October 1968
THE
ISLAMIC REVIEW
&
ARAB AFFAIRS
WOKING • ENGLAND

56th YEAR OF PUBLICATION

THREE SHILLINGS

"(O ye who believe) ... and hold fast to the pact of God all together, and split not"
(The Qur'an 3:103)
TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

The Islamic Review, the official organ of the Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust (The Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England, and Azeem Manzil, Brandreth Road, Lahore, Pakistan), is published monthly. In conformity with the objects of its publishers The Islamic Review is a cultural, non-political journal which takes no stand on political policies of the various Muslim countries. In publishing such articles as deal with the world of Islam, its sole aim is to acquaint the component parts of the Islamic world with their problems and difficulties. Its aim in presenting political issues is analytical and informative. All opinions expressed are those of the individual writers and not those of The Islamic Review, or its publishers.

The Editor will be glad to receive articles for publication. These will receive careful consideration and an honorarium arrived at by mutual arrangement will be paid for all manuscripts accepted for publication. Articles not accepted, if so requested, will be returned to their authors, but the Editor regrets he is unable to accept responsibility for their loss in transit.

Annual subscriptions £1 10s. 0d.; single copies 3s. post free or the equivalent of this amount unless otherwise mentioned.

Subscribers who remit foreign currency from abroad should kindly add bank charges to the amount remitted.

Registration to all countries at the equivalent rate of 36c. per annum for 12 issues.

The cost of sending 'The Islamic Review' by Air Mail varies with its destination, e.g. Egypt 3', Pakistan 4' - extra per copy

Orders for yearly Subscriptions or single copies may be sent to:

Australia:
Islamic Society of South Australia, Box 1694N, G.P.O., Adelaide, S. Australia.

Ghana:
H. B. Gajraj, Esq., 13 Water Street, Georgetown.
Hoosain Ganje, Esq., P.O. Box 232, 75 Breda Street, Werk-en-Rustm, Georgetown.

Burma:
Smart & Mookerdam, 221 Sule Pagoda Road, Rangoon.

Ceylon:
Ansara Book Depot, 106-108 Armour Street, Colombo.

Dutch Guiana (S. America):
Alhadj-Abdr. B. Jaggoe, "Doeikan", Saramacca Straat 115 P.O. Box 926, Paramaribo, Surinam.

H. W. Muhammad Radja, Prinsenstraat 33, P.O. Box 633, Paramaribo, Surinam.

England:
"The Islamic Review," The Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey, £1 10s. 0d. post free; single copies 3s.

Fiji:
The Desai Book Depot, Box No. 160, Suva.

France:
For name and address of the agent please apply to The Manager, "Islamic Review," as above. Annual Subscription, 18 N.F. post free; single copies 1.50 N.F.

Holland:
Mr. G. A. Bashir, Ruychrooklaan 54, The Hague, Holland.
NV Boekhandel Antiquariaat en Mitgeverij, C.P.J. van der Peet, Nwe Spiegelstraat 33-35, Amsterdam C.

Hong Kong:
Sumbo's Library, P.O. Box 448, Hong Kong.

Kenya:
The City Bookshop, P.O. Box 1460, Fort Jesus Road, Mombasa.

Malaya:
Messrs. M. M. Alley & Co., P.O. Box 241, 103 Market Street, Kuala Lumpur.
Jubilee Book Store, 97 Battu Road, Kuala Lumpur.
N. Muhammad Imsal, Esq., P.O. Box 233, 13 Jalan Mosjid, Ipoh, Perak.
A. Abdul Rahim; Esq., 31 Jalan Ibrahim, Johor, Bahr.

South Africa:
Messrs. Union Printing Works, 91 Victoria Street, Durban, Natal.

Bahrain:
Messrs. Ashraf Bros., Import-Export, Bahrain.

Kuwait:
Messrs. Ashraf Bros., Import-Export, Kuwait.

Tanzania:
Messrs. Jaroowalla-Store, P.O. Box 210, Tanga.

The United States of America:
Orientalia Inc., 11 East 12th Street, New York 3, U.S.A.
The International Muslim Society, Inc., P.O. Box 37, Manhattanville, Station J, New York, 27 N.Y. $5.00 post free; single copies 0.45 c.

Western Germany:

AGENTS IN INDIA

Readers wishing to order The Islamic Review from India can order through:
The International Book House (Private) Ltd., 9 Ash Lane, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay I, India
Higginbootham (Private) Ltd., Mount Road, Madras 2, India

AGENTS IN KASHMIR

AGENTS IN PAKISTAN

Western Pakistan
Pak American Commercial Inc., P.O. Box 7359, Elphinstone Street, KARACHI 3.
Maktaba-i-Pakistan, Chowk Anarkali, Lahore.
Kashanai-Adab, Katchery Road, Lahore.
Ideal Book Depot, 42 The Mall, Lahore.
Books Centre, Ahmad Mansions, 49 The Mall, Lahore.
International Book Centre, 75 The Mall, Lahore.

Eastern Pakistan

The Manager, Knowledge Homes, 146 Govt. New Market, Dacca-2, East Pakistan.
The Manager, Current Book Stall, Jessore Road, Khulna, East Pakistan.
The Manager, Setara News Agency, Patuakhali, Bakarganj, East Pakistan.

OFFICE IN KARACHI (PAKISTAN)
K. S. Mahmud, Esq., S.K. (The Islamic Review), 3 Commercial Buildings, Bellasis Street, off South Napier Road, Karachi-1.

Subscribers in Pakistan can send their subscriptions direct to England through their bankers. Every Pakistani is entitled to buy books and journals in foreign currency worth Rs. 300 per annum.

Subscriptions may begin with any desired number.

Kindly quote your subscriber's number when corresponding.
NEW BOOKS WHICH YOU SHOULD ACQUIRE AND READ

Some Aspects of the Constitution and the Economics of Islam
by NASIR AHMAD SHEIKH, M.A., LL.B.
with Foreword by
The Late ZAHID HUSAIN, Ex-Governor, State Bank of Pakistan
A book on political and economic aspects of Islam as compared with the present-day theories and practices answering a universal demand in these two fields

256 PAGES

The Life and Work of Rumi
by Afzal Iqbal 27/6
Diplomacy in Islam
by Afzal Iqbal 27/6
The Culture of Islam
by Afzal Iqbal 50/- Postage Extra

Table Talk
by
Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din
Pp. i-ii + 131 5/6
dealing with subjects:
The object of Religion; Heaven and Hell; Transmigration of Souls; Life after Death; Evil and its Genesis; Darwin and Evolution; Arabic, the only Vehicle of the Divine Mind; Revelation of the Qur’an, a Necessity; Different Religions of Different Peoples; Problems for a Free-Thought Socialist

To be had off

MUHAMMAD, THE LAST PROPHET
by Imam Vehbi Ismail

Muhammad, the Last Prophet, is primarily written for American-born Muslim children, but, in fact, this could be profitably read by all the English-speaking boys and girls and, of course, newcomers to the faith of Islam. It is a must for every English-speaking Muslim family.

Mr. Vehbi Ismail is the religious leader of the Albanian Muslim community in the United States. He is the Editor of Muslim Life quarterly and at present working on a commentary of the Qur’an in Albanian.

£1.17.6

THE ETERNAL MESSAGE OF MUHAMMAD
by Abd-al-Rahman Azham

This book, originally in Arabic, is already a classic on Islam. It brings to the Western world a remarkable interpretation of Islam. The author, the first Secretary-General of the Arab League, examines the social, economic and constitutional requirements of a Muslim State and general attitude of Islam to the modern world.

£2.5.0

The Theology of Unity
MUHAMMAD 'ABDUH

The first of his works to be translated into English, Risalat al Tauhid, represents the most popular of Muhammad 'Abduh's discussions of Islamic thought and belief. From its major arguments the general direction of current apology derives. Though timid and conservative by external standards, his mind, here accessible at its most revealing task, constituted both courageous and strenuous leadership in his day.

All the concerns and claims of successive exponents of the duty and meaning of the mosque in the modern world may be sensed and pondered in these pages. Both the world and Islam have moved on in the seven decades since 'Abduh's day, but he remains a first source for the historian of contemporary movements and a valuable index to the self-awareness of Islam.

To be had off

OCTOBER 1968
Malek Bennabi, an Algerian Muslim, is a scholar of repute. He has written several books and pamphlets in French and Arabic on Islam and its problems. His *Le Phénomène Coranique* (the Qur’anic Phenomena) has been translated into Arabic.

R. Caspar, a French scholar, is a member of the Catholic Literary Institute, *IBLA* (*Institut des Belles Lettres Arabes*), at Tunis, Tunisia.

Ahmad Nabi Khán, a Pakistani Muslim, is Assistant Superintendent of Archaeology, Western Pakistan Circle, Lahore, Pakistan.

Professor Sáqib Anwar, M.A. (Texas), L.I.M. (Texas), an Indian Muslim, is Professor at the *Maulana Azad* College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Aurangabad, India.

Saláhí Ramadán, M.A., Dip.Ed. (London), a Turkish-Cypriot Muslim, is studying for his Ph.D. at London University.

Mrs. Olive Toto, an English Muslim, is keenly interested in the work of the Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust, Woking, England, in an honorary capacity.

---

**PROPHECIES OF THE HOLY QUR’AN**

*(fourth edition)*

Warning to the Christians

Gog and Magog — European Christian Nations

Signs of the Appearance of the Anti-Christ

Nuclear War

 Destruction of the Modern “One-Eyed” Civilization

Basic Dogmas of Christianity

By ‘ALI AKBAR

132 pages
Price 5s. 0d.

THE MUSLIM BOOK SOCIETY
The Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking
Surrey, England

---

**The Islamic Review & Arab Affairs**

*Founded by the Late Al-Haji Khwaja Kamal-Ud-Din*

**The Shah Jehan Mosque,**
Woking, Surrey, England

Telephone: WOKING 60679
Telegram & Cables: MOSQUE, WOKING

All correspondence to London Office:
18 Eccleston Square, Victoria, London, S.W.1
Telephone: VIC 2591

---

**OCTOBER 1968**
56th Year of Publication

**Editors**

ABDUL MAJID, M.A.

Dr. ‘ALI MUHAMMAD KHAN, Ph.D. (Associate)

**Contents**

---

Editorial ... ... ... ... ... ... 3

Western Orientalists and Their Writings ... ... ... 5
by Malek Bennabi

Hasan al-Basri ... ... ... ... ... 15
by R. Caspar

Treasures of Muslim Art in the Pakistan National Museum at Karachi ... ... ... ... 22
by Ahmad Nabi Khán

Palestine and Zionism ... ... ... ... 29
by Sálahí Ramadán

The Indian Muslim Women and Islam ... ... ... 31
by Sáqib Anwar

Children’s Page ... ... ... ... ... 36
by Olive Toto

---

*THE ISLAMIC REVIEW & ARAB AFFAIRS*
EDITORIAL

The Tragedy of Palestine and the Arabs

"Surely God does not do injustice to men but men are unjust to themselves" (The Qur'ān 10:44).

A change in the outlook is the need of the times

We have no desire to write an elegy on the British policy in Palestine, which has brought endless trouble to the people of the Middle East, nor do we wish to talk of Zionism, which is bound to bring disaster to the world Jewry in the same way as it has brought disaster to the Arabs. The colonial system is evil, and from evil one should not expect goodness.

But, all the same, we would like to record our deep sorrow concerning the tragedy of Palestine and the rôle played in this tragedy by the Arabs themselves. The bitter fate which befell the Arabs is nothing new to history. It is the inevitable consequence of a series of mistakes which they themselves have made. Describing the rise and fall of nations, the Qur'ān has made it clear that the seeds of their decline lie in their own composition and that it is not God Who wills their destruction and that people bring about their own destruction by their own evil deeds (The Qur'ān 10:44, 13:11).

It is evident that a corrupt society in which political anarchy and social injustice have reached their climax is bound to collapse and spells catastrophe to its countless innocent people. This is exactly what has happened to Arab society. For, during the past 20 years, the Arabs failed utterly to establish a healthy, democratic system of government. While the Israelis mustered all their efforts to build their society on the sound bases of education, technology, social reforms and military preparations, the Arabs never realised that their own system of education, administration, and their political and social structure was incapable of producing a generation with healthy moral values and a deep sense of responsibility. The Israelis enjoyed contemporarily a democratic government with freedom of thought and expression. But the Arab people, living cheek by jowl with the Israelis, received nothing but tears, sorrow and repression from the powers that be. Furthermore, the Arab rulers, consciously or unconsciously, allowed forces, hostile to Palestine, to succeed in their old ambitions. The name of Palestine as a State was removed from the map of the Middle East. It is an irony of history that even the Arab sector of divided Palestine lost its own identity. Some parts of it went to Egypt, while others went to Jordan, and what was left theretofrom, namely, the remaining usurped area, was merged into the new state of Israel.

When one looks back, one wonders why it never occurred to the Arabs that their part of Palestine should have formed the constitutional state of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital. It is also surprising that the State of Jordan, two-thirds of whose population are Palestinians, did not realise that it was in her own interests to rename its State and call it Palestine. The complete failure of the Arabs, however, to understand the fluctuations of international politics and to put their own houses in order can always be considered the blackest chapter in the history of Palestine. Doubtless one day the sun will rise above the mountains, and a Nūr al-Dīn and a Salāh al-Dīn again will appear on the stage of Palestine. But even so, there is yet time for the present Arab generation, in particular the Arab rulers, to examine themselves carefully.
and begin a complete new way of life.

The first step towards stabilizing affairs in Arab societies is that the Arab rulers must recognize the basic human liberties of freedom of thought and expression, and that the integrity of every citizen must be respected and preserved. Again and again experience has made it clear that the judicial system, the noblest institution in a civilized society, has become merely a handmaid of the Arab rulers. It should rather be an institution independent of the government, where every citizen could plead his case. It is said that in some parts of the Arab world some members of the Muslim Brotherhood organization are still in prison. If this is so, then this is yet another tragedy of Arab society that members of this organization are being persecuted by their own brothers. One may not agree with the Brothers' rigid political ideas, yet their imprisonment without a fair trial is a matter for regret and sorrow for Arab and Muslim societies, who are supposed to be the ideal ones.

**Some points for the Palestine guerrillas to watch**

Since the Palestine guerrillas are emerging as a new force in Palestine, we would like to draw their attention to the following points:

(a) It is very difficult for a political organization to reach its goal with no political philosophy. Guerrillas, therefore, should search their own history to find their political identity. This political philosophy must be based on moral and spiritual values;

(b) A national government for Palestine should be established. This government must be representative of the Palestinian people, regardless of their faith. Jerusalem must be regarded as the capital of the new national government;

(c) It is no exaggeration to state that the Western powers have not the slightest interest in peace prevailing in the Middle East. To serve their imperialistic aspirations, the colonial powers have worked to create perpetual quarrel and hatred between the Arabs and the Jews. Furthermore, it is the Western hostility towards the Arabs that has always been the greatest barrier to peace. Apart from the historical crimes committed against the Arabs, there is the Tripartite Declaration of 1950. By this declaration, Britain, France and the U.S.A. undertook to intervene against any party seeking to alter by force the armistice lines between Israel and the Arabs. It is evident that this declaration was directed against the Arabs. For, doubtless, these very powers would have intervened, had the Arab forces crossed the Israeli frontier. Yet, in the present situation, the intervention has been regarded as unnecessary. Furthermore, on the eve of the June 1967 war, President Johnson declared that the territorial integrity of every state in the Middle East would be preserved. What the President meant by this was the territorial integrity of Israel alone would be maintained! It is an open secret that the Israeli occupation of the Arab lands is fully supported by the U.S.A.

These two points suffice to illustrate the fact that the Western powers do not wish to see the Arabs live in peace. It is a matter of regret that the hostile attitude of these powers paved the way for Russia to penetrate in the Mediterranean. Thus, in their struggle, the Arab guerrillas must trust no one but God alone and themselves.

It has to be noted that there are many well-meaning and good people in the Western world, who sincerely desire to serve man, regardless of faith, race and language. For example, this is why the capitals of the Western world witnessed huge demonstrations in support of the Vietnamese. Through their own efficient, well-informed, sincere and active members, the Arabs can obtain considerable help and sympathy for their cause. The Arabs can learn a lesson from the fact that there has not been a single demonstration in the West in favour of their righteous cause, because they have failed to present their case to the well-meaning and honest men and women of the world.

(d) This noble struggle for life by the guerrillas should by no means be directed against the Jews. On the contrary, it is against the political ideals of the expansionism of Zionism. The Arabs would do well to remember that they, more rightly the Muslims, protected the Jews when the latter were subjected to every kind of persecution in the West. Thus, the Arabs should not abuse their own history. The present humanitarian attitude of Israel towards the Arabs should not be regarded as an excuse and pretext for revenge on those Jews who live in Arab countries.

(e) The 'Ulama in Arab countries as a rule had always been preoccupied with fruitless dialectical discussions. They never raised a finger of protest against social injustice and moral corruption in their countries. The result was that it got beyond their capabilities to lead the Muslim youth along the path to an ideal life. The inefficiency of their own offices is not a secret and is known to everyone, and has even become proverbial. But now they have commenced shallow religious propaganda against the Jews. They do not seem to know the extent to which their un-Islamic behaviour and ignorance is being exploited by Zionism. Islam, as a religion, is hostile to no one. It was perhaps the first religion in the history of faiths to glorify man as divine in origin and advocate a righteous life towards all, regardless of faith, race and language. Religious propaganda against the Jews as a community is absurd and this un-Islamic trend should be discouraged and stopped.

_A letter of Iqbal on the importance of co-operation between the Turks and the Arabs_

(f) The Arabs must establish relations with and win the sympathy of men and women of goodwill all over the world, particularly their neighbouring countries, like Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is interesting to note that Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, the famous Muslim thinker of modern India and Pakistan, about 30 years ago wrote in a letter that the Muslims of Asia could learn a lesson from a report which was then published by the British Government on the question of Palestine. He observed that again and again experience had made it clear that the political stability of the Muslim countries in the Middle East lay in co-operation between the Turks and the Arabs; for the Western policy of keeping the Turks away from the Muslim world was being actively pursued. In warning the Arabs, Iqbal further remarked that they should not forget that their revolt against the Turks, when the Turks were passing through a critical period of their history, would bring far-reaching consequences in its trail and that the Arabs must not trust their poor kings, who were not capable of forming their own honest and free opinion and, after a careful study of every aspect of the Palistine question, the Arabs should make their own decision. This letter was written in 1937. Did the Arabs learn any lesson both from this warning and from the trials of life? It is most painful to note that they did not. To use the words of the Qur'an, perhaps this is the reason why “neither heaven nor earth shed a tear on their catastrophe” (44: 29). For how long will the Arabs fail in their duties towards life? God alone knows, Who has made it clear that He (God) changes not the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves (The Qur'an 13: 11).

RASHID AHMAD JALANDHARI

Western Orientalists and Their Writings

The Production of the apologetic literature by the Muslims is the result of the pathological effects of Western Orientalists’ Writings

The role of Orientalists’ Books in the Ideological Warfare

The problem of the world of Islam is to be or not to be — not a renewal of arms but of stock of ideas

By MALEK BENNABI

PREFACE

In drawing up the following exposé as the subject for a lecture at the Congress of Muslim Students in Western Europe, my opinion of Orientalism in general, and more particularly of one of its “de-Islamising” aspects, had already been formed some considerable time previously. In fact I had partially and briefly expressed them in the introduction to my book: L’A Phenomène Coranique (The Phenomenon of the Qur’ān), published over twenty years ago. But here is something new on the subject. The French Orientalist, M. Maxime Rodinson, who wrote the Preface — and how well I understand this! — to the book by M. Abdallah Laroui mentioned in the following pages, has himself just published a book with the title Mahomet, Paris 1962. It has been introduced to us by Mounir Hafiz in Jeune Afrique, Tunis, in its issue No. 371.

Maybe you do not know this individual? Nor do I. He is probably a compatriot of the so-called “Amin Tabet”, alias Elie Cohen, who was hanged for the glory of Israel in a public square at Damascus, after having tricked a number of eminent Arab military personalities as to his nationality and his avocations.

I think he must also be a co-religionist of Professor Maxime Rodinson himself, for in this brief introduction he treats us to Rodinson’s pedigree, his noble ancestry apparently dating back to Voltaire and the Comte de Boulainvilliers. Hang it all, that’s going back to the Middle Ages!

Briefly, for a purely “scientific” purpose, Professor Maxime Rodinson arraigns the Prophet of Islam before a tribunal, there to be judged, firstly, on the form and content of his message and secondly, on his behaviour as a “political agitator”, “revolutionary” and “innovator”.

Who are the judges before whom Professor Rodinson delivers his indictment? Lo and behold, we have already guessed it, Marx and Freud, of course! And the indictment begins with a piece of precautionary oratory: “Muslim believers who might read these lines must pardon my plain speaking.” And the trial begins: “... Muhammad, restless as
a child and later as a young man, one day became a prophet. At Medina he found he was in a position which allowed him, which obliged him, in fact, to join in the struggle for power in the heart of the oasis.”

I don’t know what Marx and Freud think of this way of approaching the question. But we can clearly see that Professor Rodinson has studiously avoided introducing the essential aspect of the drama of Muhammad, by locating it straightway at Medina, that is to say, in the city where the Prophet passed the later years of his life. This period is perhaps the most interesting one for the ordinary historian, but it has the minimum of significance for an intimate study of the Qur’anic phenomenon.

And we also wonder why Marx and Freud have been conjured up in an ordinary historical process which could have unfolded just as well — if not better — before Isaac, the author of the Manual of French History, and Sylvain Levy, for whatever purpose that might serve.

In any case, we have to thank Professor Rodinson for having, a posteriori, given us one more valid reason justifying our theme in the pages which follow.

In our view, it suffices, in order to give some indication of the importance of this proof, to quote these remarks made by his reviewer, Mounir Haefz: “Perhaps before discussing the point of view of the eminent Orientalist, we should emphasise that what is important is not what a scientific and atheistic non-Muslim thinks of Islam, but rather what Muslims have found in their religion . . . What is important is what they have become as a result of their profound meditation on Revelation . . .”

And all this has been so well expressed in such well chosen terms! But we have the impression of having already read this somewhere, in more hackneyed terms. In fact, the "thread of Ariadne" followed up by Professor Rodinson leads not to Marx and Freud but to Louis Bertrand and André Servier, who do not claim to be either Orientalists or scientists.

**WESTERN ORIENTALISTS**

A classification of the Western Orientalists

Our first task is to classify the Orientalists — that is to say, Western authors who have written about Muslim thought and civilization. We can conveniently divide them into two classes:

(a) Chronologically — ancient writers such as Gerbert d'Auriol or St. Thomas Aquinas, and modern writers like Carra de Vaux or Goldziher.

(b) According to their general apologetic or polemical tendency in either praising or denigrating Islamic civilization.

This subject could well be dealt with globally in an exhaustive study. But from our present particular sociological viewpoint and in the limited scope of this expose, we will write only one of the chapters of such a book — a chapter dealing with the influence of apologetic Orientalists. We are therefore obliged to eliminate the other chapters.

It is evident that the ancient Orientalists have influenced, or still influence, the ideas of Western peoples rather than our own. Generally speaking their writings gave rise to that fermentation of ideas which paved the way for the Renaissance in Europe. They have no kind of influence whatsoever on what we may today call the "Muslim Renaissance".

Similarly, we shall ignore the modern polemical and denigratory writers, even if they have had some kind of influence, or a certain renown, such as the Père Lammens. They do not figure in the scope of this study. Their writings may perhaps have had a few points of meaningful impact on our culture. But they have not impinged upon the mass of our ideas because our system of cultural self-defence has reacted automatically, as it did at the time when Tahà Hüsâyñ, influenced by Margoliouth, published his Fi Shi'r al-Jâhiliyyàh. This raised storms of indignation and brought down the avenging wrath of Mustàfa Sàdíq al-Râfî'i.

On the other hand, the works of apologetic orientalists have had, on the evolution of ideas in present-day Muslim society, an influence which has been all the more considerable since we have offered no resistance to it. Our own system of self-defence was, so to speak, set up needlessly, for apparently there is no reason to defend ourselves against these writers, as in the preceding case.

Our task here is simply to show the effect of that hiatus in the evolution of ideas in modern Muslim society, which has existed during the last hundred years, or at least during the 20th century.

Reinaud, the translator of the geography of Abu al-Fídà' in the middle of the 19th century, Dozy, the brilliant historian of the Arab golden age in Spain, Sédillot, who spent all his life fighting to credit the astronomer-mathematician Abu al-Wafà' with the discovery of the law of the second inequality of the moon, up to Asin Palacios, who brought into prominence the Arab origins of the Divine Comedy — all these men doubtless wrote for science, for history, and not the least for their own Western society.

But it was the Muslim community which was stimulated and affected by their writings. We will describe these writers as "apologetic", because they were purely and simply disinterested. My own generation has sought and found in these Western orientalists and their later Eastern pupils, such as Ahmad Ridâ, the means with which to counter-balance, or compensate for, an inferiority complex which has affected the entire morale of Islam, an Islam face to face with Western civilization. However, this effort at "self-compensation" has had gratifying results, not only in the evolution of the Muslim thought and culture — it has had a pathological effect and we will endeavour to examine this in the following pages.

In order to estimate at its real value the influence on present-day Muslim society of this particular type of literature, of which we have quoted the names of some of its representatives, both Western and Eastern, we must look back to its historical beginnings.

The impact of the West on the Muslim thought

Europe can be said to have discovered Islamic thought in two phases of its history. During the Medieval phase, before and after St. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274 C.E.), it sought
chiefly to discover, translate and assimilate a type of thought or conception which was later to inspire and guide its steps towards the Renaissance.

In the modern, colonial phase it “re-discovered” this same Muslim conception. But it was no longer with a utilitarian objective, as in the preceding phase, but in order to adjust its own culture, or perhaps simply its political set-up, with a better knowledge of the culture of the peoples it dominated. And sometimes this preoccupation was accompanied by a certain sentiment of justice towards these races. It is from this standpoint that we must certainly regard the work of Sédillot and Gustave le Bon, fifty years later. But in this historical context, the Muslim world itself felt the impact of Western culture in a two-fold way — on the one hand, an inferiority complex, on the other, an effort to find compensation or counter-balance for it.

With a number of Muslim intellectuals this impact set up a kind of automatic paralysis of their system of self-defence. Their inferiority complex led them, so to speak, to complete resignation. They surrendered arms on the spot. They were, in fact, the first deserters in the ideological war which opened up relentlessly between the Muslim community and the West, whose culture they started to adopt indiscriminately.

Such was the case in India after the War of the Sepoys (known as the Indian Mutiny of 1858 in English history books), of Sayyid Ahmed Khan, the founder of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College (later the Muslim University) of Aligarh.

The Muslims seek for a compensation-factor for their inferiority complex in apologetic literature

Under the influence of the same impact other intellectuals sought rather for a compensation-factor for the inferiority complex, and this had a profound influence on the whole of Muslim society, but particularly its élite. Some sought this by adopting the techniques, the “things and objects” (even the dress), of the West, others by the self-injection of a dose of pride — to wipe out their humiliation. The former tendency found expression in the intellectual, political and social domains. With Jamál al-Din al-Afghání there began the phenomenon known as al-Nahdah (the Renaissance). Because of its method of conception and superficial borrowing from the West, this renaissance was marked by certain symptoms. And these symptoms showed that “... Muslim evolution was taking the path of “materiality” and “stock-piling”. I will not expatiate here on the sociological significance of these symptoms, which I have pointed out in other exposés. I will simply say that even the present struggle of the Muslim community against its under-development is also marked by “materiality” and “stock-piling”.

So as not to overstep the narrow limits of this exposé I will simply say that the cure has, after all, been more harmful than beneficial, for several reasons. First, a pedagogical reason, having psychological results, which we will illustrate with a modest example. In speaking to a poor man — unable today to find his daily food — about the opulence enjoyed by his father, his grandfather and his forbears, we can bring him a short moment of oblivion when, by a kind of temporary anaesthesia of his memory and mind, he forgets his sufferings. But we have not cured his suffering. Similarly, we cannot remedy the miseries of a society by telling it about the splendours of its past.

The story-tellers who related to the Muslim generations of the post-Almohadian centuries the splendid marvels of the Thousand and One Nights no doubt lulled their audiences into a degree of forgetfulness and oblivion. After those entrancing evenings they must have dropped off to sleep still haunted by the enchanting vision of a glorious past. But the next morning they would have had to face the stern and harsh realities of conditions which were far from enviable.

The second trend, with which we are more particularly concerned in this study, found its natural expression in the apologetic literature which had its beginnings with those European orientalists of the 19th century, who, like Dozy and so many others, unveiled the splendours of Muslim genius by making them live again in their writings. In truth, the school arising from this second trend did not differ so very much from that arising from the first.

More precisely it constituted a type of ideology common to the contemporary Muslim mind, which was searching for a tonic, a dose of pride, to enable it to wipe out the humiliation inflicted by triumphant Western culture, like the morphine addict, who craves for his drug to overcome, momentarily, his morbid weakness. Nevertheless, we cannot deny the salutary influence of this apologetic literature in Muslim society, after the sharp impact of Western culture. My own generation is indebted to it, at least in part, for the preservation of its Muslim personality. It was when I was between fifteen and twenty years old that I discovered Ibn Khaldûn, in the translation by de Slane, and the splendour of Muslim civilization with Dozy and Ahmad Ridâ. I know what I owe to these books — I have spoken about it in Mémoires d’un témoin de siècle. But today, at the age of sixty, I can draw up more accurately the balance-sheet of this "spiritual care" and the moral condition of the Muslim world during the forty years which followed.

The Ideological Warfare and the Western Orientalists

"In the space of half a century the Muslim community has not made progress. On the contrary, it has lost ground"

The apologetic literature about the “Golden Age” of Islam nurtured the taste for the marvellous and the magical amongst the Muslims instead of the urge towards practical achievement.

The apologetic literature of the “Golden Age” of Muslim civilization thus played a dual rôle. In one of its aspects it evoked an adequate reaction to the impact of Western culture by preserving, to a certain extent, the Muslim personality. But in this personality it nurtured the taste for the marvellous and the magical instead of the urge towards practical achievement.

This weighty observation, which appears to be fully justified, is worthy of our close attention. Although it is important when we transfer it to the domain of the ideological struggle in which the Muslim community is engaged at the present time.
To understand briefly the meaning of the term “ideological warfare”, in the Muslim world, we must at least bear in mind one general truth. When people in the present-day Muslim society seriously concern themselves with a problem arising in their midst, we notice at once that the selfsame problem has already been raised, or will be raised, by the colonialists — the colonialist “specialists” have already studied it, or will not be very long in doing so. And when Muslims are on the point of arriving at a solution to such a problem, the “specialists” in question will examine it even more closely than the problem-solvers themselves. If it is faulty, or lacking in some particular point, they will render it even more erroneous. If it contains a parcel of truth, they will use all possible methods to eliminate the same, or neutralise its effects by appropriate antidotes.

This is, generally speaking, the significance of what is meant by “ideological warfare”. So that if in the Muslim world some symptomatic fact becomes apparent — though still unnoticed by Muslims — it is immediately put under the microscope by the “specialists” of the ideological warfare. They analyse it, dissect it. And if it has any bearing whatsoever on the progress of ideas, on the restructuration of the Muslim society, its contents are pulverized, manipulated, filtered and re-filtered, by a series of fractionated distillation, with the object of leaving it with the smallest possible residue of permissive factors and the maximum possible dose of privative factors.

Now one of the most symptomatic facts of the evolution of a society is the trend of its “directive ideas”. This trend may be forward, orientated towards the future, or, on the contrary, it may be backward — a retrograde trend in some morbid way falling back on the past. Without going any further in this analysis of the subtleties of ideological warfare, we must briefly examine the following factors of our subject — the influence of apologetic literature on the life of ideas, on their trends and their movement in a present-day Muslim society.

A significant example of the ideological warfare in Paris

We can see at once that the other aspect of this literature could become an instrument which in the hands of the specialists in ideological warfare — very simply, the war of ideas — could be used in a mischievous and diabolical way. In fact, to the eye of the practised observer, the “undermining” or “eroding” process is going on today in all sectors of the intellectual, political and social life of the Muslim community, especially in the Arab countries, where I have lived my life as a man, as a writer, and as a journalist.

I should need another book to tell of these experiences. I will simply mention the most up-to-date episode. At a recent Congress of Algerian workers which took place at Paris, the organisers arranged to distribute a thousand copies of a pamphlet. In this pamphlet was outlined a very urgent present-day problem, particularly urgent in a country whose constitutional emblem is the word “Democracy”. The specialists in ideological warfare did not lose sight of the situation. What could they do to “neutralise” the ideas expressed in this pamphlet, or at least attenuate their impact on the Muslims present at the Congress? They invited the charming German lady who wrote that remarkable apologetic work, *The Sun of Allah shines on the West*.* She presented the book to the meeting, and those present were transported from the crucial problems of the present to the pomp and splendours of the past. A friend described the scene to me:

“At the end of the session the entire assembly gave her a standing ovation.” He had not the slightest inkling that he had just described an episode — a very significant episode — of the ideological war.

In truth, this warfare is at present at its maximum intensity in the world. It is especially so among Muslims, though it does pass somewhat over their heads. We see how, in one particular situation, the specialists of colonialism start to operate when an assembly of Muslims becomes particularly interested in some practical or theoretical project or idea. They try to divert them from such an idea, by dangling before them seductive, dreamy visions from the *Thousand and One Nights*.

*Ba’thism, Berberism, Africanism, Communism, etc., serve as a means of diversion in the hands of well-informed Orientalist Specialists*

We must always have present in our minds the truth which we have already formulated — when we bring forward a problem which has arisen in our community, the colonialists will “appropriate” it and bring it forward again as their own discovery. And when we propose a solution, they will invariably endeavour to deform it by one subterfuge or another.

The various “-isms” — *Ba’thism, Berberism, Africanism, even Communism* — an acclimatised Communism sedulously cultivated in the hothouses of Colonialism — serve only as means of diversion in literature of the apologetic type. In the hands of the well-informed specialists, they serve as means for diverting the Muslim world from its fundamental problem, the problem of civilization and progress. These specialists will divert the attention of Muslims to false problems, and to false solutions, whose futility becomes tragically apparent in the crucial circumstances following some serious breakdown, disaster or capitulation, such as the calamitous débâcle which followed the events of 5 June 1967.

In fact these tactics of diversion and distraction have constituted a problem for some considerable time — they were known before the first World War. Today, when the Muslim world is passing through the profoundest crisis in its history, the problem still exists. Disregarding certain superficial factors, it was nearer to a solution of the problem some forty years ago, when it was under the régime of colonialisation. Its ideological unity was more compact.

Today it is still further away from a solution, in spite of its political independence, because its ideology had, during those forty years, suffered the effects of a continual campaign of “fragmentation”, a frittering-away of its ideological unity. This is the real tragedy. We must deal rigorously and relentlessly with any appearances which trick and deceive us. In the space of half a century the Muslim community has not made progress, on the contrary, it has lost ground.

The problem for the world of Islam is to be or not to be — not a renewal of arms but a stock of ideas

In endeavouring to fathom out the situation, the mistake made lies in the fact that we try to weigh up the destiny of a human society from the political viewpoint. And since this society had, previous to the period of forty years referred to above, functioned under a colonialist régime, but is now independent, there has apparently been, from the political point

---

*The book referred to is in German and appeared under the title of *Allahs Sonne über dem Abendland*, Stuttgart, Germany, 1960, and in French under that of *Le Soleil brille sur l’Ocident*, Paris, 1963.*
of view, a certain amount of progress. But in the interval the essential has been left by the wayside. Our society has lost the notion, the consciousness, of its organic unity. And no "parcel" of territory can solve, separately, its internal problems, either through Ba'thism, Berberism, Afrikanism, Communism, or the legends of the Thousand and One Nights.

Today, the problem for the Muslim peoples takes on a dramatic urgency, in the form of a Shakespearean dilemma: to be or not to be, at a moment when the swing of the pendulum seems to indicate the second alternative. The events of June 1967 showed in a striking manner the fragility of political and military edifices built on a foundation of "materiality" and "stock-piling", since the weapons — the "objects" which had been "stock-piled" — as a defence against the diminutive State of Israel — melted away in a few hours.

And it is not a question of remedying the tragic situation arising from this disaster by a renewal of the stock of arms destroyed or left in the hands of the enemy. But what must be renewed, and renewed fundamentally, is the stock of ideas, to replace those leading to defeats and disasters, disasters which have come about because men were not sufficiently imbued with the right ideal. For the right ideal would lead men to the right ideas, living ideas, vivifying ideas, enabling them to carry out their duties with the highest efficiency, giving them an irresistible élan and, when the occasion demands, the will to surmount all opposition and all obstacles.

At the most decisive turning-points in its history it is never a lack of material means that endangers the existence of a society but the absence of ideas.

At the most decisive turning-points in its history, it is never a lack of material means which endangers the existence of a society, but the absence of ideas.

The Sinai episode is only one minor example of this truth. We should add — to give this example all its sociological significance — that after its lightning victory over the imposing but inanimate Arab armour, Israel is today finding things rather more difficult on this same territory. For on this territory it is face to face with men inspired by new ideas, men who have been transformed by these ideas. The destruction of the cruiser Eltheth and the exploits of the valiant Fiddjyin on the frontiers of Jordan, and even inside Israel itself, are but a symptom of the change which took place after the catastrophe, not in the "world of objects" possessed by the Arabs, but in the "world of the ideas".

Incidentally, at this point, I will merely mention the importance of ideas, for I intend to bring out a work on this subject under the title: The Problem of Ideas in Muslim Society, which I hope will be published fairly shortly.

The impact of Western civilization on the Muslim community during the 19th and the present 20th century was particularly powerful in the domain of science. So much so that its effect became manifest even in modern Qur'ânic exegesis, to which we are notably indebted for a work by Tantawi Jawhari, a prodigious book but entirely without intellectual or social significance. His commentary on the Qur'an is in fact a monument of imposing proportions but lacking in the essentials of true architecture. It could be said to interpret, so to speak, that general tendency of Muslim evolution towards "stock-piling," the obsessive urge towards the heaping-up of supplies, objects, things. In this book there is an unrealistic "piling-up" of various items of knowledge which might perhaps go to make up a badly-organised encyclopaedia, but can in no way constitute a commentary on the Qur'an. And this literary production also interprets a new trend — the trend towards a sterile kind of "scholasticism" which is, in reality, only the "effort at compensation" on the part of the Muslim community. It is an effort which finds expression in that particular domain where such community can reply to the challenge of Western science.

The apologetic literature of the Orientalists has met with most sympathetic welcome from Muslim sentiments.

And it is precisely in this domain that the apologetic literature of the Orientalists has found its choicest terrain — the terrain on which it has met with the most sympathetic welcome and response from Muslim sentiment. But this sentiment, this attitude, is in a state of continual unrest, debate and speculation, which is only partially allayed by the works of Orientalists, such as those of Tantawi, Jawhari, Ahmed Ridd and Farid Wajdi, and those of Western Orientalists such as Dozy or Gustave le Bon. But the debate is never settled, because other Orientalists or other Orientalists — usually pupils of the former — immediately revivify it with fresh provocations and fresh challenges. For instance, the Orientalists, or their pupils, will make a point of minimizing, or "playing-down", the part played by Arabs in the development of the sciences during their civilization over the centuries, and will assert that they were only translators or transmitters of the Greek heritage.

One particular activity of such pupils is to "camouflage" an anti-Islamic undermining or "eroding" campaign — obviously based on propaganda put out by the agents of colonialism — under the disguise of what we may conveniently describe as "progressism". The objective is to deny to Islam its value and prestige as a civilizing medium, and they will even assert that its success in this domain is the cause of the present-day stagnation in the Muslim world. The young Moroccan who has just published a work prefaced by Maxime Robinzon, and based on a false syllogism, Les idéologies Arabes en présence de l'Occident ("Arab ideology and its relationship with the West"), undoubtedly belongs to this category. There are even in this category of "apprentice-Orientalists" a number of well-meaning but quite naive amateurs, who infiltrate, not only into Western culture but also into its politics, by bringing forward pseudo-problems, and pseudo-solutions with which to settle them. They differ only by their good intentions from the Orientalists proper, who, knowingly or unknowingly, serve as tools — very efficient tools — in the hands of the specialists in ideological warfare.

After their Western masters have, in carefully-worded articles, in a style a little more nuanced, denied or minimized the past record of Islamic thought and culture, these pupils take upon themselves the evil work of "playing-down" its future by employing the usual progressivist phraseology, like the young Moroccan whose book we have just mentioned.

Thus the debate or controversy in the Muslim conscience, at times allayed by the apologists, and sometimes revived by the denigrators, continues unceasingly. It never stops, it has been going on for the past hundred years. It uses up the highest intellectual energy of the Muslim world in vain and sterile activities which have no real bearing on the evolution of Islamic thought. We are certainly indebted to this controversy for those splendid "rockets and fireworks" — books which are wonderful productions but with no lasting influence, like the admirable work by Syed Ameer Ali, The Spirit of Islam.
If we were to draw up the social balance sheet of all these literary productions, we should finally come to the conclusion that they were really a waste of valuable intellectual energy and wrongly-used resources. And in order to appreciate the significance of such a résumé, we must not lose sight of such literary masterpieces as those of Luther (d. 1546 C.E.) and Calvin (d. 1564 C.E.), which set European society on the path to the Reformation, the writings of Descartes (d. 1650 C.E.), which opened up the road to technology, or the more contemporary works such as those of Marx, Engels and Lenin, which raised society to a higher degree of evolution, culminating today with the conquest of space.

Thus we can rightly conclude that Orientalist literature, in its twofold aspect, has been harmful to Muslim society. It has inhibited its intellectual development. In its apologetic form it has diverted the Muslims from a due consideration of present conditions by plunging them into the delights and splendours of the past. In its polemical form, it has diverted them from their real problems, and they, the Muslims, have become absorbed in the discussion of pseudo-problems. It has made them the promoters of a decadent post-Almohadian society, whereas, on the contrary, they should be its most vigorous and clarivoyant critics, in firm and loyal support of our unshakable Islamic truth. And the Muslims must not leave to the critics and the denigrators the slightest opportunity of formulating this truth in their own pernicious way for the furtherance of their sinister ends.

The problem of Muslims is to establish that the Qur'an can create a climate favourable to the development of science.

And yet, under this sinister form, Orientalist literature has unknowingly rendered the Muslims certain services. By denying or minimizing the part played by the Arab peoples in building up a scientific heritage for humanity, it has sometimes led them to a puerile kind of "scienticism". This has for the most part found expression in the works of modern exegetists by the Muslims, such as, for example, Tantawi Jawhari. But today it compels Muslims to transcend such puerile conceptions and to reconsider the problem of Islam and science in newer terms, more compatible with the spirit of renewal now being manifested in the Muslim world in the form of a re-investigation of the Qur'anic conception.

Here we are not so much concerned as to whether this conception contains any allusion, more or less obvious, to some discovery or some invention made in the laboratories of Europe. We are more concerned with whether the Qur'an can create in a society the atmosphere favourable to the development of science, and whether its psychology can lend itself to the release of the mechanisms necessary for the acquisition and transmission of knowledge. This is the problem regarding science, and we are approaching it from the psychological point of view and not from the viewpoint of epistemology. Incidentally, in justification of the Islamic conception from the former point of view, we need only mention two inventions without which the entire technological progress of the 20th century would have been inconceivable.

Let us consider the technological progress which has today culminated in the super-science of nuclear physics. Could this have been conceivable without the technique of ultra-rapid calculations made possible by the perfecting of those electronic brains known as "computers"? And could these "electronic brains" have been made to function without the perfected of a suitable numerical system? This could have been feasible only through the use of the decimal system, by means of which scientists are able, by calculation, to arrive at a constant, such as the Avogadro constant, using only five figures.

And this essential preliminary development was a product of Muslim civilization. That is to say, it came to fruition in the intellectual atmosphere brought into being by the Islamic conception and culture. Similarly, without the contribution made by Algebra — the very name of which is Arabic and which enabled calculations to progress from the numerical stage to the stage of pure mathematics — progress would not have been possible in any of the mathematical and exact sciences. And it was in the atmosphere created by the Qur'anic conception that Algebra came into being, even though some Eastern writers (disciples of the Western "Orientalists", such as the Egyptian scholar Farid Wajdi, who died a few years ago, motivated by an unhealthy scientific snobbery, endeavoured to attribute this discovery to Diophantes, the Greek mathematician (flourished 3rd century B.C.).

It would be superfluous to add that the Qur'an, in its verses, did not directly embody either the numerical decimal system or the notion of algebraical calculation. It brought something more important — the moral and intellectual atmosphere in which there was engendered a new attitude towards science and knowledge. For science does not develop solely by reason of its epistemological data, but because the mind of the scientist undergoes a general orientation, and he is led to carry out his researches and discoveries in certain specific directions.

The scientific "centres of interest" change from one epoch to another with the continual variations in the intellectual atmosphere peculiar to any one epoch or any one civilization. Turning to history, it was pure chance which led the French physicist, Denis Papin (d. 1714 C.E.), to discover the expansive power of steam. Sitting by his fireside he would watch the lid of the kettle continually rising and then falling again. But since the discovery of fire, how many generations of people, before his time, would have seen the same phenomenon without coming to the same practical conclusion, a conclusion which indeed led humanity into the era of technology? The truth is that Denis Papin (or the Scotsman James Watt (d. 1819)), was observing, and reflecting, in a different intellectual atmosphere.

How ideas prepare the atmosphere for science and technological development

Two centuries earlier Descartes had already given expression to this "pioneer" way of thinking in his Discours de la Méthode: "Is it possible," he wrote, "to discover and develop knowledge which will be of the utmost use in our daily lives, and, instead of this speculative philosophy they are teaching in the schools, could we not find a practical one by means of which, knowing the powers and the properties of fire, of air, of the stars and the heavens, and of all the bodies which surround us . . . we could use them for all the purposes for which they are suitable, and thus make ourselves the masters and owners of nature?"

This idea was certainly a "forerunner". It was a presage of all future technological development. It pointed out the path to be followed later by the European mind in its
search for practical and utilitarian truth. On this path the human mind was inevitably destined to discover, through the medium of Denis Papin or some other pioneer, the expansive power of steam. In a word, it set up a new intellectual “climate”, in which was to blossom forth the practical genius of the new civilization. It is from this angle that we should view the general relationship between Islam and science. The new attitude of man towards the phenomenal world, the new path on to which the human intelligence was guided by the Qur’ânic conception, the Qur’ânic revelation, the new intellectual atmosphere in which there developed the genius of Muslim civilization — these are the essential and various elements of the problem. Science is the sum-total of knowledge and the ensemble of the methods which have favoured its acquisition.

Examples from European history how new ideas pave the way for technological development

We must, nevertheless, add something to this epistemological definition by formulating it in another way — scientific development cannot be attributed solely to the knowledge already gained and to the methods which have favoured its acquisition, but also to all the psychological factors which have played a “permissive” role in this development. Galileo (d. 1642 C.E.), when he proclaimed that the earth revolved round the sun, did not encounter opposition from scientists — the opposition came from the theologians. He was not condemned by a learned academy judging him in the name of science, but by an ecclesiastical tribunal trying him in the name of Church dogma. What really condemned him were all the negative and repressive factors which had accumulated in the psychology of society at that particular period of history. To give some definite justification for this statement we will point out that in this pre-Cartesian society an astrologer would be appointed to the rank of Chief Counsellor to the king, like Nostradamus, the Counsellor of Catherine de Medici (d. 1589 C.E.), the Queen of Henry II of France, at the royal court of France. Whereas a man of science, an astronomer, could be condemned to death!

If Galileo had lived in a Muslim community, even at that epoch which coincided with the decline of civilization, he would not have encountered the opposition which was meted out to him, which seriously hampered his scientific work and finally shortened his life.

But in Islam even notorious cases of blasphemy were not made the occasions for repressive vindictiveness. We will mention the case of Ibn Râwandi (beginning of the 10th century C.E.), who did not dissipate his hatred of the Prophet when he remarked: “He has made a real crony of Ibn Abi Kabshah, by pretending to be the Seal of the Prophets”. Even a blasphemy like this was not punished by an “ecclesiastical court”. And finally the culprit killed himself in despair during a pilgrimage to Mecca (by the use of cupping-glasses to draw off his blood).

Even the Jews could openly attack the teachings of the Qur’ân, the only reaction being a sometimes devastating (and unanswered) reply from the Muslims. As example we will mention the scurrilous letter written by the Andalusian Jew, Ibn Najirîlah, whose criticisms of the Sacred Book of the Muslims were nothing but the expression of his hatred. But neither he nor his writings were burnt at the stake.

These extreme cases go to show that the intellectual atmosphere in Muslim society, at a time when it enjoyed the privilege of being the “pilot-nation”, did not permit of any coercion vis-à-vis the progress and development of thought and the expression of personal opinion. The effect of negative factors, which played a definite and very harmful role during the epoch of the Caliph al-Mâ’mûn (d. 833 C.E.), in connection with the problem as to whether the Qur’ân was created or uncreated, was lessened and sometimes neutralised by positive and permissive factors which had developed in the Muslim psychology since the revelation of the Qur’ân, and also concurrently with the Qur’ânic conception itself.

The Intellectual Atmosphere inaugurated by the Qur’ân

The Qur’ân stimulates the gradual development of an intellectual atmosphere

This Qur’ânic conception, or idea, which stimulated the gradual development of the new intellectual atmosphere, held a particular significance for the future. In the book of Genesis, the first book of the Bible deals with the phenomenal world and how it came from the hands of God who had just created it. The first verse of St. John’s Gospel deals with the substance of the person of Christ — the Word made flesh. The first verse of the Qur’ân, the first Qur’ânic idea which thundered into the consciousness of Muhammad and was indelibly printed on it, was the word “Read!”. “Read” was the first word to be heard by the first Muslim soul, and was the word heard by every Muslim soul coming after him.

The letter, the vehicle of mind, of every message, every communication, the basis and the symbol of all knowledge, was the essence, the fundamental part, of the first verse inaugurating the cycle of the Qur’ânic phenomenon. From then onwards it became an integral part of the psychology of a society whose cultural value and attainments were embellished with the mantle of the sacred things conferred on it by the Qur’ân. But the letter is the vehicle of the mind — it also conserves the soul and the essence of things. Its role is first apparent in the conservation of the Qur’ân itself — the only book whose contents have not been changed for fourteen centuries, whereas all the Revealed Books, the Bible and Vedas, have only a conventional value vis-à-vis their authenticity. It is true that this is treated with deference by present-day criticism, but it is not regarded as having any scientific value whatsoever.

The scientific work embarked upon in accordance with the new way of thinking, carried out in the Qur’ânic “atmosphere”, began with the effort now made by the emergent society to preserve the text of the Qur’ân. The Commission entrusted with this task, presided over by a Companion of the Prophet Muhammad, Zayd Ibn Thâbit, set to work with a method which we will not describe here, but which merits the admiration of the most rigorous critics of our epoch. It was in fact the first scientific work carried

I A derogatory name used by the Meccans for the Prophet Muhammad.
out in accordance with the new Islamic conception, the first rigorously methodical effort in the history of human thought. It was the educative period, the period when men’s minds were orientated towards a serious study of those problems which arose when interpreting the Sacred Text, of religious observances and the religious life, all based on the precepts contained in the Qur’an and the Hadiths.

Verse 144, Chapter 3 of the Qur’an

Scientific development and progress had always come into conflict with the principle of authority, the iron rule of magister dixit, which brooked no opposition whatsoever. It still comes up against this stumbling-block even today. For instance, in the U.S.S.R. the scientific authority of the biologist Lyssenko was retarded for some thirty years because of this kind of opposition.

In all human societies we find this handicap, which arises where a section of the people arrives at a certain degree of evolution and psychological maturity, outstripping, so to speak, their fellow-nationals. During its first era, that of “childhood”, humanity bases its judgments on criteria borrowed from the world of objects, of matter. Such judgments are, therefore, rudimentary, and are based on sensation, or men’s primary needs. In its second stage judgments are based on criteria borrowed from the world of persons. At this stage the idea is usually associated with an “incarnation”, and its value in our eyes depends on the value we attribute to the person incarnating such an idea. When humanity arrives at its third psychological stage, the idea is a value in itself, and is no longer dependent on the criteria of objects or persons to sustain its value in our eyes.

Now with the Qur’an, humanity has direct access to its third stage — the idea is totally liberated or disengaged from all primary or secondary limitations. The Qur’anic verse proclaiming this advent of the idea is striking in its clarity. The Prophet brought the Islamic “idea” or conception incarnated in his person in the eyes of the primitive society to whom he brought it. But the objective of the Qur’an was to liberate the Qur’anic idea from the person of the Prophet and, in so doing, to liberate the Muslim community from the handicaps which hinder the progress of the human mind and the development of science. And the “liberating” verse runs as follows:

“Muhammad is only a Prophet, and before him other prophets have been sent . . . would you return to your former condition if he died or were put to death?” (3:144).

The Qur’an enables us to overcome the hazards of uncertainty in our quest for truth

It was this verse which proclaimed the direct and immediate accession of the primitive society that received the Qur’anic message, from the age of the “object” to the age of the “idea”. Thus, in a few words, from its very first word: “Read!” the Qur’an transformed all the psychological conditions essential to the formation of an intellectual atmosphere. The new atmosphere was subject to certain tests which defined its significance, and these tests were addressed to the Muslim conscience. They can be summed up as a single question:

“Say! are those who know and those who don’t know of the same value (worth)?” (The Qur’an, 29:9).

This verse constitutes a test, a criterion. It affirms, in the form of a question coming from the lips of the Prophet, the pre-eminence of men of science over the ignorant, and proclaims, in this indirect form, the pre-eminence of science in the new society.

Science, reduced to its simplest form, is the quest for truth in all spheres — moral, juridical, medical, physical, etc. — but this quest is beset with hazards and is full of stumbling blocks. We are sometimes apt to regard an illusion as reality, and a mere opinion as the truth. Science must overcome these uncertainties by the education of the mind.

The Qur’an proceeds to carry out this education by a method which is sometimes indirect. For example, in the narration of some religious fact or incident, it will emphasize the essential difference between truth and its opposite. Dealing with the disobedience of the Jews it says:

“And abasement and humiliation were brought down upon them, and they became deserving of God’s anger. This was so because they disbelieved in the communications of God and killed the prophets unjustly” (2:61).

The narration of the facts is quite simple and straightforward, but their interpretation is worthy of attention. It is not the killing of the prophets which is here the object of abomination and malediction. It is more than that. It is that their death could not be justified by any lawful reason. The question does not so much concern the world of persons — that of the prophets put to death — but the world of principles which were challenged and of laws which were scoffed at, in other words, the world of ideas.

We will quote another verse of the Qur’an where there is no condemnation of a juridical “counter truth”, as in the preceding case. It is more a question of describing “truth” in an essentially distinct and different way. This is in order to free it from an error, still quite common at the present time, which consists in putting it into the same category as an opinion, or, quite simply, our “doubt” on some specific point. This verse, again dealing with the Jews, disengages or separates the certitude from the vague moral or intellectual “approximation” which might result from its erroneous interpretation. The verse is as follows:

“And there are among them ignorant ones who interpret the Book only after their own desires, having nothing but doubts” (The Qur’an, 3:7).

Desire, conjecture and doubt are simply terms which express uncertainty, that is to say, the exact opposite of “truth”, which is the absolute certitude of the spirit. Another verse which contains a sharp criticism of the type of person who will presume to discuss matters, the details of which are not in his possession.

“Behold! you are they who disputed about that of which you had knowledge. Why then do you dispute about that of which you have no knowledge?” (3:66).

Thus the Muslim mind is led to the path of science, of knowledge, the path which is followed throughout the whole of the Qur’an.

In this brief exposé we will not deal at length with this pedagogic process. We will simply add that the Qur’anic “idea” is, so to speak, the constant theme of the Hadiths,
which develop and comment on it and give it concrete expression in sentences which link it up intimately with the practical morality and the everyday life of the Muslim. The Prophet Muhammad says:

“Science (knowledge) is obligatory on all Muslim men and women.”

“Seek knowledge, even though it be in China.”

“The ink of the scholar is holier than the blood of the martyr.”

Two incidents from the life of the Caliph ‘Umar to show how early Muslims were freed from formalism, the tyranny of words and intellectual pride

As we see, all these Hadiths go to strengthen the structures built up by the Qur’an in Islamic thought and the Islamic conception with the definite object of furthering its scientific purpose. The effect of this Qur’anic preparation of the mind of the new society for its intellectual tasks appears, firstly, in the attitude of Muslims when faced with quite simple problems in certain very significant circumstances. More than once the attitude of the Caliph ‘Umar in this connection was very edifying. One day when reciting the Qur’an — at least what he knew of it, for he had only learnt a part of it — he came to the following verse:

“It is We who pour down the water, pouring (it) down in abundance. Then We cleave the earth, cleaving (it) asunder. Then We cause to grow therein the grain. And grapes and clover. And the olive and the palm. And thick gardens and fruits and herbage” (88:23-30).

But ‘Umar’s attention was arrested by the last word — in Arabic Abban — for the simple reason that he did not know its meaning. How to solve the problem? ‘Umar was neither a linguist nor an exeketist; he was an ordinary man, a man of action. So he did not waste any more time over a word which for him, as a believer, detracted nothing whatsoever from the general meaning of the verse. For him the problem was not an intellectual one, as it might have been for a Qur’anic scholar, but a moral one. He solved it by saying, simply: “Why are you worrying about the word ‘Abban’, just because you do not understand it? It is a useless waste of time and a vain thing to try to fathom it.” And ‘Umar went on to attend to other matters.

On another occasion ‘Umar was endeavouring to reduce the amount of the marriage dowry to a reasonable sum which seemed to him to be more compatible with the means of each marriage partner. But in the audience a woman spoke up at once and replied: “God has in no way given you this right. The Almighty has said:

‘And if you wish to have one wife in the place of another, and you have given one of them a qintár (50 kilos) of gold, take not from it anything. Would you take it back? That would be an evil action, a manifest sin’” (4:20).

And before the entire assembly ‘Umar cried: “The women of Medina are wiser than ‘Umar!”

These two incidents show the new attitude of the mind towards the proofs or criteria with which it was tested. In the first episode we see how, in the new atmosphere, the mind is freed from formalism, from the tyranny of words which have so often paralysed the development and progress of knowledge. In the second episode we see man delivered from intellectual pride, the mortal enemy of truth.

Here is another example of the new intellectual atmosphere inaugurated by the Qur’an. On the eve of the Battle of Siffim (657 C.E.), ‘Ali Ibn Tâlîb, when appointing Zivâd Ibn al-Nâdhâr to be the commander of his advance guard, gave him his final instructions. “Take command of these men,” he said, “you will be able to learn something from those who are intelligent, and you can teach something to those who are not.” This was yet another occasion clearly showing the influence of the new intellectual atmosphere created by the Qur’an. Society is a ladder on which each member is a rung, so to speak, between the one who knows less and the one who knows more. In this way knowledge spreads in both directions, sometimes from a lower rung to a higher one, as, for example, when the old woman corrected ‘Umar when he was adjudicating on the question of the marriage dowry.

It is this ladder which, since the era of the original primitive society, has enabled the Muslims to ascend all its rungs, to the point where it attained those splendid triumphs in science. And this was at a time when the rest of the world lay in the darkest ignorance. When these triumphs of the Muslim genius are today evoked in the writings of Orientalists, we are very prone to a good deal of nostalgic day-dreaming and, contrariwise, we are saddened and humiliated when these triumphs are denied or “played down” by this type of writer. And so, in these two ways, such books, whether they be of the apologetic or of the polemical type, give rise to a twofold inhibition in our personalities.

To combat this inhibiting tendency we must have recourse to the “ladder” set up by the Qur’anic conception, the conception whose influence ultimately led the human mind to the formulation of the decimal system, to the invention of algebra, the creation of science and to the discovery of so many fundamental laws in the organic world, in physics and in astronomy. This ladder is still available to the Muslim world, whenever it decides to set foot upon it. There is no doubt that the real contribution of Islam to the scientific and cultural heritage of humanity, before it materialised in all these triumphs — whether eulogized, or denied, by the “Orientalists” — was first engendered by the total transformation of the intellectual atmosphere and the mental structures of Muslim society. And, beginning with the first word of command: “Read!”, it was to the Qur’anic conception that these profound changes were due.

Conclusion

To terminate this brief study we should perhaps attempt to draw a conclusion. The Orientalist writings should first of all be considered as an activity whose value, from the scientific point of view, cannot be denied. Sometimes it even deserves our profound admiration when it manifests as, for example, in the works of authors like the French Orientalists Sédillot and Gustave le Bon or the Spanish scholar, Asin Palacios, in addition to its intellectual quality, an undeniable moral quality, that of an authentic and impartial appreciation.

The importance of the intellectual output of the Orientalists for the psychological and ideological warfare

But we should be forgetting something very important if we did not recognise that all intellectual output bears within itself — in this 20th century so very much dominated by considerations of “productivity” and “effectiveness” — a projection or “offshoot” into the utilitarian and political domains, where ideas and conceptions, from the loftiest to
the basest, become instruments for the outraging of consciences. Sometimes, even unknown to their authors, books and publications — the most remarkable as well as the most insignificant — as soon as they are off the press, fall into the hands of the "specialists" in psychological or ideological warfare, and, according to the nature of such books, they are transformed into instruments for subversion, corruption or simply diversion. A book brought out in some European capital, for example, is sometimes published simultaneously with its Arabic translation in some Muslim capital. And this clever synchronisation does not appear to attract any attention in those countries which are experiencing the effects of the ideological warfare. These peoples do not even suspect the nature, the means employed, or the aims of this warfare, in the precise sense of the term as understood in this exposé.

In this connection, if you try to put a question to an "enlightened" person you will get an evasive and vaguely obscure reply. "Ideological warfare? Oh! do you mean existentialism, or Marxism, or surrealism?" You might then perhaps become more specific: "No, sir, I mean pseudo-Marxism, which is doled out to our young men and women, in the form of slogans, by organisations which are definitely anti-Marxist. I mean existentialism or surrealism which have no relationship whatsoever with theories on life or art, but are nothing else but the means used for intellectual infiltration and penetration by these same organisations which definitely do not subscribe to these theories from the standpoint of philosophy or art. I mean, for example, certain Digests, with which these sinister agencies can cram the minds of our young people at a very moderate price — to help their digestion!"

But, so far, you will not have convinced the "enlightened" person who is listening to you. You do not speak the same language. He lives and moves on that particular plane where, so they say, personal opinions should be treated with indulgence, because tastes and colours are above discussion. Whereas you yourself are speaking from the ideological standpoint, where all ideas must be carefully examined under a microscope. For on this plane a book should not be judged, as such, merely with regard to its intellectual or artistic qualities, or even with regard to the intentions of its author. It should be judged with regard to the intentions of those who will utilise it for their own particular ends.

Generally speaking, your listener will not follow you, because he has no knowledge whatsoever of the ideological war now being waged in the world today. The most he is capable of imagining is that such warfare would be the concern only of the "ideological bloc", and nothing to do with him.

The "specialist" agents and their use of the writings of the Orientalists

At this point we must endeavour to localize, or "place", in a more precise manner, the writings of the Orientalists. In fact they belong, not on the intellectual or moral plane, having regard to the qualities and intentions of their authors, but on another plane, the one where we see manifested the intentions of the "specialist" agents, who will exploit such books for their own particular ends in our own present-day world, and not in some far-off or imaginary universe. These ends, which we have indicated above and described as intellectual "seduction", can be summed-up as follows: "Any ideological vacuum which is not occupied by our ideas is liable to be occupied by ideas which are contrary to them." That is the fundamental assumption.

The specialists in ideological warfare are perfectly aware of this elementary truth. We should emphasise that these individuals are not simply honest intellectuals in search of truth — for its own sake — but for what can be gained thereby in the material domain. In consequence they are only too pleased when a "vacuum" occurs. They will even manufacture one themselves, and if necessary, fill it, temporarily, with ideas other than their own. For in this domain the application of a principle is carried out not by the simple process of drawing a straight line, as in geometry, where a proposition is arrived at by a rigorously logical deduction from the proposition preceding it. In the ideological warfare the line is often tortuous, and the transition from a preliminary stage to the one which is the real objective is not a direct one. Sometimes intermediate stages are necessary, and this involves making detours. The false, or pseudo-Marxism which is doled out in the form of slogans to a certain section of our youth is only one of these intermediate stages, the object of which is to "detach" a section of our young people from the national ideological front.

They cannot say openly to these young men and women: "We want to reduce or paralyse the rhythm of development of your country, so will you help us to discredit and minimise the ideas and the ideals which are animating it?" That would be too naive. And the loungers who sit about on the terrasses of certain cosmopolitan cafés bewailing their miseries would not be taken in by such a vulgar manoeuvre. So it is by using as a bridge an ideological "transition" process that these young people (caught in the trap of their own snobbery and the use of clever fallacies) will be lured to the opposite bank of the river. There they will join a veritable clique composed of false Marxists, false Nationalists and false revolutionaries.

With this first operation the objective is reached — the moral unity of the country has been shattered at the very moment when it has most need of it to deal with the important and difficult problems of independence. So much so that the number of these problems, instead of diminishing, increases as the results of this operation begin to make their impact on the intellectual domain of these young people, and on the general social and political domains, where these same young people are made to play the part of "brakes". And it is in this rôle that they slow up or stop the national momentum whenever the specialists decide to apply the foot-brakes — we say foot-brakes, for these de-railing experts take good care not to soil their hands in the process.

Muslims must regain their intellectual integrity and their independence in the economic and political domains

These considerations do not perhaps seem to have much bearing on our subject, but there certainly is a connection, if we can manage to view such operation from the global instead of from the partial standpoint. For if we have managed to grasp the idea at this juncture, where a section of our young people is injected with the serum of demagogic insanity, we should also be able to comprehend the other phase of the operation, when the same specialists pour into the nostalgic souls of another section of our youth the nectar of oblivion so obligingly provided by Orientalist books. And the operation finishes when the specialists have brought about paralysis in both sections of our Algerian youth — one half contracts convulsive paralysis, and the other half the paralysis of lethargy.

Continued on page 40

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW & ARAB AFFAIRS
HASAN AL-BASRI

(642 — 728 C.E.)

One of the dominant figures of Islam of the first century

Hasan’s inspiring and independent attitude towards political power
of his time

By R. CASPAR

"For the modern Muslim, it would seem that in the life and doctrine of Hasan al-Basri there
is a twofold teaching. By his open and forthright attitude towards authority, even unjust
authority, he remains the type of believer who is ‘actively enrolled’ in the life of the city,
of his country, thus giving the lie not only to all the ‘esoteric’ religious jargon of ‘initiates’,
and purely negative types of criticism, but also to the service courtiers who will find an
excuse for everything, or to the rebels who will overthrow a whole community. This attitude
is by far the most difficult one — in the long-term view it is the only one which is adequate
and effective. . . . As the promoter of an intelligent and ‘inward’ religion, Hasan was the
earnest advocate of the scrupulous observance of the Law, as a criterion of the sincerity of
one’s faith, but where the spirit takes absolute precedence over the letter against every kind
of formalism and hypocrisy. This Islam, ‘interiorized’ and made fully practical, and purified
by the examination of conscience, opens up the path to the highest achievements, even to
reciprocal love between God and man, even though Hasan himself does not seem to have
quite completed the journey to the ultimate goal”

Hasan’s exemplary attitude towards political power

The aim of modern Muslim countries is to promote a
society which is both loyal to the best of a prodigious past
and open and receptive to the exigencies of contemporary
civilization. This article is an effort to aid appreciation of
present-day values of the Arabo-Muslim heritage and, as a
synthetic study, portrays one of the personages who have been
prominent in their respective epochs, or will offer themes for
study and reflection which have emerged during the centuries.
At the same time we shall endeavour to give prominence to
everything which will serve as replies to the questions which
now preoccupy our contemporaries.

Hasan al-Basri is incontestably one of the dominant
figures of the Islam of the 1st century A.H. (8th century
C.E.). He has left his mark on most of the religious sciences,
then in their early beginnings: commentaries on the Qurán
(tafsr), collection of the traditions (hadith), the art of oratory
(balághah), the first theological discussions and the first lean-
ings towards asceto-mysticism — all of these, in spite of their
divergences, came under his patronage. And we can already
point out that his viewpoints, his attitudes, on these varied
subjects — and especially the spirit of independence and per-
sonal reflection which inspired them — are of the highest
value. But it is principally his attitude towards political power
and the grave crises encountered by the Muslim community
of his time, which remains exemplary, and which can rightly
inspire any citizen desirous of participating in the life of his
country with loyalty and intelligence.

We shall, first of all, relate the outstanding events in his
life, which are closely linked with those in the life of the
Ummah (the Muslim community). From these details will
emerge the principles underlying the attitude of Hasan to-
wards authority. We shall then deal with any notable details
regarding his position in the domain of religious science, as
well as the general details on the asceto-mystical path pro-
posed by him. We will conclude by making a few observations
as to his past and present rôle in Muslim civilization.

1. HIS LIFE AND WORK

Hasan was born at a time of great crisis in the early days of
the Muslim community

According to Muslim sources, Hasan al-Basri was born
at Medina in the year 21 A.H. (642 C.E.). His father, Yasar,
came from Maysan, a village in the neighbourhood of Basra.
He was taken prisoner by a Companion of the Prophet
Muhammad during the conquest of Iran and taken to Medina.
Here, after being enfranchised by his master, he married
Hayrah, a slave who had been liberated by Umm Salamah,
one of the wives of the Prophet Muhammad who had sur-
vived him. Here Tradition, with its customary embellishment,
recounts that the wife of the Prophet Muhammad had suckled
the young Hasan during his mother’s absence, that he had
drunk from the goblet used by the Prophet Muhammad, and
that this was the source of his wisdom.5 When quite young
he was sent to the Wadi al-Qura, a valley to the north of
Medina and some distance from the town, probably in order
to learn to speak the pure Arabic language.6 He later returned
to Medina and took up the study of the religious sciences,
especially the figh (Religious Law), and the Hadiths (Tradi-
tions).

But almost since the time of his birth Hasan was to
have first-hand experience of the serious crises which were to
rage the Muslim community. He was two years old when
the Second Caliph, 'Umar, was assassinated, in 24 A.H. (644
C.E.). He was fourteen when 'Umar's successor, 'Uthmán, the
third Caliph, was also assassinated by Muslims — the Com-
panions of the Prophet Muhammad. Even 'Ali, the cousin
and son-in-law of the Prophet, was accused of being impli-

*Courtesy, The Editor, IBLA, 1967-1, No. 117, Tunis, Tunisia.
icated in the plot, in which the two opposing factions were the early refugees and first converts of the Prophet, and the nobles of Mecca. Then began a period of civil wars, which lasted five years, from 36-41 A.H. (656-661 C.E.) and which became known in Muslim tradition as "The Great Affliction" (al-Fitnah al-kubrā). The community, which had up till then been united, broke up into four or five factions, which made open war on each other. There was the Umayyads party, supporting Mu'āwiya, the Governor of Syria and claimant to the succession of his cousin 'Uthmān. There were the Shi'ites, or the party (shi'ah) of 'Ali, who, basing his claim on his family ties with the Prophet, considered himself as his natural heir. There were the Kharijites, who broke away (kharijah) from the party of 'Ali, because the latter had accepted human arbitration between Mu'āwiya and himself. And there was the Medina party, composed mostly of early émigrés, and grouped around 'A'ishah, the best-loved wife of the Prophet Muhammad, 'Talhah and Zubayr, her constant companions.

Hasan was doubtless too young at that time to have taken sides in this struggle. We can assume that it was by reference to his subsequent attitude in similar situations that his biographers were able to conclude as to his "abstention" (i'tizāl) during the "Battle of the Camel" in 36 A.H. (656 C.E.). This battle was so named after the camel which 'A'ishah used to ride when waging war — accompanied by Talhah and Zubayr — against 'Ali, her personal enemy.

Mu'āwiya's action in founding the Umayyad dynasty deepens the crisis in the Muslim community, but Hasan keeps his head and performs his duties as a good Muslim

In 41 A.H. (661 C.E.), 'Ali was assassinated by a Kharijite. His rival, Mu'āwiya, became Caliph and founded the Umayyad dynasty, which ruled at Damascus from 41-133 A.H. (661-750 C.E.). At long last peace seemed to return to the Muslim community, in spite of the incessant revolts of the Medina party, the Shi'ites and the Kharijites. But there arose another scandalous situation to shock the pious Muslims. The Umayyad Caliphs seemed to show little, if any, adherence to the ideal of a Muslim leader as exemplified by the Prophet. Some of them were drunkards, and debauchees. Others acted like despots. One of these was 'Abd al-Malik (died 705 C.E.), who appointed the notorious al-Hajjāj ibn Yusuf to be Governor of Iraq. This official kept order by a reign of terror. In 73 A.H. (692 C.E.) 'Abd al-Malik even went so far as to take Mecca by force, after having bombarded the city by the use of the "mangonel" (an engine used for throwing stones), and setting fire to the Ka'bah. (At that time Mecca was occupied by the anti-Caliph ibn Zubayr.) All of these rulers, with perhaps the exception of the devout Caliph 'Umar II (died 720 C.E.), behaved more like Arab princes than Muslim leaders. Further, the very origin of the dynasty was, in the eyes of the pessimists and the Shi'ites, illegal and spurious, by reason of its warfare against 'Ali, who had been ousted from his right to the Caliphate.

Confronted with this fresh crisis, the attitudes of the Muslims were very varied. We shall examine them in their turn, as also the loyal and level-headed attitude adopted by Hasan al-Basri. But first, far from becoming discouraged or retiring from the scene, he carried out his duties as a good Muslim — he took part in the jihād, the holy war, on the frontiers of the Empire. We note his participation in several expeditions to the East, particularly the first capture of Kābul, in 45 A.H. (665 C.E.).

He later returned to Basra, where he lived for another sixty years. He never ceased preaching the good life, the way of Islam, to his compatriots, either by teaching the various religious sciences, by addressing the people in those celebrated sermons which will remain models of their kind, or by well-arranged discussion-circles (majlis) at his house, when all kinds of questions and problems were debated. His renown spread all over the Empire, and people travelled far to consult him, especially about cases of conscience connected with conflicts within the community. His candour towards the authorities made him suspect, and from 86-95 A.H. (705-713 C.E.) he was forced to hide in order to escape from the police of al-Hajjāj. As from the year 99 A.H. (717 C.E.) he regained favour under the reign of the devout Caliph 'Umar II, and was appointed Cadi of Basra. However, he resigned shortly afterwards, feeling that he could not assume the post without compromising with the public authority. He died at Basra in 110 A.H. (728 C.E.). The impressiveness of his funeral solemnities showed the love and respect in which he was held by his followers.

2. HIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS AUTHORITY

Confronted with the dissociation between actual facts and conditions and the ideal of a community united around an irreproachable leader, there were several attitudes possible, and, in fact, several attitudes were adopted.

Being anxious not to add to the troubles already afflicting the 'Ummah, by questioning or challenging the authority of the powers-that-be, the majority of people suspended judgment on this point, and "remitted" to God the right to judge the conduct of the leaders. They simply obeyed orders, whatever these might be or might imply, without questioning their legitimacy. It was the Murji'ites who took up this attitude — they took sides with the Umayyads and constituted the "cardle" of Sunnism. Others, on the contrary, invoked the principle of legitimacy, either by claiming the Caliphate for the direct descendants of the Prophet's family, in fact, for 'Ali — these were the Shi'ites or in the name of a puritan ideal according to which all sin automatically excluded a person from the community, and all authority and all particular judgments appertained to God alone (la hakma illa lī 'Allah) — these were the Kharijites. Both these parties, as well as the Medina party, preached revolt against the Umayyad authority. Further, the Shi'ites held the particular doctrine that if open revolt was not possible, a man could hide his real convictions (kitmān or taqiyyah), and take refuge in clandestinity, and thus make it easier to undermine authority. And a few groups of pious Muslims, forerunners of the mystical movement (Sūfis), found their solution by abandoning all interest in the problems of the city and in "fleeing from the world" (al-firār min al-dunyā) to take refuge in God.

But Hasan al-Basri rejected all these unilateral solutions. He proposed the way that was the most difficult, the most rigorous: not revolt (khurād), not clandestinity (kitmān, taqiyyah), not easy-going submission ('irjā), but, on the contrary, a twofold loyalty — to one's community and to one's conscience.

The true Muslim must, above all, remain loyal to his community, by respecting constituted authority and by giving it his obedience in everything which is not explicitly contrary to the Law of God. He therefore refused to rebel, even when his friends asked him to join them in fighting against the
tyranny of al-Hajjāj. On this basis he drew up a general principle: when one is obliged to submit to an authority which one considers to be unjust, the best way of remedying the situation is not to resort to revolt and the use of arms, for that would only aggravate the situation. The right way is to have recourse to patience (ṣabr), and a change of heart (tawbah), and to profit from the God-Permitted trial by purifying oneself.²²

Hasan, while respecting constituted authority, never kept silent about its misdeeds and reproached whenever it infringed the Islamic law

Obviously such a conception, taken by itself, would lead only too easily to a "conformism" tolerating anything and everything, as was the case with the Murji'ites. But this was definitely not the attitude held by Hasan. If he refused to rebel, it was not with the idea of shirking his responsibilities as a citizen, and acting against his conscience. For him, his first duty was to remain an active member of his community. In fact, he took part in the ḫiḍah; he accepted, for a time, the formidable task of being Cadi, and, above all, he refused to remain silent in the face of injustices. He fought, not "with the sword", but by the use of the spoken word, by following the precepts of the Qur'an. He practised the other kind of loyalty — loyalty to conscience and to the duty incumbent on every Muslim to "...enjoin the good and prohibit the evil" (al-amr bi al-Ma'rūf wa al-Nahi 'an al-Munkār) (The Qur'an 3: 104, 110, 114, etc.).

It is a principle of Islam that a Muslim must not only observe the Law with sincerity, but must also urge his brethren to respect it. This implies what is termed "brotherly correction" (nasīḥah — good counsel), practised towards all other Muslims, and Hasan never ceased to speak of this duty to those who listened to his sermons.²⁸ But it also implies something much more difficult and dangerous — what is known as "...the right of remonstration with the prince". Instead of keeping silent about the misdeeds of the authorities, Hasan never ceased to reproach them whenever they infringed the Islamic Law, whether they happened to the Caliphs or their Governors. In this connection he "non-suited", so to speak, the two rival contestants for the Caliphate — Mu'awiya committed four grave faults, of which one alone would have been sufficient to ruin him. He delegated authority to his favourite cronies instead of appointing an advisory council composed of notabilities (šūrā). Now his son, Yazid, was "...a tippler, a drunkard, who dressed in silks and played the guitar",²⁹ and by investing Yazid with the Caliphate before his own death, he had rendered the Caliphate hereditary, whereas, in fact, this post was elective. Finally, he had the leader of his opponents executed. But 'Ali, on his side, committed wrong in taking up arms against Muslims in order to assert his rights, and also by accepting human arbitration.

Although he had to submit to the authority of al-Hajjāj, the terrible Governor of Iraq, for some twenty years, from 75–95 A.H. (694–714 C.E.), Hasan refused to revolt, as we have seen. But he had the courage to cope with al-Hajjāj and oppose him, even after he had conquered the rebels. Incidentally, al-Hajjāj was fair-minded enough to appreciate his courage and not to deal with him too outrageously.³⁰

Hasan had an opportunity of putting into practice his teaching about this two-fold loyalty when, after the death of al-Hajjāj, a new Governor of Iraq, Ibn Hubayrah, was appointed by the Umayyad Caliph Yazid II, in 102 A.H. (720 C.E.), Ibn Hubayrah was worried by problems of conscience after receiving from the Caliph orders which he considered unjust — he had been ordered to execute some of the rebel prisoners. Hasan refused to reply servilely, like a mere courtier, as one of his colleagues did, and invited the Governor to show preference to the Law of God, and not to the unjust orders of a Caliph.³¹

Such was Hasan's attitude towards power and authority — loyal and courageous, but nevertheless ill at ease. It presupposes not only his greatness of soul, but also a spirit of independence which we shall later on discover in his attitude towards doctrines.

3. HIS DOCTRINAL ATTITUDES

Hasan's attitude towards the exegesis of the Qur'an, Hadith and fiqh

It was during the first century of Islam that the fundamental religious sciences came into being — commentaries on the Qur'an (tafsir), the collection of the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (Hadiths), and Religious Law (fiqh). The same period also witnessed the first doctrinal discussions arising from the actual concrete problems met within the life of the community, and which were soon to become the theology of Islam (ilm al-kalām). Hasan, like most of the sages of his time, both cultivated all the sciences and at the same time imprinted his personal stamp upon them. Within each matter which came under discussion, he manifested both his critical sense — his "rationalistic" sense according to L. Massignon⁴⁰ — and his concern for the "interiorisation" of religious practices. We will give a few typical examples of this.

Concerning exegesis, whether of the Qur'an or of the Hadiths, he did not hesitate to reject, and even to ridicule, certain popular interpretations or certain "invented" Hadiths. According to him, what mattered was not the exactness, or the bona-fides of the chain of guarantors who had transmitted some saying of the Prophet. It was not even the literal exactitude of the text (matn) transmitted which mattered, but the essential inner meaning of such text, and its value as a means of religious instruction.³³ On the other hand, he knew he could find in the Quran the guidance and the authoritative precepts conducive to a moral and religious life, to the idea of collective responsibility,³⁴ and to the attainment of the vision of the Divine Essence in Paradise, but without "circumscribing" or limiting it (bilā ḫidāhat).³¹

In fiqh (we will say "in ethics"), he insisted on two complementary qualities. First of all, the sincerity of one's faith must be practically demonstrated by good works, as the Law requires. And here he definitely rejected, in advance, the numerous pretensions and theories according to which it is faith alone which saves, and good works are but a complementary factor of secondary importance.³⁵ But, on the other hand, good works are meritorious only by reason of the intention (niyyah) underlying them, and sincere faith is an indispensable condition of every good work.³⁶

And so Hasan al-Basri insisted on the purification of all such intentions, and he denounced hypocrisy in all its forms, even those that were the most secret and intimate and "unconscious".³⁷ He particularly castigated the hypocrisy of the "Doctors of Law (fuqahā), who prescribed for others rules which they took care not to apply to themselves, who gave decisions in order to curry favour with those in power at the time, or who reserved their science for the benefit of a small group of "initiates". According to him, the real savant

OCTOBER 1968

17
(fuqih), the real sage, was the man who acted only on the dictates of his conscience, without worrying about his success and his personal future.38

Hasan's originality in dealing with doctrinal and theological questions

On doctrinal or theological questions Hasan showed the same originality and the same exigency. At that time there was a good deal of agitation about the problem of "the status of the believer-sinner" (tukum al-fasq). It was a very cut issue: if the believer who commits a grave sin (kabriah) remains a believer like the others, he is a member of the community, and if he is of the governing class, he must be obeyed without being asked for explanations. This was the attitude of the Murji'ites. But if such a transgressor is no longer considered to be a believer, he must be expelled from the community, and even executed. This was the attitude of the Kharirites, the puritans of Islam, who, in fact, actually carried out such executions. We can see that this problem brought up another one — that of the relationship between faith and deeds. It also evoked another more fundamental problem — the relationship between the Omnipotent God and human liberty. If God is All-Powerful, He creates everything which exists, even evil and sin, and thus man is no longer responsible for his sin. This was the attitude of the Jabrites, according to whom man is under the constraint (jadr) or control, of God. Consequently if man is a free agent and responsible for his sin, is God still the All-Powerful? This was the question put by the Qadrites, who believed in the exclusive power (qadr) of man over his actions. These fundamental problems were unceasingly debated throughout the history of Muslim theology.

But Hasan refused to let himself become too involved in such dilemmas. As he had taken up a mid-way position — but one that was exacting — in his attitude towards authority, so, in the doctrinal domain, he made a point of respecting both the moral imperative (faith demands the works of faith), and the value of faith itself. According to him, the "believer-sinner" was neither a believer (mu'min), nor an unbeliever (kafir), but he termed him a "hypocrite" (mudaffiq), a man whose words and actions do not bear each other out. Here on earth we should exhort him to reform, without excluding him from the community. But if he does not do so, then the greatest of torments await him in the hereafter, torments worse than those awaiting the infidels.36 According to Hasan, it was not a question of a verbal solution, but the transference to the doctrinal domain of his insistence on sincerity, and the putting into practice of the faith that one professes.

Hasan rejected the views of the Jabrites and the Qadrites

His attitude was the same with regard to the relationship between the Omnipotence of God and human liberty. He rejected both the pure determinism of the Jabrites and the absolute freedom of man as postulated by the Qadrites. In fact Hasan did not draw up any definite solution to this antinomy (supposing that such a solution ever existed). He was content to affirm the two truths, as expressed in the Qur'an — God is All-Powerful and His word is Law, but man is free and responsible for his actions, for God has endowed him with all the powers and faculties he needs (tafwi'd).35 Both schools of thought claimed to be his disciples, but it would seem, from the texts, that he insisted above all on the responsibility of man. And the Mu'tazilites, although they seduced or "separated" (fitrasa) from his wasli on the question of the choice of words, rather than about doctrine, can justly claim to be his spiritual heirs.

No doubt, we are still in the early stages of the religious sciences, in general, and of Muslim theology in particular. The solutions outlined by Hasan will need further development. What we know about them will be enough to enable us to recognize, and justify, the inspiration of his practical attitude to respect the exigencies of a sincere and lively faith. It is the same inspiration which we shall find during the early stages of the asceto-mystical path which he proposed.

4. HIS ASCETO-MYSTICAL PATH

The basis of Hasan's spiritual life

Hasan does not seem to have belonged to any of the early groups of Sufis which began to take shape incidentally at Basra itself.37 We have seen that his conception of the civic duty incumbent on a responsible citizen led him to reprove isolation and "fleeing from the world" in order to cultivate the spiritual states. He criticized those who wore the robe of white wool (siif) to distinguish themselves from the ordinary believer. But the spiritual path which he proposed, consisting of reflection, detachment from worldly affairs, and examination of conscience, and which culminated in a reciprocal love between God and the believer, was a veritable asceto-mystical one.

At the basis of the spiritual life, according to Hasan, was what he termed "the science of hearts" (Tuhfat al-qulub). It consisted in reflecting (tahakkur, fikrah) about one's actions, and in practising the examination of conscience (muhabbat), of which he was the first to give a very psychological description. The believer had to examine himself before God, comparing his actions with the Law of God, as revealed by the Book of God, the Qur'an. This examination of conscience was to be carried out in two stages. Before acting, a person should ask himself if the action he envisages is truly in accordance with the Will of God. After the action, he will seriously examine the intention which lay behind the act, without seeking convenient excuses. If he has sinned, he will ask pardon, and, above all, he will make a firm resolution not to transgress again.38

We now see the rôle played by intelligent reflection in the spiritual life. It was the method used by Hasan to help his brothers to reform, either in private conversation or during public sermons. He invited the believer to look inwards, to meditate on the vanity of the world, on death and judgment. We give a few typical examples of both the special method of interrogation which he would use when approached by a private questioner or inquirer:

"Hasan said, 'I say, so-and-so, would you be satisfied with the state in which you are at this moment, if it were the moment when death came to carry you off?'

'No.'

'Do you commune with your soul, in order to pass from this state to another, where you would be happy to die when the time came?'

'Yes, I do, but not seriously.'

'Is there after death another place where a man can reform himself and live an irreproachable life?'

'No.'

'Have you ever seen any intelligent person as satisfied with himself as you are with yourself?'" (Jāhiz, Bayān, III, p. 93).

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW & ARAB AFFAIRS
and also his famous sermons:

“What’s happening to me? I hear a murmur but do not see any intimate friend. The men have disappeared. There remain only ghosts. If only you would reveal what you are covering up! You exchange dishes of food, but not good counsel. Umar said, ‘May God be merciful to the man who offers us that which we are worthy of. Get ready to reply, for you will be questioned (as responsible). The true believer does not choose his religion to suit his own ideas, but he receives it from God. This is the truth, and its seekers have fought for it and have held their passions in check. No one will remain faithful to it who does not recognise its superiority and hope for its success. Whoever extols this base world casts a slur on the life hereafter. No one is unwilling to meet God (to die), except he who is already the object of His anger…” (Jâḥiz, Bayân, III, p. 89).

“O sons of Adam! Your religious life, your religious life! For you all that matters are your flesh and your blood: O sons of Adam! Glutton, glutton, who pile up and pile up property all over your house, who draw tight your purse-strings, who ride about on well-trained horses and who dress yourself in fine linen... May God be merciful to the man who is not disturbed at what he sees happening to many men. O sons of Adam! You will die alone. You will enter the tomb alone. You will be resurrected alone. You will be judged alone! Son of Adam! It is your destiny that is in the balance, it is you who are being judged!” (L. Massignon, Recueil, pp. 2-3, No. 8.)

Hasan’s view of spiritual life is not an ascetism of the negative kind

Reflection on life and death should therefore lead to detachment from the world (zuhd) or worldly affairs, and even to a life of comparative poverty (jaghr), following the example of the Prophet Muhammad, who had castigated the rich and shown his disdain for wealth.31 This meditation on the vanity of the world and the precariousness of life engendered in Hasan a tendency to sadness (huzn), a kind of sensitivity of the heart. Because of this he detested noisy laughter, which for him indicated a soul indifferent to spiritual realities.32 This was in no way a more or less morbid kind of phenomenon, but a manifestation of high spiritual quality, a result of the constant practice of the examination of conscience. Muslim writers, including Hasan himself, refer to it by the term war (fear), and it corresponds to what devout theologians call the “sensitivity of conscience” — the whole-some fear of committing the slightest infringement of the Law of God, and the great care taken not to underestimate the smallest act of virtue, or of sin.33

But the spiritual life is not limited to an ascetism of a wholly negative kind — avoiding sin of every kind and over-involvement with the world. It consists essentially of a continual ascent towards God. Hasan, like all the great exemplars of spiritual genius, avoided the two-fold temptation — the pretension or claim to love God while disregarding the demands of His Law, or satisfaction with a literal observance of the Law without vivifying it by a personal relationship with God. Hasan believed that the assiduous observance of the Law, if carried out with the requisite degree of in-wardness, refines and elevates the soul, and liberates it from everything not appertaining to God and His will, until it is entirely centred on Him and desires no other thing whatsoever but Him. Following up the two Qur’anic verses which speak of reciprocal love between God and the believer (3:51, 5:54), but modifying somewhat the vocabulary,34 he made this reciprocal love the summit, the supreme goal, of the spiritual journey. United with God through this love, the believer lives only for Him and becomes His witness before all men, like the prophets. He can even become an intercessor with God, like a lightning-conductor diverting the Divine punishment incurred by a sinning and sinful humanity.35

Hasan’s image of the true believer

This mystical conception did not attain its fullest development until later, especially with Hallâj, who suffered death by hanging in 309 A.H. (922 C.E.). According to Hasan it was not a question of some isolated text, whose absolute authenticity could not even be guaranteed. Hasan’s own path seems to have been a more modest one, and was characterised by the conscientious and “inward” observance of the Law, focussing the soul on God and the future life. This is what emerges from the image of the true believer, as portrayed in the text quoted below:

“There are some servants of God who are as if they can see the people in Paradise enjoying it eternally, and the inhabitants of hell eternally suffering. Their hearts are grave, their troubles not serious, their needs light, and their souls pure. They endure shortened days because of the long rest which will follow them. At night, they stand upright (to pray). Their tears flow down their cheeks. They implore their Lord, “O our Lord, our Lord!” During the day they are quiet, studious, devout, as if they were experts. He who sees them thinks they are sick, but there is no sickness among them. Or it is thought their minds are deranged, but their minds are occupied with one unique and splendid theme — the life hereafter” (L. Massignon, Recueil, pp. 4-5, No. 12).

Such was the life, the attitude, and the doctrine of Hasan al-Basrî. Their originality was outstanding enough to arouse opposition during his lifetime. The Murî’îe Sunnis were shocked by his public criticisms of authority. The Shi’îahs reproached him for not taking part in the conflict between ‘Ali and his opponents. The Khârîjites and other rebels considered him a coward when he refused to rebel, as they were doing, against authority.

After his death in 728, on the contrary, everyone claimed him as their own. He became one of the glories of Islam. Commentators, traditionalists, jurists, theologians, mystics — all claimed him as the precursor of their science or their school of thought. Almost all the Muslim brotherhoods, the much “devaluated” heirs of the tradition of the great mystics, include him in the chain (isnâd or sîtsîlah) of their founders. The trade-guilds named him as their “shaykh” or “pîl” (Persian).36

For the modern Muslim, it would seem that in the life and doctrine of Hasan al-Basrî there is a twofold teaching. By his open and forthright attitude towards authority, even unjust authority, he remains the type of believer who is “actively enrolled” in the life of the city, of his country, thus giving the lie not only to all the “esoteric” religious jargon of “initiates” and purely negative types of criticism, but also to the servile couriers who will find an excuse for everything, or to the rebels who will overthrow a whole community. This attitude is by far the most difficult one — in the long-term view it is the only one which is adequate and effective.

As the promoter of an intelligent and “inward” religion, Hasan was the earnest advocate of the scrupulous observance
of the Law, as a criterion of the sincerity of one’s faith, but where the spirit takes absolute precedence over the letter against every kind of formalism and hypocrisy. This Islam, “interiorised” and made fully practical, and purified by the examination of conscience, opens up the path to the highest achievements, even to reciprocal love between God and man, even though Hassan himself does not seem to have quite completed the journey to the ultimate goal.

1 The Sabaeans savant Thabit Ibn Qurrah (died 258 A.H. (900 C.E.)), a very knowledgeable person in this connection, declared: “I envy the Arab nation three men: ‘Umar as Head of State, Hassan as a poet, and philosophy, as Tawhid, Taqwil al-Mahz, quoted by I. Massignon in Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane, p. 179.)

2 The sources for this study are firstly the Biographies (Tabaqāt), and other ancient Arab sources, in particular:
   Ibn Qutayyah (died 276 A.H. (899 C.E.)), Ta’līl Mukhtalaf al-Halāl, edition of the year 1920 and pp. 5 and 290 et seq.

   L. Massignon has assembled a number of texts, borrowed from the sources quoted above, from unpublished manuscripts, in his Recueil de textes inédits concernant l’histoire de la mystique en pays d’Islam, Paris 1929, pp. 1-5.

3 Among the numerous studies of Hassan al-Basri the basic work is that of L. Massignon, Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane, 2nd edition, revised with additions, Paris 1954, pp. 174-201. This masterly work is used, and quoted, by numerous authors, especially Anawati and Gardet, La yawmiyya al-Mu’tazila, Paris 1944, pp. 24-26. See also a very good résumé of the life of Hassan al-Basri in the article by H. Ritter in Encyclopédie de l’Islam, new edition, Vol. 2, pp. 254-255.

4 His full name is Abū Sa‘īd al-Hasan Ibn Abī al-Hasan Yasāfī al-Mayyānī al-Basrī. His nisbah “al-Basrī” is derived from the city of Basra, though he was not born in the city, his family having come from Mayyān, a village not far away. At Basra he passed the greater part of his life, at least after the year 38 A.H. (658 C.E.), and he is one of its most illustrious sons. The logical transcription of his name in English would be “al-Hasan al-Basri”, but we will conform to the established usage, which has been the identical one since his time.

5 The details furnished by Muslim historians on the birth and youth of Hassan al-Basri have been rejected by H. H. Schaedler in a well-documented but ultra-critical thesis, “Hassan al-Basri. Studien zur Frühgeschichte des Islam,” in Der Islam, Vol. 14, 1925, pp. 42-48. According to him, earlier traditions had claimed Hassan al-Basri to have been born and brought up at Medina in order to give more weight and authority to the numerous Hadiths of which he was the transmitter. Actually neither he nor his father ever left Basra, except for his period of hijrah and for two pilgrimages (p. 28). In our opinion, even admitting that certain Hadiths, where Hassan and ‘Uthmān are in each other’s presence, were invented to placate or please the ‘Umayyads, it seems difficult to refute radically the traditions which are in agreement as to the birth and youth of Hassan Basri in the Hijāz.


7 In the early Muslim society the town dwellers made a point of placing their young children in the care of Bedouin families, especially nomad Bedouins. Here the object was twofold — the children would grow up strong and healthy with the open-air life and, perhaps more important, they were let grow under the supervision of the nomads, reputed to be an Arabic much purer than the town dialects.

8 According to tradition, Hassan al-Basri was an eye-witness of ‘Uthmān’s assassination. He is supposed to have saved some of the people of Medina on the day ‘Uthmān was murdered. I was then fourteen. The Prince of Believers (‘Ali) was in one of the bays of the mosque when he was told of the assassination. He raised his hand, saying, ‘O God! I condemn this, and I was in no way concerned with it’. (Ibn al-Murtadā, Tabaqat al-Mu’tazilah, p. 98).

9 For some considerable time the Murji‘ites had been regarded as being neglecting in the moral domain, but at the present time are in process of rehabilitation. The actual acceptance of power comes also, perhaps, as a result of the fact that remains that the people did not dare pass judgement on the conduct of the leaders, and that the Murji‘ites, whose views often coincided with those of the Jabrītes, found justification for everything in the name of a particular school of theology. Almighty God was the one real and effective cause behind human actions.

10 L. Massignon, Essai... pp. 180-182.

11 On the occasion of the revolt of Ibn al-As‘āth, who took up arms against al-Hajjāj Ibn Yusuf, ‘Uqba ibn ‘Abd al-Ghaffār, Abī I-Jawza‘ī and ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ghlib set off with a number of men of their party and went to see Hassan. They addressed him: “Abū Sa‘īd! What do you say about taking up arms against the tyrant (Hajjāj), who has shed forbidden blood, stolen the property of others, abandoned prayer and done this and that?” Hassan replied: “If this is a punishment coming from God, you will not divert it with your swords. If it is a trial, endure it until God delivers judgement, for He is the best Judge” (The Qur’ān, 10:109). They left him saying, “Are we going to obey this blind man?” (for they were Alids, Arabs). They revolted, with Ibn al-As‘āth, and were all killed (Ibn Sa’d, al-Tabaqat al-kubrā, Edit. Dār al-Sadīr, Beirut, Vol. 26, pp. 163-164). “I was with al-Hasan and Sa‘īd Abī al-Hasan when al-As‘āth was revolting (toward Medina). They ordered us to abstain, whereas Sa‘īd Ibn Abu al-Hasan incited to revolt). Sa‘īd spoke thus: ‘What is your opinion, if tomorrow we were to meet the Syrians (troops of the Ubayyād Caliph) and al-Hajjāj?’ We said: ‘By God, we have not overthrown the Caliph and we have no intention of doing so. We only want our revenge on him for having appointed al-Hajjāj Governor. Why doesn’t he get rid of him?’. Why should he have finished his work? Have they not spoke, glorified and praised God, and said, ‘O men! Do not try to oppose Divine punishment with the sword, but have recourse to the peace of your souls and seek God’s mercy in prayer. As for your question, you ask about the time. I think that if they come and al-Hajjāj gets them to share (makes them swallow) his temporal ideas, he will only be enrolling them in a cause which they are already supporting. That is my opinion about them.” (Ibn Sa’d, al-Tabaqat al-kubrā, p. 164).

12 “I heard Hassan say,” When men suffer at the hands of authority, if they can show patience, it would not be very long before they were delivered. But if they are impatient, take up the sword and rely on that, by God, such a procedure never yet brought forth orthodox Islam” (“Ibn Sa’d, al-Tabaqat al-kubrā, pp. 164-165).

13 “When they said to Hasan. ‘Are you not going to revolt? You could change (an unjust state of affairs)’, he replied, ‘God will change (such a situation) only if you repent, and not if you take up the sword’.” (Ibn Sa’d, al-Tabaqat al-kubrā, pp. 164-165).

14 “‘May God be merciful to him who gives good counsel to his brothers and to all his own family, saying, ‘My brothers, your prayers, your prayers! Your charity, you charity! Your neighbours, your neighbours! Your brothers, your brothers! Your needy, your needy!’ Perhaps God will be merciful to you. For God praised one of His servants (Ishmael), saying, ‘He commanded his people to pray and to give alms. He was accepted by his Lord’ (The Qur’ān, 19:55). O son of Adam, how could you be a true Muslim who has submitted to God, if your neighbour is not free (sallima min) from your malice? How could you be a true believer (mu’min) if men cannot have confidence (amín) in you? (Jāhiz, Bayān, Vol. III, p. 90).


16 When al-Hajjāj had finished with the suburbs of Wásit (sic), he inspired the inhabitants to begin this work. He is supposed to have said to the people of Medina on the day ‘Uthmān was murdered. I was then fourteen. The Prince of Believers (‘Ali) was in one of the bays of the mosque when he was told of the assassination. He raised his hand, saying, ‘O God! I condemn this, and I was in no way concerned with it’.” (Ibn al-Murtadā, Tabaqat al-Mu’tazilah, p. 98).

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW & ARAB AFFAIRS
executives). Hasan lost no time in arriving. The chamberlain stood at the door. As Hasan was approaching his lips were moving, and the chamberlain watched him. When he had entered, al-Hajjāj said to him, 'Come here!', and led him towards him. He stood up and had to say to 'Ali and 'Uthmān? Hasan replied, 'I say what was said by him who is better than I am (Moses), to him who is worse than you (Pharaoh). Pharaoh said to Moses, 'You have come out of Egypt.' Hasan replied, 'Only God knows!' (The Qur'ān, 20: 51-52).

16. Similarly, here is what Hasan said when Ibn Hubayrah sent for him, and also that of his friend (fāqiḥ). Ibn Hubayrah said to Hasan, 'What is your opinion, Abū Saʿīd? Of these letters sent to us by Yazīdh Ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (the 'Ummayyad Caliph), and which contain this and that? If I carry out these orders, I incur the anger of the disbelievers. If I do not, I may lose my life.' Hasan replied, 'You have here present al-Shaʿbī, a lawyer from the Hijāz'. Ibn Hubayrah questioned al-Shaʿbī, who replied like a courtier (servilely), 'Hold fast (to the Caliph), and follow the right path. If you are a servant, this is the Book of God. That is for you. If you are a servant of the Book of God, carry it out, and what is not in accordance, do not carry it out. God is more worthy of obedience than Yazīdh, and the Book of God than Yazīd's letter'. (Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, al-İqt al-farid, Edit. Ahmad Amin, Cairo, Vol. I, 1948, pp. 58-59).


18. "I was in the mosque at Basra with Abū Salāmāh Ibn Ābū al-Rāhmān. Hasan arrived. Abū Salāmāh sat near him and recited a Hadith which had been transmitted through Abū Hurayrah from the Prophet, who is reputed to have said, 'The sun and the moon are two bells which will be hurred in the Fire on the day of resurrection.' Hasan said, 'And for what sin?' Abū Salāmāh replied, 'I was only reciting a Hadith coming from the Prophet.' Hasan remained silent. He said, 'What had I done? What had I done?' (Ibn Qataybah, Tāʾwil, p. 121).

19. Hasan Basrī recited a Hadith. Someone asked him, 'Abū Saʿīd, from whom did you get it?' Hasan was angry. 'Brother! Why do you bother about the "from whom"? The important thing is that you listen to the Hadith and what is written in it. Hasan recited the Hadith and the verse it contains you 'Al-Iqt al-farid, 1, p. 4.

20. A reference to the Qur'ān 11: 65-68, which narrates the story of the Prophet Šāhīr, sent by God to the people, the Thamūd. The latter refused to listen to him and slaughtered the she-camel given to them by God as a sign. Hasan commented, 'Only one man killed the she-camel, but God inflicted the punishment on the whole people, because they were unannam in condoning this sin.' (Quoted by al-Jāhiz, p. 87).

21. See L. Massignon, Essai, p. 185, where there is a quotation from Shaʿbī.

22. "Faith is not an article of finery, which can be worn. It does not consist of futile desires. But it resides in what is in one's deepest heart, and in that which good works confirm as being true" (al-Jāhiz, Bayān, 111, p. 89).

23. "A young man may well be an ascetic. We shall not know this by what he says, but only by what he does. This is science which is useful" (Ibn Saʿīd, al-Taqābūl al-kabīr, p. 177).

24. "The intention is more efficacious than the action" (L. Massignon, Recueil, p. 2).

25. "If the believer has a good opinion of his Lord, his act will be good. If the hypocrite has a bad opinion, his act will be bad" (L. Massignon, Recueil, p. 2, No. 5).

These maxims of Hasan al-Basrī are the origin of the famous Hadith inscribed in large Kufic characters on the pediment of the porch at al-Azhar in Cairo, "Actions will be judged only according to intentions" (Ibn al-Amīr bī al-Nīṣābūrī).

26. "The moral from which he had finished speaking and was about to rise, would say, 'O my God! You see our hearts filled with impurity (shirk = associating other gods with the One God), pride, hypocrisy, the desire to be seen and heard, and in fighting about the truth. O Thou who stirrest up the hearts of men! Strengthen our hearts in Thy religion, and make our religion the real Islam!' Ibn Saʿīd, al-Taqābūl al-kabīr, p. 176.)

27. "No one has the right to be called a believer so long as he persists in reproaching others with the vices which he has himself, and in opposing them to reform when he has not even begun to reform himself. If he decides to undertake this, each time that he abandons a vice he will discover another which, in its turn, he will then have to abandon. In doing this he will be much too occupied with the affairs of his own soul to worry about the vices of others" (al-Jāhiz, Bāyān, 111, p. 90).

28. "At one time the sages made use of their knowledge so as not to have need of the people of the world. It enabled them to pass judgment on the people of the world in matters which the temporal wealth of the people of the world could not solve. The people of the world spent their temporal wealth, and never perceived the benefit of the sages, to which they aspired. Today, the sages have come to the stage where they impart their knowledge to the people of the world, because they have need of their temporal wealth. And the people of the world, with their temporal wealth, have turned away from them, and are thus deprived of their knowledge, because they have not seen the sorrow predicament to which which had been reduced among them" (al-Jāhiz, Bāyān, 111, p. 91).

29. "Matar asked Hasan a question. Then (Hasan) said to him, 'You are from a family (fāqiḥ) have the opposite opinion to yours'. Hasan replied sharply, 'May your mother lose you, Matar! Have you never seen a fāqiḥ? Do you know what a fāqiḥ is? A fāqiḥ is a humble, scrupulous man, who seeks not the favour of those superiors to him and does not despise those who are inferior, and who will not accept even one stick of firewood in exchange for knowledge which God has taught him'" (Ibn Saʿīd, al-Taqābūl al-kabīr, p. 177).

30. "Hasan Basrī would say: "Those who make a mystery out of their knowledge, that the wind from their bellies would suffocate those who went to hell" (L. Massignon, Recueil, p. 4).

31. "The sages do not worry (is not embarrased or flattered) whether his wisdom is disseminated or not. If it meets with approval he says, 'God be praised!' If is rejected he says, 'God be praised!'" (L. Massignon, Recueil, p. 3, No. 10).

32. This category of hypocrite is mentioned in the Qur'ān. Arabs of Medina had welcomed the Prophet after his migration in 622 C.E. They rallied to his cause because they desired, and officially professed Islam, but in reality were jealous of his influence. They plotted against him in secret, joining forces with the Medina Jews and the polytheists of the mountain of Mecca. At their head was Mundhir, who emphasized the importance of the term fāṣiq, and who had received the honorific title "al-Fāṣiq" from the Qur'ān (6: 139, 6: 143, 9: 49-52, etc.). This attitude of Muslim vis-à-vis the status of the fāṣiq is at the origin of the important school of theology known as Muʿtazilī. This school believed that God alone is the One Who created this world. Mundhir announced the doctrine of the term fāṣiq, adopted his doctrine, and regarded the fāṣiq as being "... in an intermediary position" between faith and infidelity (fi al-manzūlah bayn l-manzūlah), and was quite as severe as he was on the question of his eternal fate. There are three kinds of men: the believer, the unbeliever, and the hypocrite. The believer is held in check by fear of God and is upheld by the desire for a good reputation (before God). The unbeliever is overcome by the sword, but fear humiliates through having to pay tribute and tolerated because of the tax he is made to furnish (= Jews and Christians). As for the hypocrites, they strut about in the mansions and in the public streets. They think, secretly, otherwise; they are indeed deceiving the public. They hide what they dare not reveal openly. A lesson from the fact that their pernicious actions are a denial of their Lord. Woe to you, who have killed the man appointed by God (= 'Uthmān), and then you want God to admit you to Paradise!" (al-Jāhiz, Bāyān, 111, p. 90).

33. "The Qadrites declared themselves followers of al-Hasan Ibn Abū al-Hasan, even though what he said was in opposition to their pretensions. He said, 'O sons of Adam! Seek the favour of anyone at the risk of your anger or the anger of anyone if it means disobeying God. Praise nobody for a favour received (in reality) from God. Blame no one for what God has not given you. God has created creatures and organisms, and he has set the roles for which they were made. Whoever thinks that his destiny will be

Continued on page 40
Treasures of Muslim Art in the Pakistan National Museum at Karachi

The Museum presents a vivid picture of the Muslim Arts & Culture in Pakistan & India

10,000 MS. volumes of the Holy Qur'an and other classical literature in Persian, Arabic and Urdu

By AHMAD NABI KHAN

The Muslim conquest of India introduces a new political, social and cultural era in the sub-continent

The advent of Islam in the sub-continent of India during the early decades of the 8th century C.E. has been responsible for a new era of political, social and cultural life. In 711 C.E. the young Arab General Muhammad Ibn Qasim conquered Sind and some parts of the Punjab and annexed the territory with the fast growing Muslim Caliphate. Later, in the 11th century C.E., Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznavi invaded the different parts of the sub-continent. These invasions brought a significant change in the political, social and cultural set-up of the country. Sultan Mahmud could retain the possession of the Punjab almost permanently throughout his reign and after his death his successors ruled over these areas, even after they had lost the possession of their own home in Afghanistan. During this period, Lahore became an important centre of the Ghaznavides and was called the "Little Ghaznavi". It was a period of great achievements in the fields of the arts, architecture, literature and the sciences. Besides, the saints and sufis like 'Uthman 'Ali Hujwiri, of Lahore (died 1072 C.E.), popularly known as Datté Ganj Bakhsh, arrived in the sub-continent to preach Islam and stay in India for the whole of their lives. It was through their efforts, Islam became a predominant religion in northern India.

The masterpieces of religious and secular architecture at Delhi, Agra, Lahore and other places in India

During the early decades of the 13th century C.E., the Muslim rule extended up to Delhi. Though Muhammad Ibn Sâm, better known as Shihâbuddin Muhammad Ghauri, was responsible for this far-reaching change, it was Qutb-al-Din Aybak who consolidated the Muslim power in the sub-continent and made Delhi his headquarters. The city was destined to remain the capital of the Muslim Empire of India until the year 1857 C.E. During this long period of history extending over six hundred years, six royal dynasties of Muslims controlled the destinies of the sub-continent. Their benevolent rule gave a new look to the social, political, religious and cultural life of India. The arts and architecture flourished in the courts and outside. Every nook and corner of the empire was embellished with numerous imposing buildings, both religious and secular. Among the earlier magnificent constructions were mosques like the Quwwat al-Islam at Delhi and the one at Ajmer, the celebrated Qutb Minar and a host of beautiful tombs and mausoleums constructed by the Sultans of Delhi, while the masterpieces of the Mughal period are the world-famed Taj Mahal and other religious and secular buildings at Delhi, Agra, Lahore and elsewhere. These are indeed the best examples of the Muslim architecture in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent.

Objets d’art, paintings and manuscripts in the National Museum of Pakistan present a vivid picture of the achievements of the Muslims in India

Besides these, the princes possessed the best specimens of objets d’art. Their libraries were full of masterpieces of paintings and calligraphy. Studios and workshops were attached to them as important adjuncts where artists, calligraphists, bookbinders, gilders, etc., remained busy in producing the masterpieces.

The ravages of time did not, however, leave these art treasures at their original places. They found their way to various museums and art galleries in the country and abroad. Profusely illustrated and illuminated manuscripts, paintings, specimens of calligraphy, garments, costumes, glazed pottery, silver and gold utensils, with inlaid work, delicate pieces of
jewellery, carpets and curtains, swords and daggers, all showing their magnificence and artistic taste, are now scattered in the museums and art galleries all over the world.

The collections of the National Museum of Pakistan, though small, present a vivid picture of Muslim art and culture. These not only represent the achievements of the Muslims in the sub-continent but also manifest some of the other Muslim countries like Iran, Iraq, etc. It includes illuminated manuscripts of the Holy Qur'an and other classical works in Arabic and Persian, paintings of various schools and styles, specimens of calligraphy, royal farā'idh (edicts) and documents, pottery, scientific instruments, carpets, royal dresses, glassware, metalware, etc.

**The Qur'an MSS**

in the National Museum of Pakistan

**Manuscripts of the Qur'an in the Naskhi, Kufic and Khatt-i Bahar styles**

The collection of manuscripts is, however, enormous, containing as many as 10,000 volumes of the Holy Qur'an and other classical literature in Arabic, Persian, Urdu and other local dialects. Among the manuscript copies of the Holy Qur'an are those transcribed by illustrious calligraphists like Yaquūt al-Musta'īnī, the court calligraphist of the last Abbāsid Caliph al-Musta'īnī Billāh (640-656 A.H./1242-1256 C.E.), by 'Abd al-Bāqī Haddād, who was in the court of the Mughul Emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707 C.E.). Yaquūt al-Musta'īnī was a proficient calligraphist who copied a number of copies of the Holy Qur'an. Among the Museum collections of the copies of the Holy Qur'an, two copies are attributed to the penmanship of this great artist. One of these copies has been transcribed in elegant Naskhi on gold sprinkled paper. The top, the middle and the bottom lines are in 'thulth' script within gold, green and azure marginal lines.

Another interesting style in the Qur'anic calligraphy is named Khatt-i Bahār. It is a traditional style between Kufic and Naskh and is believed to have been evolved at a very early period in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. The National Museum of Pakistan possesses a few copies of the Holy Qur'an transcribed in the elegant Naskh script. The marginal decoration and the inter-linear space is in gold wash.

\[A page from the Holy Qur'an transcribed in the Nastaliq character in the 11th century C.E. The page has floral decoration executed in green, red, white and gold colours. One of the most rare specimens of Qur'anic calligraphy executed in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent\]

\[A page from the Holy Qur'an transcribed in the elegant Naskh script. The marginal decoration and the inter-linear space is in gold wash\]
Qur'an transcribed in this style, one of them has a dated colophon, i.e. 821 A.H./1418 C.E. All the 'unwâns and other indictions in this copy are in bold golden letters and every page is illuminated profusely.

A manuscript of the Qur'an in the Nasta'liq style

A beautifully decorated copy of the Holy Qur'an has been transcribed in Nasta'liq character. It is interesting to note that only a few copies transcribed in this style are found in the libraries of the world. The Museum copy is written in bold letters on large size paper measuring 14” x 9”. The space around the lines is illuminated with gold. The first two pages are profusely decorated with golden and azure floral designs. It was transcribed in 1050 A.H./1650 C.E.

Some rare manuscripts of Arabic and Persian books

Among the other rare manuscripts of Arabic and Persian books the following are worth mentioning:

Muwalâh-i 'Aliyah. Commonly known as Tafsîr-i Husaynî. This famous commentary on the Holy Qur'an in Persian is the great work of the Mu'allâh Kâmâl-al-Din Husayn Wâriz Kâshifî. It was transcribed in 945 A.H./1538 C.E., i.e. 35 years after the death of the author, who died in 910 A.H./1504 C.E. It is a fine specimen of minute Naskh, transcribed tastefully on a golden background and has a dated colophon.

Adab al-Muridîn. A treatise in Arabic on the teachings and the earliest precepts of the Suhrawardîyyah order, written by a famous saint and learned theologian, Abûl-Nâjîb 'Abd al-Qâdir Ibn 'Abd Allâh Ibn Muhammad Suhrawardî. The copy has been transcribed in beautiful bold letters of Naskh character by Ahmad Ibn Suhrawardî in 717 A.H./1317 C.E., who was a disciple of the famous calligrapher, Yâqût-al-Mustâ'îmî. The first and the last pages are illuminated.

Kitâb al-Ta'arrûf li Madhhab Ahl al-Tasawwuf. It is one of the important books on sufism in Persian and is written by Abû Bakr Muhammad Ibn Ibrahim Bukhari Kalbâzi, who died in 380 A.H./990 C.E. It is the oldest manuscript in the collection of the Museum, which was transcribed in 473 A.H./1080 C.E.

Maktûbât-i Ahmad Sirhindî. A collection of letters of the Shaykh Ahmad Faruqî Sirhindî, addressed to his disciples, contemporary saints and to some nobles of the Moghul court. The letters deal with various religious and mystic subjects. These were compiled by Yâr Muhammad of Badakhshan in 1025 A.H./1606 C.E., during the lifetime of the author.

Maktûbât-i Mu'addid Alî-i Thâbî. The second volume of the Mu'addid's 99 letters addressed to various dignitaries of his day. Some letters have been addressed to the nobles of the Moghul court, such as 'Abd al-Rahîm Khân Khânân, Khân Jahân and Shaykh Tâhir Bayakshî. The book was transcribed by Mu'addid's disciple, 'Abd al-Hayy, in 1075 A.H./1664 C.E. A few corrections have been made in the text by Sayyid Muhammad Ma'sûm, another renowned siff. The first folio bears two seal impressions which show that the manuscript was previously preserved in the state library of Tonk, India.

Thamarah al-Quds min Shajarah al-Ums. A rare work containing a biographical account of the saints of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent, written by Lâl Beg, a Bakhshe of Shahzâdah Murâd, son of Emperor Akbar. An endorsement at the end of the manuscript records that it was copied from the author's copy. There are several other endorsements and seal impressions but most of them have been mutilated. Two seal impressions which have escaped obliteration are dated 1050 and 1190 A.H./1640 and 1776 C.E.

Tabaqat-i Nâsîrî. A general history in Persian compiled by Minhâj-i Sirâj Jauzjânî, describing the history from the earliest time to 658 A.H./1259 C.E. and treating more especially the dynasties of Ghaur, Ghaznavâd and of the sub-continent of Indo-Pakistan, which flourished in the 6th and 7th centuries A.H./12th and 13th centuries C.E. The other incomplete copy is preserved in the library of the Punjab University. The other copies previously preserved in the sub-continent were taken away to London by Major Raverty, who published a scholarly translation of this book.

Tarikh-i Mahmid Shâhî. A general history dealing with prophets, saints, scholars, famous dignitaries, monarchs, etc., written by Fâyz Allâh Ibn Zayn al-'Abîdîn Ibn Husayn Bunyâni entitled Malik al-Quds Sardâr-i Jahân. The book has been divided into several maqsâds and begins with the general history of Adam. A brief history of the Muslim emperors of
this sub-continent has also been given in the end. It starts with the history of Sultan Qutb al-Din Aybak and ends with Mahmud Shah of the Sayyid dynasty (838-849 A.H./1434-1445 C.E.).

*Majmu‘ah i Makhzan-i Afghani* with two Takmilahs. History of the sultans of the Lodh dynasty, written in Persian by ‘Nimat Allah Hiravî in 1021 A.H./1612 C.E. in the reign of Jahangir. The important parts of this book are the two Takmilahs, which include the *Tarih-i Sher Shahi* by ‘Abbás Khán Sherwâni and the *Takmilah* of Ibrâhîm Bâtni, which was written in 1113 A.H./1701 C.E. The second book is a part of the history of the Lodhis and the Moghuls. It is unpublished so far. A part of *Makhzan-i Afghani*, entitled *Ansâb-i Afghani*, was translated into English by Dr. Dorn and was published in London in 1929 C.E.

Many of these exquisite specimens were once the proud possessions of the kings and emperors whose seal impressions on colophons appear on them.

**Paintings**

in the National Museum of Pakistan

The Rajput and Kangra Schools

The beginning of the Art of painting in the 16th century C.E.

The collection of paintings in the Museum mainly belongs to the Moghul Schools and its later offshoots. Among these are the specimens of book illustrations and stray paintings from various albums.

Two Persian painters — Mir ‘Ali and ‘Abdus Samad

The art of painting in the Moghul period was started during the days of the Moghul Emperor Humayûn (1530-1556 C.E.), who, while coming back to India from Persia, brought with him two Persian painters, Mir ‘Ali and ‘Abdus Samad. Under the patronage of the Moghul Emperor Akbar (1556-1605 C.E.) these two painters were entrusted with the task of organizing the Imperial Academy of the Arts. They also trained a number of local painters in the art of miniature, who in their prime produced art marvels. Akbar himself used to supervise the work of these painters and select Persian classics for illustrations. The earlier works of this period, like the famous classic *Dastan-i Amir Hamzah*, give an excellent idea of the customs, traditions and social etiquettes of that glorious past. The illustrations are generally the work of a team of artists; one has, for instance, executed the outline, the other the portrait, the third the landscape and the fourth has added the colour.

But, the most remarkable are the individual paintings executed specially for the albums during the days of the Moghul Emperors Jahangir (1605-1627 C.E.) and Shâh Jahân (1628-1657 C.E.). These two Emperors were interested mainly in the portrait painting and study of natural scenes, plants, animals, etc. Shâh Jahân liked paintings portraying a gorgeous depiction of court ceremonies, social parties and palace life. Delicacy and polish were the characteristics of these works. Numerous albums were prepared which contained portraits of Emperors, courtiers, noblemen, ladies, etc., and incidents of court life, pictures of animals and birds. The practice was to have separate folios in the album, sometimes a painting on one side and a specimen of calligraphy on the other.

**The Folios of *Ajâ’ib al-Makhlûqât* and Shâhnâmeh**

Among the collections of the National Museum of Pakistan, the most important pieces are folios of the *Ajâ’ib al-Makhlûqât*, a Persian work on the study of animals, birds, trees, etc. The names of the painters are written on the margin. There is a copy of Firdûsi’s Shâhnâmeh transcribed by Mir ‘Ali and illustrated in the Shiraz style of painting. The...
field of decoration, and a number of monuments, especially mosques and mausoleums, have been decorated with various kinds of inscriptions.

In the beginning of the Muslim era, Arabic was transcribed in Kufic characters. Many copies of the Holy Qur'an are now known to have been transcribed in this early style. Then there evolved the Naskh script, which was more concise and rounder in shape. At the outset, it was used for ordinary writing, but later on the text of the Holy Qur'an and the Arabic books were also transcribed in it. This style is still used for this purpose.

The evolution of the Nasta'liq style by the Persians

The Persians are given the credit for evolving the Nasta'liq, which has been regarded as the most beautiful style of writing. It was mainly employed for writing the Persian books. Many Muslim kings and emperors are known to have patronized this art, while a few of them were themselves calligraphists. Among the Moghul Emperors and Princes, Dárá Shikoh, Sháh Shujá', Aurangzeb and Bahádúr Sháh were good calligraphists. Some of the renowned calligraphists of the Moghul period whose specimens are now in this Museum were Sultán 'Alí Mashhádá, Mír 'Alí-Káttib, Mirzá Muhammad Husayn, 'Abd al-Rashíd Daylámí, 'Abd al-Báqí Haddád, etc. Of the later period were Hidáyat 'ul-láh Zarrín Qálam, Muhammad Afzal, Shaykh Núrulláh, Muhammad Báqir, Sayyid Muhammad 'Amír Rízví, etc. The beautiful specimens of calligraphy displayed in the Museum gallery of the Museum give an idea of the art. These are mostly in the shape of Wastils (two sheets of paper joined together used by calligraphists to practise their art) and have decorated borders in gold, green and red colours.

Royal Farāmin (edicts) and Documents

in the National Museum of Pakistan

From amongst a large collection of the royal documents, farāmin (edicts), personal letters of renowned personalities of the sub-continent, like Mirzá Asadulláh Khán Ghálib, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khán, the 'Allamah Iqábál, Akbar Alláhabádí, etc., a few farāmin of Muslim Emperors and other official documents, mainly of the Moghul period, are important. This original material throws light on the cultural and social history of the Muslims in the sub-continent and also reveals the elaborately arranged documents of the Moghul secretariat. The procedure of the preparation of these documents, namely endorsement, mode of issue, attestations and verifications, etc., all are discernible from these specimens. Some of these documents reveal historical facts not available otherwise. A specially worth mentioning collection of the farāmin is that of Sultán Ghiyáṣ al-Dín Balban (1265-1286 C.E.). It is the oldest known original document of that period. Apart from its great historical value, it is a beautiful specimen of the calligraphic art. It has been transcribed in bold and elegant tashkíh characters. The tughrá of the Sultán and his seal appear on the top. The farāmin was issued to the Mauláná Hadídar for the grant of a piece of land at Delhi in 671 A.H./1272 C.E.

Islamic Pottery

in the National Museum of Pakistan

The glazed pottery was very much favoured and made throughout the Muslim world since very early days. In the Muslim world, Fustát, Samarra, Ctesiphon, Susa, Rayy, Nishápúr, Káshán, etc., were the famous centres for this art, while in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent, Uchh, Multán, Hyderábad, Sákhtar, Hala, Lahore, Sialkot and Peshawar were the main cities where the tradition existed. The specimens in the collection of the Museum relate the history of this industry from the 9th century C.E. down to the modern period. Nishápúr was a great centre of glazed ceramics and excavations of the Muslim remains there have revealed many hitherto unknown types of early Islamic pottery. The pottery is profusely decorated; lustre enamel painting was reserved for the high grade ware. Besides, incising underglazed painting in monochrome and polychrome was also
used. Another type of incised decoration was called graffiato. In Pakistan, a good many pieces of pottery decorated in this fashion have been recovered from Banbhore, a probable site of Debal. The Muslim potter knew many other styles of decoration: sometimes the Kufic inscriptions were applied on the rim of the pot and sometimes stylized human figures were painted.

**Islamic Metalware in the National Museum of Pakistan**

Specimens of metalware have provided the most continuous and best documented material for the history of Islamic art. Unfortunately, gold and silver objects of the early period have not survived in great number. It is mainly from the bronze, brass and copper utensils that Islamic metalwork can be studied. Before the 12th century C.E., the usual techniques applied to decorate the metalwork were casting, carving, engraving, repoussé work and niello. The 12th century C.E., however, saw the beginning of a technique of inlaying bronze and brass with copper or silver wire. In Iran, the main centres of this industry were Khurásán, Bukhará, Samarkand, Balkh, Marv, Nishápûr and Herát, where a series of candlesticks with plain or decorative body were manufactured. Another new style was formed under the influence of Chinese paintings and textiles, which included floral motifs. There is no evidence of inlaid metalwork having been made in Mesopotamia before the beginning of the 13th century C.E. Syria, however, produced the most splendid metalwork during the 14th century C.E. The work continued to flourish for more than a century.

*A minutely decorated Gulab Pash (rosewater sprinkler) made of brass (late 18th century C.E.)*

*A specimen of Muslim leather book-binding executed in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent in early 19th century C.E.*
The specimens of metalwork in our collection are representative of these periods. These are candlesticks, bowls, samovars, and other small pieces manufactured both in the country and abroad.

Islamic Glassware
in the National Museum of Pakistan

The Eastern world has always been regarded as a thriving centre of glass industry. But, very little is known about those ancient pieces and it is only from the 11th and 12th centuries C.E. that we find examples of cut-glass being produced in Egypt with conventionalized figures of animals and ornamental decoration in high relief. The most beautiful products of oriental glass, however, are the enamelled glasses which were produced during the 12th and 14th centuries C.E. The earlier products of the 12th and 13th centuries C.E. are the magnificent domestic vessels like pots, bottles, vases and goblets. Most of them were made in Mesopotamia and Iraq. The mosque lamps (Fātūs) were made chiefly in Syria during the 14th century C.E. These possess spirited decoration in the shape of arabesque and flower motifs, medallions showing coat-of-arms or inscriptions. In the 15th century C.E. the Syrian manufacturers also produced peculiarly shaped pots and bottles, usually of blue or green glass. The specimens of Islamic glassware containing mosque lamps, bowls, flower pots, bottles of numerous shapes and designs in the collection of the Museum give a complete picture of the advancement of this art-industry.

Rugs and Carpets
in the National Museum of Pakistan

The rug weaving industry in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent was also introduced by the Moghuls. During the time of the great Moghul Emperor Akbar, many new designs of decorations for rugs and carpets were produced. Although in the beginning, local weavers working in the State manufactories copied the Iranian designs, in the later days they introduced new and original designs of plants, flowers, etc. The best rugs of the Moghul period were woven during the reigns of Akbar, Jahangir and Shāh Jahān. The work was executed either upon the imperial looms located at Agra, Fatehpur, Lahore and Delhi or in the factories supervised and patronized by other courtiers and nobles.

Another popular variety of Moghul rugs made during the time of Shāh Jahān shows a trellis framework containing realistic plants. In technical perfection, the weavers of this age often surpassed the Persian workers. The rugs and carpets produced during the period have variety of designs and colours. One of the favourite designs was the rows of flowering plants each delineated separately as if planted in a garden. Every flower, bud, leaf and vine is represented as a living organism, exactly as in nature. The colours of these rugs were generally lighter than those of Persian carpets. The technique was also the finest employed anywhere. One of such masterpieces is on display in the Pakistan National Museum which, although comparatively damaged, shows the proficiency of the local weaver.

This is a very brief introduction of the art treasures preserved in the National Museum of Pakistan. These treasures throw light on the various aspects of the cultural and social life and manifest the splendour that was Muslim India — an aspect generally neglected by the Indian as well as Western art-historians.

The obverse and reverse of the gold coin of the Moghul Emperor Shāhjāhān (1628-1655 C.E.). The Mohr was minted at Akbarabad (Agra) in 1054 A.H.
Palestine and Zionism

The Suppressed Report of the American King-Crane Commission

By SALAH RAMADAN

About fifty years ago, at a secret conference of the Council of Four, consisting of President Wilson of the U.S.A., David Lloyd George of Great Britain, M. Clemenceau of France, and M. Orlando of Italy, held in Paris on Thursday 20 March 1919, to be exact, in order to discuss the wartime Secret Agreements1 connected with the carving up of the Ottoman Empire,2 after her defeat by the Entente Powers in World War I, President Wilson's suggestion that a Commission should be sent to inquire into local conditions in Syria and Palestine was unanimously approved, although not without some reservation.3 France and Great Britain were not very happy about such a Commission,4 which, in the words of President Wilson, was to be composed of "an equal number of French, British, Italian and American representatives", who would be sent "with carte blanche to tell facts as they found them",5 before these territories were assigned to mandatories.

On 21 May, after a long period of squabbling among the protagonists of secret diplomacy as to the feasibility and utility of such a Commission, President Wilson informed the Council that he had instructed his Commissioners to leave at once, in spite of the absence of representatives from the other three countries. Thus, the American Commission, headed by Charles R. Crane and Henry Churchill King, left Paris on 25 May in order "to study conditions in the Turkish Empire with reference to possible mandates ... simply and solely to get as accurate and definite information ... in order that President Wilson and the American people may act with full knowledge of the facts in any policy they may be called upon hereafter to adopt concerning the problems of the Near East."6

On August 1919 the King-Crane Commission, as it became known then, reported to the Peace Conference at Paris. Its findings were kept secret and suppressed not only by the Great Three in Paris, viz., Great Britain, France and Italy, which had a direct stake in the Near East, but also by the American State Department, which seemingly had no axe to grind. The reason: "It was entirely too frank, it contained too much plain-speaking regarding political and other conditions in that tinder box of the world, the Near East."7

Extracts from the King-Crane Report on the subjects of Palestine and Zionism

The King-Crane report,8 which was a mammoth volume of upwards of 40,000 words, consisted of three parts, the most interesting of which was Part III, including a special confidential report "for the use of Americans only" in which the Commission expounded its findings with candid sincerity.

The Commission's "courageous and dispassionate observations" on the subject of Palestine and Zionism are so vivid and outspoken that, even today, one can read through the lines a fair warning of what was to come in the Near East, and Palestine in particular; a warning which those who indulged in power politics and secret diplomacy did not pay heed to, and which foretold the sad story of the bloodshed, human misery and degradation in this region whose future is so uncertain and perilous.9

1 The Constantinople Agreement of 8th March 1915; the Treaty of London of 26 April 1915; the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 16 May 1916; and the St. Jean de Maurienne Agreement of 17 April 1917.
3 For the entry of the Ottoman Empire into the First World War see Harry N. Howard, op. cit.; Ahmed Emin (Yalman), Turkey in the World War, New Haven 1930; and M. Bompard, L'Entree en Guerre de la Turquie, La Revue de Paris for 1 July 1921, pp. 61-85.
7 The other principal members included Dr. Albert H. Lybyer, Dr. George R. Montgomery and Captain William Yale, advisers, and Captain Donald M. Brodie, secretary.
9 Ray Stannard Baker, ibid., p. 205.
10 For more details on the Report see King-Crane Commission to Negotiate Peace, 28 August 1919, Paris Peace Conference XII; see also King-Crane Report on the Near East in Editor and Publisher, 11/7, 27th edition, 2 December 1922.
11 Ray Stannard Baker, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 213; for the other activities of the Commission, see pp. 207-212 of same.
One of the recommendations of the King-Crane commission with regard to Palestine advocated a "serious modification of the extreme Zionist programme for Palestine of unlimited immigration of Jews, looking finally to making Palestine distinctly a Jewish State". The Commissioners began their study of Zionism with minds predisposed in its favour, but the actual facts in Palestine, coupled with the force of the general principles proclaimed by the Entente Powers and "accepted by the Syrians", had driven them to the recommendations they made in this report.

"Although the Commission found much to approve in the aspirations and plans of the Zionists," went on the Report, "and had warm appreciation for the devotion of many of the Jewish colonists and for their success, by modern methods, in overcoming great natural obstacles; and although the Commission recognized that definite encouragement had been given to the Zionists by the Allies; by the Balfour Declaration of 1917 about the establishment of a national home for the Jews — it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine — yet it hardly doubted that the extreme Zionist programme had to be greatly modified. For a 'national home for the Jewish people' is not equivalent to making Palestine into a Jewish State: nor can the erection of such a Jewish State be accomplished without the gravest trespass upon the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine." The fact came out repeatedly in the Commission's conference with Jewish representatives that the Zionists looked forward to a practically complete dispossession of the present non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine, by various forms of purchase.

"In his address of 4 July 1918 President Wilson laid down the following principle as one of the four great ends for which the associated peoples of the world were fighting: 'The settlement of every question, whether of territory, of sovereignty, of economic arrangement, or of political relationship upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned, and not upon the basis of the material interest or advantage of any other nation or people which may desire a different settlement for the sake of its own exterior influence or mastery.' If that principle is to rule, and so the wishes of Palestine's population are to be decisive as to what is to be done with Palestine, then it is to be remembered that the non-Jewish population of Palestine — nearly nine-tenths of the whole — are emphatically against the entire Zionist programme. The tables show that there was no one thing upon which the population of Palestine were more agreed than upon this. To subject a people so minded to unlimited Jewish immigration, and to steady financial and social pressure to surrender the land, would be a gross violation of the principle just quoted, and of the people's rights, though it kept within the forms of law. . . .

"The Peace Conference should not shut its eyes to the fact that the anti-Zionist feeling in Palestine and Syria is intense and not lightly to be flouted. No British officer, consulted by the Commissioners, believed that the Zionist programme could be carried out except by force of arms. The officers generally thought that a force of not less than 50,000 soldiers would be required even to initiate the programme. That of itself is evidence of a strong sense of the injustice of the Zionist programme on the part of the non-Jewish populations of Palestine and Syria. Decisions, requiring armies to carry out, are sometimes necessary, but they are surely not gratuitously to be taken in the interests of a serious injustice. For the initial claim, submitted by Zionist representatives, that they have a 'right' to Palestine, based on an occupation of two thousand years, can hardly be seriously considered.

"There is a further consideration that cannot justly be ignored, if the world is to look forward to Palestine becoming a definitely Jewish State, however gradually that may take place. That consideration grows out of the fact that Palestine is 'the Holy Land' for Jews, Christians and Moslems alike. Millions of Christians and Moslems all over the world are quite as much concerned as the Jews with conditions in Palestine, especially with those conditions which touch upon religious feeling and rights. The relations in these matters in Palestine are most delicate and difficult. With the best possible intentions, it may be doubted whether the Jews could possibly seem to either Christians or Moslems proper guardians of the holy places, or custodians of the Holy Land as a whole. The reason is this: the places which are most sacred to Christians — those having to do with Jesus — and which are also sacred to Moslems, are not only not sacred to Jews, but abhorrent to them. It is simply impossible, under those circumstances, for Moslems and Christians to feel satisfied to have these places in Jewish hands, or under the custody of the Jews. There are still other places about which Moslems must have the same feeling. In fact, from this point of view, the Moslems, just because the sacred places of all three religions are sacred to them, have made very naturally much more satisfactory custodians of the holy places than the Jews could be. It must be believed that the precise meaning, in this respect, of the complete Jewish occupation of Palestine has not been fully sensed by those who urge the extreme Zionist programme. For it would intensify, with a certainty like fate, the anti-Jewish feeling both in Palestine and in all other portions of the world which look to Palestine as 'the Holy Land'.

"In view of all these considerations, and with a deep sense of sympathy for the Jewish cause, the Commissioners feel bound to recommend that only a greatly reduced Zionist programme be attempted by the Peace Conference, and even that only very gradually initiated. This would have to mean that Jewish immigration should be definitely limited, and that the project for making Palestine distinctly a Jewish commonwealth should be given up. . . ."

This is a significant extract from the King-Crane Report, which had no influence upon the settlement of the questions with which it dealt because not only was it not implemented, it was also suppressed by the Big Powers which had a direct stake in the Near East, as well as by America, the very country which had sponsored the King-Crane Commission, and which does not seem to have drawn any lesson from its report.

The Indian Muslim Women and Islam

The Purdah and its share in the backwardness of Indian Muslim Women

Ziya Gokalp, the national poet of Turkey, and Iqbal, of Pakistan, on the need of re-thinking the status of the Muslim women

By SAQIB ANWAR

Causes of Muslims' backwardness in India

That the Muslims in India are backward in many respects is no secret. A few solitary cases apart, it can be said that in general they are far behind the majority community, economically as well as politically. Various historical factors are responsible for this state of affairs. "After 1857 the heavy hand of the British fell more on the Muslims than on the Hindus. They considered the Muslims more aggressive and militant, possessing memories of their recent rule in India, and therefore more dangerous." This is one of the causes of their economic depression. Secondly, during the Muslim rule in India, due to their false sense of pride, the Muslims cared little for agriculture and trade, as they regarded these occupations below the dignity of the ruling class. Consequently, the majority of the educated Muslims joined the services under the British crown and the remaining illiterate masses resorted to menial labour, leaving the main sources of prosperity, i.e. trade and agriculture, solely in the hands of the non-Muslims. As a natural corollary to feudalism the Muslim society split into multi-millionaires and the working class. An overabundance of wealth led the Jāşirāds (estate titleholders) and Nawābhs (the ruling hierarchy) to be engaged in other pursuits and neglecting the problem of educating their children properly. As to the working class Muslims, they just could not afford to send their children to academic institutions for higher learning. Hence the widespread illiteracy and ignorance among the Indian Muslims.

The other major factor greatly responsible for this economic and educational backwardness of the Indian Muslims is their rigid view of Islam. Here it may sound paradoxical, yet it is a fact that their conservatism and orthodoxy are, and were, the greatest impediments in the progress of the Muslim community in India. Although Islam, no doubt, is a dynamic religion, the dogmatic and irrational attitude of its followers has made it a stagnant creed. Moreover, a sizeable number of the native converts to Islam in India failed to grasp the spirit of Islam, for instance, to quote the example of the Khoja Muslims and Katchi Memon Muslims, who preferred the conventional Hindu law of inheritance to the Muslim law, the Shari'ah, for many years.* This, together with the conservatism of the orthodox Muslims and their irrational approach to Islam, was responsible for the complete seclusion of Muslim women from social life. The late Mr. Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, an English Muslim who lived for a number of years in India, critically examining the miserable condition of Muslim women in India remarks: "The status to which the great majority of Muslim women in India are reduced today is a libel on Islam, a crime for which the Muslim community as a whole will have to suffer in increasing social degradation, in weak and sickly offspring, in increasing child mortality, so long as that crime is perpetuated." No doubt this crime began in ignorance of the Islamic law, the Shari'ah. But the grave consequences of the transgression are inevitable. Wrong notions among the Indian Muslims about the Purdah system, which is neither of Islamic nor of Arabian origin, is at the root of the depressed status of Muslim women in India. For the Purdah system was practised by many nations of antiquity. The 'gynaiikonitis' was a familiar institution among the Athenians; and "the inmates of an Athenian harem were as jealously guarded from the public gaze as the members of a Persian household then, or of an Indian household now." Thus it is clear that the Purdah system is of Zoroastrian-Persian and Christian-Byzantine origin. "It has nothing to do with Islam, and for practical reasons, it has never been adopted by the great majority of Muslim women" except in India. Therefore, naturally the Muslim community in India, after confining half of its female members to seclusion, could not claim financial and educational equality with the majority community.

The Veil

Here let us examine in detail the false notions about the Purdah system cherished so dearly by Indian Muslims for centuries on end. Even in these days of intellectual enlighten-

*Hāmid *Ali: "The Customary and Statutory Laws of the Muslims in India." (The Islamic Culture, Hyderabad, India, for October, 1937, pp. 444-454.)
1 Jawaharlal Nehru: An Autobiography, p. 460 (Delhi, 1962).
4 Pickthall (op. cit. p. 148).
ment the majority of the improperly educated Muslims are conservative in their outlook on life. Their over-emphasis on the glory of the past never allows them to be objective and stultifies their impromptu investigation and free inquiry. What is more, they, even today, do not accept their mistake and think that the existing Purdah system in India is in accordance with the tenets of Islam and the Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad. It is a fact “that the Prophet of Islam is the greatest feminist the world has ever known”.

The students of Islamic history know full well in what contempt the Arabs in the Prophet’s day held their womenfolk and the change the Prophet’s teaching brought about on women’s status. It was due to the tireless efforts and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad that she was raised to a position beyond which she can go only in theory. I am aware that many of the enlightened non-Muslims may call it a “tall claim” on my part in view of what they see in the day-to-day life in a Muslim household, especially in India. Yet it is a fact that the existing institution of seclusion (Purdah) in India, is un-Islamic in its nature; for it keeps up half of the Muslim population behind doors in unhygienic conditions. Islam came to uproot all sorts of inhumanity from the world, and not to impose disabilities upon the fair sex.

**Christian fathers’ low opinion of womanhood**

Islam held women in high respect even in those days when the Arabs regarded it as derogatory to be called the fathers of their daughters. Both the Jews and non-nomadic Arabs contributed liberally to this hatred of the pagan Arabs towards their womenfolk. The Hebrew maiden, even in her father’s house, stood in the position of a servant; her father could sell her if a minor. In case of his death, the sons could dispose of her at will and their pleasure. The daughter inherited nothing except when there were no male heirs. In their aversion for women the Quraysh and the Kindah tribes even went to the extent of burying alive their female children. The pagan Arabs acquired this inhuman attitude towards women from their Persian and Byzantine-Christians neighbours, who had themselves given a very low position to women in society. The Christian theory of “Original Sin” and the emergence of the institution of celibacy are rooted in the contempt of the Christian Church for women. “The strong and inexplicable antipathy of Paul towards the female sex, joined to the words of the Master, strengthened in the Church the Esseonic conception that the union of man and woman in the holiest of ties was an act of sinfulness, an evil to be avoided as far as possible.” It is a pity that the Christians, who are proud of their recognising and practising Mariolatry (the adoration of the mother of Jesus), basically held a very low opinion of women, because many Fathers of the Catholic Church wrote upon the enormities of women, their evil tendencies, their inconceivable malignity.

The Latin father of the Church, Tertullian (d. about 230 C.E.), representing the general feeling, described women as “the devil’s gateway, the unsealer of the forbidden tree, the deserter of the divine law, the destroyer of God’s image — man.” Ameer ‘Ali, in his *The Spirit of Islam*, quotes some of the epithets used by the Christians for women. Another authority declared with a revolting cynicism. “Among women he sought for chastity, but found none.” The Greek father of the church, Chrysostom (d. 407 C.E.), who is recognised as a saint of high merit, “Interpreted the general opinion of the Fathers,” says Lecky, “when he pronounced women to be a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a deadly fascination, a painted ill.” Even the theory of the Indian ash-covered yogis, the matted-locked ascetics and the priests of the Buddha (all celibates), that knowledge is unattainable without surrendering all the loving ties of home and family and infinitely impossible of realisation without leading a life of singleness, is based upon the same perverted view of the natural laws of sex. To a Muslim to look askance at the normal physical joys of married life is nothing short of unnatural.

**The Emancipation of Women in Islam**

This was the status given to women both in Eastern and Western countries at the time of the advent of Islam. Islam actually emancipated women from this forced degradation centuries before the Western world had even thought of it by exclaiming in unequivocal terms the equality of woman with man in all respects without ever condemning her for her sex. Borrowing the words of Mrs. Malika Citrine, it can be said that “the Qur’an is the only world scripture which does not contain expressions of contempt for women, or regard them as base-born creatures. On the contrary, expressions such as ‘the believing man and believing women’ are frequently repeated, constantly linking man and woman together on a basis of personal equality in regard to their duties, rights and merits.” The Qur’an says:

> “And for women are rights over men similar to those for men over women.” (2 : 228)

The Qur’an admonished those who held women in contempt and ill-treated them habitually in these words:

> “Ye who believe! It is not allowed you to be heirs of women against their will, nor to hinder them from marrying, that you may take from them a part of that which you have given them, unless they have been guilty of evident lewdness. But deal kindly with them, for if ye hate them, it may happen that ye hate a thing wherein God hath placed much good.” (4 : 19)

Unfortunately in Europe and America it is commonly believed that the Muslim view of women is that women have no souls! But the Qur’an makes no difference between men and women in relation to God, as both are promised the same reward for good, and the same punishment for evil conduct. Here is a typical quotation from the Qur’an which clearly elucidates the Islamic concept of the equality of sexes:

> “Verily the men who surrender to God and women who surrender, and men who believe and women who believe, and men who obey and women who obey, and men who are sincere and women who are sincere, and men who endure and women who endure, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who are modest and women who are modest, and men who remember God much and women who remember (Him), God hath prepared for them pardon and a great reward.” (33 : 35)

The Prophet Muhammad not only taught the equality of sexes when he said, “Women are the twin halves of men”, but also gave her a potential superiority over men when he

---

5 Num. XXX.17.
6 Ameer ‘Ali (op. cit. p. 239).
7 Ibid. p. 251.
8 Ibid. p. 251.
said, “The most valuable thing in the world is a virtuous woman” and “Paradise lies at the feet of mothers”. He further said, “When a woman observes the five times of prayer, and fasts in the month of Ramadán, and is chaste and is not disobedient to her husband, then tell her to enter Paradise by whichever gate she likes.”

Purdah and Education

It is a pity that the majority of the conservative Indian Muslims are unaware of this status of equality conferred upon women by Islam. Women, too, are deplorably ignorant of their equal social and legal rights. Times have changed. Social thought has advanced and the progressive nations have adjusted themselves to the changes in their environment, except the Indian Muslims, who are ignorant of the fact that the true Islamic teaching enjoins on women a modest conduct and not that type of seclusion which in India goes under the name of Purdah.

Let us read the Qur’án on this vexed question. The Qur’án says:

“And say to the believing women that they cast down their eyes and . . . not display their ornaments except what is outward (the face, hands and feet) and let them cast their head-coverings over their bosoms . . .” (24: 31).

In this verse the Qur’án is using words with which the Arabs of the days of the Prophet Muhammad were familiar to convey the idea of decency of conduct. It is evident that it is not the particular form of dress that is required of the Muslim woman to be worn; for dress changes from place to place and country to country, and from one age to another. The Qur’án, by using the words for the type of dress regarded as decent by the Arabs, merely emphasises the idea of decency and not some particular type of dress. It is not the literal meaning of the words but the spirit behind them that the Qur’án wishes to bring home to Muslim women.

Islam requires equal observance of modesty and chastity from both sexes

“The Purdah system, as it now exists in India, was quite undreamt of by the Muslims of the early centuries of Islam, who had adopted the face-veil and some other fashions for their women when they went into the cities of Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia and Egypt, at once as a concession to the prevailing custom and as a protection to their women from misunderstanding by people accustomed to associate unveiled faces with loose character.” Even in India the Purdah system was adopted, in the earlier days of the Muslim rule, only by the well-to-do families who could afford big, airy, palace-like spacious and well-lit houses with beautiful gardens in them, and not by those who led a hand-to-mouth life. (When compared to India, the Muslim women of Arabia, Syria, Egypt and Turkey were always emancipated because the peasantry of these countries is predominantly Muslim. “The majority of Muslim women in the world are peasants who work with their husbands and brothers in the fields.”) The face-veil for them would be an encumbrance. The head-covering, on the other hand, is quite convenient both for the working class women as well as the Muslim women of the upper class.

While Islam requires the equal observance of modesty and chastity in the case of both sexes, it does not demand the rigid segregation of men and women, as is sometimes suggested. The very fact that the Qur’án demands careful behaviour in the presence of the opposite sex presupposes that they will have occasion to be in each other’s company. Islam does, however, point out the obvious dangers to virtue which may arise when a man and woman, not closely related to each other, associate in private and informally; but there is no Islamic reason why men and women should not meet and co-operate, under proper conditions, for religious, cultural, social or occupational purposes.11

Some sayings of the Prophet Muhammad on the acquisition of knowledge

The harm the Purdah system, as practised in India, has done to Muslim society is immense. The Prophet Muhammad has expressly enjoined that “education is the sacred duty of every Muslim and every Muslimah”. To inculcate properly the value of education upon the minds of Muslims again and again the Prophet stressed this point in different words, such as:

“Seek knowledge, though it be in China”, or,

“An hour’s contemplation and study of God’s creation is better than a year of adoration”, or,

“Verily God doth not keep knowledge as a thing apart that He withholdeth from His servants, but He doth keep it in the grasp of men of knowledge, so that if He shall cause not a man of knowledge to remain, mankind will take foolish heads, and they will be questioned and give fatwas, and they will err and lead others into error”, or,

“The ink of the scholar is holier than the blood of the martyr”, or,

“He dieth not who seeketh knowledge”, or,

“Whosoever revereth the learned, revereth me”, or,

“The first thing created was reason”, or,

“God hath not created anything better than reason. The benefits which God giveth are on account of it, and understanding is by it; and God’s displeasure is caused by it, and by it are rewards and punishments”, or,

“To listen to the words of the learned and to instil into others the lessons of science is better than religious exercises”, or,

“He who leaveth his home in search of knowledge, walketh in the path of God”, or,

“Acquire knowledge. It enableth the possessor to distinguish right from wrong; it lighteth up the path to Heaven. It is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when friendless. It guideth to happiness, it sustaineth in adversity. It is an ornament among friends, and an armour against enemies”, or,

“Lo! the angels offer their wings to the seeker of knowledge”, or,

“Are those who have knowledge on an equality with those who have no knowledge?”

Some famous Muslim women

Universal education both for men and women thus became the norm of life in Islam thirteen centuries before it was adopted by the West. Every Muslim deemed it his duty

10 Pickthall (op. cit. p. 139).
11 Mrs. Malika Citrine (op. cit. pp. 15-16).
to acquire knowledge. When the Muslims in the early days of Islam were performing this duty of acquiring and propagating education and the Muslim scholars were writing exegetic tracts of Plato and Aristotle, the Europeans, in the dark ages, had just begun to learn the spellings of their names. Their contemporaries, some Muslim women, like Zubaydah, the wife of the Caliph of Baghdad, Harun (d. 786 C.E.), was playing a conspicuous part in the history of the age; Humayrah, the wife of Fardq, a Medinite citizen who was away for twenty-seven years engaged in wars in Khorasan, was educating her son, Rabia’ah al-Rayy, to become one of the most distinguished jurists of the day: Sakinah, the daughter of Husayn and grand-daughter of ‘Ali, was prizing the converse of learned and pious people; Burhan, the wife of the Caliph Ma’mun (d. 813 C.E.), Ma’mun’s sister, married to the eighth Imam of the house of ‘Ali, and Umm al-Habib, Ma’mun’s daughter, was busy in expelling the gloom of ignorance and illiteracy by their scholarship. In the 5th century of the Hegira (11th century C.E.), the Shaykhah Shuhaydah, designated as Fakhr al-Nisa’ (“the glory of women”), was lecturing publicly at the Cathedral Mosque of Baghdad to large audiences on literature, rhetoric and poetry, occupying in the annals of Islam a position of equality with the most distinguished ulama; and Dhat al-Himmah (corrupted into Zemmah), “the Lion-heart”, the heroine of many battles, was fighting side by side with the bravest knights of her day.12

Some Muslims have irrationally divided education in two branches: (1) religious, and (2) secular. It is maintained by them that for Muslim girls a religious education is enough. As a matter of fact, Islam has never differentiated between religious and secular education. To quote a recent European writer: “It was the glory of Islam that it gave to other sciences the same footing which it gave to the study of the Qur’an and the Hadith and Fiqh (i.e. Muslim Jurisprudence), a place in the Mosque.”13 M. M. Pickthall, in his Cultural Side of Islam, says: “Lectures on chemistry and physics, botany, medicine and astronomy were given in the mosque equally with the lectures on the above named subjects; for the mosque was the University of Islam in the great days, and it deserved the name of University, since it welcomed to its precincts all the knowledge of the age from every quarter. It was this unity and exaltation of all learning which gave the old Muslim writers that peculiar quality which every reader of them must have noticed, the calm serenity of their minds.”

Therefore, it is unwise to think that Muslim girls should rest contented only with the parrot-like reading of few Arabic texts, without ever knowing the meanings of what they are learning. It is true that some liberal-minded Muslims are giving even secular education to their daughters, along with religious education. But, excepting a few institutions of religious learning, like those of Deoband and Rampur in India, there are no institutions of systematic study of Islam throughout India. The result is that the Muslim youth gets either only secular or only religious knowledge. Those who have a thorough knowledge of both sides are a microscopic minority. This complete segregation of these two branches of education has resulted in a wide gulf of apathy towards each other. The students of religious and secular institutions look askance at each other.

13 Quoted from Pickthall (op. cit. p. 9).
15 Humayun Kabir: Education in Indian, p. 89 (1901).
17 Ibid, p. 92.
"Let not anyone scatter over my tomb anything other than grass, for it is enough for the grave of the poor."

Every student of Indian history knows the intellectual achievements of Zebunnisa, the daughter of Aurangzeb, who was interested in the advancement of knowledge. She had established a literary academy and a library for the use of scholars and it was at her instance that the Mullâb Sayfuddin translated the Imam Râzi's Ta'fîr Kâbir into Persian and named it Zeb-At-Tasfîr, after the name of her patron. A contemporary historian has recorded that Zebunnisa was a sedulous collector of books and had a large library (Mu'dîrî-
A'lamî). She also wrote poetry of high order.

Muslims in India lagged behind in education after the disappearance of the Moghul rule in 1857

All this was the past of Muslim women in India. The decline of Moghul rule was the greatest setback to Muslim education in India. After 1857 the condition of the Muslims was still worse. With the dawn of the new era the new nationalism grew up from above — the upper class English-speaking intelligentsia — and this was naturally confined to the Hindus, for the Muslims were educationally backward. because it was a sin for orthodox Muslims to learn English, whereas the Hindus had taken far more kindly to the English language and clergly jobs, and seemed to be more docile.

Therefore the Hindus, with the help of the broadminded Englishmen, felt the dire necessity of female education in India. Through the efforts of Hon. John Elliott Drinkwater Bethune, Legal Member of the Governor-General's Council and President of the Council of Education, and of Pandit Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, one of the great educationists and social reformers of modern India on 7 May 1849 established the first separate school for the instruction of the girls of high class Hindus, under the name of the Hindo Vâlîka Vidyalaya (Female School). Similarly, Raja Radhakanta Debably helped the cause of female education by starting a girls' school in his own house at Sobha Bazar in Calcutta. Mr. J. E. D. Bethune once wrote to him, "I am anxious to give you the credit which justly belongs to you of having been the first native of India who, in modern times, has pointed out the folly and wickedness of allowing women to grow up in utter ignorance and that this matter is neither enjoined nor countenanced by anything in the Hindu Sastras."

Institutions like Hindo Vâlîka Vidyalaya were meant for high class Hindu girls only. Thanks to the benevolent efforts of the Christian missionaries in India, who rushed to the rescue of the miserable lot of the down-trodden Hindus of low-birth. At the close of 1850 the missionary "efforts in female education in India embraced three hundred and fifty-four day-schools, with eleven thousand five hundred girls; and ninety-one boarding schools, with two thousand four hundred and fifty girls, taught almost exclusively in the vernacular language. These missionary schools were thus distributed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Bengal</th>
<th>N.W. Province</th>
<th>Madras Presidency</th>
<th>Bombay Presidency</th>
<th>Ceylon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>6,929</td>
<td>1,087</td>
<td>2,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarding</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>836</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>1,101</td>
<td>172</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

354 11,549 91 2,446

Unfortunately we have no knowledge of the proportion of Muslim girls learning in these 445 mission schools among these 14,000 students. Perhaps we may get some idea of the proportion of Muslim girls in these schools from the findings of Mr. Adam, who saw 175 girls in four female schools in Burdwan district in 1938; of these one was Muhammadan, 36 were either daughters of Christian parents or orphans supported by the missionaries, and 128 Hindus, but of the Hindu girls 58 were Bagdis, 18 Muchis, 17 Domes, 12 Haries, 6 Vaishnavas, 6 Tantis, 2 Chandals, 1 Kurmi and 1 Bate."

This was the sad picture of the education of Muslim women in India in the 19th century. There was some improvement in the 20th century, due to the special efforts of the British Government, as well as the whole-hearted cooperation of both the enlightened Hindus and Muslims. In post-independence India "special efforts have also been made to increase the facilities available to girls and women. The number of pupils on the role of various types of educational institutions has doubled, rising from 3.5 million in 1947-48 to over 7 million in 1954." Even here we do not know the proportion of Muslim girls in these 7 million girl students. Certainly the rigidity of the Purâdah system might have deprived thousands of Muslim girls from availing themselves of the educational opportunities so generously kept open for all the citizens of the free India, irrespective of caste and creed.

Iqbal and Ziyîa Gökalp on re-interpretation of the "founding principles of Islam"

Among Muslim nations of today Turkey perhaps alone has shaken off its dogmatic slumber and attained to self-consciousness. Let us see what Ziyâ, the nationalist poet of Turkey, says about the emancipation of Muslim women:

"There is the woman, my mother, my sister, or my daughter, it is she who calls up the most sacred emotions from the depth of my life! There is my beloved, my sun, my moon and my star; it is she who makes me understand the poetry of life! How could the holy law of God regard these beautiful creatures as despicable beings? Surely there is an error in the interpretation of the Qur'an by the learned?"

"The fountain of the nation and the state is the family!"

"As long as the full worth of the woman is not realised, national life remains incomplete."

"The upbringing of the family must correspond with justice;"

"Therefore equality is necessary in three things — in divorce, in separation, and in inheritance."

"As long as the woman is counted half the man as regards inheritance and one-fourth of man in matrimony."

Continued on page 39
Fifty Questions of Interest about Islam

My dear boys and girls of 12 years of age or even younger!

I have a few questions and answers for you.

I know you know already that Islam is a belief in One and only One God, and that Muhammad is the Last Prophet. And also that Islam reveres all the prophets (the only religion that does this). I also know you know that our Prophet was born in Arabia and that his mother’s name was Aminah and his father’s name was ‘Abdullah. But I have a few different questions that might interest you. So, my dear children, here they are. I know what it is like when one is at school; friends think all kinds of funny things about us Muslims, and therefore we must be ready to answer any questions whatever they are. Never get annoyed with anyone asking you any question, even if it seems silly to you. Always remember for many years Islam was misunderstood. Of course, not so much now. But even now, some people do not understand Islam. And it is your job, young as you are, to make Islam understood by all.

Question 1. Name the religion which wants its followers to believe in only One God for Whom the word in Arabic is Allah, and the word in English is God.

Answer 1. Islam is that religion.

Question 2. Name the religion that believes in all the prophets and also believes in the Prophet Muhammad as the Last Prophet.

Answer 2. Islam is the only religion that believes all that is said above.

Question 3. What religion believes that Jesus is a prophet?

Answer 3. Islam is that religion.

Question 4. What are the followers of Islam called?

Answer 4. Muslims.

Question 5. Why cannot a Muslim call himself a Muhammadan?

Answer 5. Because, as you know, the Christians worship Jesus Christ or through him, therefore they are called Christians. A Muslim does not worship Muhammad. So he must not be called a Muhammadan, because it gives a wrong impression.

Question 6. A little child asks this question with reference to the above Answer 5 (the child is a little girl who asks, “But what if my teacher calls me a Muhammadan and I am too shy to correct her?”).

Answer 6. Little girl! If you let anyone call you a Muhammadan you are doing a lot of harm to all Muslims everywhere. Never be too shy to stand up for Islam, if there is any likelihood of Islam being misunderstood. As for your teacher, she will admire you if you put your hand up and politely give the reason why you must not be called a Muhammadan.

Question 7. Who gave the name of Islam to our religion?

Answer 7. God gave the name of Islam to this religion which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. A statement about this is in the Holy Qur’an (our Holy Book).

Question 8. Does a Muslim need anyone to wash away his or her sins or did anyone die on a cross to save us?

Answer 8. No, definitely no. A Muslim must wash away
his own sins with prayers to God, if he is truly sorry. We Muslims believe that no man must die for us to wash away our sins, and that God could never want anyone to die for our sins.

**Question 9.** Does a Muslim need a priest to confess to?  
**Answer 9.** Islam is against such things, and there are no confession boxes. A Muslim prays straight to God himself.

**Question 10.** What is the meaning of the word Islam?  
**Answer 10.** The word Islam means submission or to submit to God.

**Question 11.** In Islam we have five important things to believe in. These important things we call pillars. You can guess why they are called pillars because they hold Islam up. Islam rests on them. Please name these five pillars.

**Answer 11.** (1) Faith in One God and the Divine Messengership of Muhammad. (2) Prayer. (3) Fasting during the month of fasting, called Ramadhan. (4) The Zakh (this is a kind of poor-rate and also a rate for the community’s benefit and a charity to help any good cause. This is a 2½ per cent tax on one’s yearly earnings, or more if possible). (5) The Hajj, or the pilgrimage to Mecca at a certain time of the year. For this pilgrimage you have to be in Mecca before the 7th day of the 12th month of the Muslim year and stay there until the 11th day of the same month. A visit to the Ka’bah at Mecca at any other time is called ‘Umrah, which means “the minor pilgrimage”.

**Question 12.** What does Islam think of labour, or in other words, work?  
**Answer 12.** Every kind of labour which enables a man to live honestly is respected by Islam.

**Question 13.** I have my Holy Qur’an to believe in and follow. But how must I think about the other holy books?  
**Answer 13.** We must respect all holy books because all holy books were brought by a prophet and from God. But it is sad to say that these holy books have not remained intact.

**Question 14.** Why did we need the Last Prophet, the Prophet Muhammad, and the last Holy Book, the Holy Qur’an?  
**Answer 14.** We needed a last prophet, which is Muhammad, because the Divine message many other prophets brought has been altered and misunderstood. We needed a last book because this, the Qur’an, is the only book that has not been altered and will not and cannot be altered, as millions of Muslims know it by heart, whereas other holy books have been altered. If all copies of the Qur’an (which God forbid!) were burnt, the very next moment the Qur’an would spring to life again from the millions who know it by heart. So you can see, there is no chance of this book, the Qur’an, being lost or altered.

**Question 15.** We have spoken a lot about God, but who is He?  
**Answer 15.** He is the maker of everything. He made the worlds and all things in them. He tells us in the Holy Qur’an (which was revealed 1,400 years ago) about the worlds, not only this world. He is the maker of everything. He is the spirit that watches over us and guides us. He has no family, sons or daughters. He is one, and only one, not three in one. He sees everything. He knows everything, forgives everything if one is truly repentant. He punishes those who do not repent or try to be good.

**Question 16.** If someone asked you, “Can Islam be understood by all?” what would be the answer?  
**Answer 16.** It is the simplicity and common sense of Islam that appeals to all who accept it. “Why,” one says, “I must have always been a Muslim because I always believed in One God and all the prophets. Of course, I did not know about Muhammad being the Last Prophet, but now I understand and see how sensible it is.” These remarks I have really heard often.

**Question 17.** Does Islam mention the poor and the orphans?  
**Answer 17.** Yes, so much so that one can write a whole book about it.

**Question 18.** Can a Muslim gamble?  
**Answer 18.** A simple NO!

**Question 19.** Can a Muslim drink alcohol?  
**Answer 19.** Definitely NO, and one day all people will see the curse of drink.

**Question 20.** What would you call Islam?  
**Answer 20.** A religion: a way of life which must be in use always, not just for prayer time on Fridays. Islam must always be with you in the home, in politics, in business, in marriage, in sleeping, eating, living and dying. It is what you boys and girls know by the common words — a must.

**Question 21.** Name some of the things that Islam says it is wrong to do.  
**Answer 21.** It is wrong to hate, steal, lie, to be jealous, or kill, and to have too much pride that it becomes haughtiness; also it is wrong to be cruel to animals, to eat pork, use bad language. It is wrong to rob in business or otherwise. Never sign a contract which you do not mean to keep. Never borrow and never pay back. It is a sin. Never incur debts which you will never be able to pay. Just ask your heart. “Is this right or wrong?” It will tell you if you are a Muslim. The Prophet once said, “Sin is that thing which hurts inside your chest.”

**Question 22.** Does a Muslim have any sacred animals as the Hindus have, such as the cow, for instance?  
**Answer 22.** No, none at all. “But all animals,” said our Prophet, “must be treated with kindness.”

**Question 23.** Does a Muslim think of any river as sacred and holy?  
**Answer 23.** No.

**Question 24.** Must a preacher be ordained before he can lead the prayers or give a sermon in a mosque?  
**Answer 24.** No. There are no priests in Islam. But there are men trained to lecture and lead prayers and to study every point of Islam. These persons are called Imams, but any good man can stand up and lead the prayers in any mosque.

**Question 25.** Will another prophet ever come?  
**Answer 25.** No. The Prophet Muhammad (may the peace and blessing of God be upon him!) is the Last Prophet. No more prophets will ever come.
Question 26. Does a prophet always bring a holy book or message?
Answer 26. We Muslims believe they always bring a book and a message.

Question 27. Are we born in sin? What does Islam say about this?
Answer 27. No. We are born sinless. But we can become sinful if we do not take God’s advice and pray for help. I ask you or anyone, “Can any mother honestly believe her baby is born sinful? Can she believe that her cuddle-some little bundle was born sinful and that some man must say a prayer before it can go to heaven, if God calls it?” A Muslim will never believe this. I doubt if any mother really would or does.

Question 28. Was the good woman Mary the Mother of God?
Answer 28. No. The good woman Mary was not the Mother of God. She was the mother of the Prophet Jesus. God has no mother.

Question 29. Does a Muslim believe that Jesus is God or a part of God and that he took the shape of a man and came down to die for our sins?
Answer 29. No. A Muslim must not believe in this.

Question 30. Does our Holy Book, the Qur’an, mention Jesus and his mother, Mary?
Answer 30. Yes. With great respect the mother of Jesus is mentioned, but only as a good woman, not as one to pray through or to; and Jesus as a good man and a prophet of God.

Question 31. If I pray to God, does He benefit by it?
Answer 31. God does not benefit by your prayer. It is you who benefit. But God is happy that you turn to Him and seek Him out in prayer, asking His help in daily life. But always remember, it is you who need God, and please do not forget this. God can and does exist without you, but you cannot exist without God and His help.

Question 32. How many times a day is a Muslim asked to pray?
Answer 32. Five times a day: (1) at daybreak to sunrise; (2) in the afternoon; (3) in the late afternoon; (4) at sunset; and (5) before retiring to bed.

Question 33. Does a Muslim say a prayer before and after meals?
Answer 33. Yes. A Muslim says a prayer before he starts anything and not only before meals. For instance, before he starts to drive his car, before he starts a journey or any job. He says: Bismi’Allah. This is an Arabic sentence, and means in English “In the name of God”. A Muslim thanks God at the end of his job with the words Allahu akbar, which means in English “God be thanked”.

Question 34. Are there any statues or figures made in marble or in any other kind of stone and wood which a Muslim has such as the Catholics have?
Answer 34. Not at all.

Question 35. Are Muslims called to prayers by bell ringing?
Answer 35. No. A human cry brings the followers to prayers. This cry is much better than a bell. A man calls out to his fellow men to come to prayers in the name of God. Any man can do this, but a special man who has a good voice does it, and is called a Muezzin. You may wonder why I say that a human call is better than a bell. Think for yourself a minute. This man has a heart; he feels happy to be going to call others to come and praise God. But that bell is just a piece of metal. It has no emotion. No heart-throbs to spur one on. The following call is heard from the mosques and Muslim places of worship all over the world:

“God is Great! God is Great! I bear witness that there is no god but God. I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God. Come to prayers! Come to prayers! Come to success! Come to success! God is Great! God is Great! There is no god but God.”

When calling Muslims for the dawn prayer, these words are added at the end of the call: “Prayer is better than sleep.”

Question 36. Does an Imam put on a certain kind of robe like a clergyman in England?
Answer 36. No. There is no special dress as the clergyman has, and no laces and embroidered robes as in the High Church.

Question 37. Are there any nuns in Islam?
Answer 37. No. We believe in Islam that a woman should marry and have children and she does not say all the prayers that a good person should. But we think it is not God’s wish for a woman to become a nun.

Question 38. Are there monks in Islam?
Answer 38. No.

Question 39. Does a baby have to be christened in Islam?
Answer 39. No. But we do cry the call to prayers softly in a baby’s ear, when it is only a few days old, as it is the best thing for a baby to hear. But if anything should happen to the baby, that cry has not paved its way to heaven. As I said before, a baby is sinless and always goes to heaven, prayer or no prayer. But we like to let the sound of the call to prayers reach a baby’s ear.

Question 40. What does a Muslim do before he says his prayers?
Answer 40. A Muslim washes himself, and this is what he does: If he is clean and does not need a bath, then he starts with washing the right hand up to the wrist three times. Then he washes the left hand three times, followed by rinsing the mouth three times, preferably brushing the teeth before rinsing the mouth. Then he should clean his nose by sniffing water up three times. This is to be followed by washing the face three times and arms up to the elbows three times, first the right arm and then the left. After this he should pass his wet hands over the head, starting from the front with the inside of the wet hands, passing down to the back of the neck (using the inside of the hands). He should now turn his hands over and use the back of them, wiping the neck all around the back and the back of the ears with the thumbs from the lobe of the ear upwards. He should then put the forefinger of each hand into each ear and work the finger around all the grooves of the ears. Last of all, he should wash his feet up to the ankles three times, first the right foot and then the left. The Arabic word for this washing process is Wudu’.

Question 41. Does a Muslim say his prayers standing?
Answer 41. Yes, some part of it. But if he is ill, he can say his prayers in any position best suitable to himself. But if
he is strong and healthy then he has to follow a set form of postures. A Muslim starts his prayers standing, then he kneels, bows down and raises his forehead right on to the ground so that the nose also touches it. No position is too humble when one is before God. In our prayers we stand, kneel, and place our heads touching the ground many times. I have given you already a detailed description of how to pray.

Question 42. Can a Muslim say his prayers anywhere or only in a mosque?

Answer 42. A Muslim can say his prayers anywhere, in a church, in a park or in a train; in fact, as I have said, everywhere. Any clean place can be a place of prayer. Our Prophet once said, “The whole earth has been made a mosque for me”.

Question 43. Does a Muslim keep Sunday as his Sabbath?

Answer 43. Every day is holy to a Muslim. We do meet on a Friday for congregational prayers soon after mid-day, when we have a short sermon and then prayers. A man can then leave the mosque and work as usual. A Muslim does not believe that God rested on the seventh day, because our Holy Book says: “God is He besides whom there is no god ... so he does not overtake Him ... His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them both tires Him not.”

Question 44. Are women mentioned in the Muslim’s Holy Book (the Qur'an)?

Answer 44. A woman is mentioned every time a man is mentioned. Here is one example: The fasting men and the fasting women, the patient men and the patient women, etc. Never is the woman left out.

Question 45. In Islam can a woman have her own property or did she have to wait, as in England, until recently to get her rights by a law passed in the British Parliament?

Answer 45. A woman was given her rights in the time of our Prophet, 1,400 years ago. Her property did not become her husband's when she married. It is true a woman does not inherit the same as her brother from her parents. But it is argued that a male has more responsibilities and has generally to keep a family, whereas what a woman inherits she can keep for herself even after her marriage.

Question 46. Which is better, prayers, fasting or good deeds?

Answer 46. We do not like to make comparisons, because prayer and fasting are the duties a Muslim has to perform as ordained by God. But if asked this question a Muslim would say good deeds.

Question 47. Does one need a rosary to say prayers?

Answer 47. No.

Question 48. What is the Hadith?

Answer 48. It is a record of the saying of the Last Prophet Muhammad. There are many collections of our Prophet's sayings.

Question 49. Is the Prophet Muhammad an historical figure?

Answer 49. Yes.

Question 50. What did our Prophet say about mothers?

Answer 50. He said, “Paradise lies at the feet of mothers.”

Goodnight, dear children. Fifty questions at once are enough for anyone.

REFLECTIONS ON MUSLIM WOMEN OF INDIA AND ISLAM – Continued from page 35

Neither the family nor the country will be elevated. For other rights we have opened national courts of justice: “The family, on the other hand, we have left in the hands of schools.”

“I do not know why we have left the woman in the lurch.”

“Does she not work for the land? Or, will she turn her needle into a sharp bayonet to tear off her rights from our hands through a revolution?”

This song of Ziya, along with many others, reflects the birth of an international ideal, which essentially forms the very essence of Islam. Ziya is obviously inspired by the philosophy of Auguste Comte. About Ziya’s claim of equality of man and woman in point of divorce, separation and inheritance and such other claims of Muslim liberals, Iqbal, the great Islamic thinker of the 20th century, says: “The claim of the present generation of Muslim liberals to re-interpret the foundational principles, in the light of their own experience and the altered conditions of modern life, is, in my opinion, perfectly justified. The teaching of the Qur’an that life is a process of progressive creation necessitates that each generation, guided but unhampered by the work of its predecessors, should be permitted to solve its own problems.”

Even a man like Iqbal was fed up with the rigid orthodoxy of Indian Muslims. Having little hope for the re-interpretation of the foundational principles of Islam in India, he complains: “In view of the intense conservatism of the Muslims of India, Indian judges cannot but stick to what are called standard works. The result is that while the peoples are moving the law remains stationary.” These are the thoughts of that man who knew the spirit of Hijrah in Islam, who knew that from 800 to 1100 C.E., not less than one hundred systems of theology appeared in Islam, a fact that bears ample testimony to the elasticity of Islamic thought, as well as to the ceaseless activity of our early thinkers. A European Orientalist, like Mr. Horten, after a deep study of Islamic literature and thought, has confessed this elastic nature of Islam in the following words:

“The spirit of Islam is so broad that it is practically boundless. With the exception of atheistic ideas alone it has assimilated all the attainable ideas of surrounding peoples, and given them its own peculiar direction of development.”

27 Quoted from Dr. Sir Muhammed Iqbal’s The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 161 (Lahore, 1944). In this connection it is interesting to recall the views of the late Iraqi leader, ‘Abd al-Karim Qasim, who maintained that the Qur'an did not deprive the female child of her rightful equal share in the inheritance from her parents. He argued that the words of the Qur'an (4: 11) are “God recommends it (Yids-kum) only.” In other words, it was not a command which could not be changed with the changing circumstances. On the basis of this argument he accorded equal shares to the daughters with their brothers in the inherited property. (Ed. I.R.)

28 Iqbal: op. cit. p. 158.
29 Iqbal: op. cit. p. 168.
30 Ibid. p. 169.
31 Ibid. p. 164.
HASAN AL-BASRI—Continued from page 21

ameliorated because he desires this intensely, let him try to prolong his life by desiring it ardenty, or to change his colour, or to increase his size or the ends of his fingers!” (Ibn Sa’d, al-Tabaqat al-kubra, p. 175).


29 “God has created men (servants-worshippers), and has given them complete power over their destiny” (L. Massignon, Recueil, p. 4, No. 13).

30 “Speak often with your hearts, for they are apt to become covered with rust. Hold your souls in check, for they have always a tendency to become puffed-up with pride” (L. Massignon, Recueil, p. 3, No. 9).

31 “Reflection is a mirror which shows you your good and your bad actions” (L. Massignon, Recueil, p. 2, No. 7).

32 “Hasan said, ‘May God be merciful to him who goes aside, takes the Book of God, and examines himself before Him. If he is in agreement with the Book, let him say, “God be praised”, and ask Him for an increase of favour. If he does not agree with the Book, let him blame himself, repent, and come back to God as soon as he can”’ (Jāhiz, Bayān, 111, p. 90).

33 “The believer is always master of his soul. He examines it for God. The presentation of accounts (on the Day of Judgment) will be light only for those who have examined their souls here on earth. It will be painful, on the day of Resurrection, only for those who have lived without carrying out this examination.” Then he described the examination of conscience. “The believer, when he is suddenly confronted with an action which he envies, is astonished at it, and says, “By God! You amaze me. Yet I certainly need you. But wait! There is an obstacle between you and me (the Law).” This constitutes examination before action. Hasan continued: “If the believer has committed some excess, he casts his mind back and asks himself, “What was my idea in doing that? By God, I will not try to excuse myself, and I will never recommence, God being willing!’” (Ghazālī, Iḥyā’ ʿUlūm al-Dīn, Edit. Cairo. Vol. IV, 1939, p. 392).

34 The Qur’ānic term for love is mahabbah (love/friendship). Hasan preferred the term ʾishq (ardent desire), either because of the possible Christian interpretation of mahabbah, which would indicate an excessive confidence in the Divine favour (so thinks L. Massignon, Essai, p. 196), or rather, we think, because the various uses of this term in the Qurān, generally speaking, have a pejorative nuance — the love of material riches which turns men away from God. In any case the meaning is the same and indicates the desire for some good which is lacking. Cf. Ghazālī, Iḥyā’, Vol. 4, pp. 263 et seq., which rightly concludes that love is real only in the man who loves/desires God — it is only metaphorical (majāz) in God, who loves/desires men, because in reality God lacks nothing and desires nothing.

35 According to an Hudith known as “Qudsī” (Divine) i.e. when it is God Himself Who speaks. Later mystics, especially Hallāj, often used this method for giving expression to their loftiest thoughts. “When the chief concern of My beloved servant is to be pre-occupied with Me, I cause him to find his blessedness and his pleasure in remembering Me. And when I have caused him to find his blessedness and his pleasure in remembering Me, I desire him, and when he desires Me, and I desire him, I lift the veil which comes between him and Me, and I become an ensemble of guiding-beacons before his eyes. Such men do not forget Me when others forget Me. The sayings of such men are the sayings of Prophets. They are the real heroes. They are the ones whom I remember when I wish to inflict punishment on the people of the earth, and I divert it from them” (L. Massignon, Recueil, p. 3, No. 11).

36 See L. Massignon, Essai, pp. 197-201.

Cuba is at the present time giving the world a striking proof of this.

At the present stage of the development of the Muslims, they are called upon to evolve their own master-concepts, their own directive ideas.

They must regain their intellectual originality and integrity, and their independence in the domain of ideas, as well as in the economic and political domains.

2 The writer is an Algerian Muslim. (Ed. I.R.)
# Books on Islam and Allied Subjects

Customers are advised not to order books by Air Mail. Air Mail Postage is expensive. It costs approximately 16/- per lb.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prices subject to change</th>
<th>Postage and Packing Extra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## THE HOLY QUR’AN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>£</th>
<th>s</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### A Literary History of Persia (from earliest times to 1902 C.E.), four volumes, by Edward G. Browne
6 10 0

### Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam. Includes all the articles contained in the first edition and supplement of the Encyclopaedia of Islam which relate particularly to the religion and law of Islam
5 5 0

### The Spirit of Islam, by Syed Ameer ‘Ali. History of the evolution and ideals of Islam with the life of the Prophet. 6th imp., 8vo, 71+513 pp. with frontispiece
1 15 0

### Ditto, paperback edition
1 7 6

### Islam Our Choice (illustrated and unabridged) by Dr. S. A. Khusrow. Deals with a short history of Muslims and fundamentals of Islam. Also includes stories of various Europeans accepting Islam
12 6

### Qur’anic Arabic. (An elementary course in Arabic for non-Arabs.) 92 pp. By Dr. Omar Farrukh
10 0

### Teach Yourself Arabic, by Professor A. S. Tritton
10 6

### Muslim Devotions, by Miss Constance E. Padwick. A study of prayer-manuals in common use
1 15 0

### The Quintessence of Islam, by Ashfaque Husain
10 6

### The Message of Islam, by A. Yusuf ‘Ali. Résumé of the teachings of the Qur’an with special reference to the spiritual and moral struggles of the human soul
6 0

### A Muslim Saint of the Twentieth Century — Shaikh Ahmad al-A‘Alawi, by Martin Lings
1 8 0

### Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age (1798-1939-59), by Professor Albert Hourani. Cloth-bound, 404 pp.
2 2 0

### The Sacred Journey, by Ahmad Kamal. (The Pilgrimage to Mecca. A guide and companion for the pilgrim.) By Ahmad Kamal
1 5 0

### Aspects of Islamic Civilization. (A vivid and fascinating picture of the richness and variety of Islamic civilization from its origins down to the present times.) By A. J. Arberry
2 8 0

9 0

### The Middle East in World Affairs, by George Lenczewski
5 0 0

### Islam in East Africa. (Most complete treatment of the subject.) By J. Spencer Trimpthing
1 8 0

### A History of Medieval Islam. (This is an introduction to the history of the Muslim East from the rise of Islam to the Mongol conquests. It explains and indicates the main trends of Islamic historical evolution during the Middle Ages and will help to understand something of the relationship between Islam and Christendom in those centuries.) By J. J. Saunders
1 12 0

### Qur’anic Advice. (Selections from the Holy Qur’án of guides for a better way of life.) Arabic text with Urdu and English translations
10 0

### Studies in Muslim Ethics, by Donaldson
1 10 0

---

**“The Islamic Review” monthly.** Single Copies... 3s. Annual Subscription... £1.10.0
Books on Islam and Allied Subjects (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Social Structure of Islam, by R. Levy. A compressed account of the influence of Islam on the peoples it embraced. Paperback</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layla &amp; Majnun, by W. B. Pickard. An English Poem in the Persian Vein</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazali, by W. M. Watt</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufism, by A. J. Arberry</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam, by Fazlur Rehman. A comprehensive picture of the Islamic Religion through the fourteen centuries of its existence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideals and Realities in Islam, by S. H. Nasr</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theology of Unity, by Muhammad ‘Abduh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The World of Islam, edited by J. Kritzek and R. Winder</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steps Towards Understanding Islam, by E. W. Bethmann</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge to Islam, by Erich W. Bethmann. Study of the religious forces of Islam and Christianity in the Near East</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prices subject to change

Can be Obtained From

The MUSLIM BOOK SOCIETY
The Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England

Table Talk
by
Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din
Pp. i-ii + 131 5/6

dealing with subjects:
The object of Religion; Heaven and Hell;
Transmigration of Souls; Life after Death;
Evil and its Genesis; Darwin and Evolution;
Arabic, the only Vehicle of the Divine Mind;
Revelation of the Qur'an, a Necessity;
Different Religions of Different Peoples;
Problems for a Free-Thought Socialist

Your Children need a book on Islam

Please send your contribution towards the printing of a much needed children’s book in English (illustrated) on Islam, Muhammad the Last Prophet, and the history and culture of Islamic countries, which Muslim children would like to know about. This will be the first book of its kind. Please help.

Kindly send your contribution, large or small, to

The Islamic Children’s Book Fund,
18 Eccleston Square, London, S.W.1

Printed by A. A. Ventiage, Ltd., of Basingstoke and Published by the Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust, Woking, Surrey, England.
REGD. 13016