant and manifest contradictions. On the one hand there are those who adhere to scholastic principles and try to interpret everything by referring to the Qur’an and the Hadith. This being an idle fancy, if not a naïve pretence, the edifice soon collapses. On the other side there are those who arbitrarily choose the juridical solutions of the past, and endeavour to carry out far-reaching reforms inside ancient moulds. Here the object is to make use of the weapons of the past in order to ward off the attacks of the old school. But in fact such proponents are distorting their own logic, and using it improperly by relying, for example, on non-Sunnite principles in a Sunnite country, or on some doubtful tradition, in order to justify their position, or on an interpretation of the text without taking into account what we may describe as the authoritative spirit of religious logic. Thus, by quoting such a tradition or text, we recognize implicitly that we can construct nothing without having recourse, in a general way, to the old juridical or religious system. In this way we are destroying with one hand what we are building with the other.

It would help, therefore, to clarify the two attitudes and make them explicit. Conformism or fundamentalism is not an evil in itself, since its existence guarantees the possibility of an equilibrium between the two opposing schools of thought. At the same time modernism is one of the most imperious necessities of Muslim society. Thus it is for each of the two schools to prove the efficacy of its principles.

Social equilibrium is not founded on an apparent consensus of opinion but on a mysterious chemical reaction which brings numerous elements, even contradictory ones, into complex relationships. We know as an established fact that one of the most potent causes of the decadence of Muslim society lies in the fact that it has always tended to hide its social and intellectual contradictions under a veil of artificial and superficial unity. Such a unity was a success for some time, but had a sterilizing influence in the long run.

The challenge has been one of the most prolific factors of progress. In the same way as the “Mu’tazilite” affair at the time of al-Ma’mūn was an opportunity for Sunni Islam, so colonial domination has been a divine favour for contemporary Islam, since it explains the present-day renaissance. An exception to this was that the challenge made to dogma and the Muslim religion was, in the East, on a material challenge, resulting from the obvious time-lag between the progress made by the Christian West, and the retarded state of the Muslim East. In Tunisia, for example, Islam was closely associated with the old ruling social classes, who fell into two groups, one governmental and the other religious. That is why the new political elite, which combated colonial-
ism with the national fighting front — and which also became a social elite — has always felt a certain aversion to the Muslim factor because the old aristocracy got support from it and collaborated to a certain extent with colonialism. This state of affairs resembles the one which existed in France in the 19th century, if only by reason of the fact that the traditions of Muslim civilization have taken on new modern forms and have prevented the internal contradictions from attaining their final state of evolution. In other words, the dialectical oppositions concerning the religious problem have not reached their ultimate historical consequences. There is another reason for this delay — the energies of the community were devoted to resisting the external enemy. This does not mean that we prefer strife to peace, nor conflict to unity. It is simply an analysis of the situation.

Treatment after diagnosis

And now, what remains to be done? In other words, from an overall historical study, and recognizing the deterioration of the religious phenomenon and the breaking-up of traditional society, how will it be possible to deal with the problem of contemporary Islam? After all, our object is to safeguard what should be safeguarded.

We can act at two different levels. One level is that of the general collectivity, and the other is that of the original, independent thinker. But there is a connecting link between the two levels. Personal study and research, made by superior minds, plays a part, because it transmits to society concepts, ideas and values which exert their influence on the behaviour of the masses and on their average conception of religion. The world of Bernanos, for example, or that of Teilhard de Chardin, is not that of the official Church, but these thinkers have, in their own original, profound and personal fashion, given a redefinition of the spiritual content of Christianity, and in so doing have influenced the official Church itself.

With regard to the first level, the principal thing to do is to amend and rectify juridical conceptions. But the Muslims, both the elite and the masses, owing to their lack of scientific intelligence, are ignorant of the historical stages through which Muslim legislation has passed. They are ignorant of the rules governing the development of religious jurisprudence. In this domain their tendency is towards improvisation. And for this reason they will find it necessary to undertake modern scientific research. In such a research religious sentiment in the domains of law, tradition and theology will play a great part. Muslims will thus come to appreciate, in a general manner, the spirit on which their edifice is founded. On the one hand they will destroy what should be destroyed, and on the other they will build up what should be built up, due consideration being given to the essentials of the Muslim faith, so that equilibrium is preserved. Professor Schacht rightly observes that the present-day legislators of Pakistan, for example, considering the value of their juridical thought, are definitely not at the same level as an Imam like al-Säfti. Let us hope that work will be carried out on Qur'anic and theological exegesis, and that there will be numerous schools of thought giving fearless interpretations. This does not mean that such schools should allow themselves to drift into the realms of mere imagination and subjectivity, but rather that they should engage in a real ijtihad — a harmonising, a reconciliation, of the creative effort with the sentiment of religious authority. But before there can be any ijtihad on the components, there must be an ijtihad on the general principles (usul). The Muslims should therefore compare their situation with what the Germans achieved in the 19th century — they will then obtain some idea of their state of retardation.

We will now discuss the second level, that is to say, the passing in review of philosophico-religious theories and the renovation of Muslim spirituality. Here the thinker can draw on numerous sources. Naturally, the superficial rationalism affected by numerous " renovators" is not serious. It is certainly easy to understand and accept in our present situation, which is dominated by the hand of authority and formal traditionalism. But in itself it is of no value. And the religious thinker should be on his guard against relativism and historicism. On the contrary, he must strengthen and reinforce his sense of the transcendental, that is to say, of everything that can transcend and soar above the insignificant and the paltry ego and attain the Absolute, towards which every noble soul will constantly strive. God is eternal because the human soul, as long as it lives, remains linked with the Absolute. Any society in which this sentiment becomes weakened, or disappears, loses its equilibrium. The believer must therefore defend his religious conception of the Absolute against laic conceptions.

The various philosophical systems have proffered numerous theories concerning the cosmos and its beginnings, but none of them has exerted a lasting influence on the human mind. Islam — thanks be to God — is a great religion. And we can be really proud of it, as we should be proud of our Prophet and our Qur'ån. It is certainly incumbent on us to leave our imprint on the main body of Islamic spirituality.

Our aim should be chiefly to encourage the representation of an evolved conception of God. For example, my conception of God is that of a God of mercy and perfection, who maintains the whole of existence and preserves it from annihilation in the void. It is this spiritual spark — a miracle — which consoles me for the indifference of matter. The God of Islam is the God of justice and goodness, and the Qur'ån is available to all men of goodwill. Man is a violent animal dominated by his ego. And the religious feeling is above all a confession, so to speak, an acknowledgment, of man's violence and instability.

In the serenity radiated by the Qur'án and the Hadiths, there is true peace, goodness and virtue, and, in the ensemble, an immeasurable treasure. I will not deal here with historical criticism, or historicity, or historicism, nor with civil reason and rationalism. For invisible authority, which is one of the foundations of religion, safeguards us from any hesitation or doubt. This is because it means acceptance of the past, the affirmation of solidarity and the voluntary denial of the selfish. If there is a real synthesis and a real conciliation, it is between the sense of authority and the personal and subjective dimension. In a word, the moment has arrived when we must enhance and strengthen the sentiment of faith. One wonders if Muslims would feel ashamed that the tyranny of contemporary rationalism had brought them to such subjection and servility. Religion is faith and holiness, but also self-discipline, purity and submission.

As regards rites, and the social and formal aspects of religion, we are confident that these will evolve through contact with reality and with the passage of time. In fact, present-day society is in the process of secularisation, so much so that the danger no longer lies in the intensity of its belief or its attachment to spiritual things. On the contrary, I begin to see the forces of materialism penetrating deeply into the spiritual edifice, and I fear its total collapse under their influence, like the faded virtue of the adolescent, whose eyes are at first completely closed to the snares of the world, but which, when he has tasted their pleasures, sees the world eat out his heart and kill him.
Muhammad Kurd-‘Ali (1876-1963 C.E.)

A Defender of Islam and Ardent Advocate of its Modernization

BY MUHAMMAD KAMIL ‘IYAD

(Part 1)

Muhammad Kurd-‘Ali was a versatile man of many qualities and achievements. He was a journalist, an historian, an Arabic scholar, a defender of Islam against Western distortions and an advocate of the modernization of Islam. It is difficult to justify emphasis on any one of these qualities separately, and justice can be done to Kurd-‘Ali only by discussing all these aspects of his life.

As a journalist

The first experience that Kurd-‘Ali had was in the sphere of journalism. This experience has perhaps left a great imprint upon his personality and has shaped his trends in the spheres of activity in which he was subsequently engaged. He became a journalist at a very early age. His first article was written at the age of sixteen, and at the age of twenty-two he became editor of the journal al-Shaam (Damascus). He went to Egypt and there wrote for other important journals — al-Muqatta‘, al-Ra‘id al-Misri, al-Mu‘ayyad and al-Muqtabas. After the revolution in Turkey in 1908 C.E. Kurd-‘Ali returned to Syria and started a daily newspaper.

Kurd-‘Ali often expressed the view that he considered journalism as one of the most effective means of achieving social and other reforms. He dedicated himself to many worthy causes and pursued them with great zeal and vigour. The many books and articles he has written give abundant clues about his aims and aspirations. In one book (al-Mudhakaraat, Vol. I, p. 61) he says that his ambition would be “to urge the Arabs to engage in useful activities and to produce projects, and to exhort people to utilize skills for the spread of education amongst the ignorant classes”. He considered newspapers as “mobile schools, enlightening the minds and acquainting the people with the meaning and purport of civilization, informing them of the progress made by other nations and the policies and aims of other countries, and bringing to them the essence of the knowledge and culture of other peoples” (Aqwamuna wa-Afaluna, p. 170). On several occasions he praised the efforts made by the press in Syria and the other Arab countries to promote a nationalist spirit in the community and to educate the people on proper political lines. He said the press had “acquainted the masses of the nature of the colonialism of the colonialists and the trickery of the cheat”; taught the masses that their nation had a recognized stature at one time, and that its present generation would have no future unless they were to adopt from the heritage of the past as well as from the civilization of the present all that would not deprive them of their characteristic identity or affect their sacred precepts; explained to them that there would be no hope except through the revival of Arab nationalism; showed that the resort to religion as the sole means of salvation would not be enough to save the people from the abyss in which they languished, because to ignore the affairs of the world would undermine the affairs of religion; and proved that the West does not wish the East any good, and that East is East and West is West” (Khitat al-Shaam, Vol. IV, p. 60). Kurd-‘Ali was at the same time fully aware of the corruption and deviation which prevailed in certain sections of the press at the time, and he made clear that some papers were engaged in a campaign of distortion with the object of preventing the people becoming enlightened about the truth. Some newspapers, he said, professed harmful policies and were in the pay of foreign powers, and they could not be trusted or in any way relied upon to promote the people’s real good. For this reason he was a strong advocate of some restrictions on the absolute freedom to publish newspapers, because he considered that this could easily give licence to some disloyal and dishonest quarters to corrupt the minds of the people and mar their proper aspirations.

Muhammad Kurd-‘Ali’s recipe for success as a journalist was wide general knowledge and experience, a knowledge of foreign languages and an understanding of science and politics. He also placed emphasis on integrity and honesty, and on an appreciation of the points of weakness as much as of the points of strength of the people for whom the journalist wrote. For this it was necessary to be acquainted with the history and economy of the country, and with its political parties, trade unions and business enterprises. He once described the journalist as “a judge who daily faces new problems and is required to pass judgment on them and must do so in good faith, tactfully and effectively”. He considered that journalism was “a vocation which could easily be corrupted by the pursuit of any selfish trend”. A journalist, according to Kurd-‘Ali, was also “an educator of his people, the founder of nations and the originator of progress . . . a teacher whose task is never finished, and whose mission acquires different shapes in different times . . . a researcher into the past, a critic of the present . . . a person who needs good intellect and patience . . . a friend of Governments as much as their enemy, the mouthpiece of the people as much as their prompter . . .” (Aqwamuna wa-Afaluna, p. 175). Many of those who knew Kurd-‘Ali have said that the description he gave of a successful journalist fitted the man himself very well. He was an ideal journalist, loyal to his mission and honest in its performance, noble in his aspirations, conscious of his responsibilities, and frank in the expression of his views. On the other hand, he was perhaps a little excitable and emotional, and easily led into extremes in his opposition to certain views or to what he considered wrong. He himself admitted
that he was at times too severe on those he considered mischievous, but he never resorted to personal abuse or vendettas; he very rarely mentioned by name the people he criticized — although it was often not very difficult for his readers to recognize the targets of his criticism (al-Mudhakara, Vol. 1, p. 612). Because of his zeal in directing criticism against what he considered were wrong trends, Muhammad Kurd-'Ali was exposed to the wrath of many people in high office, and was at times in personal danger. Through all this, however, he earned a very high reputation amongst the general public. His honesty and frankness were proverbial, and his zeal to promote reform and eradicate evil and corruption were above question.

At the end of World War I, Muhammad Kurd-'Ali began to lose interest in active journalism, and he closed down the paper he was editing. There were complicated and pressing political and other reasons for his decision. But when he retired from journalism he had already made a great imprint upon the whole profession, and he himself had become conditioned to his experience. He became distinctly realistic, and demonstrated throughout his life close touch with the life of the people, their problems and their grievances. He also acquired a clear style of expression and a preciseness in method which made his writings intelligible to a very wide public.

As a reformer

After his retirement from journalism, Muhammad Kurd-'Ali began to devote very serious attention to the promotion of reform in the various spheres of life, and advocated ideas that were designed to bring about wholesome change for the Arab and Muslim peoples. He took a particular interest in the activities of the Arab Academy of Damascus (now the Academy of the Arabic Language), and he became one of its main pillars, writing articles and delivering lectures on various subjects and helping in the administration of the Academy. At the same time he was busy writing books and conducting research on various subjects.

According to Muhammad Kurd-'Ali reform and progress for the Arabs could be achieved through the promotion of a few simple and closely inter-related objectives. These he elucidated in his articles and lectures on several occasions. They were: the revival of Arab and Muslim culture; the combat of reaction and narrow-mindedness amongst the Muslim shaykhs and the eradication of superfluous and irrelevant religious innovations; the upholding of genuine moral standards; the acceptance of reason and science as the crucible and yardstick of achievement: and the adoption of whatever commends itself from Western civilization, without prejudice or bias but after careful scrutiny and thought.

He was responsible for a strong movement that led to a substantial revival of interest in Arab and Muslim culture. He edited and published several old Arab treatises and classics on various subjects, and he encouraged others in this sphere. He also published commentaries on excerpts from old Arab and Islamic masterpieces, and discussed their relevance and significance to the needs of modern times. This was of tremendous benefit to the cultural movements at the time, and provided the basis upon which a modern renaissance for the Arabs could be established. Kurd-'Ali's theme was that there was a great deal in the heritage of the Arabs and the Muslims from which they could derive benefit in tackling their present problems, and that the only way in which the resources of this rich heritage could be tapped would be by thorough study and analysis in an enlightened manner and without prejudice, accepting what is good and rejecting that which does not prove its worth or usefulness.

A constant target for the criticism and attack of Muhammad Kurd-'Ali were those professors of religion whom he considered reactionary or deceitful. He did not have a hatred of all shaykhs, after he had been tutored by some well-known shaykhs like Tahir al-Jazayeri, Muhammad al-Mubarak and Salim al-Bukhari, and had great respect for them, and constantly acknowledged his debt to them. But there were many shaykhs for whom he had little respect, and perhaps even hatred. He considered that many of them had used religion as a subterfuge, and were ignorant of the real meaning and purpose of Islam. But he resolutely and very enthusiastically supported genuine reform movements in Islam. He was very much in favour of the movement led by Shaykh Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh, both in Egypt, and Shaykh Tahir al-Jazayeri in Syria. He also wrote high praise of the Imam Ibn Taymiyyah, whom he described as "the greatest reformer in the eighth century after Hijrah, and the greatest reformer up to that date, who wanted to free religion of the superfluous growth attached to it by ignorant people, and to restore it to its original purity and vividness" (Khutat al-Shaam, Vol. IV, p. 50). On another occasion Kurd-'Ali had this to say about the Imam Ibn Taymiyyah: "Had his mission succeeded...the religion of Islam could have been saved for all times from the hands of the prevaticutors, and there would not have been anybody in the lands of Islam proclaiming loyalty to anything but God, and there would have been no tomb to which people would go as an act of worship and holding as sacred things which this faith of unity and oneness had preached" (Kanz al-Ajad, p. 367). In Kurd-'Ali's opinion one of the main reasons for the lapse of the Muslims into stagnation was their preoccupation at one stage in their history with the ascribing of a religious colour or significance to many aspects of mundane life. This he considered to be unnecessary and mischievous, and he urged that the affairs of religion and the affairs of everyday life should be separated in broad outline, such as has been the case in the West in separating state from church.

The campaigns which Muhammad Kurd-'Ali waged were not solely against the deceivers or the corrupt amongst the men of religion. He devoted attention to what he considered to be a deviation in the spheres of public life, and wrote at length about the unpleasant side of life in Arab towns, aiming biting criticism against certain sections of the community. But some social reformers have expressed doubt about the effectiveness of his method, and maintained that mere criticism and exposure were not enough to produce a change. People are the product of their times and of the economic, social, political, cultural and other circumstances prevailing in the community. Personal conduct is geared to all these factors, and unless they are changed it has little chance of changing. Change only in one sphere of life has little chance of being effective unless there can be a change in corresponding and interrelated spheres of activity.

Modernization

Despite the emotional outbursts and the spontaneity of reactions which were characteristic of Muhammad Kurd-'Ali, it is a fact that he was a man of deep thought and great contemplative powers. He was a great believer in reason and demonstrated this by the emphasis he often placed on the rationalist approach to problems and on the analogy he made with the experience of the past. He showed how this kind of argument prevailed amongst the scholars of old, and drew
comfort in particular from the great Arab philosopher al-Jahiz, who taught that reason must never be abandoned in the examination of religious problems, and that religious and mundane matters could be related to one another and a joint approach made for their solution.

This attitude of Muhammad Kurd-'Ali was the main reason for his fascination with modern Western civilization, which he believed to be founded on reason and science. In his opinion, the essential test of the worth of a civilization was its capacity to control to a large extent the physical aspects of life, and to serve the cause of material as well as moral progress. He said: "Material things are the ladder by which an ascent can be made to the pinnacle of power, and there can be no moral strength where material strength is utterly lacking" (Aqwaluna wa-Afaluna, p. 312). He lost no opportunity to preach that attention should be devoted to improving the material aspects of life and to the attainment of success in practical spheres. He was constantly against those who sought to distract the attention of the people by engaging them in vague spiritual enterprises and disputations. In his book Kutub al-Khayalaat, p. 1044, he says: "In recent times the endeavours of many of those who engage in philosophy and religious studies in the Arab universities have been directed at the publication of books of the old philosophers and the Sufists. They claimed that many people were anxious to learn more about this subject, and they claimed that in these studies were to be found secrets which, if unravelled, could disclose the laws of nature, give the key to human progress, save the souls from destruction, and rid mankind of all evil... But when the secrets of the Sufists were presented to the world in this new garb it became clear to everyone that they were flimsy and hollow, and heavily charged with the mischief which those who love the mysterious and the unknown have sought to propagate throughout the ages, wasting their lives on these pursuits, and wasting other people's lives as well." Kurd-'Ali was not fond of philosophy, and somewhat impatient with pure philosophical arguments. He appears to have been very much influenced in this by the trend prevailing in the Western world at the time which rejected philosophical and theological studies as irrelevant to the needs of the times.

Throughout his life Muhammad Kurd-'Ali was a staunch advocate of the study of Western civilization for the purpose of adopting from it. He wrote a book on this subject — Ghar'a'ib al-Gharib — which many people think was his magnum opus. In this book Kurd-'Ali wrote about three visits he made to Europe, in particular to France and Switzerland in 1909, 1913 and 1921. He did not simply recount his personal experiences during these visits, but reported many of the things he had heard or read in or about these countries. He took his visits very seriously indeed, and he never went to a place in Europe without first making very exhaustive study about it. He always asked searching questions, and always knew beforehand what he would be looking for. He wrote about the various aspects of life in the countries he visited, and offered deep and thorough analysis of all that he encountered. Although his visits to Europe were comparatively short he was nevertheless qualified to make serious observations by virtue of the fact that he had previously studied his subject thoroughly and he fully utilized his stay in Europe for the amassing of information and the examination of the topics in which he was interested. His writings on this subject were very colourful and interesting, for he was a vivid and truthful chronicler and reporter. The conclusions he drew from his observations were also very meaningful and were received with serious attention by his readers.

Muhammad Kurd-'Ali was conscious of the many dangers with which the Arabs and the Muslims were threatened. He was of the opinion that they would not be able to preserve their identity and their rights unless they used, against those who were menacing them, the same weapons as were being used against the Arabs and the Muslims — the weapons of knowledge and science. He said: "It is not enough for us to recall our ancient glorious history and to give examples of the illustrious achievements of our ancestors in the days of their shining civilization. The civilization of the West today is not merciful to the weak. We must adopt from this Western civilization all that would be beneficial for the building up of our stature" (Ghar'a'ib al-Gharib, Vol. I, pp. 158-159). Kurd-'Ali explained the significance of the ideas of Western civilization in the spheres of political and social organization and in industry, science and commerce. He devoted particular attention to education — universities, public libraries and scientific academies. He gave many examples of the great interest taken by the West in the arts and the sciences, and of the cooperation existing between the masses and their government in many respects. He urged that a similar relationship should exist between the Arabs and their rulers. In fact, he hoped that many of the good examples of the West would be followed by the Arabs. The very purpose of his writing and lecturing was to draw attention to the fact that the problems of the Arab world could be successfully tackled by pursuing the examples of the West. This perhaps explains why he appeared to many people to be seeing only the good things in the West, and to be discussing only the seemingly sides of Western life and thought. Kurd-'Ali himself says that this criticism had been directed against him, and he replies to it in this manner: "I wanted to acquaint my people with the good things, so that they could follow these examples. It was never my intention to inform people about the evils and the depredations, for these exist everywhere and we have our share of them... I must say that I saw not only good things but bad things as well in modern civilization, but the good things were much more than the bad, and it behoves our people to adopt the good and forget about the bad." (Aqwaluna wa-Afaluna, p. 112).

(To be continued)
Quintessence of Islam

By Dr. HAJI G. H. KASSIM

Islam is an extraordinarily simple and reasonable religion and withal sublime and majestic. It is pre-eminently a practical faith.

The following few extracts from the most authentic and earliest history and scriptures of Islam will show clearly the grandeur and rationality of the faith.

In the fifth year of the Prophet's mission, about 615 C.E., a number of Muslims were allowed by the Prophet to emigrate to Abyssinia, a tolerant Christian country, in order to be safe from the terrible persecutions to which the converts to Islam were subjected by the pagan Quraysh of Mecca. This is known as the first Hijrah. The rulers of Mecca sent ambassadors to ask the Negus for their extradition, accusing them of having left the religion of their own people without entering the Christian religion, and having done wrong in their own country. The Negus (against the wish of envoys) sent for the spokesman of the refugees and, in the presence of the bishops of his realm, questioned them of their religion. Ja'far ibn Abu Talib, brother of Ali and cousin of the Prophet, answered:

"We were folk immersed in ignorance, worshipping idols, eating carrion, given to lewdness, serving the ties of kinship, bad neighbours, the strong among us preying on the weak: thus we were till Allah sent to us a messenger of our own, whose lineage, honesty, trustworthiness and chastity we knew, and he called us to Allah that we should acknowledge His unity and worship Him and eschew all the stones and idols that we and our fathers used to worship beside Him; and ordered us to be truthful and to restore the pledge and observe the ties of kinship, and be good neighbours, and to abstain from things forbidden, and from blood, and forbade us lewdness and false speech, and to prey upon the wealth of orphans, and to accuse good women: and commanded us to worship Allah only, ascribing nothing unto Him as partner, and enjoined upon us prayer and alms and fasting. So we trusted him and we believed in him and followed that which he brought from Allah, and we worshipped Allah only, and ascribed nothing as partner unto Him. And we refrained from that which was forbidden to us, and indulged in that which was made lawful for us. And our people became hostile to us and tormented and sought to turn us from our religion that they might bring us back to the worship of idols from the worship of Allah. Most High, and that we might indulge in those iniquities which before we had deemed lawful."

There can be no better summary of the Prophet's work or his teachings. The above speech was delivered about the beginning of the Prophet's mission, and the translation is by Marmaduke Pickthall.

The Last Sermon

The following is about the last sermon of the Prophet delivered from the top of the Mount Arafat on 7 March 632 C.E. before he died. Most of the sermon is taken from Amir Ali's *Spirit of Islam*:

"Ye people! Listen to my words, for I know not whether another year will be vouchsafed to me after this year to find myself amongst you at this place. Your lives and property are sacred and inviolable amongst one another until ye appear before the Lord, as this day and this month is sacred for all, and (remember) ye shall have to appear before your Lord, who shall demand from you an account of all your actions . . . Ye people, ye have rights over your wives and your wives have rights over you . . . Treat your wives with kindness and love. Verily, ye have taken them on the security of God, and have made their persons lawful unto you by the words of God. Keep always faithful to the trust reposed in you, and avoid sins. Usury is forbidden. The debtor shall return only the principal; and the beginning will be made with (the loans of) my uncle Abbas, son of Abd al-Muttaalib, . . . Henceforth the vengeance of blood practised in the days of paganism is prohibited, and all blood feuds abolished, commencing with the murder of Ibn Rabi'a, son of Harith, son of Abd al-Muttaalib. And your slaves see that ye feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves, and clothe them with the stuff ye wear; and if they commit a fault which ye are not inclined to forgive, then part with them, for they are servants of the Lord, and not to be harshly treated.

"Ye people listen to my words and understand the same. The Arabs have no superiority over the non-Arabs (Adjims), nor have the non-Arabs any superiority over the Arabs, for ye are children of Adam and Adam was created of clay. Know that all Muslims are brothers unto one another. Ye are one brotherhood. Nothing which belongs to another is lawful unto his brother, unless freely given out of good will. Guard yourselves from committing injustice.

"Let him that is present tell it unto him that is absent. Haply he that shall be told may remember better than he who hath heard it."

Can there be any teaching more simple, more practical and more grand? The central and fundamental teaching of Islam is the Unity and Majesty of God. Below are two quotations from the Qur'an and finally a part of the sermon of Ali Ibn Abu Talib. *The Gateway to the City of Knowledge.*

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Iqbal—and Western Poets

On 21 April, Pakistanis everywhere observed the death anniversary of their national poet-philosopher, Allama Iqbal. In the following feature a comparative study of his poetry with those of some Western poets is outlined.

Iqbal was conversant with several languages and he had read poetry not only of the languages he knew but also, in translations, that of several other languages. For years he taught English and Arabic poetry in colleges at Lahore. It was inevitable that a poet of his broad vision and sensibility responded to his contacts with the great literary minds of the world in an effective manner. Going through his poetry, one recognizes a good deal of affinity between him and some other poets, both Eastern and Western. Amongst the Eastern poets his affinity with Ghalib, Bedil, Nazir and others has been noticed by several critics. As regards the Western poets, he wrote Payami-Mashriq in response to Goethe’s Divan, and his Javid Namah has been called by some writers an Islamic Divine Comedy.

Western influence

A student of Iqbal’s poetry will not fail to notice that the influence of Western poets on him is both wide and deep; and it will be interesting to trace it out.

The main characteristic of Iqbal’s art is a synthesis of romanticism and classicism. While still a student at Sialkot, his home town in Pakistan, he started writing poems in the classical style of Urdu poetry, but he was soon attracted by the romanticism of the English poets, especially Wordsworth and Shelley. It can be said that romanticism continued to fascinate him throughout his life. Very few languages of the world have produced poetry of nature to match that of the English language, and Wordsworth (1770-1850) is admittedly the greatest poet of nature in that language. The conception of nature as a being, though shared by other poets, became a cult with Wordsworth.

Ego

In the early stages of his career Iqbal agreed with Wordsworth, but later on he developed his philosophy of ego, according to which throughout the universe there is a rising note of egohood. Every object in the universe has an individuality which becomes personality in man. According to both Iqbal and Wordsworth the intercommunication between man and different objects in the universe is possible. Wordsworth’s conception of nature in the last stage of his development corresponds in a remarkable degree with Iqbal’s conception in the first stage of his development: with this difference — that while Wordsworth was only a partial pantheist and regarded God as immanent in nature but transcendent for man, for Iqbal, God was immanent both in nature and man. It has been said that for Wordsworth in boyhood nature was simply the playground, but in adolescence he came to love nature for her own sake and later on saw the Divine in her. It is strange but true that this process was reversed in Iqbal. Iqbal saw the Divine in nature quite early in his poetic career and during the last stage of his career he loved nature for her own sake and regarded nature as possessed of an ego.

Wordsworth and Iqbal also bear partial resemblance in the matter of their sense-endowment. Wordsworth excelled in two senses — seeing and hearing; other senses meant nothing to him. Iqbal excelled in seeing and hearing, but also had a good sense of smell. Thus while he frequently talks of the fragrance of flowers, Wordsworth appears to be insensible to fragrance.

Significant difference

While both Wordsworth and Iqbal have left behind great poetry of nature, there are significant differences between the two. Wordsworth is chiefly a poet of nature. On the other hand, Iqbal, in spite of his superb poetry of nature, is the Poet of Man. Summing up, it can be said that both Wordsworth and Iqbal are not merely poets of nature, they are prophets of nature. No wonder Iqbal wrote about Wordsworth that he “saved me from atheism in my student days”.

While his love of nature was attracting Iqbal towards Wordsworth his interest in the problem of good and evil in human life drew him to another English poet, Milton (1608-1674). Milton’s choice diction, the statelyness of his verse and the sublimity of themes made a great impression on Iqbal, who wrote to a friend early in his career that he wanted to write a poem on the model of Milton’s Paradise Lost.

Paradise Lost

It is in dealing with the problem of the evil in the life of man that one finds the greatest similarity between these two great poets. It is a problem for them, how evil can find a place in this world controlled by a beneficent and kind God. Milton’s answer to the question is the traditional Christian reply that Satan or the Devil is responsible for all the evil in the world. In tackling the problem of evil in the world, Iqbal, too, refers to Satan, and the character of Satan as depicted by Milton and Iqbal is of absorbing interest. Milton has described Satan and the problem of evil in his masterpiece Paradise Lost. Iqbal has dealt with the subject in several poems. In spite of cultural and religious differences Milton and Iqbal display remarkable kinship of poetic genius and some affinity of thought.

German poets

As remarked above, Iqbal was a very widely read man, and was equally familiar with Eastern and Western cultures, but perhaps it will not be wrong to say that notwithstanding his Islamic background Iqbal was equally a product of German culture. Apart from German thought he had made a deep study of German literature. He had studied Goethe, Schiller and Heine and other German poets. Iqbal expressed his admiration for the transcendent genius of Goethe (1749-1832) in his poems, frequently. In the preface to his Payami-Mashriq he wrote:

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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM DURING THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD’S TIME (570-622 C.E.)

By W. M. GAZDER

(Part 3)

ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM DURING THE PERIOD OF THE FIRST FOUR CALIPHS

"The early Muslims were, no doubt, the distinguished pioneers and pathfinders of the Islamic culture and we truly wish to emulate them. We must take up their unfinished work and continue the same creative spirit”

Western misconception about Caliphate

It is usual on the part of Western writers to project their own Church-fostered concepts to Islamic questions and Islamic institutions. Dogmatism is an essentially church characteristic. Islam recognizes neither dogma nor ritual, and yet those brought up in the church atmosphere, not able to divest themselves of their church notions, unconsciously associate Islam with similar paraphernalia. Islam — a plain, simple, natural mode of life on God’s earth — does not admit of any such terms or trappings. There is no “man-God” in Islam. The great Prophet of Islam was just a man like the rest of men. There is no “infallible church” in Islam; nor is there any Pope or priest in Islam. Nevertheless, for the simple reason that religion in the West cannot be conceived of but in association with such appendages, Western students of Islam are prone to interpret Islam as well in some similar terms. They cannot but see Islam through their own glasses, and hence the boring absurdity of all their pedantic talk of Islam.

The institution of Caliphate has been one such subject of ill-informed fuss based on forced analogy from church papacy. Time and again the point has been elucidated that there is nothing sacred about the person of caliph, nor is there such an artificial halo of sanctity with which a pope is surrounded. A caliph is just an erring, wavering mortal as any other. He derives his authority from the people whose service is the sole justification of his office. Abu Bakr was the first caliph after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, and these noble words of his inaugural address will ever shine in the pages of history: “If I go wrong put me right.”

Electoral procedure

No ambiguity, no complexity. The head of the people must be the servant of the people, subject to the will of the people. His chief functions were temporal. He had no religious authority. He could not change or modify any essential Islamic law or tenet. The caliphate was, in the words of al-Khudri, “a temporal headship based on religion”.

It is highly significant that the Holy Qur’an is silent and even the Prophet did not leave any definite instructions, nor did he lay down any particular procedure for the appointment of his successor. To some this may appear rather disappointing, but there is every reason to believe that this omission was deliberate and quite in consonance with the elastic and universal character of Islam. As Islam is meant for all times and all climes, it could not afford to bind its followers to a hard and rigid procedure in these matters. The Prophet, knowing very well that the mode of succession would differ from time to time and from people to people, deliberately abstained from laying down any particular rules of procedure in this behalf, thus leaving this question to be decided by the people themselves. The early caliphs, however, in keeping with their own national traditions, and in accordance with the spirit of Islam, adopted the following three modes of succession which can serve as precedents to Muslims who could follow any one of them suiting their own circumstances and environments.

As soon as the Ainsar (Helpers) of Medina heard about the death of the Prophet, they assembled together in order to elect the caliph from among themselves. When this news reached the prominent companions of the Prophet, Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and Abu Ubaydah sensed the dangerous implications of such an election and hastened to the spot. Abu Bakr urged the point with the Ainsar that if they elected the caliph from among themselves, no recognition would be given to such an election by the tribes of Arabia, and particularly by the Quraysh, who occupied the most important and prominent position in Arabia and enjoyed the confidence of the majority of the people. Thereupon the Ainsar demanded that there should be two chiefs, one from among themselves and the other from among the Quraysh. Abu Bakr rejected this demand, emphatically asserting the fundamental principles that there could not be two rulers in one state. The Ainsar were convinced of the futility of their claim to the caliphate and agreed with Abu Bakr’s viewpoint. In the meantime ‘Umar, reminding the people that since Abu Bakr was the most venerable and senior among the chief companions of the Prophet and had the honour of leading the congregational

1 Kluden, Tarikh Ummatul Islamic, p. 171.
prayers of the Muslims during the illness of the Prophet at his own instructions, took oath of allegiance to him as the first caliph in Islam. And when Abu Ubaydah followed suit, the whole assembly present there took oath of allegiance to Abu Bakr. On the following day the entire Muslim community of Medina took the oath of allegiance to Abu Bakr as the first caliph of Islam.

During his illness, Abu Bakr thought of nominating his successor, and, after due consideration, he put the name of 'Umar before the prominent companions of the Prophet. Only when there was unanimity regarding this proposal did he decide to nominate 'Umar as his successor. Thereafter he convened a general assembly of the people and announced the above decision, which was accepted with great zeal by Muslims.

When 'Umar was fatally wounded by an assassin and it was felt that there was no hope of his survival, he was approached by the companions of the Prophet to settle the question of succession. 'Umar nominated a council of the following six most prominent companions of the Prophet: 'Ali, Usman, Talha, Zubayr, Sā'ad Ibn Waqqas and Abd al-Rahman Ibn Awf, and instructed them to select the caliph from among themselves within the next three days. He also associated the name of his son Abdullah, but with the clear stipulation that he would exercise a casting vote in case of a tie and that he could not be elected to the Caliphate. In order to facilitate the selection Abd al-Rahman Ibn Awf suggested that some of the members of the Council should withdraw their candidacy. Thereupon three of them, namely Sā'ad Ibn Madqas, Zubayr and Talha, withdrew their candidacy. Thus 'Usman, 'Ali and Abd al-Rahman were left in the field. However, Abd al-Rahman, in order to satisfy himself, spent the remaining time in soliciting the opinion of the people, and when he realized that the majority were in favour of 'Usman he took the oath of allegiance to the latter. The decision of Abd al-Rahman Ibn Awf was accepted by the people unanimously, including 'Ali himself; and the oath of allegiance to 'Usman was taken by all the people throughout the country.

When 'Usman was martyred under ominous circumstances by the rebels, 'Ali was elected by the people of Medina. Under ordinary circumstances, 'Ali's unanimous election to the caliphate was a foregone conclusion. But under the adverse circumstances of his election by the people of Medina, including the rebels, some people thought that it lacked the principle of unanimity. 'Ali, in the first instance, had declined the offer very wisely, but ultimately he was prevailed upon to accept the offer. A sharp cleavage occurred between 'Ali and his supporters on the one hand and the Prophet's wife, 'Ayesha, supported by Talha and Zubayr, on the other. The latter declined to accept him as a caliph unless he had taken vengeance from the murderers of 'Usman. This led to a frightful war between 'Ali and Ayesha in the first instance and between Muawiyah and Ali subsequently. Although 'Ali was accepted as caliph by the majority of the people, the unity of the Muslim community was shattered. The martyrdom of 'Usman not only destroyed Muslim unity and opened the floodgates of dissension, but also put an end to the universal character of the caliphate.

Administrative system in the early period of Islam

The Islamic state as founded by the first four caliphs differed fundamentally from all other states with regard to the conception of sovereignty. In all other states from time immemorial, unrestricted sovereign powers have been assumed by human beings, resulting in exclusive privileges for the sovereign authorities and deprivation of equitable rights of the people as a whole. Owing to this unrestricted right of sovereignty to human beings, even in the most modern states, equality, liberty, fraternity and justice are rarely to be found.

During the early caliphate, the administrative affairs were carried on in accordance with the Qur'ānic injunctions and the traditions of the Prophet. In the absence of any direction in both these sources, the caliph, in consultation with his Council, used to enunciate new laws. Thus the caliph in Council possessed partial and restricted rights of law-making. He could make no law contrary to the clear injunction of the Qur'ān, which are noted for their universal applicability. In this sense, it may be said that the Caliph was not really a law-maker, and as such was not above the law; and could not possibly claim any exclusive privileges for himself or for the members of his Council. The caliph, in fact, was the executor of the Divine Law, and as such, stood at par with the ordinary citizens.

Since sovereignty in that state was restricted within the laws of Islam (Shari'ah), whose principles are universal and equally applicable to all, the first resultant characteristics of such a state were naturally equality, liberty, fraternity, justice, toleration. Moreover, people generally were inclined to respect ethical laws in addition to the temporal laws of the time.

In reality the caliphate was not religious in the sense of medieval Christian theocracy in which certain ecclesiastical authorities had arrogated to themselves the right of law making, thus putting themselves above the law and creating inequality and social injustice. It may also be regarded as temporal as it was required to administer affairs which were temporal in character and not spiritual. But it was not temporal in the modern sense of the term, like the states of today which are guided by no religion and as such lack moral conscience and spiritual basis for the administration and application of their laws. It may, however, be concluded that it was religious as well as temporal and since all its laws were to be derived from the revealed Book, i.e., the Qur'ān, it becomes difficult to separate the religious from the temporal functions. But it must be confessed that at that time the state religion was Islam, for whose protection and promotion the state was established. Since the caliphate was a trust in the hands of the chosen caliph, the latter was not a master but a full-time servant of the people required to carry on the affairs of the state in accordance with the laws of the Shari'ah for the good of the people. He was not allowed to devote any part of his time to any private occupation. He was, however, allowed to have a fixed pension just sufficient to maintain himself and his family in accordance with the decision of his Council.

It is evident from the constitutional history of the early caliphate that the duration of the office of the caliph was not fixed. The executive head of an Islamic state should continue in office as long as he acts justly and righteously. Of course there is no bar to the fixing of the term for which he shall hold office. He is directly responsible to the people who elect him and can remove him from the exalted position in case of misgovernment and miscarriage of his functions. The competent body which can judge whether he is guilty of such gross misconduct for which he may forfeit his right to continue in office was the Council of Advisers (Majlis-i-Shūrā).
The caliph, the head of the Islamic state, is authorized to conduct diplomatic relations by concluding treaties and agreements with foreign states, appoint ambassadors in foreign countries and receive those appointed by foreign states and to make international trade and commercial pacts.

A caliph is entrusted with power to direct and supervise the execution of law, and for this purpose he appoints, directs and removes his subordinate staff.

A caliph is the head of the army and the navy. In declaring wars he must consult the Council, but he can conclude peace subject to the ratification of its conditions. Once the war is declared he is supreme in his power to conduct the military operations. In case of foreign attacks, he is responsible for defence.

Shūrā (Consultation)

In accordance with the injunction of the Holy Qur'ān, the affairs of the state had to be carried out by mutual consultations. For this purpose there existed a Majlis of Shūrā or Advisory Council. The appointment of the Council was made from among the most important, virtuous and competent Companions of the Prophet, the only criteria for appointment being their intimate knowledge of Shari'ah, their previous services to the cause of Islam and their character. Several members of this Council were also assigned certain portfolios and all problems of legislation and administration were discussed and decided by them. Since the final decision rested with the Qur'ānic law and the Traditions of the Prophet, every member had to be convinced by pleas advanced from the above two sources. The decision used to be usually unanimous and the Council had a sense of collective responsibility. The meeting of the Council used to be convened by the caliph in the mosque of Medina after the announcement through call to prayer. If a decision on a matter of vital public importance was to be taken, representatives of the people from various provinces were also invited on the occasion of the pilgrimage.

Another feature of the early caliphate was centralization in matters of administration. The very nature of the state, which was based on the Qur'ānic principles, demanded that there should be uniformity in administration. All power emanated from the caliph, who used to appoint governors, military commanders, qadhis and all other high officials in the state, of course in consultation with his Council.

The governors of the various provinces were appointed by the caliph after taking into consideration the wishes of the people, but they were liable to be transferred or dismissed from their posts. An appointment letter was given to every governor in which the conditions of his service were laid down and he was required to read this letter before the people, at the time of taking over charge, in the central mosque of the capital of the province. If at any time he acted contrary to those conditions, the people were entitled to lodge a complaint with the caliph, who would remove him after due enquiries had been made and charges laid against him had been proved. The governors were given adequate salaries so that they might not succumb to temptation. But in order to ensure honesty an estimate of the wealth of these governors used to be made by the caliph at the time of their appointment, and whatever extraordinary accumulation of wealth by any governor was noticed another estimate of his wealth used to be made and surplus, if any, was deposited in the Treasury or Bayt al-Mal. The governors were enjoined upon to lead a life of simplicity and austerity. If any governor indulged in luxuries or kept a guard in order to render himself inaccessible to the public, he was taken to task publicly. Judges were appointed by the Chief Executive and were therefore under his administrative control. But they were in no way bound to obey his directives in respect of the discharge of their duties. In the English constitution the king can do no wrong and hence no court is competent to try him. In almost all modern constitutions, the Chief Executive is not subject to the jurisdiction of any court. But in Islam, the great caliphs are summoned and tried by the ordinary courts. The law was applicable equally to all irrespective of rank and wealth. The advantage of this system is that, as the chief of the state is liable to answer for his wrong deeds in a Court of Justice, he would always try to watch every step he takes with judicial care and sound judgment. It may be argued that if he were to be sued so easily, it would be impossible for him to do his duty fearlessly. This argument does not hold good because those who bring frivolous and baseless complaints shall be dealt with so severely as to prevent a recurrence of such cases in future.

The economic policy of the caliphate was also based on some of the verses of the Holy Qur'ān: "so that the wealth should not circulate only among you." Hence the distribution of wealth among all classes of people has been emphasized by the Islamic institution of taxation, based on property tax, or poor tax, or Zakah, to the extent of 2½ per cent on surplus property, cash hoarded as well as commercial capital; restriction on all process of testamentary disposition; laws of inheritance and the prohibition of usury. The Islamic economic system does not believe in class tug-of-war nor is it in favour of complete socialisation or the state control of the basic instruments of production and distribution. It does allow the individuals to acquire private property so that their incentive may not be lost; but at the same time it does not allow the concentration of wealth in a few hands in order to perpetuate capitalism in its unrestricted form. Thus the economic system during the early caliphate stood midway between the two present-day diametrical systems of the world, i.e. capitalism on the one hand and Communism on the other.

Finance department

There was no need for a Treasury during the life of the Prophet Muhammad or even during the period of the first caliph. Abu Bakr, as the amount collected by way of taxes or other revenues was not very large and was promptly distributed among the people equally or according to the needs of the people.

It was during the caliphate of 'Umar, however, that a regular department of finance known as Dewān was established. The necessity for the establishment of this department arose when large sums of revenue started to come from Bahrein and vast amounts of booty fell into the hands of 'Umar during his wars against the Persians and the Romans and its distribution involved elaborate administration.
Abu Bakr al-Siddiq

By MUHAMMAD al-MAJZUB

‘Abdullah Abu Bakr, known as al-saddiq (the believing one), was the first Caliph in Islam. He took over the leadership of the Muslims at the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 634 C.E. During the first 25 months of his office he was engaged continuously in a struggle against some of the Arab tribes who had revolted against the Muslim government after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. At the same time, during this period, he was successful in pushing Islam forward in Iraq and other parts of the Middle East, and in preparing Muslims to march on to new and spacious horizons, taking Islam with them to shine and spread amongst the eager and enthusiastic people. Before becoming a Caliph, Abu Bakr had spent twenty years in the company of the Prophet Muhammad, during which period he had taken on very heavy responsibilities and had performed great feats of endurance, perseverance and wisdom.

Abu Bakr was a man of rather slender build. The tasks he had undertaken were heavy and arduous, and it was surprising that he had been able to endure this for such a long time. In the end, however, he did succumb. According to his daughter ‘Ayişah, wife of the Prophet Muhammad, he took a bath on a cold day and became feverish and was confined to bed, and died a fortnight later. It was rumoured at the time that he had been poisoned by the Jews, and that the poison was a slow-acting one which had its final cumulative effect in a year’s time. There is no confirmation of this report, but some historians have given as their opinion that Abu Bakr may in fact have been poisoned, and that the poison may have weakened him enough to make him succumb to a minor illness in the end.

There are reports that when he suffered the final illness Abu Bakr had a premonition of death. He appeared relaxed and in no way disturbed or ill-at-ease. He was happy at the prospect of meeting his Creator, and particularly pleased that he should die when of the same age as the Prophet Muhammad. It is said that because of this he refused to let a physician see him, and considered that his destiny had been set, and that there was nothing that any physician could do for him. But while he was ill in bed Abu Bakr was fully preoccupied with the affairs of the Muslims and was busy considering plans for their present and future. He was particularly worried about the possibility of the Muslims quarrelling among themselves in regard to the affairs of government. Such differences and dissension amongst the Muslims would have had serious consequences, in view of the fact that the Muslim domain had substantially increased. Rancour or disagreement would have affected many of the lands which the Muslims had conquered, and would have seriously weakened the position of the Muslims in the face of their enemies. For this reason Abu Bakr thought carefully about the question of a successor to the Caliphate. He was of the opinion that the only way to prevent disputes arising between the Muslims would be to help unite them in his lifetime on the acceptance of a person who would be suited to assume the leadership of the Muslims and secure their undivided and unyielding loyalty. He consulted on this the leading Companions of the Prophet, and found amongst them agreement about ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattab. Abu Bakr wholeheartedly approved of this choice, because he had personal experience of ‘Umar and was convinced of his high qualities and of his impartiality and staunch loyalty to the cause of Islam. Some scholars say that Abu Bakr was in this matter also guided by a dream or a vision he had about it, in which ‘Umar was shown as the best successor of Abu Bakr and the best qualified to hold the banner of Islam in its new rôle. Thus, from the very beginning of his illness, Abu Bakr looked upon ‘Umar as his successor. He asked ‘Umar to lead the prayers, and this was a significant gesture indicating prospective leadership for ‘Umar. Abu Bakr then made his will, dictating it to ‘Uthman, in which he mentioned ‘Umar as the Caliph. He is also said to have told visitors about this, and to have leaned out of his bedroom window on to the mosque and enquired of the congregation whether they would accept ‘Umar as their Caliph. When they signified their assent he is reported to have said: “I have appointed ‘Umar as my successor. Listen to what he says, and obey him.” The people are reported to have answered: “We have heard, and we shall obey.” After dictating the letter of appointment in favour of ‘Umar, Abu Bakr is said to have felt great relief as a result of his shedding off the burden he had been carrying for so long. Abu Bakr’s prayer after this was: “O my God, I have only desired to reform and improve their lot, and I have been afraid lest they should fall victim to dissension. I have done what You know I have done, only for this aim. I have thought about the matter and I have appointed as their leader the one who is the best and most upright amongst them . . . I have not wanted to favour ‘Umar for any other reason . . . O God make their leader righteous, and make him one of Your enlightened servants and the best amongst his people.” This prayer reveals a great deal of the character of Abu Bakr, and shows the reason why he was worried about finding a successor, and why he had chosen ‘Umar as his successor. The thing that worried Abu Bakr most was the possibility of dissension amongst the Muslims after his death; and he found ‘Umar to be the man least likely to give rise to disagreement amongst the Muslims. ‘Umar’s period of office, and the progress made by the Muslims during his Caliphate, fully substantiate Abu Bakr’s farsightedness and wisdom in the choice he made, and in the acumen he possessed as a judge of ‘Umar’s character.

While on his death-bed, Abu Bakr told those around him: “Find out what increase there has been in my possessions since I became Caliph, and send that to the new Caliph after me.” Preparing himself for death, Abu Bakr asked his daughter ‘Ayişah, wife of the Prophet Muhammad, how many gowns the Prophet Muhammad had when buried. She
said, "Three." So Abu Bakr instructed that two of his old
gowns be washed and used, and a third gown be bought.
"The living are more entitled to the new clothes than the
dead," he said. He ordered that his wife Asma' and his son
'Abd al-Rahman should prepare him for burial.

As the Caliph Abu Bakr lay dying, the Arab military
leader al-Muthanna Ibn Harithah arrived from Iraq and
asked to see him. Abu Bakr saw Ibn Harithah and enquired
from him about the situation in Iraq, and about the prospects
of the success of the Muslim campaign. Ibn Harithah
requested Abu Bakr that the Muslim army should be helped
by the drafting into it of those who had returned to the
fold of Islam after the wars of al-Raddah (Arabic: The
Return — the wars waged by the Muslim commander Khalid
Ibn al-Walid, under the leadership of Abu Bakr, against the
Arab tribes who left Islam after the Prophet's death —
632-634 C.E.). Abu Bakr agreed to this and asked 'Umar
to comply with this request.

Abu Bakr died after sunset on Monday 18 Jumada al-
Akhirah in the 13th year of the Hijrah. The last words he
uttered was this verse of the Holy Qur'an: "My Lord, Thou
hast given me of the kingdom and taught me of the interpre-
tation of sayings. Originator of the heavens and the earth,
Thou art my Friend in this world and the Hereafter. Make
me die in submission and join me with the righteous" (12:
101). He was prepared for burial in the way he had requested,
and was carried to the mosque on the same bed as that on
which the Prophet Muhammad was carried. His body was
then laid in state between the minbar and the tomb of the
Prophet, and the Muslims flocked there to pay their respects.
The funeral service was led by the new Caliph, 'Umar Ibn
al-Khattab, and after the prayers the body of Abu Bakr was
taken to 'Aiysha's room to be buried by the side of the
Prophet Muhammad, as he had asked. He was laid very
close to the Prophet's tomb.

What his contemporaries thought

The death of Abu Bakr recalled for the Muslims at the
time the death of the Prophet Muhammad. There was very
deep and profound sorrow, and the Muslims everywhere
experienced a sense of personal loss. There was in all places
deep appreciation of the qualities and achievements of Abu
Bakr, and many speeches were made in that vein. Abu Bakr's
daughter, 'Aiyishah, said: "May the Almighty brighten your
face, O my father, and may He reward your good deeds.
In your actions you rejected the false things of this world, and
sought in earnest the Hereafter. After the death of the
Messenger of God your death is the most grave of tragedies,
and the loss of you the most irreplaceable. The Book of
God bids us be patient over your loss ... I shall always
pray to the Almighty to grant your forgiveness. May peace
be upon you." The new Caliph, 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab, was
left almost speechless by the tragedy. He said: "O successor
to the Messenger of God ... You set an example. How can
this be followed?" 'Ali, cousin of the Prophet Muhammad,
said: "May God grant you all mercy, O Abu Bakr. You
were foremost in your Islam, the most sincere of people,
the most loving to the Messenger of God, and the most loyal
to Islam and the most protective of its interests and its people.
May God reward you for what you did to Islam, the
Messenger of God and the Muslim people ... You believed
the Messenger of God when everybody else disbelieved him,
and you were kind to him when nobody else was. In His
Book God refers to people like you when He says, 'And he
who accepts the truth — such are the dutiful'. You were, as the Messenger of God has
said, weak in your body but strong in your faith, humble
in yourself but great in the eyes of God and in the eyes of
the believers ... May God reward you and guide us after
you."

These words of three of the leading Muslims of early
days speak eloquently of the tremendously high qualities of
the Caliph Abu Bakr. They are an incontrovertible testimony
of the heavy tasks fulfilled by 'Umar in the service of Islam
and of the Muslim, and of the unique character of the man
who was at the helm of the great ship of Islam in its most
critical voyages. He set a very high example for the Muslims
for all times, and for all men in all lands. It would be very
difficult to list all the good qualities with which this very
great leader of Islam was blessed. His uprightness, his
intelligence and wisdom, and his courage were of the highest
calibre. The life of Abu Bakr both before the rise of Islam,
and after, shows a distinct predisposition towards the vital
historic role he played, a role that could have been entrusted
only to men of exceptional qualities and gifts. Even before
the days of Islam Abu Bakr had decided to reject wine and
verisification as deceptive and dangerous. He was always
dignified in everything he did, and always remained aloof
from partisan activities or from anything that could com-
promise his impartiality and his honour. Even before Islam,
in the tribe of Quraysh, he was looked upon as a leader.
After the rise of Islam Abu Bakr demonstrated even greater
qualities and achievements. He was extremely loyal to the
Prophet Muhammad, and spared no effort to support him.
He was very staunch in his beliefs, and unshakeable in his
convictions. He was also imperturbable and most steadfast.
His single-mindedness in pursuing the aims of Islam and the
Muslims was proverbial. On more than one occasion he
proved that he was extremely courageous, and that he would
never accept any bargaining or compromise that would
detract from the interests of Islam and the Muslims, however
immaterial or minute such detractions were considered. He
stood at one time almost alone against the Arab tribes who
sought to leave Islam after the death of the Prophet, not
caring whether he lived or perished in the process. This
heroic stand so impressed the waverers that they soon
rallied to the cause of Islam and secured its triumph against
its enemies.

His special qualities

The record of the life and deeds of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq
is one of continuous achievements of a kind unmatched by
others in his days. The Prophet Muhammad gave testimony
of this on several occasions. The Prophet is reported to
have said: "God sent me to you and you said I was not
truthful. But Abu Bakr said I was truthful, and he gave me
sacred and comfort." The great Arab military commander
and conqueror 'Umar Ibn al-As said the Prophet
Muhammad about who was the most beloved unto him. The
Prophet said, "'Aiyishah". "And amongst the men, who
is the most beloved?" 'Umar asked. "Her father," the
Prophet replied. When the Prophet Muhammad was on his
deathbed he drew attention to Abu Bakr, and many people
then thought that the Prophet intended that the Muslims
should appoint Abu Bakr as successor. Al-Hasan al-Basri,
one of the most leading Muslims of the time, swore that
the Prophet Muhammad had signified that Abu Bakr should
be his successor. There is some evidence for this. The
Imam al-Bukhari, the great authority on the Traditions of the
Prophet (Hadith), says in al-Sahih that there were indications
that the Prophet had asked that after his death people should
go to Abu Bakr for the solution of their problems. The
exegetist Ahmad al-Qastalani (1448-1517 C.E.) says in his

1 The Qur'an 39:33.
commentary on al-Bukhari’s *al-Sahih*: “The people of the time are agreed that Abu Bakr was the most suitable in the nation. Al-Sha’i’i and others have also spoken about the unanimity of the Companions of the Prophet over this. We have seen how the whole household of Abu Bakr had taken part in helping the Messenger of God at the time of the *Hijrah*, each assuming a particular function according to his capacity. The Qur’an also records the Prophet’s friendship with Abu Bakr. It is also to be remembered that the conversion of Abu Bakr to Islam was a great and auspicious omen for Islam, and that many leading men embraced Islam through him.” The Caliph ‘Ali was asked about the Caliph Abu Bakr, and is reported to have said: “He is the man whom God had called the ‘believing’ (Arabic: *siddiq*). . . He was the successor of the Messenger of God, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him. He had accepted the Messenger of God and we should accept him.” ‘Umar is reported to have said: “The Messenger of God, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, ordered us one day to give to charity. I had possessions at the time, so I said to myself I should do better than Abu Bakr, and I took half my property to the Messenger of God. The Messenger of God, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, said, ‘Have you kept anything for your family?’ and I said, ‘Yes — as much as I have brought you.’ Then Abu Bakr came, with all that he possessed. The Messenger of God asked Abu Bakr if he had kept anything for his family, and Abu Bakr said, ‘Yes, I have kept for them God and His Messenger, and that is enough.’ So I said to myself I shall never be able to outdo Abu Bakr in anything.” The Imam Abu Salih al-Ghaffari says: “‘Umar used to look after an old blind woman. He would fetch her water and run errands for her. But whenever he came to her he used to find that someone had preceded him and had done what was necessary. So ‘Umar once came early and hid nearby to see who it was that used to help the woman. It was Abu Bakr, when he was Caliph.”

Abu Bakr displayed in all his actions wisdom of profound depth and realism in the approach to people, the two qualities which made a great impression on everybody. In his first speech after he became Caliph Abu Bakr said: “I have been appointed your leader, although I am not the best amongst you. But the Qur’an has been revealed, and the Prophet has conveyed his message, and we have learnt things.” In this Abu Bakr appears to determine that the basis for evaluating people is their knowledge and wisdom. He always sought knowledge, and was careful not to commit himself to anything unless he was fully informed about it. He was once asked about the verse, “And fruits and herbs — a provision for you and your cattle” (The Qur’an 80:31), but could not explain it fully. So he declined to give an interpretation, saying, “What heavens could shelter me and what land could carry me, if I were to say in explaining the Book of God what I did not know?” Abu Bakr would not venture an opinion unless he was sure that it was a correct one. This cautiousness was one of his most characteristic qualities. The story is told that a group of Muslims disputed the meaning of the verse, “O you who believe, take care of your souls — he who errs cannot harm you when you are on the right way. To God you will all return, so He will inform you of what you did” (The Qur’an 5:105). Abu Bakr said of this: “Some people have misunderstood the meaning of this verse. I have heard the Messenger of God, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, say that if people saw wrong being done they should punish the wrongdoer, and if they saw evil being committed they should undo the evil, for otherwise God would punish them.” The directions which Abu Bakr gave to his military commanders on their campaigns reveal great acumen and profound experience. He demonstrated skill in devising strategies, and also showed great understanding, not only of the psychology of his own armies but his enemies as well. During the war in Iraq Abu Bakr ordered the commander Khalid Ibn al-Walid not to make any move for a whole year, and to conserve his energy and potential during that period. This strategy was one of the main sources of the victory which the Muslims subsequently scored against their enemies in the various battles waged, whether in Iraq or in Syria or other countries.

Not only in the military sphere, but in the administrative and diplomatic spheres as well, the first Caliph of Islam was the epitome of good sense and genius. He crowned his achievements by appointing ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattab as his successor to the Caliphate, and in this he showed a real understanding of the character and qualities of men fit for the rôle of leadership and capable of guiding the destinies of men. In what was achieved in his lifetime, and in what followed after his death, and for which he paved the way by his foresight, is evidence that the Caliph Abu Bakr must be considered the most pre-eminent of men in the history of Islam and the Muslims.

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The Woking Muslim Mission & Literary Trust

The Trust was founded with the object of the propagation of non-sectional Islamic ideology and to dispel various misunderstandings about Islam in the West. It continues to render this service to the best of its resources. Some of its important spheres of activities are:

**THE SHAH JEHAN MOSQUE** — a world-famous Islamic centre where Muslims as well as non-Muslims both from England and abroad come in search of knowledge about Islam. Muslim scholars go out from this centre to give talks to various organizations in the country.

**THE ISLAMIC REVIEW** — a monthly journal in its 55th year of publication. Scholars from all over the world reach the Muslim intelligentsia through its 40 pages.

**THE MUSLIM BOOK SOCIETY** — both sells and distributes freely Islamic literature. Every penny of its profits, if any, is spent in the service of Islam.

**THE FRIENDS OF THE MOSQUE SOCIETY** is an organization of the youth to help the Mosque run the various voluntary social services of the Muslim community in England.

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18

_The Islamic Review_
The *Hajj* (Pilgrimage to Mecca)

A World Peace Conference

By MUHAMMAD ‘ALI al-SABUNI

The big Powers — both in the East and the West — have recently held many conferences for the purpose of establishing world security and peace. They make great efforts to bring about world peace by means of treaties and agreements concluded between governments. A great deal of time is spent on these activities, and large sums of money are expended to bring about the realization of this aim which would spell peace of mind and security for the peoples of the world, and dispel the shadow of war which has brought upon mankind great misery and pain in recent years.

The pursuit of world peace is indeed a very praiseworthy activity. The peoples of the world must encourage their governments to take the necessary steps towards establishing stability, security and peace. The blessings of peace and security are of tremendous value and significance, particularly at the present time when security is precarious and peace uncertain, and when the lives of people are threatened with collapse and destruction because of reckless ambitions and foolish trends pursued by individuals who have secured for themselves positions of leadership and control in their respective governments, and who thereby rule the destiny of their people.

Everyone wishes that mankind should regain their dignity, and that life should become peaceful and secure. Everyone also hopes that the dark clouds which mar the prospects of peace and security should disappear, and that people should experience peace of mind and happiness. Everyone hopes that in an atmosphere of peace nations should find the opportunity to build, develop and industrialize. Everyone yearns for a life of security and peace, and looks forward to the time when the leaders of nations regain consciousness and sanity and save mankind from the distress and catastrophe that befell them as a result of prolonged destructive wars which had reaped a great toll of life and property. The shadow of such wars remains threatening and terrifying to all the peoples of the world.

The *Hajj* (Pilgrimage to Mecca) is one of the pillars of the religion of Islam, and a duty imposed upon the Muslims by Almighty God. This institution of *Hajj* is in fact a peace conference in every sense of the word. One of the primary purposes of the *Hajj* is that the Muslims should seek benefits therein. The Qur’ān says:

“And when we pointed to Abraham the place of the House, saying: Associate naught with Me, and purify My House: for those who make circuits stand to pray and bow and prostrate themselves. And proclaim to men the *Hajj*: they will come to thee on foot and on every lean camel, coming from every remote path, that they may witness benefits provided for them, and mention the name of God on appointed days over what He has given them of the cattle quadrupeds: then eat of them and feed the distressed one, the needy. Then let them accomplish their needful acts of cleansing, and let them fulfill their vows and go round the Ancient House” (22 : 26-29).

No benefit that the Muslims could derive from the *Hajj* could be greater than the establishment of peace and security in the world, and nothing could be more beneficial to people everywhere than the restoration of peace of mind and stability for mankind.

God in His wisdom has ordained that the institution of the *Hajj* should have as its main objective the promotion of the good of the Muslims. The benefits which the Muslims would derive from the *Hajj* vary in quality and degree. There are spiritual benefits and social benefits, and there are benefits of an international kind which would envelop all peoples and nations without exception. One of these international benefits is the establishment of security and the promotion of world peace. The *Hajj* is in fact the greatest and the most effective opportunity for the promotion of this objective. It is an international conference of a unique nature, and one designed primarily for the fostering of world peace.

Nothing is condemned more severely in Islam than aggressive war that destroys lives and property, affects the innocent and the guilty, and undermines the efforts made by people for the promotion of human welfare. Such efforts have been made since the beginning of human life, and they are often threatened and jeopardized by barbaric wars waged by the enemies of mankind. In a matter of days or hours the gains, successes and achievements of generations are wiped out or substantially undone. Now, with the invention of satanic devices and weapons such as the atom and the hydrogen bombs, the destruction takes lesser time, and is total and final.

The various conferences which many states have championed and sponsored, and which have been held for the purpose of attaining world peace and security, have been mere ink on paper, and have not been implemented to any serious degree. Wars continue, and intense disputes rage between states, and problems become more complicated and difficult. People everywhere feel insecure about their future, because the threat of war remains real and menacing — despite all the conferences about peace.

Islam adopts a realistic attitude towards the questions of peace and security. Its provisions are not mere theories with-
out practical content. They are not like the promoters of the various peace conferences, who plan and formulate resolutions and then disregard what they had agreed upon, violate their solemn pledges, and ignore the principles they had adopted.

The teachings of Islam are characteristically practical, as well as humanitarian and compassionate. The laws of Islam brought about comprehensive peace and security to the many countries over which the Islamic banner flew at one time in history. Islam was able to dispel the fears of war, and people found prosperity and happiness under its wings. Peace and security will not prevail in the world unless and until Islam regains its ascendency and guides the actions of governments as well as of individuals. Only then will the happiness sought by mankind be achieved, and the threats and depredations brought about by the greed of the leaders and the ambitions of those who hold the reins of government be banished.

The purpose and wisdom of Almighty God is demonstrated clearly in the institution of the Hajj as a great conference for the establishment of world peace. Through such means the world will arrive at the unquestionable benefits of peace and security. The Qur'an says, addressing the tribe of the Quraysh:

"See they not that We have made a sacred territory secure, while men are carried off by force from around them? Will they still believe in the falsehood and disbelief in the favour of God?" (2:67).

The Hajj represents a unique opportunity as a world peace conference. If properly utilized it can bring about security and peace for all the peoples of the world. It can finally banish wars and it can in that way bring back real prosperity and happiness to mankind, in an atmosphere of freedom and stability.

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**Enlargement of the Mosques at Medina and Mecca**

**The Prophet's Mosque at Medina**

On 8 June 1949 the late King Abd al-Aziz of Su'udi Arabia wrote a letter addressed to Muslims all over the world informing them of his intention to enlarge the Prophet's Mosque at Medina at a cost of fifty million Su'udi riyals.

The foundation stone for the enlargement was laid on 20 November 1953 in a ceremony attended by thousands of representatives from Islamic countries. The enlarged Mosque was formally opened to the public on 22 October 1955.

The enlargement of the Mosque consisted of 6,024 additional square metres of built-up area, bringing the total to 16,326 square metres. The new building has 44 windows. Foundations for the walls and pillars are 5 metres deep. There are two new minarets, 70 metres high, with foundations 17 metres deep.

**The Great Mosque (al-Mas'ā) at Mecca**

The overall plan also calls for:

1. The Mosque to be surrounded on the four sides by streets 30 metres wide with parking facilities for 4,000 cars.
2. That a wide square faces every side of the Mosque, including the square facing the Saffa. In the centre of the square will stand the House of al-Arkam, from which the Prophet and his Companions went out for the first time to pray openly together. The additional function of the House will be the promotion of Islamic culture.
3. That the Mas'ā will be enclosed within the main Mosque area.
4. That the sides of the Saffa and Marwa will be lined with plate-glass to enable worshippers in them to see the Ka'ba — Islam's holiest shrine.
5. That a garden will be planted all along the Mas'ā to separate the commercial area from it.
6. The four gardens, one on each corner of the Mosque, will be planted to provide shade and cool air inside.

The enlarged Mosque is the nucleus of an extensive urban replanning for Mecca while still preserving its Islamic character.
MUSLIMS FROM OUTSIDE SU'UDI ARABIA WHO PERFORMED THE HAJJ (PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA) AND TOOK PART IN THE CEREMONY OF WUQUF (THE CEREMONY OF THE PASSING OF THE DAY ON THE PLAINS OF 'ARAFAH WHEN PRAYERS ARE READ BY THE VAST CONCOURSE)*


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Total Number of Pilgrims for this year, 316,226, of whom 107,078 came by air, 113,391 by sea, and 95,757 by land.

Total of pilgrims for the year 1385 A.H. (1965/66 C.E.) **294,118**

Total of pilgrims for the year 1384 A.H. (1964/65 C.E.) **283,319**

Total of pilgrims for the year 1383 A.H. (1963/64 C.E.) **260,141**
What Our Leaders Say...

King Faisal was the first of the reigning monarchs of Su'udi Arabia to visit England, in May this year. His visit is being considered in the diplomatic circles as very significant, "demonstrating the way in which Su'udi Arabia is now seeking to play a role on the world stage".

The name of King Faisal has become synonymous with the country's current progress. He was born in Riyad in 1906. He received his religious education from his maternal grandfather, Shaykh Abdullah Ibn Abd al-Latif al-Shaykh.

King Faisal's first experience in active service was when, at the age of fifteen, his father sent him at the head of a punitive expedition in Assir in 1921. In 1933 he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Assir-Tahama region.

King Faisal's education in foreign affairs came from his father, whom he accompanied on various international conferences, including the Conference for the creation of the United Nations. In 1925 he was appointed Viceroy in the Hejaz and in 1930 the Foreign Minister. Following a Royal Decree proclaiming a reorganization in the country's government system, he was appointed the Head of Shoura (Consultative) Council in 1935.

In 1953 Faisal was appointed heir to the throne, followed by his appointment as Prime Minister. Ten years later, in 1963, in view of the urgency of the situation, he was appointed by a decree issued by the Ulama (religious leaders) with full popular support as the King's deputy, taking over all the Royal prerogatives and responsibilities.

Finally, on 2 November 1964, with the support of the whole country, Faisal was proclaimed King Faisal the First of Su'udi Arabia.

"The Message of Islam which emanated from these places, and whose light shone upon all the countries of the world, advocated good, peace, right, justice and equality. . . . We have no designs, objectives or aims against the Yemen. We do not want blood to continue to be shed between brothers, friends and the members of the same family and creed. . . ."

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

Brother Muslims: On behalf of the people and the Government of the Kingdom of Su'udi Arabia, the neighbours of the House of God and the Mosque of His Messenger, I extend to you hearty greetings. I pray to the Almighty that He may preserve you and us, and guide us and help us to protect His religion, keep to His Shari'ah, fulfill the duties of Islam which He has imposed upon us, and adhere to what has been brought forth by Muhammad.

Brother Muslims: Almighty God has imposed the duty of hajj upon His Muslim servants because of the noble qualities and aims inherent in this function. Among these are the opportunity for the Muslims to get to know one another and to exchange views on matters for the improvement of their conditions in the mundane and spiritual spheres, and also in order that they may become united in adhering to the Book of God and to the Sunnah of His Messenger. The hajj is a unique meeting between the Muslims from various parts of the world, and at this meeting there is equality between the high and the low, the rich and the poor. That was what Almighty God wanted to make evident, so that this would be a guiding example for all the nations, for with God there is no difference between high and low, nor between rich and poor — "The noblest of you with God is the most dutiful of you".

Brother Muslims: Islam is not the monopoly of any individual, group, people, or country. It is the religion of Almighty God, brought forth by His Prophet to all nations and to all countries, and to all peoples, be they white or black, kings or humble folk, rich or poor. Whoever obeys Almighty God and follows His Shari'ah, by fulfilling His commands and avoiding what He forbade, will be preferred by God and rewarded. Whoever rejects God's word and accepts therefore any substitute whatever will be punished by Almighty God and denied His mercy — and that is the severest punishment that can be inflicted upon a human being.

Brothers: The people of this country feel honoured and proud that Almighty God has bestowed upon them the duty of serving these holy places and of serving you. Brothers, when you come to fulfil your duties and perform your rites. To us this is the greatest honour and privilege, second only to the honour and privilege of being Muslims.

Brother Muslims: The Message of Islam emanated from these places and whose light shone upon all the countries of the world, it advocated good, peace, right, justice and equality.

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1 The Qur'an, 49:13.
These are the guiding lines of our great Shari'ah, and these are the principles to which we must adhere. In these times you are being exposed to various undercurrents and endeavours designed to deflect you from your religion and to induce you to substitute for the religion of Islam some other religion, and for the Shari'ah of Islam some other dogmas and laws alien to the word of God. For this reason, it is your duty, fellow Muslims, all of you — leaders, groups and individuals — to repel the evil threatening your religion and your Shari'ah and to unite over God's upright covenant. You are required to do this in order to promote your own interests, dignity and prestige; and this is the only course which will enable you to earn the forgiveness and mercy of Almighty God. Whatever is said about the Messenger of Islam by the detractors and the prevaricators, God will protect His Book, His Prophet and His faithful servants. Whoever seeks good should contemplate over this great Shari'ah and use it as a guide to all his deeds and words. Those who seek to deviate from the right path, and who want to clothe evil with the garb of good, will not be of you and will suffer the punishment for their wrong. Almighty God shall uphold His religion, His Book and His faithful servants.

Some of our brother Muslim leaders have extended to us a gracious invitation to meet the Muslims. We accepted this invitation and welcomed it. Unfortunately, however, aspersions have been cast upon this invitation, and various aims and objectives have been attributed to it, although it is entirely free of them. We pray to Almighty God that He may guide us all, and lead our Muslim brothers in all countries to the path of truth and make them consciously contemplate over their affairs and uphold their religion rather than support those who oppose it and fight against it. Almighty God will support whoever supports His religion, and will reward him. And it is indeed unfortunate that amongst the Muslims there should be some who oppose the Islamic call, or who do not want to see it triumph. It behoves these people instead to oppose the enemies. That some Muslim groups should stand against the Islamic call is a distressing fact, and we pray to Almighty God to guide us and them on to the right path, and we hope that they will meet amongst themselves and discuss their religious and other affairs. Almighty God has commanded the Muslims to perform the hajj to this holy place in order that they may get to know one another, seek benefits, consult one another, and endeavour to put their affairs in order. These are the purposes of the hajj which God has ordained.

Brother Muslims: There may be amongst you some who would like me to say something about a present problem, a problem which, although it arises between the Arabs, is nevertheless your own problem, because the Arabs and you are Muslims, and because what interests the Arabs interests you and you are all brothers. On this occasion I should like to clarify some aspects of this problem. The problem I mean is that sad problem of the Yemen. It is a problem which has been imposed upon us, for we, brothers, did not seek to create this problem, nor do we desire its continuation. May God bear witness, and may you, Muslim brothers, bear witness, to the fact that we have no designs, objectives or aims against the Yemen. We do not want blood to continue to be shed between brothers, friends, and the members of the same family and creed. When a Yemeni is killed it is one of us who is killed, and when an Egyptian is killed it is also one of us who is killed. God knows that we have only feelings of friendship and loyalty towards our Egyptian brothers. We pray to Almighty God that matters may revert to normal, and that affection will take the place of antagonism and fraternity the place of quarrelling. We pray that these disputes, which have bled our hearts, your hearts and the hearts of every believer in God who seeks the good of his nation and his faith, should end. We want only one thing — that our Egyptian brothers should withdraw from the Yemen, and that our Yemeni brothers be left alone to solve their own problems and determine their future by themselves without any intervention either by us or by our brothers in Egypt or any other party. This is all that we seek. If our brothers in Egypt agree to withdraw from the Yemen then we pledge to the name of God, and pledge to you, that we should not in the slightest degree interfere in the affairs of the Yemen, and would leave to our brothers in the Yemen the exercise of the right of self-determination and the adoption of whatever system or form of government they desire, freely and without any interference either from us or from anybody else. If our promise or pledge is not accepted or trusted then we are prepared to accept that some of you, fellow Muslims — Arabs and non-Arabs — should supervise and inspect our movements when the forces of sister Egypt leave the Yemen. We shall welcome forces or observers from among you on our frontiers, and we shall gladly agree to their observing that we do not interfere. If we fail to keep this promise, or renounce it, then you can be the judges and can condemn us as the culprits.

It is a tragedy that matters should be left as they are at present, with brother killing brother and sacred things being violated on both sides. It is something that should be stopped, first and foremost in the name of Almighty God, and also in the name of the sanctity of Islam, the Arab brotherhood, and common interests.

I would assure you, brothers, that when we hear that an Egyptian or a Yemeni has been killed we feel sad because they are all our brothers. The Egyptian forces are our forces, and we want them to be a support for us and a source of strength for our nation and for the preservation of our right and the restoration of those parts of our lands that have been usurped.

I would assure you, brothers, on behalf of this people and Government, that we are ready to prove at any moment that we are truthful in what we have said, and that we are not indulging in any intrigue or deception. All that we ask is that our Egyptian brothers should leave the Yemen, and we would cease any intervention on our part in the Yemen. In this way the people of the Yemen would be left free to determine their future by themselves. We must not interfere in this directly or indirectly, and the Yemenis must decide by themselves what they want. If this is allowed to happen in complete freedom, I assure you that we should be the first to recognize whatever the Yemenis have decided for themselves.

Brother Muslims: I had not originally intended to discuss this matter on this occasion. But I wanted to make clear to you our policy and our attitude so that you may be able to judge as regards ourselves as well as others. I told you about what we desire and pray for. If we ever violate this pledge then you can condemn us in any way you like.

I pray to Almighty God that He may guide us all on to the path of right, and save us from the pursuit of error. May He bless your hajj and reward you for it. We hope, brothers, that we have deserved your approval for the services which we have the honour of rendering to you. You are our brothers, and we are all members of the same family.

2 The Qur’an, 3 : 102.
May Almighty God guide you all to the doing of what pleases Him. He is the All-Powerful. And may the peace and blessings of God be upon you.

“The Muslim leaders should discuss their affairs frankly and without equivocation or ambiguity. This may lead to a solution of the problem, and enable us all to march on the right path...”

I have the honour to address you in this Holy Land where we have gathered together to perform the duty of the hajj. I had not had the privilege of participating in such an occasion, and this is the first time that I have the pleasure of performing the hajj.

I wish the Muslims could come together every year at such a great occasion, when those whom God has installed as leaders of their fellow Muslims in every Muslim country, and whom God has enabled to shoulder the serious responsibility of government, would meet one another. We pray to God, Who has enabled these Muslims to be the responsible leaders of their countries, to make them understand the truth about the religion of Islam, namely that it is based upon advice. When the leaders of the Muslims come to this Holy Land every year, and attend a great and auspicious gathering such as this, they should keep in mind the truth that religion is advice.

A few months ago I had the honour of visiting this country following a gracious invitation from His Majesty King Faysal. I spoke at the various meetings at which honour was done to me. At most of these meetings discussion centered on a great subject — Islamic solidarity or the Islamic ingathering. The great and frank Faysal spoke to us in the same frank manner in which he spoke this evening, saying that Islamic solidarity is the message of Islam, brought forth by the Book of Islam and the Prophet of Islam, and it is not simply an idea of Faysal or anyone else. He told us: “He who doubts the truth about Islamic solidarity and Islamic ingathering in the service of Islam is welcome to come and discuss the matter with us and challenge what we say.”

We heard Faysal this evening giving us his views about the attitude of this kingdom — over which God has installed him as guardian — regarding the problem of the Yemen. They were clear and unambiguous words. And since our religion is the religion of advice, there must be people in this audience and elsewhere who take an interest in this subject and who will take note of what has been said, and consider it further so that an end can be put to the problem and to the shedding of the blood of the Muslims in the Yemen, whether they be Yemenis, Egyptians or others. The Muslims in the Muslim countries, as well as in the non-Muslim countries in Europe, America and Asia, should all be interested in this, and should convene a conference at an early date. Such a duty is one which Almighty God will reward. Those who come forward and contact the responsible authorities, and place themselves in the service of this Arab and Islamic problem, thereby prove their truthfulness and their Islam, and deserve thanks for their initiative.

I bring you the greetings of your brothers in the Sudan. I thank God for granting me the opportunity to stand here as a spokesman on their behalf. I assure you that the Sudan is in a good state, and that it is now considering the drafting of a permanent constitution, because it has not since the day of independence had the opportunity to draft the necessary constitution. One of God’s bounties to the Sudan and its people is that at this juncture, when they have accepted His Book as their constitution, and as the Constitution of the Sudan, they have come to love Islam and uphold the doctrines of Islam, and to reject apostasy and deviation. I pray to Almighty God that when we and our brothers meet here next year we shall talk about the ideal Sudanese constitution.

On this occasion, when the leaders of the Muslims meet in this Holy Land, they meet as equals in all respects — “the noblest is the most dutiful of you”. We pray to Almighty God that He may grant unto the people of this country and those who are coming to it the opportunity to meet together. In particular, those who are responsible for the affairs of Islam and the Muslims should hold an annual conference. This is a point which His Majesty the great Faysal has already mentioned. The Muslim leaders should discuss their affairs frankly and without equivocation or ambiguity. This may lead to a solution of the problem, and enable us all to march forward on the right path. It appears to me that there is no religion anywhere on earth to which its followers adhere as strongly and as loyally as the Muslims adhere to Islam.

This is a great blessing to all of us. We must hold high the banner of Islam so that people may rally under it. God will support those who support His faith. This is a great religion, a religion of purity, frankness and strength. There is nothing on earth that is stronger than the Muslim in any

Birth of a Baby

By OLIVE TOTO

Young readers, Assalama Alaykum! (What a wonderful greeting! It means “The Peace of God be upon you!”)

It is your page, only for you. Read it to your little brothers and sisters who cannot read. We shall continue to give you your page every month—just for YOU.

It was in the year 571 C.E. that a young mother-to-be was living in a town called Mecca in the hot sands of the desert of Arabia. Alas, this mother was thinking: “My poor child, when it is born, will have no father, as my husband is dead, and if it is a baby girl the people around may want to bury it alive, as few girls are allowed to live.” Arabs in those days worshipped idols (if people worshipped at all), and sometimes they killed their baby girls — so the mother was sad.

Well, my young readers, the day came when the baby was born. The mother cried with joy, for she had a baby boy. Oh! she would be able to keep her baby boy. Although she belonged to the great tribe of Quraysh, she was poor, and would find it hard to find someone to help her look after her baby — but he would be rich in her love.

Little did she know that her lovely fatherless child had God watching over him, with a great plan for the baby's future. This baby was to grow up and give out God’s Message that God is One. And God was going to make it clear to mankind (when the time was ripe) that this baby (who would then be a grown-up man) was to be the last Prophet to bring again the true religion.

O yes, God had sent His Message before, by a very good Messenger called Jesus — a good holy man was Jesus, who called God his father. God is father to us all.

But, dear children, the Prophet Jesus was misunderstood and, later, people started to worship him and made him God. So you see, a new Messenger was needed, and God chose this baby, whose name was Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him).

Now I must tell you something at this stage. When I was a child and a bit of a fighter I used to say to myself, “If I say after Muhammad’s name ‘the peace and blessings of God’, why not say it after all the prophets?” Now I know, of course, that I can say so. We pray for God’s blessings on Muhammad — reminding ourselves all the time that Muhammad was a man in need of God’s blessings, and that he is not God. This is how my mind as a child worked it out.

Perhaps in your mind, dear reader, you are thinking something else. You can reason things for yourself as long as you do not alter the religion which is the belief in One God — a loving God — who loves us all. Also, you must have a belief in all the prophets as good men and Muhammad as the last Prophet. No one stops you from thinking and working things out. Islam — the religion Muhammad brought — is a religion of common sense.

I have started talking of other things because I suddenly remembered my childhood thoughts. Next time I will tell you more about the Prophet Muhammad. But for this month we shall think of the happy mother in the sands of Arabia — poor but happy. With God above looking and guarding the mother who had in her arms a wonderful baby. Yes, all babies are wonderful to their mothers. But this baby’s name would go down through the pages of history and religion. Muhammad, the founder of Islam through God's help.

Please send me any questions with a stamped and addressed envelope. I shall be pleased to answer and also publish some of your questions. Do not be afraid, I have told you what I thought as a child. Now you tell me what you think or want to know.

The Prophet Jonah

By JEAN SHAHIDA COWARD

(In the margin are references from the Holy Qur’ān — chapter and verse)

In ancient days a tremendous and glorious city was built named Nineveh. This city is no longer standing, but it is believed to have been on the left bank of the River Tigris, opposite Mosul, in Iraq. There are two mounds of earth there, one of which bears the name of “The Tomb of Nabi Yunus” (The Tomb of the Prophet Jonas).

The city of Nineveh became very wicked. Many evil things were practised by the people, and idols were used as gods. The people were very ignorant and they did not know of the One God. And Almighty God decided to send a prophet who would teach the truth to the people of Nineveh. For God is forgiving, and has always sent a
messenger to all the nations so that people might come to believe and live good lives. This particular prophet was named JONAH (Jûnûs), and he was a Hebrew, a descendant of the Prophet Isaac (Ishaq).

JONAH was a righteous man, and when he received the command of God to go to the people of the city and preach to them he obeyed. It was a huge city of over one hundred thousand people. JONAH travelled round the city teaching the Word of God, but the people did not take heed of him. They rejected JONAH, and he thought that God had forsaken him. He became very angry with his people and ran away from them.

At a nearby port, JONAH took a passage on a ship. The ship was overladen, and met with difficulties at sea when a storm gathered. The sailors were superstitious and, whenever there was a storm, they believed that there was some "unlucky" passenger on board the ship. According to the normal practice, they drew lots among the passengers and the crew, and it was JONAH who lost. He was blamed for the bad weather and so the sailors threw him over the side of the ship. Even today, many sailors still use the phrase "there is a JONAH on board" whenever their ship meets trouble!

Instead of being drowned, JONAH was swallowed by one of the enormous fish that used to live in those seas. He was helpless, and in the darkness of the belly of the fish he turned to God, the only Friend he had and could always trust.

JONAH realized that he had done wrong and disobeyed God's commandment by running away. He should have known that God would not have sent him on the mission to his people if his mission was destined to fail. JONAH prayed earnestly to God, admitted his mistake and asked for forgiveness.

God forgave JONAH, and delivered him from out of the belly of the fish, and he reached dry land. After his great ordeal, he felt very ill and rested under the shade of a gourd plant, in the fresh air. Gourd plants are plentiful in the tropical countries and grow very quickly, having fruits like cucumbers and water-melons.

When he had recovered, JONAH set out for the city of Nineveh. This time he had complete faith in God and knew that he must obey God's instructions. Arriving in the city, the Prophet JONAH again began preaching to the people about God and His Greatness. He probably told them also about the great miracle of how he was swallowed by the fish and how his prayers saved him. There were many thousands of people living in the city who still did not listen to the Prophet JONAH. But among them a few hundred became believers in the One God, and changed their bad ways.

God is merciful, and because of the goodness and faith of the few believers in Nineveh, He saved the city from destruction. And the people lived on for many years, with JONAH, their prophet, peacefully in the way of God.

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What Our Leaders Say... — Continued from page 24

respect or in regard to any problem, because those who adhere to this religion proceed along the right path, supporting right and opposing wrong.

We pray to Almighty God that He may accept our hajj and make it accessible to us, and that we return safely to our countries. But, of course, this too is our country, and on a previous occasion I have said that we in the Sudan consider this to be our first homeland, and the Sudan as our second homeland.

May God make this ancient house the centre of gravity of the entire world, and may the eyes of all people be directed towards this house many times a day. This is God's bounty to the Muslims. May God guide the Muslims unto what pleases Him and earns His approval. And may the peace and blessings of God be upon you.

* Text of a speech (translated from Arabic) delivered in reply to King Faysal's speech.

The Editors of The Islamic Review invite writers in all Muslim countries to send them articles on religious, political, social and other subjects in relation to their countries.
Crucifixion Before Christ

By KHAMIS AHMED BUSAIDY

(Recommended to be read in conjunction with the article in this issue “Food for Thought for Christians” on page 32)

Two great religions of the world confront each other with a question: Can God die?

For Christianity the issue is decided. It is imperative to believe in the gory drama of the crucified Christ. The very purpose, hope and glory of human life rests on the concept of crucifixion. Two doors are open for a Christian. One leads to eternal heaven through the belief of the risen Lord who died so generously for humanity. The other directs the way to the conveyer-belts of the hell-chamber in rejection of the doctrine. The fact that the Christians believe in Christ’s subsequent resurrection does not alter the fact that He died for a period at least.

The Qur’an appeals to human reason. Man must judge for himself. And when it comes to crucifixion the Qur’anic answer is that God can never die. Jesus was not God. He never expired on the cross (4: 157).

The issue of crucifixion has always commanded great interest. History, for one thing, can never refute that the doctrine of atonement for sin existed long before the birth of Christianity. Five hundred years before the Christian Era, the story of the crucifixion of Prometheus was written by Aeschylus, the Father of Greek Tragedy (525-456 C.E.), and was acted in Athens. The hero of this macabre epic (Prometheus), transfixed with his arms extended in the form of a cross, uttered these words:

“It is I who guides mankind; it is I who protects and saves mankind: I who am Alpha and Omega,” says Bacchus.

The history of Mexico is equally eloquent. The first Spanish monks who went to that land found the crucifix among its heathens. Shocked, the monks enquired what it meant and were told that it represented Bacch, who was the Son of God, killed by Eupu. His body was fixed on a beam of wood, with arms stretched out. The Aztecs used to celebrate a feast in the early spring, when victims were nailed to a cross and riddled with arrows.

In The Observer Weekend Review of London for 26 March 1967, Mr. Malcolm Muggeridge had some vigorous things to say on the significance of crucifixion. He wrote:

“It (the crucifix) portrays the defeat of goodness by duplicity and power; a meek and broken victim of the kind of human brutality to which we, perhaps more than most generations of men, have had to accustom ourselves.”

Touching upon the sun-god theory Muggeridge remarked:

“To imagine God having a son in any particular sense, and this Son to have been born of a virgin, and to have lived on earth for 30 years or so as a man; then to have died and to have risen from the dead, is, as far as I am concerned, beyond credibility.”

The writer then asks himself a question:

“What, then, does crucifixion signify in an age like ours?”

He supplies the answer in the following words.

“With a cry of despair Christendom comes to pass. We are henceforth to worship defeat not victory; failure not success: surrender not defiance; deprivation not satiety; weakness not strength.”

The Qur’an maintains that Jesus, the Prophet of God, never died on the cross. History testifies that crucifixion comes from paganism and ancient mythology. Modern scholars are sceptical about the issue. But we can all take comfort from the great Latin poet, Ovid (B.C. 43-17 C.E.), who, with vividness, wrote “the most powerful shafts of philosophic scorn” on the myth of crucifixion. He says:

“When thou thyself art guilty, why should a victim die for thee? What folly it is to expect salvation from the death of another.”

Who would not agree with him!

2 Prometheus Chained, translated by Rev. R. Potter. Published by Harper & Brothers, New York, p. 82.
4 Bible Myths, p. 191.
5 Ibid., p. 200.
6 Ibid., p. 193.
7 Ibid., p. 181.
The Uniqueness of the Islamic Concept of
Private Ownership

Private Ownership of Property:
Governmental Injunctions

By Professor Dr. Muhammad 'Abdullah al-Araby

PART II

In Part I (published in The Islamic Review for July-August 1966) the writer dealt with the ethical and moral injunctions of Islam about ownership to create a sense of responsibility and a conscience. He showed how ownership in essence remains that of God and that the individual succeeds to some rights only on specific conditions. Two eminent Egyptian scholars were quoted on the right to private ownership of property — Mahmud Shalbit and Abu Zahrah. The Qur'an was quoted on the attribution of property to individual owners, explaining the positive and the negative injunctions imposed by Islam in regard to the use of property likely to harm the community or the individual. In this respect Islamic restrictions on the methods of developing and increasing property by deceit, hoarding and monopoly were discussed.

The first instalment of this article dealt with the ethical and moral injunctions which Islam makes in connection with the private ownership of property. The main point made in that article was that the religion of Islam, in the totality of its teachings, seeks to nurture the Muslims on the acceptance of the idea that God's purposes in the ownership of property should be fulfilled, and that private property should be used for the general good. But, being a realistic religion, Islam knows that human beings are weak, and that they often waver indecisively between good and evil, between right and wrong. For this reason the teachings of Islam make positive provisions for the purpose of ensuring that its teachings are not ambiguous or likely to be violated with impunity. Provisions are made to cover those cases where voluntary obedience is not forthcoming, and where the moral and ethical exhortations of Islam bring no positive result.

One of the first positive injunctions of Islam in this connection is contained in the following provisions in the Qur'an:

"And hold fast by the covenant of God all together and be not disunited. And remember God's favours to you when you were enemies, that He united your hearts so by His favour you became brethren. And you were on the brink of a pit of fire, then He saved you from it. Thus God makes clear to you His messages that you may be guided. And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. And these are they who are successful." (3: 102-103).

These two verses merit close analysis. The Qur'an requires the setting up of a body which would undertake three tasks. One is to "invite to good." This means not only that the government should exhort the people to good things, but that it should undertake positive steps to give effect to these exhortations and to promote the good of the Muslim community. This means that a Muslim government must have as its main objective the promotion of the good of the people in all respects. This is summed up by the modern concept of the "Welfare State," and it is interesting that the religion of Islam, many centuries ago, had made provisions for the practical realization of this concept. The second objective of a Muslim government should be to "enjoin good." "Good" in this context means all things that are for the benefit of the Muslim community in all the spheres of activity. The third task entrusted to a Muslim government is the task of "forbidding wrong." And "wrong" in this context is defined as anything that is in any way detrimental to the Muslims or injurious to their interests in any shape or form. These are the three main functions of the body that administers the affairs of the Muslims.

The two verses quoted above also speak of the spirit which characterizes the Muslim society — the feeling of
brotherhood. "By His favour you became brethren," the Qur'ân says. This brotherhood symbolizes the relationship between the governmental régime and the people who are governed. In addition to this there is the injunction that the Muslims as a whole should "hold fast by the covenant of God"; and this implies that they should adhere to the various injunctions of Islam on solidarity and social conduct among the members of the Muslim group.

**Basic conditions of a Muslim government**

A brief mention may be made here of the conditions which Islam lays down for the setting up of the government of the Muslims and the qualifications it requires of the members of this government and its functions. The government shall be established as a result of free consultation among the Muslims. In other words, it would be truly representative of the people. There are also provisions regarding the duty of the Muslim government to comply with the injunctions of Islam, and strict qualifications laid down regarding the attributes of the members of the government and the policies which they should follow. The injunctions which the Qur'ân lays down in regard to the concept of private ownership are among the most important guiding lights provided by Islam for the conduct of government, for property is the central theme of economy and the ownership of property one of the most characteristic attributes of human beings.

The ethical and moral injunctions provided by Islam on the subject of the private ownership of property play a very substantial role in facilitating the task of the government in this matter. They have a great effect upon the Muslims, and they condition them to the acceptance of the role of the government without demur, and with sympathy and understanding. The government would thus find little or no reason at times for taking active steps to procure enforcement of these injunctions, simply because in a truly Muslim community the people have already been properly indoctrinated and are naturally disposed to complying with the teachings of Islam, because they have a realistic appreciation of their goodness and their role in the promotion of the general welfare of the community. The leaders of the government are under a specific duty to carry out the task imposed upon them in the Qur'ân, and if they fail in this they, and the community which does not rectify the failure, are guilty.

The jurisprudence of Islam lays down the rule that "the conduct of the Imam (i.e. leader of the community) must be related to his duties towards the public". The great jurist al-Ghazzali (1059-1111 C.E.) says: "The Shari'ah views the interests of the public as five-fold: the protection of religion, of body, of mind, of offspring and of property. Anything designed to promote any of these five objectives is in the public interest, and anything not conducive to these objectives is evil and should be repelled." The Imam al-Shatibi (d. 1388 C.E.) says of this: "The legislator seeks to promote the interests of His creatures. The provisions of the law change with the change in interest. A thing is prohibited where there is no interest, but is permitted where there is interest".

The leader of the Muslim community is to be guided by, among other things, the following maxims of the Qur'ân, the Traditions and the Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad in the fulfillment of his duties towards the people: "No harm is allowed, whether the doer benefits from it or not" (the Arabic for this is la dharra wala dhihara); "What is necessary for the completion of a duty is itself a duty"; "The repelling of evil takes precedence over the securing of good"; "Necessity may justify prohibited things"; "Private harm must be tolerated in order to prevent public harm"; "Minor harm must be tolerated to prevent major harm"; "Behaviour towards the community is governed by the good of the community"; "Provisions change with time"; and "Things should be judged by their purpose".

I shall now deal with the provisions of the Shari'ah of Islam regarding the powers of the government in the matter of the private ownership of property. There is no doubt that initially this right exists in Islam. The right of private ownership of property, like other rights in Islam possessed by the individual, is subject to certain limitations. Islam makes provisions in regard to the kind of property that can be owned and the circumstances in which it can be owned. While Islam allows the private ownership of property, it imposes restrictions on this right mainly as regards harmonizing it with the general interest of the community as a whole. Since in Islamic law rights derive only from a grant by the Almighty, and since the Almighty wishes to promote the interests of all His creatures, the right of private ownership is limited by the extent to which it can be practised without violating the interests of the community. The fundamental purposes and theories of the Shari'ah are permanent and unchanging, but the detailed provisions in implementation of some theories necessarily change with time and place.

Various Islamic jurists speak of this. The jurist Ibn Qayyin al-Jawziyyah (1292-1350 C.E.) says: "This is a very important principle, and ignorance of it has led to great misunderstanding of the Shari'ah, which has caused hardship, and led to the imposition of unnecessary duties of the kind which the Shari'ah — the highest expression of public interest — would not have justified. The Shari'ah is founded upon the idea that its provisions as a whole serve the public interest and are in that respect wise. Any matter which ceases to be just and becomes unjust, and anything that ceases to be beneficial and becomes harmful, as well as anything that ceases to be wise and becomes mischievous, cannot be deemed to have been sanctioned by the Shari'ah or justified by it" (A'Slam al-Muwaqqit, Vol. 3, p. 1).

Another jurist, Ibn 'Abidin (1784-1836 C.E.) says: "Many provisions of the Shari'ah change with the passage of time. This happens either because of change in habits or because harm ensues from the rule. In some cases, if the provisions of the law remain unchanged there would be hardship and harm to the people — and this cannot be permitted since the essential purpose of the Shari'ah is to make matters easy, not of offspring but of the law. That is why some jurists have seen fit to disregard the views of earlier jurists on certain matters which had been related particularly to a certain place or age. This is done in the belief that these earlier jurists would not have agreed to such provisions had the conditions been different in their time" (Majmu'at Rasa'il Ibn 'Abidin, Vol. 2, p. 125).

Many other sources can be quoted for the view that the detailed provisions of the law change with time and with the variation in the habits of the people. In all cases the rules worked out from the main principles must seek to promote the good of the people by reference to the actual time and place to which they are related. There are, however, certain essential principles of the Shari'ah which are unchangeable irrespective of time and place. The following are a few examples: the sanctity of contracts and the need for free acceptance by all the parties of the terms of the contract; the accountability for harm inflicted upon others; the admissibility of a confession against the person who makes it and against no other person; the need to prevent harm to the community and to eradicate crime; personal responsi-
bility for acts or omissions and the accountability of the doer of an act of commission; and the recognition of innocence until guilt is proved. These, and many other provisions, are of continuous significance and do not change by reference to time or place. Detailed rules to implement these general principles may, however, vary from time to time or from place to place. But in all cases it is absolutely clear that the guiding light of the Shari'ah as a whole is the promotion of the general good and the eradication of what is harmful to the community.

Another provision of the Shari'ah regulating intervention by the state in the private ownership of property is the concept of "no harm is allowed whether the doer benefits from it or not" (Arabic : la dharrara wala dharrara). This concept is based on a Saying of the Prophet Muhammad. By "harm" is meant anything adverse to the interests of others. This is held to be unjustifiable whether or not the doer benefits from such infliction of harm. And the harm is also not permissible even though it may be in retaliation for harm already done. This concept finds expression in many verses of the Qur'an and provisions of the Traditions and the Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. The Shari'ah adopts this principle as a fundamental concept, and many of its provisions are concerned with the prevention of the infliction of harm, the making of rules as regards compensation for harm, and the devising of ways in which the interests of the community as a whole can be protected by the elimination of causes which may lead to the infliction of harm, including the proposition of preferring the lesser of two evils.

Some specific rules of the Qur'an

This concept of the Qur'an has led to the formulation of a number of specific rules which are briefly dealt with below:

(i) "Harm must be repelled as much as possible." This means that an attempt must be made to prevent the harm, on the assumption that this would be better than providing a remedy for the harm after it has taken place. This principle is the basis of the Shari'ah's rules regarding jihad (i.e. fighting for a holy cause) to prevent the harm that would befall a country in the event of a successful aggression. It is also the basis of rules on the punishment of crime and the maintenance of internal security, and on the taking of steps to prevent the spread of evil practices and habits.

(ii) "Harm should be removed." This means that all the effects of a harmful act must be eliminated, and the causes of the original act must be removed. Thus, if the defective guttering on a house pours water on the road to the inconvenience of the public the guttering should be repaired. The rule also means that if a person builds his private property, without permission, on a common land, the property would be removed to maintain the rights of the public.

(iii) "Harm is not to be removed by harm." The rule does not permit the commission of a wrongful act for the purpose of eliminating another wrongful act. The substitution of one harm for another is no solution. Thus if a needy person finds that the only way that he can fulfill his need would be to take the property of another person, he is not permitted to do this. A poor person is not under obligation to maintain a poor relative, for the maintenance of one person here means that the other would in turn need maintenance.

(iv) "The lesser of two harms is to be preferred." Under this rule a rich person has the obligation to maintain a poor relative, because the harm that would be inflicted upon the rich person, by his being asked to maintain the relative, is less than the harm that would be suffered by the poor relative if he were not maintained. This rule has at times been expressed in the maxims "the lesser of two evils is to be preferred" and "if one of two acts must be committed it should be the one less harmful".

(v) "Private harm is to be tolerated for the prevention of public harm." Thus an ignorant or inefficient physician or public servant must be prevented from practicing his profession although he would suffer by this prohibition, for the harm thereby inflicted upon him is less than the harm which would be suffered by the public if he were allowed to do what he wanted. The same rule justifies the confiscation of hoarded property in time of crisis, and the fixing of prices for essential commodities in an emergency. On the same basis it would be justifiable to pull down a house adjoining a fire if that were the only way to prevent the fire spreading and affecting a large number of houses.

(vi) "The prevention of harm is better than the procuring of benefits." The reasoning behind this is that the effect of harmful acts is generally widespread, and for this reason it would be better to prevent harm from happening than to do good which, in fact, can be more than offset by the harm allowed to happen. The Shari'ah echoes this principle, and an analysis of its provisions shows that as much attention is given to the matter of the prevention of harm as to the positive ordaining of good deeds. It is reported the Prophet Muhammad said: "What you have been forbidden to do you must avoid, and what you have been commanded to do you must do, if at all possible." In accordance with this principle it is forbidden in the Shari'ah of Islam to trade in intoxicating liquor, although there may be economic advantages for individuals in this trade. The same principle prohibits a person from so using his property as to be a nuisance, or to cause harm to his neighbour — as, for example, where a person builds a factory which emits smells or fumes inconveniencing the neighbourhood.

(vii) "If there be conflict between the grounds forbidding the doing of an act and the grounds permitting it, preference should be given to the grounds which forbid." The rationale of this maxim is that the prevention of harm is something which must be given priority.

(viii) "General custom should be presumed to be right." In other words, if a practice has been in existence for a long time, there must be a presumption that it has been properly authorized, and that it should be allowed to continue. But there is a corollary rule to this principle to the effect that "harm cannot be rectified by prescription" — i.e., that the passage of time alone would not make right what is by objective standards wrong and directly prohibited by the Shari'ah.

A third principle that regulates the power of the state to interfere in the private ownership of property is this — "hardship allows exceptions". The basis of this principle is these verses of the Qur'an — "God desires ease for you, and He desires not hardship for you" (2:185) and "And strive hard for God with due striving. He has chosen you and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion — the faith of your father Abraham" (22:78). The same theme is to be found in the following Saying of the Prophet Muhammad: "God has removed from my nation's shoulders the consequences of mistake, forgetfulness, and that which has been forced upon them". But it must be noted in this regard that
the hardship which would justify a relaxation of obligations must be of an extraordinary nature. The inconvenience and hardship suffered in the normal course of fulfilling duties and obligations does not in any way justify the relaxing of these duties and obligations, for there is hardly any worthwhile duty the performance of which does not involve some hardship or inconvenience. To permit relaxation of duties because of hardship can easily lead to the abolition of all duties. So there must be a sense of proportion here. But it is not necessary that the hardship incurred should be of the most extreme and serious kind before it can serve as justification for the relaxation of a duty. It must be unreasonable or substantially onerous, without necessarily being altogether crippling.

The foregoing principle has led to the formulation of various specific rules, such as:

(i) "If the matter becomes difficult it would be eased, and if ease returns the original position is restored." This means that if, because of exceptional circumstances, it has become unduly difficult to apply the provisions of a rule made in the past the rule would be relaxed to make impossible for the rule, or some form of it, to be applied. But this would apply only as long as the special emergency or the exceptional circumstances continue. As soon as conditions revert to normal the original rule would be restored and the relaxation abandoned.

(ii) "Necessity justifies prohibited things." This is based on the provisions of the Qur'an where, in listing many prohibited acts for the Muslims, the proviso is made that the rule would not apply where the Muslims are compelled to violate it. Examples of this: "And what reason have you that you should not eat of that on which God's name is mentioned, when He has already made plain to you what He has forbidden to you — excepting that which you are compelled to" (6: 120); "He has forbidden you only what dies of itself, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that over which any other name than that of God has been invoked. Then whoever is driven by necessity, not desiring, nor exceeding the limit, no sin is upon him. Surely God is Forgiving, Merciful" (2: 173); "Say, I find not in that which is revealed to me aught forbidden for an eater to eat thereof, except that it be what dies of itself, or blood poureth forth, or flesh of swine — for that surely is unclean — or what is a transgression, other than the name of God having been invoked on it. But whoever is driven to necessity, not desiring nor exceeding the limit, then surely thy Lord is Forgiving, Merciful" (6: 146); and "So eat of what God has given you, lawful and good things, and give thanks for God's favour, if He it is you serve. He has forbidden you only what dies of itself and blood and the flesh of swine and that over which any other name than that of God has been invoked; but whoever is driven to it, not desiring nor exceeding the limit, then surely God is Forgiving, Merciful." (16: 114-115).

These provisions allow a Muslim to eat forbidden food where the alternative for him would be to starve. Other prohibited things are also permitted where obedience of the prohibition rule would lead to grave harm and difficulty for the Muslims. Such harm and difficulty need not be of the utmost magnitude; and as long as there is substantial discomfort the rule can be relaxed.

(iii) "Necessity excuses prohibition of the same measure." This means that the necessity which is pleaded as excuse for the relaxation of a rule must be comparable to that rule, and the harm that would ensue from the necessity being unremedied must be greater than that which would result from the rule being relaxed on the specific occasion. This rule requires, of course, that the moment the necessity disappears there can be no justification for the relaxation of the rule, which would be restored to its original effectiveness.

(iv) "Necessity does not affect the rights of others." The necessity serves as an excuse for requiring the punishment for a violation of a rule or a right. But it does not justify the taking away of the right of others. Thus where a person is driven by hunger to eating food belonging to others, he remains liable for the cost of what he eats, and the right of the original owner is not considered abolished. Where a person of necessity destroys the property of another he would be liable to make compensation; and where the act was induced by someone else, the inducer, being morally responsible, would be legally responsible as well.

(v) "Need (Arabic: al-hājah) ranks the same as necessity (Arabic: al-dhurūrah), whether it be public or sectional." "Necessity," usually means something more pressing than "need". Necessity in this context means something which causes grave danger if not fulfilled, as in the case of hunger which can lead to death. "Need," on the other hand, can cause only marginal dangers, and leads in the main only to inconvenience if not fulfilled. The rule means that if "need" affects the whole of the community, or a section or group among the community, it would rise to the rank of "necessity". "Need" affecting a single individual or a few individuals, however, would not be "sectional" in this context. This is one way of elevating the need of a section of the community to the rank of the needs of the community as a whole. The Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad give us an example of this practice. The Prophet is reported to have permitted in peacetime the sale by people of things they did not possess. This was contrary to the general rule of the Shari'ah which forbade the sale of non-existent things. But the Prophet saw fit to relax the rule in order to make possible for people to sell their products and take an advance payment on the price which they could use to facilitate production. This was found by the Prophet to be conducive to the public good, and permitted. Many other examples can be given of rules of the Shari'ah which were changed because of changes in circumstances and the presence of a pressing necessity or need by the public or a large section of it. The jurists are agreed that any relaxation in the rules of the Shari'ah because of need or necessity apply only as long as such need or necessity exist, and that relaxation of the original rule can only be made where it is proved that hardship of a serious nature will ensue to the public as a whole or to a large section of the community if the relaxation were not made. This rule about relaxation is obviously a very serious and delicate concept, and unless limits were rigidly drawn there can easily be excess which would undermine the whole concept of the sanctity and permanency of the law.

(To be continued)
Food for thought for Christians

The Riddle of Trinity

Recommended to be read in conjunction with the article in this issue “Crucifixion Before Christ” on page 27

By SAIFUDDIN

Father, Son and Holy Ghost... this is a riddle and perhaps not.

This doctrine of Trinity which is the basis of the Christian faith has puzzled eminent personalities, including clergymen, philosophers and scientists of all ages. Ernest Maeckel of Germany, in his book entitled The Riddle of the Universe, page 227, writes as follows:

“The dogma of Trinity, which still comprises three of the chief articles of faith in the creed of Christian peoples, culminates in the notion that one God of Christianity is really made up of three different persons: (1) God the Father, (2) Jesus Christ, and (3) the Holy Ghost, a mystical being over whose incomprehensible relation to the Father and the Son millions of Christian theologians have racked their brains in vain for the last 1,900 years. The Gospels, which are the only clear source of this triplothem, are very obscure as to the relation of these three persons to each other, and do not give a satisfactory answer to the question of their unity. On the other hand it must be carefully noted what confusion this obscure and mystic dogma of the Trinity must necessarily cause in the minds of our children in the earlier years of instruction. One morning they learn (in their religious instruction) that three times one are one, and the very next hour they are told in their arithmetic class that three times one are three. I remember well the reflection that this confusion led me to in my early school days.

“For the rest, the ‘Trinity’ is not an original element in Christianity; like most of other Christian dogmas, it has been borrowed from other religions...”

After the death of Jesus the Christians set up a new god for themselves of whom no trace was found in the books of Moses and the Prophets, and who was quite unknown to the Israelites. Faith in this new god overturned the whole scheme of the Old Testament doctrine. All the doctrines which had been given by the prophets of God for many centuries for attaining true purity of life and obtaining salvation from the bondage of sin, were overthrown and purification from sin came to be based on the theory that Jesus was in fact god and that he himself chose to die on the cross in order to give salvation to the world. And the Christians, in making the belief in the blood of Jesus an essential condition for the remission of sins, have practically done away even with repentance and striving after piety. The Christians did not stop here, and in their confounding complexities went further to attribute divinity to Christ. But no reasonable person would ever like to forsake the worship of One God and bow instead in submission before human beings, making them equal with God. And to consider three distinct persons, all equal in power and glory, as constituting a single person, “three in one” as it is called, must, no doubt, be a peculiar principle of the Christian logic!

Islam gives us the true conception of God when it declares the Uniqueness of God and says that He has no partner in His Godhood. He is a self-sufficient Being on whom all depend, the Creator, Nourisher of all, the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Loving, the All-Merciful. Nothing can come out of Him and become His equal and rival in Godhood. He is one in person, essence and motive power: And there is nothing like unto Him” (The Qur’ân).

“Say, He is God, One, God the eternally Besought of all, He begetteth not nor was begotten, And there is nothing like unto Him.” (The Qur’ân, 112 : 1-4).

And again:

“God, there is no God save Him, the Ever-living, the self-subsisting by Whom all subsist. Neither slumber nor sleep overtaketh Him. Unto Him belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Who is he that intercedeth with Him save with His leave? He knoweth that which is in front of them, and that which is behind them, while they compass nothing of His knowledge save what He wills. His throne includeth the heaven and the earth, and He is never weary of preserving them. He is the Sublime, the Supreme in glory.” (The Qur’ân, 2 : 225).

The Christian scheme of salvation

The Christian explanation that “Christ suffered that painful death for our sins” fails to satisfy an enlightened and inquisitive mind: for it goes against the very grain of common sense. Is it in consonance with Divine justice that one should sin and another should be punished for it?

Jesus did not come to die for the sins of humanity but he came to fulfill the law of Moses and the prophets. Dying for the sins of man was something foreign to him, as the following Qur’ânic verses will prove:

“And because of their (Jews) disbelief and of their speaking against Mary and tremendous calumny; and because of their saying, ‘We slew the Messiah Jesus son of Mary, God’s Messenger’, They slew him not, nor crucified him, but it appeared so unto them, and lo! those who disagree concerning it are in doubt thereof: they have no knowledge thereof save pursuit of a conjecture: they slew him not for certain. But God took him up unto Himself. God was ever Mighty, Wise” (4 : 157).
It is a fact according to George Sale that Christian sectaries long before the Prophet Muhammad's time held the opinion that Jesus was not crucified. The Basilidians, in the beginning of Christianity, denied that Christ himself suffered, but that Simon the Cyrenian was crucified in his place. The Corinthians, before them, and the Carpocratians next, to name no more of those who affirmed Jesus to have been a mere man, did believe the same thing, that it was not Jesus himself but one of his followers very like him that was crucified. Photius tells us that he read a book entitled The Journey of the Apostles, relating the acts of Peter, John, Andrew, Thomas and Paul; and among other things contained therein was that Christ was not crucified, but another in his stead; and that, therefore, he laughed at those who thought they had crucified him.

Nevertheless, the present-day Christians take great pains to prove that the saying of Jesus on the cross could not have come from another man nailed mistakenly to the cross and in despair (as the Muslims believe), especially when Jesus said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Thus when Jesus said so he meant, according to the Christians, that his task of salvation for mankind was accomplished and completed. They say this was really the shout of a conqueror. Therefore, it was impossible to believe that the man who was crucified was not Jesus himself.

The Qur'an, however, explicitly states that Jesus himself was not crucified. The fact is that when the policemen turned up to get hold of Jesus Christ at his residence, where he was present, a certain person entered the house before the others. It so happened that the police got hold of the man who entered first and resembled Jesus Christ. The police scourged him and put him to death, presuming him to be Jesus Christ. But soon after they realized the mistake, and some exclaimed: "Ah! the victim was not Jesus Christ!" Others said: "Then where has Jesus Christ gone? He was in the house. If we take the victim as Jesus Christ, where is our man who entered the house first, and if you assume that he was the same man, then where is Jesus Christ?" Now read again the verses: "They slew him not, nor crucified, but it appeared so unto them, and lo! those who disagree concerning it are in doubt thereof, they have no knowledge thereof save the pursuit of a conjecture."

If we accept for a moment that the Christian theory of redemption is true, then we would like to know what effect it has created. Are the children who come on earth without a sin? If they come without a sin why should they be baptised? And if baptism is the condition for their sinlessness, then all the Christians who have been baptised must be without sins. But who among the Christians can claim to be sinless?

The licentiousness during the previous two World Wars, and the present threat of atom destruction are the obvious proofs that the "blood of the innocent" could not clean human souls. Why was Christ then sacrificed?

According to Genesis (3:14-19), the punishment which was inflicted upon man and woman was that the man shall earn his bread with the sweat of his forehead and the woman shall bring forth her children with pain.

Now we would like to ask our Christian friends, is this punishment taken away after the death of Jesus on the cross?

Nobody can deny the existence of this punishment. But why was Jesus then sacrificed? If the ransom was paid for the sins of the world, then punishment ought to have been abolished and mankind should not suffer under the burden of the sin of Adam and Eve.

If God is merciful and He loves the world, why could He then not forgive us without a ransom?

Was it perhaps His justice, which would not let Him forgive human beings? But how can we believe that God is just, if He inflicted upon one the punishment of a sin which one never committed?

He has created us without our desire to be created. And if He creates us under the burden of a sin, how can we then believe that He is a loving God?

But, contrary to this, Islam teaches about a God, Who is Merciful, Forgiving, Who does not punish anybody for the sin of another.

According to Islam we cannot speak about the justice of God, because there is no question of justice between the Creator and His creation. We cannot believe that God's sense of justice would prevent Him from forgiving us without a ransom. In the Holy Qur'an we read:

"Say, O my servants who have done wrong to your souls, be not distressed as to the Mercy of your Lord; He can forgive all your sins. Verily He is Forgiving, Merciful." (49:55).

The dogma of Christ Crucified is a later innovation and does not form part of the religion given by Jesus. It is too eloquently demonstrated in the Holy Qur'an that Jesus did not die on the cross. Saul, a Hellenized Jewish scholar who changed his name to Paul, and by a series of accidents became the founder of present-day Christianity, did his best to make his own "religion" acceptable to the Greek and Roman pagan world.

W. J. Sheard in his scholarly treatise "Who Founded Christianity: Jesus or Jewry?" very pertinently remarks:

"I maintain, unhesitatingly and unequivocally, that the dogma of Christ Crucified is a dogma which Judaism had to invent, to propagate, and keep in force, for the sake of its own survival.

"Let me ask a question of my reader: Where would Judaism and Jewry be today if the West had not been given the story, and accepted it, of Jesus the Israelite, the son of God, who suffered death by crucifixion in atonement to God for the sins of the world, subsequently rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven — where he lives and reigns for ever as the co-equal of God? Where would Jewry be today if the story of salvation of non-Jewish humanity by Christ crucified had not been evolved from the simple story of Jesus, and so evolved that Judaism and Jewry are represented as the hallowed receivers from God, and the hallowed and beneficent transmitters to non-Jews, of a passport to the Throne of God? Jesus had to be made to die on the cross if Judaism and Jewry were to live."

Similarly, Dr. Havelock Ellis explains this myth in an eloquent manner. He says:

"The religion of Jesus was the invention of a race which itself never accepted that religion (i.e. Jewry). . . .

"Something even stronger than theology or metaphysics has served to cut us off from the spirit of Jesus, and that is the spirit of Paul, certainly the real founder of 'Christianity'; and we know it, for Jerome, Augustine, Luther were all the children of Paul, and in no respect the children of Jesus. That marvellous little Jew painted in its main outlines the picture of
Christianity which in the theatre of this world has for so many centuries shut us off from Jesus. 

"... Well-nigh everything that has ever been evil in Christianity, its temporal power, its accursed intolerance, its contempt for reason, for beautiful living, for every sweet and sunny and simple aspect of the world — all that is involved in the awful conception of ‘moral force’ — flows directly from Paul. . . ."

"This Paul and not Peter was the rock on which the Church was built."

Jesus said: “Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits.” If the Christians would conscientiously and honestly apply this test to Pauline Christianity, as distinct from the simple and sublime teachings of Jesus, they would surely realize that Paul inflicted an irreparable injury on the holy scripture. The genuine Divine revelation afterwards was either lost completely or got so diluted with interpolations that the original Divine revelation and fallible human interpretations are hopelessly confused, with the result that Christianity has lost all contact with its original form as taught by Jesus Christ.

The unreliability of the gospels

Worst of all, Christianity has no authentic Divine scriptures at all. No original manuscript of all the books of New Testament has survive. The four canonized gospels (Luke, Matthew, John and Mark), arbitrarily chosen at the Council of Nicaea in the 4th century C.E. out of many others, are written about Jesus Christ in a foreign language (Greek) and contain no direct revelation to Jesus. While the Holy Qur’an tells us that the Prophets cannot but receive God’s revelation in their native tongue and the language that Jesus Christ spoke was Aramaic. He did not know even one word of Greek. Again the hotch-potch of Biblical verses interpreted differently by different sects of Christianity add an interminable confusion to an already complex situation, whereas there is no such frustration in Islam: for the Holy Qur’an has been preserved here intact as it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad some 1400 years ago.

It is prophesied in the Qur’an (15 : 9): “Verily We have sent down the Qur’an, and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)

Not a single word has been altered since the Qur’an was first taken down from the mouth of the Prophet as he uttered it on being revealed to him. The revelations came to him piecemeal, from time to time. As soon as he received any he used to communicate it to his companions and ask them not only to learn it by heart but also to write it down and to multiply the copies. On each such occasion he indicated in a precise manner the place to which the new revelation belonged in the whole text; he did not compile them chronologically. One cannot admire too much this care for preservation, when one takes into consideration the standard of the then culture of the Arabs and the corruption that had overtaken all previous revelations. Thus the Holy Qur’an was committed to writing and preserved in the hearts of hundreds of persons in the very lifetime of the Prophet.

Attempts by non-Muslims, especially Western writers, have, of course, been made from time to time to show that the Qur’an has been altered or corrupted, but historical evidence has shown these attempts to be baseless accusations. In fact, attempts have also been made by opponents of Islam to actually alter some of the words of the Qur’an, but these were detected and exposed.

The Qur’an — the Word of God — then, originally dictated through Gabriel to an illiterate man (Muhammad), ensures its claim to Divine authorship and its preservation as such by the protection of the Almighty. To those who doubt or disbelieve the authenticity of the Qur’an, the Almighty God has thrown a challenge for all times to come:

“Or they say: He (Muhammad) hath invented it. Say: Then bring ten verses like thereof, invented, and call on everyone ye can beside God, if ye are truthful” (7 : 13).

The Dead Sea Scrolls

The Bible (the Old and the New Testament) was written by many authors, few of whom have been positively identified.

The original manuscripts in the authors’ handwriting have long been lost, and there are no first editions known to scholars. All that exists are copies of the “originals” — copies which are at variance with one another and into which errors have inevidently crept.

Devout Christians rejoiced when in 1945 the so-called Dead Sea Scrolls were first discovered in secret caves about 14 miles from Jerusalem, thinking that God Himself must have preserved the old original Bible books to prove to the world the authenticity and integrity of the present-day Bible.

Since then a large number of the scrolls and tens of thousands of fragments of hundreds of manuscripts have been deciphered and translated. The scrolls provide scholars for the first time with many pre-Christian books, whole or portions of them, and also non-Biblical books, many dating as early as the 2nd century B.C.

The scrolls show many of the “sacred and trusted” Bible chapters to be inaccurate and “distorted” or garbled, and almost all, if not all, of the books in the Old Testament will need correction and improved rendering, and the New Testament will suffer considerable reinterpretation of the key verses on which Christian doctrines depend.

However, on the whole, the epochal significance of the findings in the scrolls have not been made known fully. The utterances of the Christian theologians concerning the contents of scrolls have hitherto been singularly hesitant, reluctant and incomplete and some even distort their meaning. The scrolls have so far revealed the dogmas and doctrines, which show the theological twists and turns, the tampering with texts made to corrobamate the newly invented creedal statements — all the additions of later centuries to the simple true faith of Jesus.

The Christian apologists are trying to minimize the importance of the scrolls’ findings, while the fact is that they are now considered among the most sensational archaeological finds of modern times. The newly-discovered scrolls, among which are found the non-Biblical books which many Christians perhaps never heard of, like Enoch and Jubilee, have made out of date the King James’ Version (by far the most popular) and other versions of the Bible — Christian or Jewish. Many of the important Christian doctrines are due for radical changes, and many others will eventually have to be eliminated when the scrolls are properly recognized and evaluated. However, the Vatican is maintaining top secrecy in the examination of these historic documents, which are likely to undermine the whole structure of Church
Christianity. But truth, like fire, must be out, and the religion of Jesus in its pristine purity as available in the Qur'an must prevail without let or hindrance.

The Qur'an has been claiming for 1,400 years that the original Bible of Jesus, or the Injil, had been altered, and we have shown some of the proofs thereof.

The Qur'an also contradicts the Christian belief that prophets were chosen only from among the Hebrew or Jewish people: “Verily We (God) sent to every people an apostle…” (16:36). The Qur'an mentions the names of some of the prophets, and they include Adam, Enoc (Eldris), Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, Zechariah, John, Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon them all).

The Prophet Muhammad was the last of these prophets, and no other prophet will be sent after him, because the religion revealed to him is a complete religion. And in obedience to God, Muhammad rescued and revived the pure and simple teachings of Jesus. As the Qur'an tells us, the Word of God has been given, of olden times, to the Jews, and they had subsequently “thrown it over their shoulders” in favour of a “religion” of National Egoism. The same Word of God was revived and revealed by Jesus and “thrown away” and changed into a “religion” easily adaptable to the egoism of nations, in which the figure of the real Jesus is but a shadow and God’s word hidden in a maze of half-mystical, half-philosophical notions imported from various “mysteries” of pagan sources.

Quintessence of Islam—Continued from Page 11

“God, there is no god but He, the living, the self-subsistent. Slumber takes Him not; nor sleep. His is what is in the heavens and what is in the earth. Who is it that intercedes with Him save by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they comprehend not aught of His knowledge but of what He pleases. His throne extends over the heavens and the earth, and it tires Him not to guard them both, for He is High and Grand.”

This is the famous Ḥayy al-Kursi or the verse of knowledge, and the translation is by E. H. Palmer.

“Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a shining star. (This lamp is) kindled from a blessed tree, an olive neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire touched it. Light upon light. Allah guideth unto His light whom He will. And Allah speaketh to mankind in allegories, for he is Knower of all things.”

This is the beautiful surah al-Nūr or the Chapter of The Light and the translation is by Marmaduke Pickthall. 24:35.

Iqbal—and Western Poets—Continued from page 12

“The Western sage, the German poet, A votary of Persian manners, He was born and nurtured in a garden, I sprung from arid soil."

Iqbal wrote some poems on subjects on which Goethe had also written, and also translated some of Goethe’s poems. But above all there is the remarkable fact that impressed by Goethe’s West Ostlicher Divan, Iqbal wrote Payam-i-Mashriq, or the message of the East. This is a unique phenomenon in the literary history of the world. They both achieved a synthesis of classicism and romanticism in their poetic art. Apart from art there is also a close affinity between the thoughts of these two literary giants. To sum up, it can be said that Goethe and Iqbal display such affinity in their art and thought as is rarely met with in the literary history of the world. Perhaps in the realm of thought the most significant affinity is to be found in the way both Goethe and Iqbal have dealt with the problem of good and evil. Iqbal agrees with Goethe that “Good and evil, therefore, although opposites, must fall within the same whole”. Another point of resemblance between Goethe and Iqbal is the important role they assign to love in the life of man. Goethe emphasizes the importance of love in the following lines:

“The changing Essence which ever works and lives Wall you round with love, serve, secure” (Faust).

Iqbal says:

“It is love that paints the tulip petals’ hue, It is love that stirs the spirit’s bitter rue. If thou couldst cleave this carcass of clay, Thou shalt behold within love’s bloodshed too.”

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The importance attributed to rhythm in this music is such that learned researchers have taken a special interest in it and made a special study. They have specially mentioned the varieties which are found in the make-up of the fixed procedure regarding slow or rapid execution, pauses and stops. But the savants have not been able to make any further progress in their research in this direction, for their different temperament prevents them from fully understanding the ideas hidden beneath the melodies of this music. Rouanet recognizes this when he declares, after drawing attention to what is said concerning the correspondence of each tune with a particular time of the day: “In order to understand these thoughts we must re-live Arab thought, feel in the same way as did the contemporaries of the musicians of Granada, possess a musical intelligence totally emancipated from our own artistic education, and similar to that of the Muslims of Baghdad, Medina and Seville.”

For the above reasons Europeans, as we have mentioned, devoted themselves to a study of the music of the Arabs, but, if I may say so, only from the “external” point of view. They based these studies on the theoretical sciences of such music as, for example, that of al-Farabi (d. 950 C.E.), and on the practical aspect of what has remained to us of the musical heritage of both Orient and Occident. As for listening to the music in order to understand and appreciate the ideas which it expresses, that is a faculty which the Arabs themselves have lost. None of the learned enquirers has dared to penetrate this domain because no one has yet discovered a foundation on which to base such research.

But here a little window opens on this closed yet fascinating realm. One of the most astonishing texts that I have ever met, one which clearly shows that the significance of this music has vanished from the memory of Arabs themselves, is one which I read quite recently in one of the treatises of the celebrated Ibn Hazin. It is this passage from the Marāṭib al-Ulūm (Classification of the Sciences): “One part of the sciences has left no tangible record. Its traces have been effaced, and this is the case with the science of music and its three groups. The ancients used to say that of these groups one gives courage to the fearful and is called al-Lawn (colour); a second group makes misers generous and has the name al-Tanini (that which gives a metallic sound); and finally, a third group either unites souls or causes them to go away from each other. The real understanding of all this has today completely disappeared from the world.”

Although since the 5th century A.H. (11th century C.E.) the Andalusians and the Moroccans have forgotten these ideas, they have nevertheless handed down a number of tubi‘ and a number of melodies. But neither professional musicians nor amateurs are able to distinguish between those measures which cause exhilaration and those which give rise to sadness or pain. The artistic merit of these successive generations, which now enable us to enjoy this unique treasure, is indeed great. That is why I feel, without wishing to boast, that the inspiration I had to approach and open up this unexplored domain will have an enormous influence on the study of music.

If I have succeeded in understanding the ideas expressed in the tubi‘, of which there remain only a few San’āhs of the eleven Naḥḥahs which have survived the passage of time, the real comprehension of the ideas they express will necessitate long sessions of study, after having isolated these San’āhs from their neighbours so that they can be played separately.

The ideas I am going to discuss here concerning each tab‘ form the principal item in the melody in question. So that all “allied” or similar ideas, sentiments and emotions can be perceived by the listeners whose senses are developed and who have refined tastes. I think these concepts are sufficiently clear that the person who hears one of these airs for the first time and who has been given some inkling of these underlying ideas, will understand and “feel” them.
But such airs should be heard several times in order that they could be fully grasped, that they could penetrate one’s inner being. Let us for the moment leave the observations we have made on this subject — we can return to them later when we have fully grasped the ideas in question. When listening to a San’ah from each Naubah you must create a complete silence in the inner self. That is to say, you must cease to think about anything except the melodies and the effect they produce on you. You must be completely absorbed, intensely perceptive.

We will begin with tab’ al-Ushshāq. This air expresses the rich upsurge of life, fulfilment and joy. All the concepts which express vitality and ebullient activity are perceived in this melody of al-Ushshāq, for in listening to it you have the impression of water spouting forth from fountains or springs and falling away with terrific force. It is for this reason that most of the poems which have remained unchanged and are still in their original state portray such scenes: the morning, flowing streams of water, the opening and blossoming of flowers, spring and youth. For the same reason it is fitting that this tab’ be played in the morning. But it is obvious that music of any kind should be pleasing to the ear and induce happiness, at whatever time of the day it may be played.

In this air the orchestra plays the San’ah Qum Bākir al-Isbāh (Rise Early in the Bright Morning) of the Basaut of al-Ushshāq, and if you pay particular attention, you will “feel” or “contact” all the impressions just mentioned.

Let us now go on to al-Hijāţ al-Mashriqi, usually known under its abbreviated form of al-Mashriqi. This melody may be considered to be one expressing all the characteristics of Moroccan classical music, or rather, all the qualities of that supreme art of musical finesse, delicacy and beauty. It resembles, so to speak, that marvellous work which decorates the artistic monuments of the Merinides of Morocco. In fact one can say that the emotions which we feel when we look at the sculpture on stucito or on wood, for example, the ‘Ināyya Madressah at Fez, are the same as the ones which stir us so profoundly when we listen to the melody of al-Hijāţ al-Mashriqi. It is not by pure chance that the seven Towashi, about which we have spoken above, belong to this measure. They constitute the highest perfection of all the arts of Morocco.

During the many years when, in the search for these ideas, I would succeed in “discovering” one of them in a tab’, and when I related my impressions to musicians, they would often recall observations which they had heard, and to which they had not paid much attention. And when I described to them what I felt on hearing such-and-such a melody, they would reply: “Ah! now we know why we used to hear certain remarks about this measure.” These remarks would coincide with the idea I had “discovered”.

The Hijāţ al-Mashriqi “is a melody which unites hearts” — this is how this tab’ was described to me. It is the tab’ of friends, and it is very true that gentleness, finesse, delicacy and beauty do unite hearts and form a bond between friends. We see the truth of this when we hear the san’āh Ya Hīwā al-Kalām (O! thou who spokest sweetly) in al-Quddām of Hijāţ al-Mashriqi.

And now a few words about Isbāhān. This tune expresses supplication, an appeal for clemency, and affection, hope, mercy. It also signifies humility and submission as a means of attaining one’s desire. For a long time I listened with all my attention in order to grasp the profound inner meaning of the tab’, until one day at Benslimane, when listening to the playing of the quddām isbāhān, it was as if I could see hands stretching upwards, humble and supplicating. And I murmured: “This tune expresses the idea of supplication.” But what is surprising is that at the very moment when the meaning of the tune flashed upon me, I asked the question of one of the listeners in our group, who like myself was also seeking for the inner meaning of the Moroccan classical music: “What does this tune express?” His reply was immediate: “Supplication.”

Later on, I heard that the beggars, when asking for alms, do this by chanting to the tune of Isbāhān. It is also said that the clapper of the hammer used for knocking at the door of Paradise beats to the rhythm of Isbāhān. Al-Hā’ik writes in his book: “Angels of Mercy and the shining souls in Paradise glorify God to the music of Isbāhān.”

The measure known as Rasd stands for lordliness, power, pride, and the rejection of all base conduct. One might imagine its composer to be a high-souled prince of some importance, consumed by a passionate love. His pride keeps him from self-abasement, and each time that his sentimentality gets the upper hand and obliges him to give in, his innate greatness will not allow him to appear as someone who has been humiliated. That is why, when we hear the Rasd, we have the impression of a horseman trying to gain the mastery over his rearing charger. He pulls the bridle-rein towards him, and the charger rears up. But he then seizes the bit and succeeds in mastering him. The air of Rasd also expresses ideas of pride and coquettishness with regard to the loved one.

The reader will appreciate all these impressions in the Quddām when he listens to the San’a Nahw min al-Ghazālān (I love, among the gazelles . . . ):

“Among the gazelles,
I love the one who slips away,
Whose form rivals that of the cypress.
Her charming beauty
Ravishes my whole being.
The two eyes of this gazelle
Send forth arrows
Towards the lover overwhelmed by her beauty.”

In contrast the Rasd al-Dhayl evokes impressions of submission, of patience, humility in the face of Providence, and satisfied acceptance of the Divine decrees. When listening to it we feel the soul being penetrated with calm and peace. This explains the saying: “If the night seems long, have recourse to Rasd al-Dhayl.” For resignation and calm are conducive to sleep. But one San’ah by itself will not produce all these effects. So do not be afraid of sinking into sleep when you listen to the San’ah Ya man nāqadh ‘Ahdi (O! you who have broken your promise), from Bātāyih Rasd al-Dhayl:

“O! you who have broken your promise
And have betrayed my affection,
In leaving me you have gone too far.
Your desertion is unjust.
O! goal of my desire,
You must free your slave.
Your feelings have changed.
But I remain always faithful!
Your desertion grieves me so much,
What is your object in leaving me?”

This brings us to the sixth Naubah, which is Gharībah al-Hūseyn. It expresses pain, sadness, the fear of God which brings tears. Its melodies are plaintive and the sadness they
evokes deep, silent, and comes from the depths of the heart. They also express a religious and mystical feeling. After I had grasped the meaning of this measure and the emotions expressed by it I was told that the hymns usually recited during funeral processions are chanted in the measure Gharibah al-Husayn.

There is a story told concerning the origin of this Naubah which, if it is not true historically, nevertheless must aptly express the concepts I have just mentioned. An Emir named al-Husayn had a favourite whom he loved. This favourite became guilty of misbehaviour, and the Emir left and abandoned her. So she took refuge in music in order to forget her grief and give to this art the flame of her passion and her sadness. During this time she composed certain musical passages. When the Emir heard these notes he pardoned her and took her back into his household. The story relates that during her disgrace the favourite seemed to be almost a stranger in the palace, and isolated to such a point that she became to be known only by the name of Gharibah al-Husayn (The banished one of al-Husayn). I cannot guarantee the truth of this story, but it belongs to the category of those legends which are said to be truer than history itself.

Al-Ha’ik describes this measure in the following words: “This tab’, its melodies and its notes, evokes pity and tenderness in the hearts of listeners, and brings tears to their eyes.” As an example of this tab’, the orchestra plays the Tawshiyah of Gharibah al-Husayn. It is the Tawshiyah, accompanied by words, and of which I have already spoken. Here it is:

“Is there anyone who could cure me of love, Who would quickly heal me of my malady? My heart has been burned in the fire of love, And you see, my tears are flowing. My star of love has fallen, And you see my beloved turn away from me. The object of my love has no intention Of coming back to see me. My desire! My hope! O! doctor! Cure me of my illness, my trouble. Perhaps my hopes will soon be realized. O healer! tend my stricken heart By union with my beloved, And a meeting, far from prying eyes, In a wonderful garden, shady and delightful, The inspiration of the poet, And all the nice people will say: Oh! what a charming spot! Such lovely flowers Bringing happiness to all who gaze on them!”

The seventh Naubah is ‘Iraq al-‘Ajâm. This tab’ expresses despair, frustration, and the lover’s abandonment of all hope. When it is played one seems to hear some poor human being bewailing his fate, and the groaning of the unfortunate man.

Here I must make it clear that all the impressions that one gets when listening to the different tubhi’i produced by melodies without verbal accompaniment. The greatest harm that has come to Andalusian music is that when the sources of its inspiration were no longer remembered, the musician ceased putting words to the melodies. They thought that their greatest skill would consist in adapting the lines to the metre in which the ancient poetry was composed, thus replacing the old lines with new ones. Musicians call this “distortion” by the name al-Terkin (the composition), and they glory in its exploitation. First, they made use of the terkin to outclass the movie-musicians, who were unable to compete with them in this subject, thus being the only ones who could sing the new verses when the piece was performed. Secondly, by this ruse they were not obliged to sing lines which might be interpreted by listeners as being of bad omen.

The most striking example of this is the Tasdirah of the Quddám of ‘Iraq al-‘Ajám. The first two lines of this piece have been changed, but the others have been left in their original state, because as a rule not all the lines of San’ahs are sung. Thus the opening lines of this Tasdirah became:

“The kingdom of satisfaction has arrived.
The abandonment is past and finished with.”

But the following verse runs:

“The day when my friends left me
The expanse of space became too limited for me.”

Thus there is no doubt that the san’ah opened as follows:

“The kingdom of satisfaction has turned its back on me,”

and not:

“... has arrived.”

Proof of this is seen in the following lines, which the people of Tetuan use as a Tasdirah of this Quddám:

“At the moment when I arrived at the homesteads,
While tears were running down my cheeks,
And my heart was on embers
Whose fire was burning...”

This interprets much more effectively the idea expressed by the notes of ‘Iraq al-‘Ajám.

There is a curious anecdote related about this tab’. It was told by an old man who was present at Fez on 30 March 1912, following the signing of the Protectorate Treaty: “The sky was dark and sombre, the sun hidden behind dark clouds, our souls were troubled, our hearts full of sadness. The orchestra started to play the Quddám of ‘Iraq al-‘Ajám. We had the impression that these tunes were commiserating with our lot and weeping over our destiny.”

The Naubah al-Máyah is of particular importance because it is one of the features which have led young people to take an interest in our classical music. In fact, they showed their great application when a group of young women sang in their sweet, clear voices, some pieces of this Naubah which they had learned by heart. This measure, al-Máyah, expresses ideas of separation, estrangements, the end of happy reunions. That is why most of the lines of this Naubah describe the evening, and sunset, when Phoebus grows pale, like the face of the lover who is suffering because of separation from his beloved. It is for the same reason that the time of day usually chosen for the performance of this air is the evening... the beginning of the night, although it can be played at any time of the day, if desired. And this applies to all the other Naubahs. I shall never forget one Sunday evening when I was on a small hill in the forest overlooking Benslimane. The musicians were playing the Insiraj of Baitéyahi al-Máyah. The sun was setting in the West, the birds were winging their way back to their nests, and a procession of cars was returning to the town, after its occupants had spent the day going to outings and relaxing with their relatives and friends. There was utter peace and harmony. The air the musicians were playing seemed to portray the ensemble of the scene we were contemplating... it was at that moment that I understood
how the practice of linking-up certain tubû with a definite
time of the day sometimes had the effect of enhancing the
perception of the listener.

Abû al-Abbas al-Azmûri was an eminent lawyer, a
man of letters, a talented poet, and a great lover of music. I
met him one day at a literary reunion. He said: "King
Moulay al-Hasan had misgivings about al-Mâyâh, because it
expresses separation and the parting of friends. That is why
he ordered that musicians should play the Naubah al-
Ushshâdî in the evening."

The San'â'ah al-Batâyâh: "At every sunset, and every
evening," will give us some idea of all these concepts:

"At every sunset, and every evening,
My suffering returns, and all can see my woe.
I wilt, I fade ... it cannot be concealed.
I love distractedly, but no one is concerned.
People are like that, but what have I done wrong?
Who can be indifferent when the sun grows dim?
O sun! you are leaving us, you are going!
But please stay with us a little longer.
Rise early, full of wonder,
You will find the leaves in the garden
Shining with dew, all silver and gold."

After separation comes remembrance. This is expressed
by the tab' al-Istîlhâl. This tab', which I personally consider
to be one of the most beautiful pieces of Moroccan classical
music, adorns the city of Fez with a garland of imperishable
glory. For it had its origin on the banks of the Nâdi al-
Jawâhû, Fez. It is the only tab' of which we have definite
details about its date and the name of the composer. This
was al-Hajj 'Allâl al-Batalah. He lived during the time of the
Sa'dîvans and was a remarkable and highly-talented
musician. He lived at a period not far removed, artistically,
from that of the Merinides, when all the arts were flourishing,
and creative genius had not yet disappeared. It was al-Hajj
'Allâl who composed this new melody, and he infused into
it a meaning which was doubtless inspired by his great
experience of the Moroccan musical heritage, handed down
from the glorious past.

This art still flourished, with its numerous and varied
tubû' bringing back to memory the prosperous periods of our
civilization at the time of the Almohades and the Merinides.
Al-Hajj 'Allâl probably noticed that, in spite of all this, signs
of artistic decline were already apparent. He tried to put new
life into art, and thus the composition of this tab' was
influenced by these circumstances. That is why the air
expresses rich and glorious souvenirs. It makes the good old
days and the joys of yesteryear live again for the one who
hears it, and vividly evokes the beauties of the past. Here the
musician has succeeded in expressing all the sentiments and
all the ideas in the different measures of the Istîlhâl
(Beginning). It is said that this Naubah took the name of
"Beginning" because after composing this tab' its author
played it for the first time during a ceremony at the palace,
in the presence of the Sa'dîyan Emir, opening the ceremony
himself by playing this new tab', which then took the name
Istîlhâl (Beginning).

Thebaytayn, the two verses which are recited at the
beginning, according to what is mentioned in the manuscript
of al-Hâ'ik, show clearly the ideas expressed by this tab':

"With Istîlhâl, whose renown has been extolled,
And whose origin was the city of Fez, whose inhabitants
are generous,

And be enamoured of it, for its beautiful air,
Moves me to love!"

Although these two lines may be poetically faulty, the passage
"It's beautiful air moves me to love!" has a direct bearing
on the meaning of Istîlhâl. It so to speak binds the one who
recites it to remember past love and make it a present reality.
It recalls the sweet and beautiful days that were facets of
the past. The memory of them gives rise to nostalgia, and
one thinks with regret of the friend one has abandoned. And
this naturally urges one to seek the means of meeting him
again by sending messengers or by writing. It also portrays
the emotion of the ardent lover at the moment when he
remembers the loved one. We feel and appreciate all these
ideas when we "contact" them, so to speak, on hearing
Istîlhâl. You also will feel them when you hear this San'â'ah,
"Your beauty has driven me to madness," in al-Qâ'im wa
Nisf:

"Your beauty has driven me to madness.
How can I deny it, O crescent moon of my feast?
Is it good, O my king, to drive sleep from my eyes?
You are at peace, O beautiful one, and I am in torment.
If one day you could have pity on a man who loves you
so dearly,
Your desertion would be over.
Oh you! who never leave my soul,
Who have my deepest love,
Do please be good to me.
Oh! my desire, my hope,
Show yourself to be gracious, and be at one with me."

Finally, we will discuss two famous tubû', Raml al-
Mâyâh and Hijâz al-Kabir.

The words of Raml al-Mâyâh were, at first, expressions
of love, or they formed other similar themes. The same
arrangement exists in all the Naubahs, in order that there
may be harmony between the words and the ideas expressed
by the melodies of each tab'. A savant of the 12th century,
Abû al-Abbas Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Qâdir
al-Fâsi, was well-versed in the musical sciences. He had as
a pupil al-Hâ'îk, of Tetuan, who assembled the poems of the
âlah. This scholar was inspired to reserve and dedicate the
tab' Raml al-Mâyâh to the glory of the Prophet Muhammad.
The ideas expressed by this tab' are greatness, power, might,
dignity, and all the lofty qualities of human perfection.
So that the melodies of Raml al-Mâyâh were those which were
best suited to express all the respect and honour which every
sincere Muslim bears towards the Prophet. One can find in
certain old manuscripts the poems which were put to music
in the Raml al-Mâyâh, before this tab' was reserved for the
praises of the Prophet. The result of this last transposition
was that the classical musicians ('illîyûn) initiated the com-
memoration, each year, of the Prophet's birth. Early in the
morning they assembled at the tomb of Abû al-Su'ud al-
Fâsi at Fez, on the day of the Maulâd (the Prophet Muhammad's Birthday) celebration. They sang all the
measures of Raml al-Mâyâh, without instruments. But they
marked the rhythm by movements of the hands, thus show-
ing their gratitude and their appreciation of the part played
by Abû al-'Abbâs al-Fâsi in so honouring the Prophet. This
tradition was perpetuated up to the beginning of this century
and ceased with the disappearance of the master-musicians.
In our family we used to hear about these festivals while we
were still pursuing our studies, and we felt sorry that they
were no longer observed. I tried to get them revived, with
the co-operation of my cousin, the Moroccan leader 'Allâl
al-Fâsi. We were encouraged and helped in this project by

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some of the master-musicians. That is more than twenty-five years ago. Then later, a splendid musical ceremony was organized, attended by savants, lovers of music, and the principal musicians. Their leader, the celebrated artiste al-Barhi, had during his youth attended similar ceremonies. He was the connecting-link between the past and the present. The custom of organizing these festivals was regularly observed each year, until, for a number of reasons, it was again discontinued. Perhaps the Association des Amis de la Musique will succeed, with the co-operation of the Fasí family, in reviving it again.

I have related all these various facts so that the reader can appreciate the great interest and keenness we used to have for music, and this applied to all classes of the Moroccan society. The San'ā'ah "Sallā û 'Ibad" (Pray, O people !), which forms the entrée of al-Basit, and which is an example, to demonstrate very clearly the concepts of grandeur expressed by Ramil al-Māyah. Here is the San'ā'ah of the al-Basit of Ramil al-Māyah:

"Pray, O people! always, for the noblest of creatures,
Ask the blessing of God for the ten companions (of the the Prophet), generous and brave."

To end our exposé we will now speak of al-Hijāz al-Kabīr (usually abbreviated to al-Hijāz). I have chosen this air to terminate this essay on the eleven Naubahs, because it expresses the concepts of plenitude and elevation of soul. It expresses very aptly the state of mind of a man at the moment when he sees all his hopes realized, when he is experiencing the joys of calm and tranquillity. In my opinion it expressed perfectly the most elevated spiritual states, those states of soul reached by certain men after having made strenuous efforts on the mystical path, and which ultimately lead to what is known as "Annihilation" (al-Fana). The music of al-Hijāz al-Kabīr expresses a particular form of greatness and beauty and profoundly affects those who hear it, compelling them to listen with reverence and respect. This San'ā'ah, Lillāh Yawman 'ammanā (Celestial day, when we were immersed . . .), from al-Basit, will give you an example of the ideas expressed by the melodies of al-Hijāz al-Kabīr:

"Celestial day, when we were immersed
In happiness and joy,
When our friendship became ever closer.
And when we joyfully realized our hopes."

Book Review


England has its Shakespeare. Germany its Goethe. Persia its Ferdowsi. The universally esteemed of all Arab poets is al-Mutanabbi. Curving his style on the greatest writers of the past, al-Mutanabbi was greatly influenced by the writings of Abu Tamman (d. 231 A.H. — 845 C.E.) and al-Buhturi (d. 284 A.H. — 897 C.E.).

Professor Arberry is acknowledged for his scholarly translations of Arabic literature — especially the classics. He has, in this case, brought out al-Mutanabbi at his height.

In the year 337 C.E. the poet became the chief panegyrist to the Hamdanid ruler of Aleppo, the heroic Saif al-Daula. The odes which he composed at this time, which form a part of the present selection, are perhaps the greatest masterpieces of Arabic poetry. In them the reader comes across lines which have become immortal:

"Every life you do not grace is death; every sun that you are not darkness" (p. 54).

Al-Mutanabbi portrays the mishaps of his life in these words:

"Time has shot me with misfortunes until my heart is an envelope of shafts" (p. 56).

And here his embittered outlook on life struggles out of his heart:

"Whoever keeps this world company for a long time, it changes in his eyes, that he sees its truthfulness to be lies" (p. 64).

Yet one thing which can be said of many great men can also be said of al-Mutanabbi. He came from very humble origins. Reared in poverty, his father was a water-carrier. As a boy, he received his education in Arabic and Arab sciences, including a period in Damascus. However, he grew up to boast of a noble and heroic ancestry, and once even claimed to be a prophet. Perhaps this is why all his life his attitude of mind was one of resentment towards the parvenu's arrogance:

"Possessors of wealth who are paupers in many virtues, not having acquired riches thereof in the way they have done out of destitution."

Arabs have in them one common virtue — martial courage. In those days of national and imperial resurgence, al-Mutanabbi stood as the supreme bastion of heroism. With sublime words he sings of the wars and squabbles of his time:

"Live gloriously, or die nobly amongst lances thrusting and banners waving"

and goes on:

"for the points of spears do much to dissipate wrath and to slake the thirst of the rancorous breast" (p. 20).

Arab heroes can be careless of their lives and even of their possessions. But, come hell, come fire, they will always defend their good name. With his head bloody but unbowed, al-Mutanabbi did this against his many enemies:

"Enough," he said, "for I am not the kind of man who, when he is on guard against the bite of snakes, is complacent to sleep on scorpions" (p. 44).

Even those whom he expected to remain his enemies after his death, he ridicules:

"To the contemptible contempt is easy to stomach; when a man is dead, a wound does not pain him" (p. 32).

He met with an unfortunate death at the hands of highwaymen en route to Baghdad.

In all fields of human endeavour, great men have retained their greatness through controversy. Al-Mutanabbi is no exception. His poems, which generate fierce pride, arrogant disdain, a spirit of sublime boasting, independence together with qualities of loyalty, affection, generosity, chivalrousness and compassion, will forever remain as a proof of his great mind.

K. A. B.
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