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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. S$5.00 post free; single copies 0.45 c.

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THE CONTRIBUTORS

His Excellency Mr. ‘Abd al-Khaliq Hassinah, an Egyptian Muslim, is Secretary-General of the Arab League, Cairo, the United Arab Republic.

Dr. Mahmud Mufic, M.D., is a Yugoslavian Muslim. Besides being a medical man, he is a keen student of the Qur’an.

Michael Scott, an American, is a lecturer in the American University at Cairo, the United Arab Republic.

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

The late Dr. M. A. Dráž, an Egyptian Muslim scholar, was a brilliant student of the Qur’an. He was a professor in the University of Cairo, the United Arab Republic.

The late Dr. Ibrâhim Hasan, an Egyptian Muslim, is a scholar of repute in the Arab world. He is a Professor in the University of Cairo, the United Arab Republic.

Professor M. A. Mannán, a Pakistani Muslim, sometime Professor of Economics in the University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan, is at present working as Assistant Financial Adviser to the Government of Pakistan, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Dr. A. Rahmán Zaky, Ph.D., an Egyptian Muslim, is a Lecturer at the Institute of Islamic Studies, Cairo, and is the author of several books — The Sword in the Islamic World: The Army during the Epoch of Muhammad ‘Ali (1805-1850 C.E.); The Citadel of Sulâh al-Din in Cairo; Fustât, the First Muslim City in Africa; Islam and Muslims in East Africa and Islam and Muslims in West Africa, etc.

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Founded by THE LATE AL-HAJJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UDDIN

Telephone: WOKING 60679

Telegrams & Cables: MOSQUE, WOKING

ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO LONDON OFFICE:
18 Eccleston Square, Victoria, London, S.W.1

Telephone: 843 2591

JANUARY 1969

57th YEAR OF PUBLICATION

Editors

ABDUL MAJID, M.A.
Dr. RASHID AHMAD (JALANDHARI), Ph.D.
Dr. ‘ALI MUHAMMAD KHAN, Ph.D. (Associate)

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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW & ARAB AFFAIRS
EDITORIAL

THE "FATAH" MOVEMENT
(Harakah al-Tahrir al-watani al-Filastini)

"The world does not respect the weak; it only respects strength" — Yasar ‘Arafat

The Palestine Liberation Movement, the Fatah, celebrated its fifth anniversary on 1 January 1969 amidst great popular enthusiasm in the Arab world and growing international support. The walls in all big towns of the Arab countries are covered with posters publicising the guerillas and giving the obituaries of those killed in action against the Zionists. Also there are to be seen placards which show young men marching fearlessly into battle with the Fatah. Observers confirm that there is no lack of young men joining the ranks of the Fatah; for these young men are, more often than not, those whose fathers, brothers or cousins have been killed in action over the last 20 years of occupation of Palestine by the Israelis.

For the last few years the feeling of discontent with the manner in which the Palestine problem was being handled by the various Arab governments and other international organizations had been growing apace. The people of Palestine had come to realize that it was they who, in the last analysis, had to shoulder the responsibility of taking it into their hands if any solution to their problem of displacement by the Israelis had to be found. Thus many cells of resistance, consisting of 11 to 15 men, grew up all over the neighbouring Arab countries, especially Jordan and Syria. They acted independently of each other and without any material or moral support from the Arab countries.

In some cases they were even suppressed and hounded out by the Arab governments from these territories, until, on 1 January 1965, when the world heard of an organized Palestinian resistance movement, known as the Fatah, which issued its first communiqué from Damascus of its exploits and destruction of Israeli projects within the Israeli territory. In this communiqué it was announced that a member of the Fatah, Ahmad Müsá, had destroyed the engineering installations erected by the Israelis to divert the waters of the River Jordan. Thus delaying the execution of the Israeli plans for three months. Ahmad Müsá lost his life in the course of his daring exploit and earned him the unique and high reputation of being the first martyr belonging to the ranks of an organized Palestinian resistance movement. It was soon realized by other small fidd’i (do-or-die) organizations that the time had come for them to close the ranks and join hands with the Fatah movement. This led to the amalgamation of the eight fidd’i groups with the Fatah.

In 1965 and before there were two principal Palestine liberation movements — the Palestine Liberation Organiza-

1 The Arabic word Fatah (Fath), meaning victory, is composed of the first letters of the Arabic words of the name of the movement — Harakah al-Tahrir al-Watani al-Filastini — in the reverse order. It is revealing to observe that the first letters of these words in their natural order make the word Hataf, meaning death.
tion and the Fatah. But in the beginning of 1969 these two organizations also decided to be amalgamated, and elected Yásar (Abú 'Ammár) 'Arafât, the head of the Fatah, as their joint leader.

Yásar 'Arafât

Yásar 'Arafât, who, by way of good augur, carries the name of Abú 'Ammár, which is the name of the first martyr in the history of Islam — Yásar Abú 'Ammár Ibn Yásar. Abú 'Ammár, who is now thirty-nine, symbolizes in his person all those Arabs who stand stoutly for the establishment and restoration of the personality of Palestine, which, unfortunately, was destroyed not by the Israelis but the Arab governments themselves. Yásar 'Arafât was born in Jerusalem. Fighting for the Palestinian cause runs in his veins. His father and elder brother were members of the Jihad al-Muqaddas — the Holy Struggle Army, which in the 1930’s, led an Arab Palestinian uprising against the British Mandate. In 1947 his family moved to Gaza, now occupied by the Israelis and the scene of Arab riots against the Israelis. But after a few years the young 'Arafât went to Cairo to study for a degree in engineering. He soon became active in students’ politics and for four years he was chairman of the Palestine Students’ Organization.

A Fatwá given by the Fatwá Committee in The Ministry of Auqáf, Kuwait, on the permissibility of spending the Zakah and the Sadaqah al-Fitr monies to help the Fidá’iyyún (vide the Arabic monthly, al-Wa’y al-Islámi, Kuwait, for January 1969) in answer to the following question:

"Can the Zakah and other monies, in which is included the Sadaqah al-Fitr money, be given to help the Fidá’iyyún?"

Ahmad Ná’if Shabbir, The Teachers’ Institute, Kuwait.

"The Zakáh is one of the pillars of Islam and both the Qur’án and the Sunnah confirm it as such. We read in the Qur’án 73:2: "And give the Zakáh.

"The Prophet Muhammad (the peace of God be upon him), in saying that Islam is based on five principles, counted the Zakáh as one of them. The Muslim community is unanimous in its being obligatory and regards it as part and parcel of Islam. Besides, it is a means of cleansing the soul and its purification. We read in the Qur’án 9:103: "Take from their property charity so that you may purify them and cleanse them.

"The Zakáh covers all that an individual parts with as being God’s own for the needy.

"Evidently the questioner is asking about the Fidá’iyyún, who are struggling hard to liberate their country, and about all others who have come from other countries to fight to liberate Jerusalem and other holy places and all other parts of Arab lands occupied by the enemy and to help their Muslim brothers against the Jews who have usurped their lands. Now there is no doubt that under such conditions it is obligatory on Muslims in all parts of the world to wage Jihad with their lives and property over and above that which is obligatory on them in the form of the payment of the whole of the Zakáh, or part of it, to help the Mujáhidín fighting in the way of God, as is being done by the Fidá’iyyún and all those who are struggling to liberate their Muslim lands occupied by the enemy. For it is for this purpose that the verse of the Qur’án prescribes the spending of the Zakáh money. We would go even further than this. We would say that the Fidá’iyyún are the group most deserving of this help at the present moment. We read in the Qur’án 9:60: "Verily charities are only for the poor and the needy and the workers attending thereon, and for those whose hearts are to be won over to the love of God, and for ransom the captives and those who are indebted and for spending in God’s path, and for the wayfarer. This is a duty prescribed by God, for God is Knowing and Wise."

"God has prescribed Jihad in Islam for the purpose of defending the cause of God, the defence of the land of the Muslims, their honour and their property."

Fatah’s Aims

Yásar ‘Arafât has been described by his supporters as the first Palestinian guerilla and the founder of the Fatah. When the British and French troops invaded Port Said in 1956, ‘Arafât was a member of the Popular Resistance Movement and when Egypt disbanded this movement in 1956 ‘Arafât went to Kuwait to work as an engineer. He moved out of Kuwait in 1964 and on 1 January 1965 the Fatah issued its first communiqué from Syria. Now, on its fifth anniversary, it is the strongest guerilla movement, with its own radio, Saut al-‘Asifah — the Voice of the ‘Asifah (Storm), which broadcasts daily from Cairo.

Abu ‘Ammár gave an outline of the aims of the Fatah in his first broadcast, in November 1968, in the following words:

“We, the Fatah movement, regard our brothers the Jews as any other confession, like the Muslims and Christians. Those who want to be partners with us in Palestine, within the framework of this understanding, we tell them Alhán — you are welcome. We are convinced that the Jews themselves as a religion and confession are persecuted at the hands of Zionism.” He said recently, “The Palestinian revolution has as its objective the complete liberation of Palestine. The world does not respect the weak, it only respects strength.”

In a statement on the Fatah’s fifth anniversary, its representative said, “We look forward to the future with great hope for more cohesion between us and the people and for more natural unity, embracing all the fighters within a phased practical programme aimed at uniting efforts and resources to counter all plots and attempts at liquidation. We give our pledge to our people to continue on the course of struggle and revolution, drawing the strength of our stand from the firmness of our people; the positiveness of their political movement and the violence of their armed struggle, until all the phases of the objective are achieved. These objectives are an indivisible part of our revolution’s general strategic goal — the establishment of a Palestine Arab State which will have room for all communities and religions and be free from racism, sectarianism and exploitation. Our insistence on carrying arms until we liberate our land accompanies our belief in peace, which is threatened by the Zionist structure in league with imperialism and colonialism. Our armed revolution and our people’s struggle will continue until victory."

The statement also gave statistics on the outcome of its struggle over the past four years, during its military operations against 140 enemy settlements. According to the statistics, the number of enemy killed or wounded is 3,650 soldiers.

Continued on page 23
Islam and the Atomic Age
A Brief Sketch of the Moral Code of Islam

The Islamic Code is imbued with the highest ideals and at the same time is essentially practical, eminently suitable to solve problems of fear and insecurity

By ‘ABD AL-KHALIQ HASSUNAH

Peace and security of men cannot be founded on the accumulation of deadly weapons

Never before in history has man lived in such a state of anxiety and insecurity. The terrible arms race — arms which are now capable of the wholesale annihilation of entire nations — is provoking a panic in the world which is without precedent. Today the mere act of survival seems to be necessarily linked up with the accumulation of weapons of destruction.

Man assumes the absolute right to shed the blood of others in order to safeguard, or so he believes, his own existence. The use of force, considered as the primitive form of protection, now seems to be an article of faith of the human race. This universal attitude with regard to the use of force lies at the very root of the problem of peace and security. It is also a condition of life itself.

I am not a negative-type pacifist. Nations have need of force in order to combat evil. Nevertheless, I believe that the peace and security of men, wherever they may live, cannot be founded uniquely on the accumulation of deadly and powerful weapons and material.

Man’s innate wisdom is certainly capable of revealing to him that his welfare can be achieved without his being obliged to devastate or destroy.

And if the piling-up of the means of destruction does not, after all, guarantee man’s protection, if it is true that it renders his existence more precarious than ever, we begin to ask ourselves how, indeed, can humanity be preserved.

All the evidence goes to show that the human problem arising from scientific progress in the domain of armaments cannot be solved either by science or by the use of force. The protection of man against the havoc caused by the destructive weapons which his skill has created will not be found in such weapons. At best, defensive weapons will give only temporary and partial protection.

There can be no survival for the man whose sole preoccupation is the acquisition of material wealth, since this need will give rise to the adoption of defensive measures. On the radio and the television I have often heard sales agents and publicity men boosting the facilities offered by their firms in the matter of the storage and warehousing of goods.

They ask you pompously if your valuable objects are safe and secure. And they remind you that even if they are secure against the risks of fire or theft, they are far from being safe against the dangers of the atomic age.

Make no mistake. This is not the solution to our problem. Men have a profound need of something more than protection against theft, fire or the atom, if they are to achieve lasting security. Faced with the latest models of weapons of wholesale extermination so far perfected by the scientific genius of man, it will not be in the possession of similar weapons of attack, or of defence, or still less in methods and measures of civil defence, however expertly they may have been organised, that we shall find permanent protection.

By themselves political agreements and international controls give no security

Some men have sought the answer to our problem in quite a different domain. They hold the opinion that security can be ensured by political agreements and international controls. There is no doubt that such instruments are not entirely without value. They are to regulate the collective behaviour of man, and, for a time, ensure for humanity a period of respite. But the duration of their effectiveness will be, after all, in proportion to the faith which lay behind their creation and to the strict keeping of the promises made at that time. By themselves they will not give security. Their effectiveness
comes from and depends on something which transcends all mere verbiage and phraseology and diplomatic arrangements and is linked with the very heart of man himself.

It is in man’s inner being and the depths of the human soul that we must look for his redemption. Only there will he find those eternal values he is seeking. His welfare lies in his observance of moral laws which will give him a greater measure of self-control.

The solution of the urgent problem of the survival of man lies in the application of a system of moral laws which will counterbalance, or compensate, the progress and the inventions achieved in the domain of science which have enabled him to obtain the mastery over material power.

The moral force, the power which preserves, without which man will be unable to control the destructive action which his material triumphs have set in motion, must come from his innermost self, and must be based on a moral system.

As has been the case on so many occasions during the course of man’s history, the evils which threaten existence itself can only be warded off with the help of religion.

An effort at an interpretation of the moral code of Islam

All the chief religions of the world proclaim and set out in detail those systems of morals which man is able to discover for himself. So in these few lines I shall limit my activity to an interpretation of the moral code of Islam. (But here I must emphasise that Islam has never claimed the monopoly over truth and virtue.)

As Christianity is a development of Judaism, so Islam is not only a development of both of these, but a confirmation of them and also of the other revealed religions.

Let us quote the Qur’án, in which God says to His Prophet Muhammad:

“We have revealed to you the Book (i.e. the Qur’án), with the Truth, confirming that which preceded it in the Scriptures” (6 : 93).

In another verse the Qur’án orders both Muslims and non-Muslims to co-operate with each other in goodwill and uprightness, not in rancour and aggressiveness. More specifically the Qur’án (2 : 136) enjoins believers to declare:

“We believe in God and in what has been revealed to us ... in what was vouchsafed to Moses, to Jesus and to the Prophets by their God. We make no distinction between them, and we submit to God.”

Further, the Prophet of Islam solemnly declared that all men are the children of God, and that He loves them all equally.

In other words, Islam seeks nothing more than equality with the other monotheistic beliefs.

A genuine effort at establishing better understanding between peoples of different beliefs would help us better to appreciate and respect each other and further the cause of world peace and stability.

The meaning of the word “Islam”

In this connection, it is important that we give an explanation of the word “Islam”, derived from the Arabic root word salima, which means “to enjoy complete peace, to fol-

low the path of God and to seek righteousness”. Islam is founded on:

1. Belief in the eternal, in the Unity of God, in His Mercy and His All-Embracing Love.
2. Charity and fraternity between men.
3. The control of one’s desires and passions.
4. Love and gratitude towards God, the Giver of all good.
5. The firm belief that man must render an account of his actions in the next world.

The first and the second postulates

The first postulate in the moral teaching of Islam is the belief in Almighty God, the Divine Providence of man and the universe.

Secondly, Islam teaches that the science of reasoning must always be developed in the mind and heart of man. After all, what is the aim of life? Is it man, or the universe itself, which is retrograding? The reply is in the negative, although there is, in effect, a certain degree of “back-sliding”. With man, reason is always active, exerting great power and influence, since it aligns itself in opposition to the powerful forces and dangers which threaten his existence. This basic thing, called “reason”, never dies. When man makes use of it, he becomes conscious of the unity of the human race and the universe. Even at the risk of losing his life, he preaches what his heart and soul tell him to be the truth. He may become a laughing-stock, he may be physically attacked and sometimes killed, but in reality he is the one who triumphs.

It is only by following this path that humanity has made progress. Some are reluctant to admit this ... they try to find other ways of making progress. But the truth, the reality, is there. The appeal must be made to man’s conscience, to his intuitive reason. Islam teaches that faith and morals are the ultimate product of man’s reasoning power.
But this has nothing in common with the naïve postulate which pretends that evil is non-existent, that imperfection is an illusion, and sins and shortcomings unreal. For Islam formally recognizes the existence of evil, man’s inequalities, his sins and shortcomings. He does not expect him to transform himself overnight into a superman. Islam is a practical and realistic Code which, although recognizing the existence of evil, encourages virtue. It makes allowances for imperfection, but at the same time spurs man on in the path of progress to perfection.

To sum up: Islam teaches that we need not despair about our defective or imperfect intelligence. The Islamic Faith is essentially one of optimism.

The third postulate is love and forgiveness

Thirdly, Islam teaches love and forgiveness. God commanded His Prophet to be generous and merciful, even towards his worst enemies. Men will always attribute the quality of greatness to the character of one who, although quite capable of returning evil for evil, not only preaches but practises the Divine principle of forgiveness and clemency.

The mercy of the Almighty is one of the most magnificent themes of the Qur’ān. The very name of “Al-Rahāmīn” (the Beneficent), with which begins each chapter of the Qur’ān and by which God is constantly invoked, is the expression of a profound conviction imbued with that love which, through the Divine mercy, embraces the whole of creation.

God says in the Qur’ān:

“Forgiveness and kind words are much better than favours accompanied by anger” (3 : 134).

“Abandon your old barbaric customs 48 : 26), blood-vengeance (2 : 178), the killing of children (6 : 151), and be united as one body” (2 : 103).

“Judge your fellow-men from the truth they speak (5 : 42); and do not be carried away by your passions, lest they cause you to stray from God’s path” (38 : 26).

The fourth postulate is that in Islam there is no difference between the means and the ends

Fourthly, Islam teaches us about moral judgment and declares that basically there is no essential difference between the means and the ends. Both must be submitted to the ethical and moral standard of Islam. To subscribe to the theory of opportunism is the negation of the Islamic moral code, which rejects the dictum that “. . . the end justifies the means”.

The fifth postulate is that Islam declares that there is no need to despair about man’s faults and shortcomings

Fiftieth, Islam enjoins humility on those who occupy important and responsible positions, and posts of authority. The leaders of the people must lead simple lives. They must avoid making themselves conspicuous and remember always that they are not superior to other men.

Abū Bakr al-Siddiqa ordered his collaborator to cherish his fellow-man, but at the same time to show reverence for everything that lives. “Do not destroy date-palms, do not set fire to fields of maize. Do not cut down fruit-trees and do not harm cattle, except those which you slaughter for your material needs.”

Further, the same message shows the respect which Islam has for other religions. Abū Bakr said: “In your work you will find non-Muslims living apart in monasteries in order to serve God. Leave them in peace, do not kill them or destroy their dwellings.”

It would be presumptuous on my part to think that I can do more than indicate to you how best to interpret the moral system of Islam. Nevertheless, even this brief explanation will show that Islam contains noble moral principles which, if applied, would ensure a highly-developed moral system, and one capable of solving the problems of fear and security with which man is faced at the present time.

The relationship between the different elements of the Islamic moral system and the problem of the survival of man can be measured in the light of the following factors.

The very practical postulate which Islam first of all puts forward is the existence of evil and the shortcomings of man. This is a good illustration of the state of affairs now prevailing in the world.

Islam then goes on to declare that there is no need to despair about man’s faults and about his imperfect understanding of things, but that we have every reason to hope. As I have already said, the basis of the moral structure of Islam is reason. Islam declares that reason is our guide throughout life, that it is inherent in the mind and heart of man. If man appeals to his own reason, he will surely discover that faith, love and fraternity go to pave the way to the path that leads to security and peace, whereas hate and ill-will create tension, fear and insecurity and could certainly lead to war and destruction.

Finally, in this brief sketch of the Moral Code of Islam, I have said that the leaders of men have been commanded to be humble and modest, to judge men with equity and truth and not to be carried away by their passions. They have also been reminded that everything created by God demonstrates that all has come from Him and will return to Him. So that they must not take a narrow and one-sided view of things. In the exercise of their earthly functions they must have constantly in mind the interests of the whole human race.

In these troubled times of fear and violence, Islam, like all the great religions of the world, offers hope and comfort to the immortal soul of man. The Islamic Code is imbued with the highest ideals and at the same time is essentially practical, eminently suitable for the solution of the problems with which man has been faced throughout history.

To conclude, I will recall a few lines of poetry:

Whoever seeks God finds Him in the green bud . . .

He who is Might, Grace and Beauty,

Mercy, Compassion and All-Peace.

The Most High, the Greatest and the Best.
Modern Evolutionary theories of the Origin of Life and of Man and the Holy Qur'an

Judeo-Christian Influence on Muslim Theologians of the Middle Ages in reading verses of the Holy Qur'an on the Origin of Life

Modern Evolutionary theories are in complete conformity with the Holy Qur'an

By Dr. MAHMUD MUFTIC

PART I

The historical continuity of life

The ancient Ionian philosophers recognized that the two forms of matter, both animate and inanimate, have so much in common with each other that they must be made "of the same stuff". Since that time a long intermission of mythical and supernatural conception occupied man's thoughts down to modern times, when, once again, mankind has started to think about the creation of the cosmos (cosmogony), the creation of the earth (geogeny), the creation of life (biopoiesis) and his own creation — the creation of man. The evolutionary theories of Lamarck, Darwin and Wallace have demonstrated the historical continuity of life and guessed at the transition from inanimate to animate matter.

In more recent decades the chemical and physical concepts have virtually bridged this transition and sub-atomic discoveries have linked matter as we see it on the earth to the earliest stages of cosmic evolution. There also emerges a postulated continuity of events from the earliest cosmic conditions to the most highly organized communities in nature. This full sweep of evolutionary theory is indeed tantamount to a unifying principle of the universe. According to modern scientific conceptions, the present life on our planet has evolved from inanimate matter, and primeval ancestors by a process of change, and the direction of change has been channelled by an automatic interaction of organism and environment called natural selection. This whole process is designated as evolution.

Evolution can be defined as descent with modification or change. The view that evolution proceeded in a straight, inevitable progression of species culminating in a particular animal such as homo sapiens is called orthogenesis. The theory of evolution was bitterly contested and its rejection was mostly general either from "official scientific" circles, or from religious authorities. Guided by the mythical part of the Bible distorted by Jews, the Christian churches declared evolutionary theory as the product of pure atheistic imagination and as an attempt to destroy belief in the Creator and degrade man, who has been created in God's image, to the status of an animal, forgetting that man and animal are both creatures of God. Muslim theologians followed blindly Judeo-Christians, condemned unanimously the theory which they thought tried to convince people that "man was originally a monkey" — for this is what the uninformed ignorants believed that the theory of evolution is.

The theory of Evolution and the Qur'an

It seems that nobody was even keen to read carefully the Qur'an and to search there what the All-Knowing has told us about the theory of evolution. The Qur'anic verses from different chapters, quoted hereunder, and which are concerned with biopoiesis and the descent of man were in the Middle Ages interpreted as related to the intrauterine developing of a child. Theologians who were confronted with evolution theories were not able to reinterpret the above-mentioned verses of the Qur'an because after a decree of Salāhuddin Ayubi another further interpretation (the Ijtiḥād) was prohibited.

Let us see now how parallel are modern evolutionary theories and the meaningful verses of the Holy Qur'an, discussing the problems of biopoiesis in general and man's descent in particular. It is becoming evident that all the happenings from the beginning of the cosmos to the present times are in reality changes in the organization of matter, changes peculiar in this respect, that the effects of one process became the cause of the next. According to J. T. Wilson (1959 C.E.) and Hales (1960 C.E.) the earth itself probably was formed about 4.5 or 5 billion years ago. The crust of the earth is at least 4 billion years old. Some believe that the earth started as a hot object and cooled with time; others that its temperature changed little with time, and yet others that it began as a cool object and has since become warmer. Some believe it was molten; others believe it was solid and that it is expanding; and still others believe that the earth has reached an equilibrium in its size and that its heat production and heat loss are in equilibrium.

Two and a half billion years ago were formed the so-called epeirogenic, or shallow continental seas. The water of the oceans of today must have escaped from the earth's interior during its cooling stage. The same must be said of the atmosphere, which was also formed of gases that accompanied tectonic and volcanic processes. To a great extent, this was water vapour, carbon-dioxide, methane, sulphides and also nitrogen, which even today is found escaping in certain
localities. The juvenile water that made up the primeval waters of the oceans was poorly provided with mineral salts. Its enrichment with most diverse elements took place gradually as a result of an irreversible process, an example of which is the water cycle in nature, the constant erosion of the continents by rivers which carry their sediments back to the sea. The Qur`án referred to that process as:

"And He it is Who expanded the earth and made upon it mountains and rivers and of all fruits, He has made in pairs two (of every kind)" (13:3).

"He it is Who expanded the earth for you, and made therein for you paths and sent down water from the clouds. Then thereby We bring forth pairs of various vegetables" (20:53).

Islam also confirms the expanding theory of the earth's crust and affirms the beginning of life in water:

"Did We not create you from the juvenile water? Then We made you settled in security (on continents)" (77:20-21).

Resulting from the process of this so-called geological preparation there was gradually formed a water medium enriched with all possible elements that were in a state of easy migration with respect to each other. A medium of this kind can promote the generation of life. Without such a medium, organic life could not have arisen. The sources of the more important anions (carbonate, fluoride, chloride, sulphonate, borate, etc.) were in those seas, while the sources of the more important cations (Na, K, Mg, Ca, Sr, etc.) were the weathered products of the dust of rocky formations of the surface of the earth, and if it became softened from water it became clay. The Qur`án is here very explicit:

"And then We created man from different clays. Then We transformed him in a single cell endowed with faculty (of further evolution). Then We transformed the single cell into a worm, then We transformed the worm into molluscan, then We gave to the molluscan a shell, then We created him (in the form of) chordata, and We (let him) develop in other different forms. So blessed be God, the best Creator!" (23:12-14).

That verse is not concerned with embryonic development of man is clear from the very beginning where it starts with creation from clay, which is not related directly to any embryological state. This is only a transitory state from pre-biological system to the beginning of biopoesis, and is related as well as the rest of verses to the creation of life in general, and man in particular. Henderson's principle of the fitness of the environment is the condition in the inorganic world for the origin of the processes, as well as the materials, necessary for the creation of primitive life.

A plausible explanation for the origin of the primeval cell

A plausible explanation for the origin of the primeval cell must account for three items: (1) the simple elements or molecules of the pre-biological world which formed the building blocks for life; (2) a logical set world which formed the building blocks for life; (3) a source of nutrient materials for the persistence of life. It seems that primeval life came into existence before photosynthesis was established. The Qur`án did not mention the necessity of the sun for life, but only the necessity of water and dust. There is but another use of the word "single cell" for the origin of man, and this one is concerned with the embryological development. We read in the Qur`án:

"Does not man see that We have created him from a cell? Then he became an open disputant!" (36:77).

"We have created man from an evolving cell, to try him. We have made him hearing (and) seeing" (76:2).

Life originated on this planet two or more billion years ago

Life did originate on this planet some two or more billion years ago but exactly how we do not know. As more has been learned about life, it has been found to be a physico-chemical mechanism complicated almost beyond the limit of our imagination. The total evidence of phylogeny shows clearly that life began as a simple cell suggesting that a study of the simplest unicellular organisms may be the chief avenue for deducing the properties of the primeval cells of first life. According to Ruzicka (1919 C.E.) and Nilsson (1953 C.E.) life must keep going to stay alive.

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Typically, all organisms begin as a single cell. This is obviously true of the single-celled organisms, such as the amoeboi, and is equally true of the multicellular organisms. An oak tree and horses alike start from a zygote, the single cell resulting from two gametes. Incredible though it seems, the single cell initiating a new generation of the most complex reactions resulting in a daughter organism essentially like parent. Life has developed into an amazing array of types, ranging from bacteria to man, with millions of other kinds of life around and between. Fossils record the fact that various kinds of life have changed radically from eon to eon, attesting the continuous origin of new genetic variants since the record began. The great diversity of life had already evolved when the existing record began. Everything changes gradually and methodically at the same rate, resulting in a sort of orderly and predictable flow of new types.

The next phase in life evolution mentioned in the Qur'an is "adag", which is the word used for Hirudo medicinalis, e.g. representative of phylum Vermi or worms (Metazoa). The worm group consists of unsegmented acelomate animals which is in the case of the most primitive of them, the flatworm, they glide, partly by ciliary and partly by muscular action, over the substratum. The anatomical features limit the worms to a low level of metabolism and this is to some extent exaggerated by functional peculiarities. The lack of an anus prevents a continuous stream of food from passing along the gut and imposes an alternation of inward and outward movements. Along with this, the lack of respiratory organs and vascular system limit rather strictly the size and complexity which the worms have been able to reach in their evolutionary history.

The next phase of life evolution mentioned in the Qur'an is "mudghahah", and it is a mollusc. The molluscs are one of the great groups of the animal kingdom. The word mollusc is derived from the Latin mollis, meaning soft. The ancestral mollusc must have appeared on earth many millions of years ago, too early; for by the time the oldest fossiliferous rocks were laid down, evolution had already produced molluscs of many different patterns. By perfecting gas exchange and a circulatory system the molluscs arrived at a more perfect type of life. It has invented gills — specially thin-walled areas of the body surface — through which respiratory gases may be transported around the body in the blood, as also can food and waste.

In worms it started the differentiation of digestive tract, and in molluscs started the development of respiratory and blood circulatory tracts. The skin over the visceral mass of ancestral molluscs, called the pallium, or mantle, secreted a covering of concholinum impregnated with calcareous salts, which is the molluscan shell or exoskeleton, the next phase of development, and signifies more security by protection of soft parts by exoskeleton.

The next phase of life evolution is creation of "bones surrounded by muscles" and it is the prototype for the phylum chordata (ancient name: the vertebrata), and these are the animals with a protected nervous system in a bony canal (skull and vertebral column): the phase which will be succeeded by a great number of other animal orders. And, finally, there is man. That all this evolutionary transformation is not referred as an intranature embryological development explains the following verses of the Qur'an:

"O people! If you are in doubt about the Resurrection, then (listen): We created you from dust, then from a single cell, then from a worm, then from lower and higher molluscs, just to (mention a few) and make clear to you! And We repeat in the wombs (certain phases) that We want till a determined date. Then We bring you forth as babies, and then you attain your maturity..." (25:5).

In this verse, biopoesis, which is here directly connected with the descent of man, starts with creation from dust, which certainly does not belong to any gametogenesis and usual embryological development in any sense. The embryological development is mentioned here separately, saying:

"... and We repeat in the wombs..."

The Arabic word nuqirul means not settlement, as it is always wrongly translated, but has today, as well as it was in the time of the Quraysh, only one meaning, and that is repetition. Here is emphasized that during embryological development certain phases of historical biopoesis are repeated. In the 19th century C.E., more than 1,300 years after the revelation of the Holy Qur'an, the French scientist, Geoffre Saint Hillaire, said: Ontogeny (embryological development) is only a short recapitulation of phylogeny (or historical biopoesis).

Modern evolutionary theories are in complete conformity with the Holy Qur'an

Such interpretations, which are unfortunately officially accepted, are the old Judeo-Christian theories, that man was directly procreated from dust. The animal and vegetal kingdoms were probably created in those famous "six days" in a mysterious and inexplicable way, the same as the Jewish "Genesis" paints it.

In the Qur'an a day is accepted as a thousand months, in another place as a thousand years, and in another place as fifty thousand years, but nobody pays attention to the differing descriptions and everybody passes over them without comment. In the Qur'an it is clearly mentioned that man is the product of an evolutionary biopoesis, and only ancestral single cell life was created from geochemical processes or from "dust". The modern evolutionary theory has nothing derogatory to the Majesty of our Creator, Who is the Creator of everything except Himself. On the contrary, these theories are in complete conformity with the Holy Qur'an. The Almighty says in the Qur'an:

"We have created man from a zygot; (and) to try him We made him hearing and seeing" (76:2).

"He is Who created seven (similar) heavens. Thou seest no incongruity in the creation of the Beneficient. Then look again: canst thou see any disorder?" (67:3)

God says:

"(Such has been) the tradition of God that has run before, and thou will not find a change in God's tradition" (48:23).

If God has created man directly and imminently from dust, He will not change this way of creation because He promises it, and man shall be continuously created from dust. But We know that this is not the case, and that man and all other beings are procreated through a genesis which is involved with geochemical biopoesis and continued later after the creation of sex by gametogenesis. Such is the tradition of God, and there is no change in it! The observed continuity of mutation in populations, and the diversity of undoubtedly genetically-controlled characters in organisms back to the earlier fossil records, all together tell a story of constant
genetic change since life began. This change has not been random but, like pre-biological change before it, has moved in the direction of a kind of order peculiar to itself.

The order in pre-biological chemical evolution was determined by temperatures, the possible kinds of chemicals mixed together, and the inherent chemical and physical properties of the resultant units. The order in genetic changes is restricted in one direction by its chemical nature, e.g. is restricted by the physiological framework into which they must fit. Considering the dynamic nature of both phylogenetic lines and the environment, it might seem as if change should be the rule and stability the exception. In many groups of organisms the opposite is formed. In evolving phylogenetic lines, stability is the rule and only in some unusual circumstances it is necessary for the line to change.

Stable phylogenetic lines appear to remain within the same ecological range, in other words, to live under nearly identical conditions for generation after generation. As stronger pressure would have been exerted if different but compatible improvements, arising as unit characters in different individuals, could have been combined in a single cell. It is, therefore, plausible to assume that some sort of recombination mechanism, that is sex, arose fairly early in the evolution of life. The Qur’ān says for this event:

“Glory to Him Who created pairs of all things, of the vegetal world, and of their kind (animal world) and of what they know not” (36 : 36).

The Qur’ān and the segregation of sexes in the vegetal and animal kingdoms as well as among Protists

The segregation of sexes is also distributed between vegetal and animal kingdoms, as well as among Protists, which were at the time of the Revelation of the Qur’ān still unknown to mankind. It is interesting to mention that the “animal kingdom” is designated as “of their (human) kind”, affirming that man, biologically, belongs to the animal kingdom. We read in the Qur’ān:

“And he creates pairs, male and female, from one determined cell (zygot)” (53 : 45-46).

“God creates you from dust, then from a single cell, then He creates you pairs, and no female will conceive or deliver without His knowledge. And nobody can live or die without (that it was predetermined) in a book. All that is easy for God” (35 : 11).

According to Keosian (1960 C.E.), life can be started as monophyletic or polyphyletic. Many living lines might have arisen independently. The first might have perished from a variety of non-predatory causes, or it might have been destroyed by other more virile types. Certain lines may have fused. However, a polyphyletic origin is not at all a necessary prerequisite of this theory. If a single organism arose answering all components of life, this could have been sufficient to begin the whole subsequent sequences of living forms. Whether or not the first life was monophyletic or polyphyletic, uninterrupted generations of some lines must have succeeded each other from the dawn of life, some billion or more years ago, down to the present. The Qur’ān seems to be merely for a monophyletic descent, saying:

“And He is Who has brought you into being from a single soul, then (He has) settled and entrusted (you) in this world. Indeed, We have made plain the signs for people who can understand” (6 : 99).

It is certain that ecological conditions on earth have changed, and the existing life forms were obliged to adapt themselves to the new condition, just to survive. It is very possible that the primeval conditions for creation of life from inanimate compounds are not now existing, and for this reason it would not be possible to observe spontaneous creation of coazervates (ancestral life micelles) from chemical compounds in nature. But it would be possible to reproduce such coazervates in laboratory under similar conditions as were present at the time of life creation itself. This event will be the realisation of another prophecy of the Holy Qur’ān for which we are waiting, and it is the building of a living cell from inanimate compounds, or creation of life from dust.

(To be continued)

The Tarjuman al-Qur’ān

by Mawlana Abul Kalam Azad

(Edited and rendered into English by Dr. Syed ‘Abdul Latif)

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JANUARY 1969
ENCOUNTER

Facts about the forced Expulsion of the Arabs by the Zionists

The Lies that Zionism propagates

By MICHAEL SCOTT

In Jordan I visited Karameh.

This had been the site of a refugee camp, housing some 100,000 persons. Over the years since 1948, with the assistance of the host-country, of UNRWA, of various voluntary agencies, and, above all, with the industry and courage of its inhabitants, a township of permanent dwellings had been built up, with a good school, a mosque, little shops, a place where people could live with hope and self-respect.

Then, in October 1967 C.E., the Israelis bombed the place, just as the children were coming out of school, using — as Western military attaches have vouched — anti-personnel bombs. The inhabitants did not flee, as they were intended to — after all, they had nowhere to flee to.

So, on 21 March 1968 C.E. Israeli troops crossed the border. With tanks and planes they systematically shelled and bombed the place into rubble, which is as I saw it. Everything is gone. The mosque, the school, the UNRWA supply centre — everything completely flattened.

The refugees fled into the hills. For the second, and in many cases for the third time, they found themselves homeless and without personal possessions. It was there, at Baqa’a, that I visited them. A vast array of tents stretches out over the plateau. Amongst them are a number of large corrugated iron sheds — the “re-hydration centres” for the children.

At a clinic I visited, I had to wait in the ante-room while the doctor finished attending to a child. There, to my horror, I noticed that a woman was — quite mutely — holding up her burnt baby towards me. I could not look. But another woman, with greater temerity, cast a fierce look at me and said to my armed guard, “Is he American?” He explained I was not, and what I was doing there, but she would not be hushed and said to me, “When are we going back? Tell me! Is this justice?”

But it is not about this woman and her like, nor about their children, who in Karameh, on the plains, could have survived, but who here, on the mountains in makeshift tents, face a winter in which the snow can be a metre and a half deep, during which they will die in their hundreds, it is not about these so much that I wish to write. Unhappily, our century has seen suffering on a much vaster scale, involving even greater numbers of people.

This particular horror, however, has certain features which deserve our special attention; and for reasons which I hope will become apparent I should therefore like to deal with it rather more from the Israeli point of view.

“Where are we going back?” “Is this justice?” To these two questions I could answer, “Soon, if God wills” and “No.” For divers reasons, the young Israeli who aimed a gun or piloted a plane at Karameh cannot return these answers. What does he say? Does he say in answer to both questions something like this: “Of course you can’t return. Don’t you realize your home in Jaffa, or wherever it was, is part of Eretz Israel, as was your camp at Jericho and your camp at Karameh? Why don’t you wake up to yourself? It’s no good living in the past!” Adding, for good measure, “Why, my ancestors lived here 2,000 years ago!”

He can no longer answer with, “You left Karameh of your own free will, at the prompting of your leaders” and “You are at Baqa’a because the Arab governments have kept you there, so it’s their fault” or any other of the curious rationalizations which were used to justify the 1948 expulsion. He is compelled to fall back on the naked assertion of a territorial ambition which has been an integral part of the Zionist movement from the very start, and is set out in full for all to read in the writings of Herzl, at the start, then Weizmann, now Ben Gurion.

THE TWO DEFECTS OF ZIONISM

Zionism, at its inception, at the first Zionist Congress at Basle in 1897 C.E., was a humanitarian movement. Its first founders were men of high principle who were putting forward a plan which, however muddled and misinformed it may have been, was honestly and sincerely devised to lessen the sufferings of the Jewish people. How, then, over the years did the mild, benign voices of a few well-intentioned old gentlemen meeting at Basle in 1897 C.E. come to be replaced by the scream of bombers over Karameh?

The plan was a simple one, or so it seemed. There were, and had been over the ages, small Jewish communities in the countries of Europe which had continually been subject to persecution and discrimination. These persecutions had not ceased with the Middle Ages; on the contrary, Europe had just witnessed with horror the pogroms which followed the assassination of Czar Nicholas II. These persecutions could only take place, it was argued, because of the position of the
Jews as virtually foreign minorities, but without any nation of their own. The solution, therefore, was to find some suitable territory where they could found a Jewish state. And though not all Zionists — not even Herzl himself, the author of the book which started the whole movement — thought Palestine need necessarily be the territory, to the majority Palestine seemed the obvious choice. Was it not from here that the Jews had been driven two thousand years ago? Did not all their ills spring from the dispersion, and so would they not all be cured if there were a fresh ingathering?

The whole thing is so seemingly logical, so dangerously simple, so persuasive, that the great majority of Westerners have swallowed it whole. Its glaring defects and manifest contradictions have totally escaped otherwise acute minds. Of these defects we may single out two in particular.

The first defect is its total disregard for the rights of the population of Israel

First and foremost there is, of course, a total disregard for the rights of the population of Palestine. This, at the start, was a result of total ignorance. No mention of the indigenous population was made at any Zionist Conference up to 1914. When they were thought of at all it was as a group of savage Bedouin in the hills, who might prove a nuisance, but little more.

No greater mistake could have been made. In fact, there was a settled population of some 800,000 souls, who and whose fathers had tilled the land there for 1,300 years — much longer than ever the Jews had held a foothold in the land. It was a population not of savages but with an ancient and distinctive Arab culture. Though it suffered from an oppressive and corrupt Turkish Government, and may have been backward in its agricultural methods by comparison with European standards, it was probably more prosperous than nineths of the rest of the Arab world. Further, it was a population which was intensely politically conscious, and shared with other Arab countries a growing national awareness and ambition.

Nor was that all. In selecting Palestine as the proposed area of colonization, the Zionists had selected the least appropriate part of the Arab world, with the exception of the Hejaz. For Palestine was the Holy Land — to Muslims as well as to Jews and Christians — Jerusalem, the Holy City, next only to Mecca and Medina. No more certain method could have been found of ensuring that sooner or later Arabs all over the world — Christian and Muslim alike — would be up in arms against the proposed colony.

At this distance of time it seems almost inconceivable that the Zionists should not have realised some of this, or at least have taken some steps to have found out. This, however, was the era of European colonization, when it had not yet occurred to Europeans that there was any duty to consult the "backward peoples", so that we should not be too hasty to condemn the early Zionists. They knew no better.

When, however, the Zionists became aware of the existence of this population — and after the first disturbances of 1920 and 1921 C.E. they could scarcely remain unaware — the full nature of this defect in Zionism became apparent. For if Palestine was to become as Jewish as England is English, then it followed as the night the day that this settled population would have to be removed. And since it was scarcely to be supposed that this peasant population, deeply attached to its land, would leave voluntarily, it followed that it must be expelled by force.

At this point, the Zionists had a choice. Either they could acknowledge the truth and renounce the aim of statehood; or they could turn their backs on the truth and go ahead. Some of them followed Achad Haam, and chose the former. Most, alas, chose the latter.

Facilis est descensus Averni. For it was at this point that Zionism became corrupt. It found itself all of a sudden with an aim which was manifestly without the help of powerful allies; it became necessary to conceal its purposes, to deceive. From cherishing illusions the transition had been made to propagating lies. And, as many a liar has found to his cost, one lie led to another; and all of them, like the Nazis, had to be great big liars which honest men would believe because they could not conceive that anyone could lie on such a scale.

For from the start things went wrong. The economy was unsound. From the achievement of statehood in 1948 it teetered along from crisis to crisis, grasping at loans, grants in aid, bond-issues, gifts. German reparations; but, despite the staggering total of $7,000 million received over the period between 1949 and 1966,1 on the eve of war, in 1967, the State was bankrupt; the Israeli pound went down to little more than 28 cents; unemployment rife; ominously, emigration exceeding immigration; the balance of trade figures, as always, the least favourable in the Middle East. (On the other hand, Jordan, with her appalling refugee problem, had a healthy growth-rate of 10% per annum and was on the way to complete independence of foreign aid by 1970.)

But the American investor — and the prospective immigrant — could at no stage be apprised of such ugly facts. So we have the legend of the kibbutz, which runs something like this. "Whereas the dirty, lazy Arab let this land of ours run to rack and ruin, we, with our bare hands, performed a miracle; under the rifle shots of the envious, ungrateful Arab, whom we could have helped so much if he had let us, we have made the desert bloom, an example to the world of what we Jews can achieve!" Bursting with pride at the Jewish Appeal Fund dinner, which had cost him $150 for his plate, and uneasily conscious that, unlike Ben Gurion, he would rather live on 47th Street than on a kibbutz, the Jewish businessman reaches for his pocket-book. No one mentions to him that only 6% of the population live on kibbutzim. Still less that the kibbutzim have been making a steady loss since 1939;2 nor, apparently, does it occur to him to ask why, if everything's going "hunky-dory" like this, he is constantly being badgered for money.

Well, like all confidence-tricks, this one has its funny side.

But then, after 1948, something else went wrong. The cowardly Arabs, who had lost the war to gallant little Israel (their armies were in fact out-numbered by nearly 3 to 2, with extended lines of communication and much poorer equipment — which does not minimize their governments' responsibility for the defeat, but is worth a mention) did not sink away and sensibly forget all about the matter. Very much the contrary.

Thus "little Israel" must constantly be seen to be in imminent peril from the Arab States, and in need of massive

1 Israel Economist for September 1967. Vol. XXIII, No. 9 (reporting Mr. Pinhas Sagir, Minister of Finance).
arms shipments from the West. At the same time — and particularly since 1967 — she has the greatest army of all time, which can easily beat any Arab army. Once again, pride on the second account, the pocket book on the first.

Reverting to 1948, something else went a bit wrong. It was now necessary to expel the Arabs. The expulsion, carried out with the utmost brutality before ever the Arab armies arrived on the scene,3 was in grave danger of spoiling the West's image of Zionism as a noble and high-minded crusade, so something had to be done, because, of course, there was no intention of letting them back, whatever Westerners might think.

So we have two further lies, which have been so successfully propagated that if you mention the Arab refugee problem to a semi-illiterate man in the street with little interest in, and less knowledge of, Middle Eastern affairs, he will nevertheless be able to trot out one or other of them as an answer, or both.

The lie that the Arab refugees left of their own accord

(1) "The refugees left of their own accord and under pressure to leave from their leaders."

Now, it is always difficult to prove a negative. In this case, however, two writers, Walid Khalidi4 and Erskine B. Childers,5 have done so most successfully. The BBC monitored all broadcasts in the area in 1948, and the records are in the British Museum. A careful examination of these and of the Arab newspapers reveals no single instance of an evacuation order. What it does reveal is the measures of the Arab states to close their borders to Palestinians of military age seeking to flee, and to send back those already in their countries; and the pathetic appeals of Palestinian leaders to their people to stay put in their homes and their jobs. No such careful scrutiny was needed to disclose Zionist threats to Arabs to induce them to flee, since many an Israeli memoir writer appears to be only too proud of this method of psychological warfare.

Facts, however, never quenched the ardour of those who wish to believe. Mr. Jon Kimche, editor of the London Jewish Observer (on 14 August 1959): "Like Mr. Khalidi, I could never establish the existence of such an order; yet I am convinced that there was such an instruction."

Mr. Khalidi produced a further edition of his meticulous examination into the facts — which deserves, in this writer's opinion, a place amongst the classics of legal literature.

But what a waste of effort! After the recent war, Professor Rushbrook Williams wrote to the Times (for 22 September 1967):

"The letter of Mr. Christopher Walkes (20 September) wholly underestimates the effect on the Arab population of Mandatory Palestine of the repeated exhortations of Arab leaders urging this population to leave their homes until the Jews had been driven into the sea, and the fighting was over. As an historian I have been able to examine very closely the effect of these exhortations and I am convinced that they were the main factor in inspiring the exodus."

Mrs. Elizabeth Collard replied on 28 September, pointing out that a check on broadcasts "revealed that not one single exhortation to flee had been made and that, on the contrary, there had been many broadcasts urging the Arabs to remain." Needless to say, no one answered — certainly not Professor Rushbrook Williams.

Non-existent exhortations on the one side, threats on the other, were not, in any case, the determining factor.

On 9 April 1948 Irgun forces surrounded the village of Deir Yassin and massacred its population, man, woman and child, sparing in their mercy a handful of survivors, whom they bundled into a lorry, took round neighbouring villages and finally dumped in Jerusalem.

The Professor Rushbrook Williams's of this world are not at a loss to account for this sort of thing: —

"The Deir Yassin massacre was a wholly isolated incident for which the Israeli army was not responsible. It was deeply deplored by all responsible people in Israel. The fact is that the men who organized it and carried it out were driven almost to madness by photographs, at the time in circulation among the Arab population, of the mutilated bodies of Jewish men, women and children who had suffered at Arab hands. I have myself seen these photographs, which shocked decent Arabs as much as the Deir Yassin massacre shocked decent Jews."

Menachem Begin, the organizer of the attack, has a rather different view of things. "The massacre was not only justified," he writes in his memoirs, "but there would not have been a state of Israel without the victory at Deir Yassin." It would be difficult for Professor Rushbrook Williams to classify Menachem Begin as one who was not a responsible person in Israel, since he is now a member of the Israeli cabinet.

The lie that the refugees are kept by the Arab leaders to be used as political pawns

(2) "The refugees are purposely kept in the camps by the Arab countries in a state of destitution so that they can be used as political pawns."

By dint of constant repetition, year in and year out, this account has been generally accepted by the public, despite the fact that it is self-evidently absurd on the face of it. Sir John Glubb compares it with the case of a landlord who evicts his tenants and leaves them shivering in the gutter with the clothes they stand up in. Reproached, he says: "Yes, I know, it's simply dreadful, isn't it, but it's all the fault of the neighbours who won't take them in." Sir John adds, "The case of the Palestine Arabs, however, was far stronger, for they were the owners of the houses from which they had been evicted."

Further, nothing the Arab leaders said or did has the slightest relevance to the manifest right of the refugees, in private and in public law, to return to their lands and homes once the fighting was over.

In public law, moreover, responsibility has been placed firmly on the Israelis by the General Assembly of the United Nations, which on 11 December 1948 resolved "that refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their

3 See, e.g., the boast of Ben Gurion, Rebirth and Destiny of Israel, p. 296.
neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the governments or authorities responsible.”

This resolution, annually reaffirmed, is, of course, ignored by the Israeli government.

But, apart from this, it is simply not true that the Arabs have done nothing about the refugees. Large numbers of refugees have been absorbed by the host countries (one third of the population of Amman is now Palestinian) and by other Arab countries as far afield as Kuwait and the Sudan. Palestinians play an important and influential rôle in the communities which have sheltered them. UNRWA reports repeatedly pay tribute to the generosity and assistance of the host countries.

But the problem of resettlement is enormous. The comparatively easy problem of resettling villagers unsettled by the construction of the High Dam cost $2,000 a head. Even supposing the necessary amount (estimated by the United Nations at $6,000 million) could be raised, where would they be put? With the possible exception of Syria, no Arab country has the land available. Egypt, for example, may look big on the map to a Westerner, but is engaged in a constant struggle to extend the cultivable land to meet the needs of her rapidly expanding population.

Over-riding all these factors is, however, the burning desire of the overwhelming majority of the refugees to return home — again attested by UNRWA reports. Limited resettlement within the host countries is one thing; mass resettlement against the will of the refugees is a thing no Arab government can contemplate — or ought to contemplate.

It was said to be unable to give any word of comfort to the women at Baqa’a. Mr. Philip Toynbee (the Times, 31 May 1967) might have done better: “The assimilation of the Arabs’ carefully preserved refugees” he writes, “presents no real problem.”

Now, the vicious thing about these two particular lies is that they are deliberately devised to draw away from these unhappy people the ordinary sympathy and understanding to which they are entitled. No more shocking an example of their effect is to be found than that of Eleanor Roosevelt who, passing through Jordan on her way to Israel, declined an invitation to visit a refugee camp; they were no worse off than refugees elsewhere, and she was on her way to visit her “friends in Israel”.

These were lies which struck at the springs of human compassion — those same springs which welled at the spectacle of Jewish misery in Europe at the end of the second world war, and have been diverted to water the Zionist myth.

Do not suppose, again, that the myth is without its funny side. A “three day expert” on Israel is shown the spot from which Tova Goldberg saved Jerusalem. The Arabs were advancing. The Haganah were 300 yards away. Good old Tova volunteered to take a message. On the way, her arm was blown off, but she picked it up (the arm — history does not record about the message), got through to the Haganah and thus saved Jerusalem, and is now married to a hero of the War of Liberation with no legs. One trusts, for Tova’s sake, his other limbs were intact.

Again, the Rabbi to the Forces, in desperate and humourless pursuit of a mythology, descends on Mount Sinai in a helicopter, blowing a ram’s horn.

All well and good. So we start off with musical comedy (“Way over the mountain” with strumming guitars and healthy young Jews waying it over the mountain in knickers-bockers in the dawn’s early light); then we proceed with good old Tova and the Rabbi into the realm of low farce; but all too soon we encounter Grand Guignol. The same rabbi blows his horn at the Haram Al-Sharif — a hideous and deliberately sacrilegious act — and Muslims are excluded from the Ibrahimi mosque in Hebron so that Jews may pray there. A light shines in the eternal peace of the desert and discloses an Arab woman who has managed to cross the border, coming from Gaza, and is digging a ridiculous slit trench, while a little way away, in another laughably shallow trench, her three absurd children blink in the headlights. She’s made it a good deal farther than lovable old Tova. She hasn’t got a husband.

This woman was chased out because she was a danger to the State of Israel. Quite right — she is; still more so her children.

The second defect is the identity of Zionism with Judaism

So much for the first defect of early Zionism — its disregard for the population of Palestine. Its second defect was its calm assumption of the identity of Zionism with Judaism; a defect which became, paradoxically, both its strength and its weakness. Its strength because it gave Zionists an invaluable weapon against their Gentile opponents; anyone who opposes the Jewish state must ipso facto be anti-Semitic, so that the writer is, he supposes, doomed to sit in hell quaffing pints of infernal Münchenerlager with Julius Streicher and Heinrich Himmler. It is some comfort to him that he will be joined by Arnold Toynbee and Sir Isaac Isaacs; by Edwin Montagu and Claude Montefiore; by Rabbi Berger of New York, Maxime Rodinson of the Sorbonne and Moshe Menuhin, late of Israel. It’s weakness because, once again, it is a lie; and a particularly fearful one.

For many of the early activist Zionists this identification was not difficult, for like Weizmann and Sokolov and Ben Gurion, they came from the countries of the Russian Empire. There they lived in closed communities, spoke a different language and held an inferior status. For them it was easy to say, “I think of myself as a Jew, not as a Russian or a Pole.” But when Zionism appeared in England, it met with intense opposition from the Jewish community — most notably from Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India and the only Jew on the cabinet at the time of the Balfour Declaration, at whose urgent insistence the Declaration was toned down from “statehood” to the “national home”. For, of course, an English Jew thinks of himself — as Israeli propaganda encourages him to do — as owing his allegiance to a state in the Middle East rather than to his native country, then it is time the Jewish Emancipation Act was repealed. It is curious, indeed, that this undermining of their citizenship does not seem to have worried more than a small minority of American Jews. “Diaspora Jewry,” said Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Zionist Organization, “must have the courage to proclaim and defend its relationship of partnership and responsibility vis-à-vis Israel . . . It has to have the courage to reject the idea that Jewish communities
owe loyalty to the states where they live.” 9 Ben Gurion: “When a Jew in America or South Africa speaks of ‘our government’ to his fellow Jews, he usually means the government of Israel, while the Jewish public in various countries view the Israeli ambassador as their own representative.” 10

These astonishingly arrogant statements evoked scarcely any protest.

This sedulous attempt of Zionism to equate the Jew with the Zionist has caused untold misery amongst Jews in the Arab countries. Settled Jewish communities in the Middle East which have lived in peace with their Muslim and Christian neighbours for centuries have suddenly found themselves the prey of Zionist “rescue” operations. Consequent suspicion of their loyalty and mounting anti-Semitism in an area which never knew it before has forced most of their members out of the Arab countries, while with delight Zionists have hailed the advent of their persecuted brethren to swell their dwindling immigration figures.

The identification of Zionism with the Jewish religion

Spiritually more dangerous, however, is the identification of Zionism with the Jewish religion.

Now, insofar as the prophets foretold a return, in the physical sense, their prophecies were fulfilled in the return from Babylon and the establishment of the Kingdom of David and Solomon. Insofar, however, as they foretold the ultimate return to Israel, the Kingdom where the lion should lie down with the lamb, the Kingdom of the Messiah, the King of Peace, it needs no biblical scholar to recognize that this Israel is not that Israel. No one, so far as I know, has recognized in Eshkol or Dayan the Messiah promised in the scriptures.

The Israeli leaders are for the most part secularist, and indeed boast of a secular state (in which, nevertheless, there is no public transport on Saturdays). But they have not been loath to take advantage of this identification; so that very many Christians, brought up in a biblical atmosphere (they include Balfour, Churchill and Wingate) have felt obscurely that in some way or another they would be opposing the will of God were they to resist Israel’s material plans. Thus, when the victorious cars carried Eshkol and Dayan to the temple in the wake of the tanks, the Chief Rabbi was with them.

Let Sister Marie Therese, whose community in France helped many Jews to escape the Nazi terror, describe this scene:

“Then one by one we carried them off (the corpses). Special care had to be taken, as the limbs easily became detached from the body. As for me, with the help of three male nurses, I carried once again the cart with the mother and her five children. Just as we were arriving at the Muslim cemetery, the Jewish authorities arrived in their cars. Dayan, the great Rabbi with his black cap on his head, and Levi Eshkol, the Israelis, chased a long line of cars drove in triumph towards the temple. I took off the cover: some Jewish women and a soldier shrank back in consternation: those maybe will remember. But immediately an Israeli soldier, sub-machine gun in hand, jumped towards me. He shouted: ‘Cover it! Cover it!’ I obeyed more out of respect for the dead than to that tone and face that brought back sad memories of the war of 1940.”

This is the horror. The bombs rained down on Karameh in the name of the Living God; and the camp at Baqa’a is witness to the fulfillment of His eternal will, and the carry-

9 Israeli Government Year Book, 1953-54, p. 35.
Initiation into the Holy Qur’ān

How the Revealed Text of the Qur’ān was Composed

*A discussion of the so-called variants*

The Caliph ‘Uthman (d. 654 C.E.) is not the “Collector” of the Qur’ān, rather he is the distributor of the copies of the Original Ms.

By the late Dr. M. A. DRAZ

The Qur’ān during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad

At the present time the Qur’ān appears in the form of a single volume, its most usual make-up consisting of about 500 pages (of 15 lines each), divided into Surahs (or Chapters) of varying lengths. Following the Introduction, composed of five short lines, the Surahs are usually arranged according to their relative lengths — the longest at the beginning, followed by those of medium length, and finally the shortest (some of which consist of only one line). The text abounds in the various signs: diacritical, vocalic, orthographical and punctuation signs, all of which help the reader in his pronunciation and the observance of pauses.

But this was not the form taken by the Qur’ān during the lifetime of the Prophet, for although the text remains strictly the same as when he dictated it, its appearance has undergone considerable change. First, there was not what one might term a volume, or collection. As we have shown by the few examples previously mentioned, the Qur’ān appeared in the form of longer or shorter fragments, which varied in length from an entire Surah to a single verse, and sometimes only a part of a verse. The Prophet recited each passage as he received it, it was memorized by his listeners, and it was then circulated among those who had not heard the Prophet’s actual words. Everyone waited eagerly for these passages and was keen to be given details as soon as possible after the Prophet had recited them. Even the Prophet’s enemies, far from being indifferent to his Qur’ān, often sought to listen to the recitations. This was either to find a weak point which they could utilise in order to produce “rival” passages, or to attack him, or simply to gratify their passionate desire for literature. So it is not difficult to imagine the interest he must have aroused among his sympathisers and supporters. For them, the Qur’ān was spiritual food, the rule of conduct, the formula used in prayer, and the medium for preaching. It was their liturgy, their history, their fundamental law and the code for all the circumstances of their everyday lives.

Twenty-nine scribes took down the Qur’ānic revelation in the order the Prophet dictated and indicated

But the Sacred Text was not merely a “Qur’ān”, or ensemble of oral recitations, intended only to be preserved in their memories. It was also a Kitāb, a Scripture, a Book — two aspects which mutually complement and corroborate each other. And so each passage received and recited by the Prophet was immediately set down in writing by the scribes on any suitable object within reach — the leaves of trees, pieces of wood, parchment or leather, flat stones, shoulder-blades, etc. The most reliable scholars state that twenty-nine people were entrusted with this work of acting as “secretaries” to the Prophet. The best-known are the first five successors (Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, Mu’āwiyyah), Zubayr Ibn al-‘Awāmm, Sa‘īd Ibn al-‘As, ‘Amr Ibn al-‘As, Ubayy Ibn Ka‘b and Zayd Ibn Thābit. But the most zealous of these were Mu’āwiyyah and Zayd Ibn Thābit. Although at

*See his article “Initiation into the Qur’ān”, *The Islamic Review* for November-December 1968.
1 Actually this order is not strictly adhered to, and there are exceptions in all the various categories, which would seem to indicate some special reason for this procedure.
2 Thus the second Surah, i.e., the first after the Introduction (the Fātiḥah), and which is the longest of all, takes up 46 pages.
Mecca there were fewer persons and the work did not bear this official cachet, one thing is certain — from the beginning of the revelations, and even during the height of the persecutions, the faithful still continued to make copies of the revealed text, compiling personal manuscripts for their own private use. According to tradition, the conversion of 'Umar was due to his reading, on a leaf which he found in the possession of his sister, the opening verses of the 20th Surah.

But in their written form these documents did not originally constitute a homogeneous, classified and numbered collection. The Prophet did not possess a single written fragment, and at this epoch no private person possessed a complete copy. Scattered about in this way among the Believers, they could not even receive their definite structure in the common memory until a short time before the end of the Prophet's life. In fact, it was soon noticed that these passages did not remain completely isolated from each other, nor did they follow each other in the chronological order of their revelation. Sometimes several groups of passages were brought together to form independent units, separate from others.

The Qur'an learnt by heart by several hundreds of the Companions of the Prophet

From time to time further verses were added — sometimes they were inserted into the body of the unit — following the personal directions of the Prophet, which he himself declared to be in accordance with the commands received from the celestial Messenger. In order to leave the way clear for these progressive developments, the Believers were obliged to wait for the completion of a certain revealed passage, or series of passages, before it could be embodied into one of the units. And although at this stage there may not have been strict continuity in the sequence of the fragments in their written form, orally, at all stages of development of the revelation, each passage was given its proper place in the Surah of which it was to become a part.

Such was the case with many of the recitations, including those dealing with prayer, education and the propagation of the Faith. Thus, during the Prophet's lifetime, several hundreds of the Companions (known as the "Memorisers of the Qur'an") had already become adept in the reading and recitation of the Book, and knew by heart each Surah, in the form that had been officially prescribed. For example, Ibn Mas'ud was very proud of having learned more than seventy Surahs from the lips of the Prophet himself. And the Prophet declared that each year, during the month of Ramadhan, his custom had been to make a general revision of the revealed text, reciting it in the presence of Gabriel, and that during the preceding year the Divine Messenger had appeared before him twice, to be present during his recitation of the Sacred Book. (This would have taken place during the last year of his life — the Prophet regarded it as a sign that he was approaching his end.)

Within a year of the death of the Prophet an authorized collection of the Prophetic Revelation was prepared by Zayd Ibn Thabit

 Barely a year had passed after the Prophet's death than it was felt necessary to bring together these scattered documents to form a properly-arranged collection, easy to consult, in which the parts of each chapter would follow each other in the order in which they had already memorized them, but to which they had so far not given any sequence or continuity. The idea was suggested by 'Umar to the first Caliph after the battle of Yamamah against the false prophet Musaylimah, during which some hundreds of Muslims were killed, including seventy "Memorisers of the Qur'an". Fearing a possible progressive diminution in the number of these "Memorisers" in future wars, it was hoped in this way, not only to render the whole of the written revelation immune to destruction, and easily accessible in case of need, but also to give authoritative confirmation to the form taken by this collection, which would be assembled and unified with the common consent and authority of the existing "Reciters" and of all the Companions who could each recite a more or less lengthy part.

The task was entrusted to Zayd Ibn Thabit, although at first, conscious of the heavy responsibility involved in such an undertaking, he hesitated about accepting it. But Abú Bakr insisted: "You are an intelligent man," he said. "In our eyes your integrity is above suspicion, and you used to write down the revelations at the dictation of the Prophet. You must certainly take charge of the collection of the Qur'an." Yet another reason seems to have played a part in this choice. Not only was Zayd a "secretary" and a "Memoriser of the Qur'an", but in addition he had been present during the last recitation made by the Prophet. In addition to all these guarantees of authenticity, rules of procedure were established and rigorously applied. No written passage could be included unless it had been certified by two witnesses as having been drawn up, not from memory, but from the actual dictation of the Prophet, and it had to be part of the text in its most recent form. According to al-Layth Ibn Sa'd, this insistence on two witnesses definitely excluded a passage brought forward by 'Umar on the stoning of an adulterer, the reason being that 'Umar was the only witness to this passage.

After all these precautions had been taken, Zayd handed the finished work to the safe keeping of Abú Bakr, who retained it during his Caliphate. Before his death the first Caliph entrusted it to the care of 'Umar, whom he had indicated as his successor. During his last moments, 'Umar in his turn placed it in the care of his daughter, Hafsah, one of the widows of the Prophet, because at that time the third Caliph had not yet been elected.

In addition to its completeness, this first official collection (which can be described as a dossier containing pages (sahif) which were classified, but not yet bound) was distinguished from other copies, whether complete or partial, in the possession of private individuals, by a kind of scrupulous exactitude, which excluded everything which did not form part of the actual text to be recited after its final compilation. In fact, although some persons, such as, for example, Ibn Mas'ud or Ubayy Ibn Ka'b, sometimes wrote from memory, including in their versions divergent or discrepant interpretations made some time previously, or took the liberty of writ-

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5 Referring to this work, Leblais wrote: "How pleased everyone would have been if, after the death of Jesus, one of His closest disciples had been entrusted with the work of putting His teachings into written form!" (Leblais : Le Qur'ān et la Bible Hébraïque, p. 47, Note 5.)

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ing in the margin short explanatory notes (sometimes in a different colour), or certain extra-textual prayer-formulas, in the official collection, on the contrary, even the titles of the chapters were rigorously expurgated where deemed necessary. But however great may have been the value of such a document, however praiseworthy the care taken in its compilation, since it remained in the vigilant care of the two first Caliphs it was still a more or less private book, and did not acquire its now universal authority until the day it was published.

The Caliph 'Uthmán has made several copies of the Zayd Ibn Thābit's MS of the Qur’ān

It was not until the reign of the third Caliph 'Uthmán, after the campaigns of Armenia and Azerbaijan, that the auspicious moment arrived for the publication of the Qur’ān.

The armies of Syria and Iraq, who had assembled for the purpose, noticed a certain difference in their respective recitations. The Syrians were listening to the reading made by their compatriot Ubayy, and the Iraqis were listening to their own Ibn Mas‘ūd. The two groups began boasting: “Our reading is better than yours!” Alarmed at this scene, Hudhayfah Ibn al-Yamān went to the Caliph 'Uthmán with the urgent request to put an end to “...such disputes which might result in cleavages similar to those of the Jews and the Christians on the subject of their Books”.

'Uthmán at once formed a committee of four “Copyists”. These were Zayd, of Medina (already mentioned), and three Meccans: ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Zubayr, Sa‘d Ibn al-‘As and ‘Abd al-Rahmān Ibn al-Hārīth Ibn Hishām. He entrusted them with the work of copying the original of Hafsah, making as many copies as there were important towns in the Muslim Empire. He further specified: “If you disagree about the spelling of a word, write it in the Qur'ānhite dialect, for it was in this dialect that the Qur’ān was (originally) given.” When the work was finished in complete accordance with the original text, it was given back to Hafsah, and the other copies of the Qur’ān were bound and distributed as permanent and unchangeable texts, which definitely cancelled all other versions which showed any kind of variation.

A number of Shi‘ahs suspected ‘Uthmán of having altered the Qur’ānic text, or, more precisely, of having omitted certain material concerning ‘Ali. If this were true the “Memorisers of the Qur’ān” (still very numerous at the time of the publication), could have verified it by comparing the passages in question with what they had learned by heart. Now, even Ibn Mas‘ūd, who had more than one reason for being dissatisfied with the policy, nevertheless acknowledged the accuracy of the work. He even foresaw that at some future date, the length of the Qur’ān would be adhered to, but the application of its precepts would be neglected.12 In view of the zeal shown by the first Muslims, who manifested much more devotion towards the Word of God than their successors, we cannot rightly attribute to the spirit of “conformism” the fact that ‘Uthmán’s version was unanimously accepted by everyone, without reservation or objection. The famous German Orientalist, Neideke, concludes that this was the best possible proof that the text “…was as complete and as accurate as could reasonably be expected.”

In any case, for fourteen centuries this version has been the only one in use in the Muslim world, including the Shi‘ah community. Here it is interesting to read the Profession of Faith of the Imāmīs (the most important section of Shi‘ism), which is to be found in a book written by Abū Ja‘far, of Qumm: “Concerning the length and contents of the Qur’ān which the Most High God revealed to his Prophet Muhammad (May he and his family be blessed !), our belief is as follows: it consists of that which is today preserved between two covers for the use of men, and nothing else. The number of Surahs recognized by the majority of Muslims is 114, but in our view, Surahs 93 and 94 form one Surah, numbers 105 and 106 form one Surah, and similarly with Surahs 8 and 9. He who says that we believe the Qur’ān to be more than this is a liar.”

And Lebois was able to declare, with justification: “The Qur’ān is today the only Sacred Book which does not contain marked variations.”13 W. Muir, in fact, had previously declared: “‘Uthmán’s version has passed on to us from hand to hand without alteration. It has been so scrupulously

8 For example, in the collection compiled by Ibn Mas‘ūd, we find, written beside the text:  "الصلاة في الصوماء"
"the intermediary prayer", this explanation:
"الصيام في الصوماء"
"afternoon prayer", or
"الصيام في الصوماء"
"which is the afternoon prayer". We will not discuss whether this definition is itself the correct one — the question was a very controversial one among the Companions of the Prophet. But, even admitting, with al-Bardah, that this definition originally existed and was considered to be the correct one, and that it was later abrogated and replaced by the present definition, it has never been found in juxtaposition to it in the final authoritative recited text, witness this same controversy about the interpretations. Ibn al-Azhari relates that during the first compilation Hafsah demanded the insertion of this explanatory word in the text, but since it provided no proof of authenticity, her father, 'Umar, opposed it categorically. (Cf. Suyuti, Durr Manthūr, Volume 1, p. 303.)

9 Thus we find, in the collection made by Ubayy, in addition to the canonical Surahs, the two famous prayers known as Surahs 101 and 102.

10 Excluding 'Uthmán's own personal copy, most of the "traditionalists" agree that five manuscripts were allocated to the five following towns: Mecca, Medina, Basra, Kufah and Damascus. But Abū Hātim al-Sijistānī mentions two other copies made for the two provinces of the Yemen and Bahrain. (Cf. Ibn Abī Dā’ūd, Kitāb al-Masāhif, p. 74.)

11 Thus, the word "الصلاة في الصوماء", which at Medina was written "الصلاة في الصوماء" retained its Meclean form of spelling.

12 Mālik, Muftī.
14 See Mirza Alexandre Kazem, Journal Asiatique, December 1843.
15 Lebois, op. cit., p. 54.
preserved that there are no variations of any note — one might even say no variations whatsoever — in the innumerable copies of the Qur'an circulating in the vast domains of Islam. There has been only one Qur'an for all the warring factions, and this unanimous use of the same text, accepted by everyone right up to the present day, is one of the irrefutable proofs of the authenticity of the text which we now possess, and which dates back to the unfortunate Caliph 'Uthmān' (who died by assassination).

While these "verdicts" show an incontestable historical impartiality, there is nevertheless the need for a two-fold amendment — they are both "understatements" and "overstatements".

The understatement lies in the fact that the source of the present-day Qur'anic text was traced back only as far as the third Caliph, whereas, as we have seen, 'Uthmān's rôle consisted of making publicly available the manuscript compiled under the direction of Abū Bakr. We have also seen that this original was simply the integral reproduction of the text written down at the dictation of the Prophet himself, following the order in which it was recited (not to be confused with the order in which it was revealed).

A few words about the variations in pronunciation

On the other hand, there is over-statement if we affirm categorically that these versions, although, graphically, repetitions of each other, do not contain any variations in pronunciation. This is a well-known fact to those who have even a rudimentary knowledge of Arabic calligraphy. First, though the long vowels have almost always appeared in the body of Arabic words, this has never been the case with the short vowels, nor with certain medium vowels. Secondly, several groups of letters not only resemble each other, but are identical in form, and differ only through being written with signs known as "diacritical points". Thus, for example, an "i" can be read as "n", "t", or "b" or "i", according to whether we put one or two "points" above it, or one or two "points" below it. Now these points were not in use either during the lifetime of the Prophet, or during the reigns of the first three Caliphs. Although ordinary common sense was sometimes sufficient to hazard a guess at the correct pronunciation of a word, more often it could be arrived at only through some oral indication. Now according to tradition the Prophet, when teaching, did not always use the same method of pronunciation. Using the same word (or rather, the same radical), he would sometimes give several different explanations (or dissertations), all of which would be quite relevant and valid. Thus the word جل can be read as malik (master, owner) and malik (king). Similarly, can be read as Ìîì (inform yourself (regarding)), and also Ìîì (act with circumspection), and these different readings are all equally traditional.

Another point of interest — the audience was not necessarily always composed of the same people. In consequence, from the very earliest days the Companions grew to adopt different ways of reading, and these were often quite unknown to each other. Al-Bukhārī relates that one day 'Umar became furious when he heard Hishām Ibn Hakīm Ibn Hızām reciting Surah 25 in a way different from that in which he himself had learned it from the Prophet. He had difficulty in controlling his anger while Hishām was reciting his prayer. When the latter had finished, he seized him by the throat, and asked him from whom he had learned those things. "From the lips of the Prophet," replied Hishām, "You are lying," retorted 'Umar, "for the Prophet taught me otherwise," and he led him before the Messenger. The Prophet asked Hishām to recite. He approved the recitation, saying that the Surah has been revealed in that way. He also invited 'Umar to recite, and then declared: "In truth, the Qur'an is revealed in seven readings or variations." Recite it in whichever of these ways is easy for you." Al-Tabarī relates that Ùbayb Ibn Ka'b was also shocked by a variation in the reading of Surah 16, and that he also sought the decision of the Prophet, who approved the two different readings.

The two-fold purpose of the publication of the Qur'ānic text by 'Uthmān

Was 'Uthmān therefore more meticulous than his Master? Was he prohibiting something that the Prophet had authorised? We do not think so. Contrary to the general belief, it was not the abolition of all nuances in pronunciation that 'Uthmān had in mind. Not only was his version of the Qur'an, like all the preceding ones, composed of "skeleton-words", liable to be read in different ways, but he always took the greatest care to give very explicit renderings of the different traditional recitations, whenever the calligraphy of the words indicated that there was only one way of reading them. Thus we see the word سبتان written with a س surmounted by a م , or with a م surmounted by a س . And so we find in one of the example-types: سبتان ; سبتان or سبتان للا . and similarly سبتان or سبتان للا. So had interpreted.

In our opinion, the publication of the Qur'ānic text under the direction of 'Uthmān had a two-fold purpose: (1) by authenticating and safeguarding the different readings which remained in the body of the written text, and which had a commonly-recognized prophetic origin, sullacious and impious arguments about their subject-matter were prevented. "To say that such-and-such a way of reading is better than some other way," 'Uthmān explained, "is simply not conceivable." (2) by excluding everything which was not absolutely identical with the original — to forestall and prevent a serious cleavage among Muslims and an eventual change in the text by the insertion, at some later date, of more or

16 W. Muir, The Life of Mahomet, quoted by B. St.-Hilaire, Mahomet et le Koran, p. 33.
17 Does the word سبتان really mean the number seven? Or does it signify an indefinite number, a multiplicity of numbers? The question is a controversial one. In any case these "seven readings" should not be confused with the "seven readers" selected by Ibn Mujāhid. There is even no question of co-relating these two categories, as suggested by Dr. Jeffery in his Arabic preface to Kitāb al-Masāḥif, p. 8. In fact, Ibn Mujāhid has often been criticised for his choice of the number seven (cf. Suyūṭi, Itqān, p. 49; Neidecke, Geschichte des Korans, p. 50; Tāhir, Tibyan, p. 81), as being likely to suggest that every reading attributed to these authorities could be considered as canonical and vice-versa. Whereas only methodical study and criticism would be capable of separating the true from the false. Contrary to the contention of Dr. Jeffery (ibid.), this criticism should invariably be applied to the Seven, the Ten, the Fourteen, and to all other sources of variations.

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less controversial variations, or of explanatory notes which individual Muslims had, in good faith, written in their copies.

Further, we must not assume that this "Uthmānian" edition, and still less its prototype, contained all the variations which had probably been taught by the Prophet, under the heading of سورة ابيه or "seven ways of reading". For though it preserved those readings for which there was unimpeachable evidence that they had been incorporated into the authentic finished text, it excluded all versions transmitted through private channels, and which did not offer this guarantee. And at quite an early date this basic principle was unanimously recognised and accepted by thousands of devout Companions.

We should mention that this exclusion in the case of the written document did not appear to have as its objective — or its consequence — their suppression in oral usage. Having thus enunciated a firm decision on this important point, the rule nevertheless permitted those who claimed to have heard the Prophet read the text in a certain way the liberty to follow their individual studies on their own moral responsibility, without, however, allowing them to assume any canonical authority in the matter for the community as a whole. This reasonable and impartial attitude was, in the first place, upheld by the reply to 'Uthmān himself, when dealing with political insurgents: "As for the Qur'ān," he explained, "my only reason for prohibiting you (the inclusion of variations) was because I feared a split. But you may read in the manner that you deem convenient." Secondly, it was upheld by the ʿĀtāʾa given by the Imām Mālik, in which he allowed the recitation according to the "Umar" reading, instead of حمودة (62:9). "Except during the ritual prayer," declared Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, "for non-Uthmānian readings do not constitute a Qur'ān trustworthy enough for the accomplishment of this duty."

A Christian missionary's view of the history of the Qur'ānic text confused

Apart from this, with the exception of the ritual prayer, and the incorporation of only authorised material into the Codex, all other ways of reading remained entirely free, and Islamic scholars of all ages have never lost their interest in the study of these individual modes of reading. And on this two-fold point the publisher of Kitāb-al-Masāḥif, Dr. Arthur Jeffery, is seriously in error. Firstly, "This investigation" is not "in its infancy in the Muslim world" (Introduction, p. 1). As evidence of this, one has only to consider the number of Arabic works which he himself has used for this particular subject. There is an abundance, not only of special treatises on orthography, phonetics and Qur'ānic readings, but also of commentaries, works by philologists, "traditionalists" and legal experts. Further, far from being subject, in this exclusive domain, to a certain "pressure on the part of orthodoxy" (Ibid., pp. 9, 10), these variations are always invested with a certain sacred character, and are still used in the Sunni schools, not as Qur'ānic texts it is true, but as hadith ʿāhid.

In spite of this evidence, the image of Christian ecclesiastical history, with which the American missionary is much more familiar, seems to have obsessed Dr. Jefferey to such a degree that he has, in his book, transposed it almost entirely on to the Islamic terrain. In fact the author has tried to show that in the Qur'ānic text there is a certain evolution resembling in many ways the evolution in the text of the Gospels. He begins by making some absurd distinction between "... a few liturgical passages" in the Qur'ān which were "probably" written at the moment of revelation, and other passages which were not (p. 6). And he declares — incidentally, contradicting himself — that even at the death of the Prophet the body of revelation had not yet been collected (cf. p. 5 with p. 7). By juggling with words he then denies the "official" character of the compilation made by Abū Bakr (cf. pp. 6 and 212). Finally, he decides that at the time of the decision by 'Uthmān, there were considerable divergences between the Codices of the various metropolitan centres (p. 8), and he describes the Muslims of Kūfah as being divided at this time into two factions: "some accepting the new text sent by 'Uthmān, but the great majority recognizing that of Ibn Mas'ūd" (pp. 8 and 21). Thus 'Uthmān's version is portrayed, not only as one of several "rival" texts (pp. X, 9, 23), but also as a "new-comer", at variance with the early Codices, even with the reading established at the time of the Prophet, and which ultimately gains precedence, not because of its intrinsic qualities, but thanks to the prestige of Medina (p. 8).

This is a very erroneous method of presenting the history of the Qur'ānic text, and calls for some corrective explanation. First, we must take into consideration, not only the age of the text, but also the fact that the text published by 'Uthmān is completely identical with the collection assembled under the direction of Abū Bakr. Modern Christian research simply confirms this conclusion. "We have already furnished proof," declares the German Orientalist, Schwally, "that the two editions of Zayd are identical, and that the edition of 'Uthmān is simply a copy of the Codex of Hafṣah." Further, we must not forget that all the material contained in this Codex dates not only from the first Caliph, but can be traced back textually to the Prophet. It is true that all the variations are equally attributable, under either an oral or a written form, to the same source. It is quite possible that some divergent readings are anterior in date to those which appear in the 'Uthmān collection, although both of these categories must be dated back to some period during the lifetime of the Prophet. But we should note that this relative antiquity can hardly be regarded as a criterion of superiority. The most authentic text is not necessarily the oldest, but rather the one that has been compiled with the maximum of careful study and research, and from which all divergences and discrepancies have been eliminated as far as is humanly possible. For, in the language of the Companions, the expression فإن من الأورج، applied to extra-textual readings, does not refer to readings which were in vogue during the time of the Prophet, generally speaking, but to the most primitive form of reading of that epoch, that is to say, the form which was later abrogated. Thus we can demolish the very basis on which some people have tried to establish the importance of these kinds of variations.

19 Cf. Ṣuyūṭī, Ḥiqāq, p. 50; Bāqillānī, Ṣintās, quoted by Tāhirī, Ṭībānī, Cairo, 1934, p. 73.
20 Cf. Ṣuyūṭī, Ibid.; Ibn Hajar, quoted by Zanjānī, Tārīkh al-Qur'ān, p. 44.
21 Ibn Abū Da'ūd, K. al-Masāḥif, p. 36.
22 Cf. Zanjānī, op. cit., p. 16.
23 Cf. Tāhirī, Ṭībānī, pp. 39-40. Ibn Abū Da'ūd holds the same opinion (Masāḥif, p. 54).
The three essential conditions for establishing the authenticity of the text of the Qur'ān

Let us leave these chronological nuances. What emerges is that the most essential condition for establishing the authenticity of a text is the certitude that, in its written form, it has been adequately verified and approved by the author or his representative. And it was precisely this ensemble of conditions which, at the time of compilation, was lacking in respect of certain variations, and thus they were excluded from the codex-types. Further, in this connection another ineradicable basic weakness became apparent during their later transmission. The compiler of Kitāb al-Mahasif stated that he himself was struck by this uncertainty inherent in the extra-'Uthmānian readings (and this forms a threefold point of view):

(1) From the first point of view — their age: sometimes it was suspected that an attempt had been made to associate a later “invention” with an older authority, in order to benefit from the prestige of its name (p. 15).

(2) From the second point of view — regarding precision as to their sources: in a number of cases there was confusion in their attribution to one or other authority.

(3) From the third point of view — the identification of the forms in which they were set out: where various lessons (readings) were attributed to the same reader, not only was it difficult to decide which of these were authentic, but in some cases the readings seemed, linguistically, to be impossible (p. 16).

Our Orientalist also acknowledges that the non-'Uthmānian readings are rarely attributed to authorities as appearing in their collections, but more often as merely forming part of their oral teaching, or recitation (p. 24). And yet, when he sets out to assemble them in order to form a collection, not only does he take the liberty of putting them all under the heading “Codex,” not only does he add to these — as if to swell their volume and enhance their prestige value — those readings which are in no way different from the official text, but he then adds other readings which he attributes to certain authors, but which are really the work of one of their disciples.

The three categories of the so-called “readings”

But after all, what is the content of these so-called readings, and what is its importance? First, we should state that not every Surah is involved, nor is the entire length of any particular Surah. If we examine their nature, we can distinguish different categories.

In one category, there is an insertion, or interpolation. Here the object is either to furnish a more precise explanation of some word which is implied, or “understood,” such as, for example: وَإِمَّامٍ (2: 127) or إِبْسِمَانٍ (3: 24); or to repeat a word which has just been explained in some detail: for example: (2: 11) and (3: 39); or to develop the same meaning by means of a paraphrase such as: (2: 217, 238, 285); or to develop the same meaning by means of a paraphrase such as: (2: 198).

All these “explanations” are clearly seen to be the work of a glossarist, who has abandoned the purity of Qur'ānic style and has overloaded the text with verbiage that is sometimes intolerable.

In the second category, the variation consists in replacing a word, either by a synonym, such as: بُكْرَةٌ = بَكْرَةٌ (2: 169); or by another word having a different meaning, but where both words should complement each other and be mutually “understood,” for example: إِبَاحَةٌ = إِبَاحَةٌ (2: 210).

In the third category there is a simple inversion, such as:

(3: 156); (40: 35); (2: 137); (47: 18).

Generally speaking, as far as these three categories are concerned — and without calling in question the respective literary values of their various readings — we may admit, a priori, the possibility that they are genuine variations, all of them eligible for inclusion, on the one condition that their origins have been historically established. However, in certain cases, one is tempted to suppose that some arrangement had been arrived at in the case of the tentative, or “semi-official,” formulas, whereas the official and accepted formulas were exempt from all special kinds of criteria, whether these were of a theological nature (e.g. لَيْسَ الْحَقُّ إِلَّا مَا نَوْحَاهُ مَلَكُ الْمَلAckbar (2: 38)), of a political nature (e.g. زَيْتُونُ وَزَيْتُونَةُ رَبِّ الْمَلَكِ (9: 100), and not زَيْتُونُ وَزَيْتُونَةُ رَبِّ الْمَلَكِ as 'Umar believed), of a dialectical nature (e.g. إِنَّ الْحَقُّ لِسَيْدِنَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ (38: 31)), or of some other kind.

26 Let us consider, for example, the so-called Codex of Ibn Mas'ud. On this subject Ibn Ishaq (quoted by Dr. Jeffery, p. 23, Note) declared that, of the numerous copies of this Codex, no two of them were identical. And Ibn al-Nadim, Fihrist declared having seen a copy in which appeared the First Surah. This was contrary to what was generally believed.
The one important consideration dominating the compilation of the Qur'ānic text

The one important consideration which dominated the compilation of the Qur'ānic text by the Companions of the Prophet was the rigorous literal accordance of each passage with the document drawn up at the dictation of the Master, which was then read over again in his presence, and which finally received his definite approval. And it is this absolute objectivity which redounds eternally to their honour.

There was, however, a certain amount of quibbling and fault-finding in the case of Ibn 'Mas'ūd (or other "collectors"), the object being to attack the unanimity of the Companions vis-à-vis the 'Uthmānian text. The truth is that none of these disputants contested the accuracy of the published text. But, in addition to this, there were other readings which certain private individuals claimed to have been authorised by the Prophet, but who were unable to furnish any objective proof of such authorisation. So they decided not to set up such readings as "rival" passages, replacing the version now unanimously recognized, but to conserve them side by side with the official text. Thus, for example, we hear that Abū Mūsá recommended his people not to suppress what was in his collection, but, when anything was lacking, to complete it from the Codex of 'Uthmān. And, when Ibn Mas'ūd was dealing with some of his followers who were dissatisfied, what did he do except to remind them that all the revealed variations were valid? No doubt the cause of this dissatisfaction — if ever there was any dissatisfaction— was two-fold: for instance, a certain Companion of the early days of Islam, who was denied the honour of becoming a member of the "censorship committee", and was then obliged to hand over his manuscript to be destroyed! But this spontaneous reaction must evidently have yielded not long afterwards to the influence of some calm reflection. For, since Ibn Mas'ūd was absent in Iraq on his official functions well before the publication, he could not reasonably demand the postponement of such an urgent matter until his return on some problematical future date, when other Companions were in possession, like him — and they had more than he had — of documents which had been rigorously compiled, and approved by the Prophet. As for his manuscript, in which he had no doubt inserted a number of personal renderings, or some variations, which had not received unanimous approval, it probably suffered the same fate as others of the same category. That is to say, it ceased to have any definite authority, remained the object of diminished prestige, and was regarded as his own personal responsibility.

Although the destruction of these private manuscripts seemed somehow a little too severe, at a time when, so far, there was no cause for any alteration, it nevertheless showed how wise and far-seeing the action of the Caliph had been. It may be true that various systems of external signs were subsequently introduced into the text (invented by Abū al-Aswād-Du‘ā'il and his successors Nasr Ibn 'Asim, Yāḥyā Ibn Ya'mar, Hasan al-Bāsri and Khalīl Ibn Ahmad), but the body of the text has always remained unchanged, defying the action of time.

In all the copies now existing, whether printed or written, there can still be found a number of superfluous letters, certain suppletionary (or complementary) words, and the archaic form of spelling reserved solely for Qur'ānic writing, and this is an eloquent witness of the most pious fidelity with which this monumental work has been transmitted from generation to generation up to the present time.

27 Cf. I. A. Dā‘ūd, p. 35.
28 Ibid., p. 18.
30 See supra the case of 'Umar (page 19, footnote 8).
31 Here the Caliph was not acting purely on his own initiative and without consulting the people. In a speech acknowledged by copies of the Hadiths as authentic, and in which the piety of the third Caliph was sturdily defended by his successor, the latter declared that this rigorous measure was taken with the common agreement of all the Companions concerned. "If 'Uthmān had not done it," declared 'Alī, "I should have done it myself." (Cf. I. Abū Dā‘ūd, pp. 12, 22.)

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and 44 officers, in addition to those mentioned in al-'Asifah communiqués. The enemy lost 658 military vehicles and 57 military communications vehicles in the operations. In this period, al-'Asifah destroyed 40 oil installations, mined 40 ammunition dumps and 174 enemy positions, destroyed 25 power installations and 21 factories, blew up military railways and destroyed 16 aircraft, 70 ambush parties, three communications centres and 59 water installations. During this period al-'Asifah lost 189 killed, in addition to 107 reported missing and whose death from wounds was later confirmed.

An official spokesman of the Palestine National Liberation Movement, the Fatah, made public in Paris a statement issued by the Central Committee:

"The Fatah rejects categorically the U.N. resolution of 22 November 1967 and the Jarring Mission, as they ignore the national rights of the Palestinian people. Any so-called peaceful solution which disregards this fundamental datum is doomed to failure. Consequently, any solution which does not take into consideration the existence of the Palestinian people and its right for self-determination will not be accepted.

"The Palestine National Liberation Movement, the Fatah, is a manifestation of the will of the Palestinian people to liberate their country from Zionist colonization, in order to regain its national identity. Its struggle is not against the Jews as a religious community, but against Israel as an expression of Zionism and colonialism.

"The Movement protests against the Zionist action which unilaterally attempts to reduce the Palestinian problem to a conflict between Israel and the neighbouring States. In fact, it is a problem concerning the existence and future of a people driven out 20 years ago from its national homeland.

"The revolutionary action undertaken by the Fatah and its military arm, al-'Asifah, affirms the determination of the Palestinian people to liberate, by popular armed struggle, the national territory conquered and colonized by alien retrograde forces founded on religious sectarianism and racial hatred, practising a policy of discrimination and persecution against the Christian and Muslim Arabs of Palestine.

"The revolutionary struggle sets for itself the example of national liberation struggles against colonialism and imperialism. Israel, a product of colonialism and out-dated European expansionism, remains an instrument of Imperialism, opposing the progress of Arab peoples and hindering their movements for liberation.

"The Palestine National Liberation Movement, the Fatah, declares solemnly that the final objective of its struggle is the restoration of the democratic and independent State of Palestine, where all citizens, regardless of race and religion, will enjoy equal rights."
No Road to Victory but through Sacrifice by the Rich and Poor alike

A Story about Ibn Qalawun (d. 1290 C.E.) and his victory over the Mongols

An Historical Story with a Moral for Muslims today

By AHMAD AL-‘INANI

The people waited for the Shaykh a long time, but he did not come.

The hall in the castle at Cairo was a very big one, wide and long and high. The metal vases shone very brightly, and the glitter competed in brilliance with the embroidery on the cushions scattered all over the place. It was as if this glitter was the only kind of activity going on in the hall, and the only indication of life. Everyone in the audience was quiet, holding his breath. The place and everything in it reflected the grandeur of the presence of the Sultan, Muhammad Ibn Qalāwūn (d. 1290 C.E.) and the respect and awe which everybody felt.

The Sultan’s messengers from Syria had just completed telling him about the sufferings of the people there at the hands of the ferocious and merciless Mongols, who looted property and shed blood. The messengers would have wished not to tell the Sultan this sad tale, but he had shown very great interest in everything they said, and was persisting in his quest for fuller and fuller details of the story. He had kept on asking questions, and they had no alternative but to tell him the whole truth, and to relate stories that shook and horrified everybody. They related what had happened to the stragglers of the Sultan’s army as they retreated from Syria after their defeat in Homs. They had been very much distressed by the teasing and derision of the people, and some of them took off their military clothes and donned the garb of farmers or labourers. They told the Sultan also about what had happened to the great town of Homs. Its women were bereaved, and they were stunned and aimless. There were tears everywhere — women and children. And succour and relief were desperately awaited.

Throughout the meeting the Sultan thought about the days not long before when the battle took place. In Homs he had thought that victory was his, and that he had defeated the savage and barbaric enemy. But he was a man without much experience of the cunning Mongols, a young man with a big heart and an innocent disposition. When he had heard that the Mongols were preparing to leave the country and abandon the invasion he felt he should relieve the pressure on his troops, so he took them off the front and dispersed them throughout the country in more peaceful roles. But the moment he had done this the Mongols sprang a sudden attack, and inflicted a very heavy defeat upon him. He was taken by complete surprise and there was nothing he could do but retreat. He did this in a fairly orderly fashion, but the retreat was more like a defeat.

The Sultan returned to Egypt with a heavy heart. He had hardly slept since the day he came back, and all the time he thought about plans and schemes to get back to Syria. His heart was filled with rage and with the desire for vengeance. He followed the news from Syria with intense and meticulous interest, and he contemplated over everything and carefully weighed all factors. At all times of the day and night his only preoccupation was preparation for the return to Syria. He was determined to go back — either to sweet and rewarding victory or to certain and unquestioned death.

The messengers had not finished telling the Sultan about what they had seen and heard of the misdeeds of the aggressor Mongols when he signalled to them to stop. He did not want them to go on. He had had enough of the very sad news. He breathed a heavy sigh. His face revealed his rage. His eyes and lips eloquently expressed his anger and his determination to get things right. Everybody was quiet, and no one uttered a word.

What had been preoccupying the Sultan had also been in the minds of his people. He had mobilized all the resources of the nation, and had commandeered everything he could lay his hands on — men, property, cattle and all — for use in the battle of revenge. It appeared there was no more that he could do, and no more sacrifice that he could ask his people to make. But he nevertheless had the idea that more was needed to make sure of victory. So he summoned his Treasurer and asked him if more money could be made available. The Treasurer said that during the reign of a previous sovereign the state had found itself in desperate need of money, so the Chief Justice was consulted and he gave it as his opinion that the sovereign could levy a tax of one dinar from each family, and this yielded a large sum of money. The Sultan thought this was a good idea, and suggested that it be applied in this case, since the need for the money was as great, if not greater, than it was on the previous occasion. But the Treasurer said that the approval of the Chief Justice would be needed for this operation. So the Sultan ordered the Treasurer to prepare a case for submission to the Chief Justice, asking for his approval.

1 This English version is based on the Arabic of the story as given in al-Wa‘y al-Islāmī, Kuwait, for September 1968.
The case was prepared and submitted to the Chief Justice. But his approval was not given. Many days passed, and several messengers were sent to the Chief Justice, but he would not approve.

Meanwhile, news came from Syria of a further deterioration in the situation. The Sultan was incensed by the fact that despite all this the Chief Justice was still withholding his consent for the levying of money for the military operation in Syria. So he summoned the Chief Justice to appear before him at once. The Sultan and the audience in the hall waited in an extremely highly charged atmosphere. The Sultan was in a rage, and everybody in the hall believed that if the Chief Justice did not come forward with the approval his head would roll off. In the audience there was a slight whispering. Some had thought that the Chief Justice must be mad to refuse to authorize the Sultan’s request in this case. Others thought that the Chief Justice had probably been bribed by the Mongols into obstructing the campaign to redeem Syria. There was speculation and guessing aplenty about the hesitation of the Chief Justice in face of the urgency of the request made to him by the Sultan.

Everybody in the hall waited very anxiously. Eyes were focussed on the Sultan. He was fidgety, but not saying a word. Everyone knew that the Sultan was very angry, and that there would be great trouble if the Chief Justice were to refuse to give his approval.

Then noises were heard from outside, and soon there came into view a man, walking gently on the thick and luscious carpets that covered the floor. He was an old man, a frail and gentle figure, and he moved very quietly towards the dais where the Sultan was sitting. It was the Chief Justice. The Sultan recognized him and appeared relieved at this.

The Chief Justice was an old man. His father was a very learned person. He was also known for his great learning and wisdom. He had an almost angelic appearance. His face showed confidence and innocence. Though the body was frail the face was strong and awe-inspiring, and radiated respect all around him.

The Sultan rose to greet the Chief Justice. He took him by the hand and drew him nearer, and asked him to sit down on the cushion next to him. The old man hesitated; then put his hand in his pocket and took out a cotton handkerchief and placed it on the cushion on which he was going to sit. He was in obvious discomfort, but he turned grudgingly, though attentively, towards the Sultan. The Sultan started by saying to the Chief Justice that he should make himself comfortable, and he apologized for the trouble caused by summoning the Chief Justice to his presence. The Chief Justice replied with some pleasant remark, but said that he could not make himself more comfortable on the cushions, and would not spread himself on a greater area than that covered by the cotton handkerchief. “My eyes do not like the sight of silk, so how can I, who cannot bear to see silk, sit on it? Silk and gold are the curse of this life, and he who obtains them in this world would be denied the rich things in the Hereafter.”

The audience was stunned. This obviously was an insult to the Sultan, directed at him to his face and in the presence of a large number of his subjects. Many felt that this was impudence and should not go unpunished. But they said and did nothing, for the Sultan himself had not uttered a word.

The Sultan then put the question for which he had summoned the Chief Justice. He said, “I would have pre-ferred not to trouble you, O Shaykh! But I wanted you personally to tell the people what your views were on the question of the campaign against the Mongols. I do not want to be alone responsible for the decision. So let us hear what you have to say.” “But what exactly is the question you want me to answer?” asked the Chief Justice. “I want your opinion about a proposal which I understand, is supported by the authority of those learned in Islam, and is not something strange — for I do not want to introduce into Islam that which is alien to it. I want to promote the interests of the Muslims in what I do. I know that the victory for which I have dedicated my life should not be sought at the expense of harming a single Muslim. I do not want anything for myself, at all, and my zeal and enthusiasm is not motivated by selfish purposes. But I do want to wage a war against the barbaric Mongols, and to purge Syria of their evil, and to save Islam from the harm they are doing to it. I have received messengers from Syria who speak about horrors which would deny the eyes sleep. They tell of crimes by the aggressors and of oppression and tyranny.” The Sultan at this stage shook with emotion. He continued addressing the Chief Justice, “You know, O Shaykh! that the Treasurer has advised us that we should collect from every Muslim household in Egypt the sum of one dinar. The sum so collected would be sufficient to enable us to wage the campaign against the Mongols. It would make it possible for us to break their hold on Syria and to punish them properly for their misdeeds. It is an endeavour pleasing to the Almighty, and one deserving of the reward of paradise for those who die in the process of accomplishing it.”

The Chief Justice replied, “I know about this, and I have told the Treasurer that it is not permissible for you to levy this money.” The Sultan was taken aback by this. He stared at the Chief Justice for a moment, and then said, “By God, it is very strange to hear you say this, O Shaykh. You ought to know that your predecessor, a man of great learning and renown, had given it as his view that this can be done in similar circumstances. Why is it that you insist on prohibiting that which he had so clearly permitted? And have you not on so many occasions in the past referred to the wisdom of your predecessor and quoted his authority as the basis of your views on all subjects? Was the man, in your opinion, truthful, learned and reliable, or was he not?”

The audience was in uproar. People from all directions wanted to speak. Many said they had in the past paid the duty levied, and wanted to do the same now. They urged the Sultan not to listen to the Chief Justice. They said that his predecessor was more learned than him, and should in preference be followed.

The Sultan called the meeting to order. “No one should speak,” he said. Then he turned towards the Chief Justice and asked for his answer. The Chief Justice said, “Yes, I do remember the opinion given by my predecessor, God rest his soul! But he had not permitted the levying of one dinar from every family until after all the princes had been summoned and had given to the Treasury all the gold, silver and jewellery they had possessed, and until each one of them had taken a solemn oath that he possessed nothing else. And when all that had been obtained in this manner it was found not to be adequate for waging the campaign, so my predecessor said that money can be levied from ordinary folk.”

The Sultan put his head down. A moment later, with tears in his eyes, and in a deep, quivering voice, he said, “By God I

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Ashraf sat with his mouth wide open. He was listening to his dear old grandfather, who was 88 years old. What was it that he was saying that could be of such interest to young Ashraf, who was eleven and a half years old?

Well, I will tell you.

He was telling him about the time when he was a young man of twenty-one and how he had joined young Prince Ibn Su'ud, who was about the same age as himself, and how he rode with this young prince throughout the country which, since 23 September 1932 C.E. has been known as Su'ud Arabia. The grandfather had a twinkle in his eyes when he mentioned Ibn Su'ud.

"Ah! That was a man," said he, "I and my companions rode the dromedary with him and never did he think himself above us. We rode together, ate together, prayed together, and when we had to we fought together as one united body."

"But why did you fight at all?" asked little Ashraf.

"Ah! You may as well ask this question when nowadays you can go anywhere, be it to Mecca or any other place, without being robbed or attacked. In those days this prince's father had been turned out of his city by someone who wanted this city for himself and, of course, the whole part of the country which was ruled by Ibn Su'ud's father. This pirate ruler was not a good ruler. He had come to power by using force. The young prince had left the city, called Riyadh, with his father and family. This country had been conquered by force and life had become unbearable for Ibn Su'ud's father, so he did the only thing left for him to do, which was to leave Riyadh.

For a while force and might had succeeded. The new ruler had got his way."

"Grandpa," said little Ashraf, "is that why some people say, 'Might is right'?"

"I don't know about that," said grandpa. "I know people often say that. But, dear little one, I don't think they really mean it. A Muslim cannot possibly say such things because often in the time of Muhammad the Last Prophet (May the peace and blessings of God be upon him!), the enemy had great might and large armies. But that does not mean to say that they were right. Our Prophet says that actions should be judged according to their motives. In the story I am telling you, the good King Ibn Su'ud had an enemy with a bad motive and his actions were bad."

"Grandpa," said Ashraf, "is our dear King Faisal a grandson of Ibn Su'ud, the same as I am to you?"

"No, little one, King Faisal is Ibn Su'ud's son and he is carrying on as his father did, that is, with justice, goodwill and love for all."

"But, grandpa! I know that Ibn Su'ud did reign, but how did that come about when his father had left the city from whence he ruled his people?"

"Ah that is a long story, little one, but as I was telling about my being in the desert with King Faisal's father, Ibn Su'ud, I will go back to that time and give you a short history as to how the whole thing happened," said grandpa.

"Prince Ibn Su'ud had tried a few times to gain back the city, which was called Riyadh, but I am sorry to say that it seemed hopeless. No one around Riyadh could help him because they were afraid of great punishment from the new ruler. Ibn Su'ud had picked from his many friends 40 men, tried and true, also young and very willing to fight. Amongst these forty men, a few of them were from Kuwait, who had the feeling, like the rest of their countrymen, that Ibn Su'ud and his father had been treated very badly. Ibn Su'ud and his father at that time were living in Kuwait and the people of that country had got to know father and son well and had a great respect and love for them.

"But Ibn Su'ud had picked only 40 men this time, as he had a certain plan which seemed the only way for him to be successful because whatever attacks so far he had attempted, someone on the way seemed to find out, and news would get to Riyadh before he did. The result was that the enemy was always ready for him. This would happen because the people were poor and a great reward was given to any one who would tell if they saw Ibn Su'ud in the direction of Riyadh. So the prince thought of a plan. He decided to make everyone think that he and his friends had died in the desert. So these forty men just went out and did not come back. They stayed away from everyone and contacted no one. Weeks went by and nothing was heard of the prince and his followers. The news started to spread around that they had died of hunger and thirst or of something or the other. There were many different rumours. This news got to the place and the person it was meant for. That is to say, the ruler in Riyadh.

"Now, news started to spread around that the ruler was happy at last. He was known to have said, 'Now I can do as I like, now that there is no Ibn Su'ud to think about.' Weeks passed into months and then, on the 15 January 1902, one fine night, in the full moonlight over the desert, came riding a party of men. Their young prince had a determined look in his eyes. He had made up his mind that they must win or die. Through the night they rode. They looked fine figures in the night but one could not say who was who, as their faces were covered, keeping the sand from their mouths. The group rested the animals for a while and the night became darker. On they went again, riding far into the night.

"At last they came to the city of Riyadh. The citizens of Riyadh were taken by surprise and were not ready for such a surprise attack. And so the prince won the day with the support of his followers. That is how the family of Su'ud regained their country. The frightened people of Riyadh were glad to have their Su'udids back with them. Peace and happiness reigned once more. Now any wrong doers would be punished and the Su'udid ruler himself would listen to anyone who felt he had not had a fair deal. He did this at a set time every day and came in close contact with his people. They grew to love him more dearly than ever."

"Oh, that's a nice story because it ends well," said Ashraf. "I like a story with a nice ending. Was our country rich then?"

"No, little one, it became rich just after World War II, that is, after 1945 C.E. But oil was discovered in the ground in 1938 C.E. But you know it takes a few years before you get money from such a great project. And as soon as King Ibn Su'ud had some money from this oil, he started to do many things for the whole of the country and his people and...

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also for less fortunate people elsewhere. He worked hard day and night. He saw to it that schools were set up. He made our present King (who was then Prince Faysal) his constant companion, and Faysal also saw to the welfare of the country.

“King Ibn Su’ud (whose full name was King ‘Abdul ‘Aziz Al Su’ud) made sure that the bad men who stole anything must suffer, and that the punishment must be great. But he made it clear that if a person was really hungry, that would be a different story. The country became much safer. The road to Mecca was now very safe to travel and pilgrims need no longer travel in fear. Schools in the first instance were travelling schools, visiting different places with teachers on certain days.”

“But,” said little Ashraf, “I go to school every day.”

“Yes,” said his grandfather, “you not only have a nice school, you can also see how wonderfully the mosques in Medina and Mecca have been made larger and more beautiful. Also how many hospitals and places of learning we now have, and how many more pilgrims are coming for the Hajj now. In fact, all the year round we have visitors. Yes, with the money our country has had great improvements done to it. The roads, many of them, are first class.”

“The road to Ta’if, where our dear Prophet went along (if not exactly that road, it was very near to it), has been made wonderful. Yes, my little one, God has been good to us, and with our past and present good rulers we have done very well.”

“Oh grandpa!” chirped in Ashraf. “I do love your telling me about these things. Don’t go home yet. Please tell me some story about our Last Prophet, who was born in this country of mine.”

“Very well,” said grandpa, “just sit still and listen to me. You know I am never tired of talking about our Prophet. And now I will start.”

“Well, it was a hot and tiring day many years ago in the time of our Prophet, when suddenly from over a small hill there appeared a camel with a man on it. The camel moved slowly over the sand. As it came nearer, one could see that there was another figure leading the camel. Nearer came this party until it came up closer to a follower of our Prophet, who was watching this small party approaching. This follower looked up and saw a figure that was his beloved Prophet Muhammad, and riding the camel was a man by the name of ‘Uqbah Ibn ‘Amr. The party came to a halt and gave greetings to each other. ‘Do not misunderstand the position you see me in,’ said ‘Uqbah Ibn ‘Amr, ‘our Prophet insisted that we should take it in turns to ride the camel. I refused but the Prophet made me ride. I know he felt that two of us would be too much for the camel, as it had come many a weary mile.’ ‘Just like our Prophet,’ said the follower. ‘He thinks for all mankind and loves the animals.’

“The Prophet then went on his way and arrived at his humble home. Outside his house there were four men waiting for him. They wanted him to go on a journey with them to visit a sick friend. Without hesitation the Prophet went with them. The men had food and provisions with them. They all rode along together and after two or more hours the time to eat came. But, first of all, they would have to collect fuel, which would be wood, for a fire and then they would cook. The four men divided the work equally amongst themselves and did not give a job to the Prophet. ‘My job is to collect wood,’ said the Prophet. But the followers begged him not to trouble himself and to let them do the job. The Prophet at once said, ‘I do not like to give any distinction to myself.

God does not like the man who considers himself superior to his companions.’ So the Prophet did his share of work.

“He visited the sick man and said a prayer for him and came home again. He was met by one of his followers, who said, ‘I have just been amongst some of those unbelievers. You really must curse them.’ Thereupon Muhammad looked sad and said, ‘I am not sent for this. I was sent to be a mercy to mankind.’ The follower felt ashamed. The Prophet went into his house. His servant, Anas, then turned to the man and by Anas’s face you could see he thought that the man had been stupid to ask the Prophet to curse anyone. ‘Do you know?’ said Anas, ‘I have served the Prophet for ten years and he has never had the slightest expression of displeasure on his face, nor has he said to me ever, ‘Why did you do this?’ or ‘Why did you not do this?’ I have heard from one of his followers that he is known to have said, ‘He shall enter the garden of bliss that hath a true, pure and merciful heart.’ Do you know that our Prophet said? ‘Verily God hath made me a humble servant and not a haughty king, and whosoever is humble to men for God’s sake, let him be exalted.’

Ashraf jumped up and said, ‘I must tell all this to my brother when I get home. I will also tell him how King Faysal’s father regained his country and served his people, and I think that is why our King Faysal spends all his money on good causes because his father showed him the way how not to be a haughty king but a guide for his people, doing as our Prophet would have liked him to do.

‘Grandpa, I feel happy. I shall always remember that brave prince who never gave up. And now please may we go home and I can say a prayer tonight of thanks to God for all He has given us.’

And so, little ones, we leave grandpa and grandson, proud of a good Prophet whose teachings helped the rulers who listened and acted upon these great teachings. Goodnight, my dear children, goodnight.

Assalamu ‘alaykum! (Peace be with you.)

18 Eccleston Square,
London, S.W.1

My dear children,

I know that you wish to give your help towards The Children’s Book on Islam, The Last Prophet and Muslim Countries. Well, here is your chance. The kind author of a book entitled Prophecies of the Holy Qur’an (a book for grown ups), Mr. ‘Ali Akbar, has offered to place at our disposal 1,000 copies of his book, giving us the entire proceeds towards the printing costs of our book, The Children’s Book on Islam, etc.

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JANUARY 1969
Islam and Trends in Modern Banking*

The Need of a Muslim World Bank with Mecca as its headquarters on the Model of IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development)

By M. A. MANNAN

Some objections to Islamic banking answered

Some Muslims who philosophize not about facts and have no knowledge of the nature of international economics are of opinion that Islamic banking is impracticable because it would isolate the Islamic state practising it from the rest of the world, causing a great loss to its international trade. But if it is possible for different nations of the world having different political theories and economic systems to live side by side and if it is possible for the U.S.A. and Yugoslavia or for the U.S.S.R. and the Arab countries to conclude trade treaties, I find no reason why an Islamic state practising the Islamic banking should be isolated from the rest of the world. If, for example, Pakistan accepted the principles of an Islamic banking system, it would just be a matter of internal re-organization of her economy, as is in a federation, the component units of which are given regional autonomy to solve their problems in accordance with their wishes without affecting the ultimate nature of the federation.

Secondly, far from causing a loss to the international trade, Islamic banking would tend to promote the volume of trade: for modern banks finance foreign trade by accepting and collecting bills of exchange drawn by their clients, and by transacting other foreign exchange business for some commission as remuneration for service rendered. But under the Islamic system of banking the banks would offer all these services without any remuneration because of their partnership with the businessmen. Moreover, the banks, being partners in trade and commerce, would help the businessmen avoid uneconomic speculation so that the demand for and supply of a commodity could be adjusted to bring economic prosperity to a country, and for that matter to the world as a whole.

Lastly, the Islamic banking principles are quite consistent with international banking principles simply because the modern world consciously or unconsciously is drifting towards the economic philosophy of Islamic banking. This trend in world financial aid was recognised by the establishment of the International Development Association (I.D.A.) on 24 September 1960, affiliated to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (I.B.R.D.) or the World Bank. It has separate policies and separate financial resources from those of the I.B.R.D., but its work is carried out by the secretariat of the I.B.R.D. The I.D.A. will start as a dissipating fund since it will provide loans even at the 0% rate of interest in exceptional cases depending upon political and economic factors in each recipient country.

A controversial point

It should be noted here that for financing our planning we have to have recourse to foreign capital on a partnership basis. In case of our failure to secure foreign investment on a partnership basis, we may take loans at interest from abroad. With regard to my second point I am definitely entering upon a controversy. One may differ with me but the fact remains that the Muslims cannot impose their religious injunctions on the non-Muslims and also this is obviously against the very spirit of Islam. So if foreign exchange becomes absolutely essential, we can take loans at interest from abroad on a reciprocal basis. This is simply for our survival in this world of conflict and competition. We think it is permissible for an Islamic state to have interest transactions with a non-Muslim state on the analogy of the action of the Caliph ‘Umar, who permitted to levy customs duties and tolls on the articles of trade of a non-Muslim neighbouring state in reprisal to the same extent as were levied by the latter. For the proper handling of these matters, a special account of the banks may be opened or a separate agency may be established. In a word, Islamic banking is not a bar to international relations.

BAYT AL-MAL AND A MODERN CENTRAL BANK

The present discussion will remain incomplete without my reference to the Islamic institution known as the Bayt al-Mal. Therefore, before analysing the role of a Central Bank

*For the first installment of this dissertation, see The Islamic Review for November-December 1968.

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in an Islamic State, an attempt may be made to discuss the functions of the Bayt al-Mal as found in the history of early Islam. Evidence has been found to indicate that all property belonging to the Muslims constituted a part of the Bayt al-Mal regardless of its physical location. The Bayt al-Mal was a very broad concept and was based on the principle that all suzerainty, inclusive of the right to property over the universe belonged to God, man being His agent on earth and possessing these things in trust and only temporarily.

There were three types of the Bayt al-Mal:—
B. — The Bayt al-Mal.

A. THE BAYT al-MAL al-KHAS

This was the “Royal treasury” or the privy purse, with its own sources of income and items of expenditure. It covered the personal expenses of the caliph, his palaces, the harem, pensions of the members of the royal family, the palace guards and gifts from the caliph to foreign rulers.

B. THE BAYT al-MAL

The Bayt al-Mal was a sort of State Bank for the Empire. This does not mean that it performed all the functions of a present-day central bank, but that whatever of these functions did exist in their primitive forms, they were performed by this bank.

Because the Islamic State of early Islam was highly centralised both at the provincial and the central levels, the administration of the Bayt al-Mal was always in the hands of one person. At the provincial level, the supreme head of the Bayt al-Mal was the governor of the province. He was in charge of the collection and administration of revenue. These Bayt al-Mal-s were situated at provincial headquarters.

The central Bayt al-Mal was situated at the capital of the empire so that it could be under the direct control of the caliph.

C. THE BAYT al-MAL li al-MUSLIMIN

The second public treasury was called the Bayt al-Mal li al-Muslimin of the treasury of all the Muslims. In fact, it was not for Muslims alone; its duties included welfare of all citizens of the Islamic State regardless of their caste, colour or creed. The functions of this Bayt al-Mal comprised public works — roads, bridges, mosques, churches — welfare of and provisions for the poor.

The Bayt al-Mal was situated at the principal mosque and was administered by the Chief Qadi of the country at the central level and by the counterpart of this Qadi at the provincial level.

The following revenue items were deposited in the Bayt al-Mal:

1. The Sadaqah or the Zakah revenue.
2. The Ghanimah, i.e. war-booty.
3. The Fay, i.e. the Kharij and the Jizyah.

It was the duty of the caliph to keep all these revenues apart from one another in the treasury because each had its own peculiarities and was to be administered according to its own set of rules.

LIABILITIES

Liabilities of the public treasury were of two kinds:

(i) Liabilities incurred from property kept in the treasury for safe-keeping.

(ii) The second type of liabilities were incurred with respect to revenues which were the treasury’s own assets:

(a) one part of these liabilities was incurred for value received, e.g., by way of compensation for the pay of the soldiers or price of arms and horses;

(b) The other part consisted of the liabilities which had been incurred for general welfare or by way of public assistance.

The Bayt al-Mal, as we see, was the central bank. Apart from the Bayt al-Mal there were no commercial banks in the modern sense of the term. Most of the trade was carried on by individuals or in partnerships but no evidence has been found to indicate the existence of large trading companies.

It appears that the Bayt al-Mal used to meet all the needs and requirements of the community. As a matter of fact, the Bayt al-Mal performed almost the same functions as the present-day Central Banks are doing except the issue of currency, supply of credit and control of the interest rate. The issue of currency is a modern device and can easily be fitted in the functions of the Bayt al-Mal, for even in these the rate of interest does not play any part in the performance of these other functions.

Again, there is no evidence to prove that Islam does not allow the financing of trade or industry on credit. Therefore, the Islamic Central Bank will provide credit to its member banks for investment and sharing the profit or loss instead of providing them with loans on a fixed rate of interest.

It follows that the central banking system under the Islamic scheme of society will be simpler and easier than ever before, for an Islamic central bank need not place too much emphasis on the quantitative control of credit — the control of credit by raising or lowering the bank rate, by engaging in open market operations and by varying the reserve ratios of the member banks. The Islamic central bank will use all such means which do not involve the application of interest. In fact, experience has shown that the quantitative control of credit cannot be effective in under-developed Muslim countries, as their money markets are utterly imperfect. The Islamic central bank should place emphasis not merely on the quantitative control of credit but also on moral suasion. Moral suasion, viewed as a method of credit control, is free from the unfavourable psychological reaction of the method of direct control. Of course it can be successfully employed only in countries possessing a comparatively small number of big banks with which the central bank is likely to develop intimate relationship. This healthy relationship between the central bank and other banks and between the central bank and the people would be quite possible in the Islamic scheme of society. Because the banking system as a whole will not act as a mere creditor of industry, trade and commerce, but also as an active partner in all types of possible economic activities, a central bank will, in such circumstances, be the people’s bank and will act according to the best advantage of the community as a whole. This favourable psychological atmosphere will, I am sure, go a long way towards creating an environment where healthy investment will be possible and
thereby reducing the possibilities of a depression in the economy.

In modern states, a central bank generally acts as the bankers’ bank. All other banks of the country keep, either by law or by custom, a certain amount of their balances with the central bank. Since the central bank is the ultimate holder of the reserves of the banking system, any bank can draw upon this pool to tide over its temporary needs and difficulties by re-discounting first class bills. These central banks not only act as the bankers of the government but also as custodians of credit and currency.

I find no reason why an Islamic central bank will not be in a position to perform all these functions without application of interest in the name of co-operation, partnership and maximum welfare of the people.

The share-capital of an Islamic central bank can be provided by the state or it can be subscribed by the government and the people jointly. As the central bank has many important functions to perform, the control of the bank generally remains in the hands of the state or it can be managed by a board of directors jointly elected by the government and the people.

The case for the establishment of a Muslim World Bank

Now is the time to examine the practicability and feasibility of founding a Muslim World Bank which is capable of pooling the resources of the world of Islam so as to foster large-scale development efforts throughout the Muslim countries. The following positive and negative factors may be advanced in support of the formation of the proposed Bank.

Positive factors

The era of economic growth and political change in the past two decades has brought about a marked increase in the demand for development capital. We have records to establish that in all Muslim countries the need for and ability to make effective use of outside capital has been increasing faster than the ability to service conventional loans. Some Muslim countries have already drawn close to the limit of the debt they can prudently incur on conventional terms. It is the awareness of this problem which may lead to the founding of a Muslim world bank. The primary purpose underlying the establishment of such a proposed bank would be to create a supplementary source of development capital for Muslim countries whose balance of payment prospects would not justify their incurring or continuing to incur an external debt entirely on conventional terms.

Nowadays, for the exploitation of the vast natural resources of the Muslim states, what is required is a huge public expenditure for which deficit financing is a must. For such economic growth what is needed is a co-operation among all Muslim countries so that they may not be a victim to exploitation of richer countries. The easiest way of achieving this co-operation is the founding of a Muslim World Bank on the model of the IBRD. Not until the world of Islam has conquered poverty could it plan any manner of political homogeneity and social cohesion.

The Muslims, despite their numerical strength and geographical distribution all over the world, are today, by and large, a poverty-stricken people — people who are mostly subject to exploitation. From Morocco to Indonesia and from Mauritania to Malaysia without exception all countries possess vast natural resources and rank amongst the world’s most important growers of primary commodities and producers of mineral wealth. For instance, 80 per cent of the world’s jute grows in Pakistan; Egypt is amongst the largest of the world’s cotton growers. Three-fourths of the world’s supply of oil comes from the Arab world. Indonesia and Malaysia meet the world’s major requirements of tin and rubber.

The one, and perhaps the only, institution which is capable of pooling the resources of the world of Islam is a Muslim world bank, which is yet to be formed, for achieving a faster rate of development.

Negative factors

Pan-Islamism will for long remain only an ideal, a dream to fire the imagination of the ardent sons of the faith, so as to bring about, in the fulfilment of their destiny, a spirit of ceaseless endeavour towards a more fruitful experiment of Islamic socialism as prescribed in the Holy Qur’an.

The various Muslim lands have for centuries been subjected to differing political ideologies inspired mostly by the creeds and cults of the Western powers who have for long dominated them. Some of these lands are still in a state of agitation and ferment.

It is true that a bold experiment is now under way in the shape of the RCD Organization between Pakistan, Iran and Turkey. While this project is an excellent beginning, it does not claim to attack the real and basic problems of the Muslim world as a whole, which today are largely economic problems.

Some time ago there was even talk of an Islamic common market on the model of the European Common Market. This is an immature project. In the world of today it is only the highly industrialized countries that can think of a common market. There is certainly no wisdom in planning an association of previously backward economies to compete with the vastly superior forces of the highly industrialized world of the West. Even Pakistan, despite her marvellous progress in the field of development, her per capita income and her standard of living are about the world’s lowest. Considering all these factors, it can safely be concluded that formation of a Muslim World Bank is a practical proposal which does not involve many complications that are likely to be faced in achieving the goal of pan-Islamism or in the formulation of a Muslim Common Market. Once Muslim countries of the world are in a position to establish a bank like this, it would be treated as a distinct milestone on the road to full co-operation among the Muslim countries in the economic field. It would be, I am sure, an instrument for the orderly adjustment of exchange rates and for a two-way adjustment for any disequilibrium in the international balance of payments. At the end of the transitional period, this bank may promise to bring in an era of a free multi-lateral convertibility of the national currencies of various Muslim countries of the world.

Objectives and functions

We have already pointed out that the prime objective of this bank would be to supplement the need for development capital of those Muslim countries whose balance of payment would not justify external debt entirely on conventional terms. So far as this involves the use of the bank’s own resources, it must be able to mobilise capital from a
variety of capital exporting countries. The main functions of
the proposed bank would be:

(a) to assist in the development of the Muslim countries
by facilitating the investment of capital for pro-
ductive purposes;
(b) to promote private foreign investment by means of
guarantees or participation in loans and other
investments made by private investors;
(c) to promote the long-range balanced growth of
international trade and maintenance of equilibrium
in balance of payments by encouraging international
investments for the development of the productive
resources of members;
(d) to arrange the loans or guarantee them in relation
to international loans through other channels so
that the more useful and urgent projects can be
dealt with first;
(e) to offer technical advice on matters relating to loan
operations: to locate experts qualified to deal with
specific technical problems — for instance, sulphur
processing in Iraq, port administration in Turkey,
pulp and paper manufacture in Pakistan; and,
(f) to lend its good offices to seeking the settlement of
economic disputes among Muslim countries as we
find done by the World Bank in the matter of the
settlement of the waters of the Indus river and basin
dispute between India and Pakistan in 1960. Any
other functions may be assigned to this proposed
bank according to the need and exigencies of the
time.

MEMBERSHIP AND RESOURCES

All Muslim countries should be eligible for membership
of this proposed bank. It is, perhaps, in the fitness of
things to suggest that a lead in this direction should come
from Pakistan for the formation of such a bank and for
enlisting, in particular, the assistance and help of Iran, Iraq,
Turkey, Kuwait, Jordan, Afghanistan, Su'udi Arabia, the
Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia, the Sudan, Algeria, Malaysia,
Indonesia, Tanzania, Somalia, to name only a few of the
more influential members of the Muslim world. The resources
for the proposed bank should initially come from the mem-
ber countries according to their means and strength, to be
supplemented by grants, aids and loans from the IBRD, the
IDA, the Asian Development Bank and other friendly
governments. As in the case of the IBRD, the capital sub-
scription of this bank may be divided into three parts. First,
a certain proportion of the subscription (say, 2-3 per cent)
of all members should be payable in gold or U.S. dollars,
so that it may be used freely by the bank in any of its
operations.

Second, 15 per cent of such subscriptions may be pay-
able in the currency of the subscribing member. Lastly, the
remaining subscription money may not be payable to the
bank for lending but may be subject to call only if required
by the bank to meet its obligations on borrowings or on
loans guaranteed by it. This is just a broad principle subject
to changes according to the requirements of the time.

Let us now throw some light on its administration and
management.

ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

The Holy City of Mecca should be selected for its
headquarters, obviously for spiritual and psychological
reasons. A Board of Governors and another Board of
Alternate Governors might be appointed by each member.
However, the organizational structure of this proposed bank
may be developed on the lines of other international financial
institutions. The development credits of this bank would be
interest-free but a service charge of 2/3 or 1 per cent per
annum, payable on the withdrawn and outstanding sums,
may be made to meet this bank's administrative costs, like
the IDA. It is not, however, intended that this Muslim
World Bank fund should be used to finance a project which
could not satisfy the normal criteria of economic and
financial viability. The bank must make a general appraisal
of the merits and priority of the project or programme.

Anyway, before making a loan, the bank would satisfy
itself that the borrowers, whether it be a government, an
autonomous agency or a private corporation, will be able to
pay the service charge of the debt.

We are quite sure that the principle of partnership
which is quite applicable to the internal banking system may
be applicable quite profitably in the international banking.
It is time that the world of Islam was awakened to the
necessity of preparing itself to survive in this highly com-
petitive world largely on the basis of self-help and mutual
assistance. The support for this proposal could gather
momentum if high-level conferences were held in the capitals
of the principal Muslim countries to exchange views. This
bank will, if established, help solve the urgent and pressing
problem of economic development in the Muslim world.

PAKISTAN AND ISLAMIC BANKING

At present Pakistan is a Muslim state, not an Islamic
state. The capitalistic conception of modern banking is still
functioning in Pakistan. In fact, Pakistan is choking from a
mortal grip of its banking. A surgical operation is the crying
need of the hour. But before a successful operation can be
undertaken, a favourable environment will have to be
created. The following suggestions will, I feel, go a long
way towards implementing the Islamic scheme of banking
in Pakistan.

(1) At the end of the four five-year plans (1965-1985)
the Central Bank of Pakistan should be nationalized. This
nationalization is necessary in order to bridge any conflict
between the fiscal and the monetary policy of Pakistan. So
long as its fiscal policy remains in the hands of the Govern-
ment and the monetary policy in the hands of the Central
Bank, the conflict is likely to emerge. But the monetary
policy cannot be successful unless it is supplemented by an
appropriate fiscal policy, for instance, in a country where
the average tendency to consume is extremely low either because
of a serious maladjustment of wealth or because of the serious
inequalities of income. An appropriate fiscal remedy through the
Zakah is of vital importance. Moreover, the nature of
functions performed by the Central Bank and the element of
planning introduced in Pakistan has increased the importance
of bringing the central bank under State management.

Before the end of the present planning period I look
with favour on the complete nationalization of commercial
banking in Pakistan for bringing uniformity in policy,
exercising an effective control of the central bank over the
joint-stock banks and for eliminating the unhealthy com-
petition of joint-stock banks. Moreover, nationalization is of
little value unless it makes the banking facilities wider and
cheaper. As private banks are always motivated by the con-
consideration of profit, they will never be willing to open offices

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at places where the prospects of profit are small. Had there been little or no prospect of profit, for example, at Sirajgaon (a small town in East Pakistan), there would have been no branches of commercial banks like the Eastern Mercantile Bank. The practicability of my suggestion can hardly be challenged because in India the Central Bank and insurance companies have been nationalized. Not only that, the Bank of England and the Bank of Australia have been brought under state ownership. In France, not only the Central Bank but also the four commercial banks belong to the nation. In Czechoslovakia the banking system in general has been nationalized. In Spain also the banking system is going to be nationalized. I find no reason why such nationalization would be ineffective in Pakistan in due course.

(2) At present the commercial banks pay a certain rate of interest to the fixed or part-time depositors, regardless of whether the depositors want it or not. The Government should immediately send out a circular to the effect that the acceptance of interest should be left to the option of the depositors as in the case of the Postal Savings Bank in Pakistan. If this scheme is immediately introduced, a good number of depositors would, I am sure, leave their money on deposit at no interest. This would enable the banks to follow the “cheap money policy”. (Money is said to be cheap when the rate of interest is low.)

(3) In the meantime, with the help of eminent juridical authorities on Islamic law and economists, the rules of the Zakāh collection should be framed and enforced tempered by considerations of Pakistan’s socio-economic conditions. Because of the recognition of freedom of the Qiyās (i.e., the free application of the principles of analogy) in Islam, we have the key to the universality and eternal adaptability of Islamic economy and its progress.

Sincere attempts should be made to increase the technical personnel for running the banking in Pakistan. The banking training scheme which has already been introduced by the State Bank of Pakistan is laudable but it is inadequate to meet the need.

(5) After nationalization along with the comprehensive implementation of the Zakāh and the banking training scheme, the banks should be partners in industry and not pay any interest to the depositors. The depositors of the bank may be sleeping or active partners in some industry. But if any depositor is unwilling to be a partner in that industry, sharing the loss or profit, he may be allowed to keep his deposit in an idle form subject to the payment of the Zakāh at the rate of 2½ per cent per annum.

If poverty amongst the masses cannot be removed by the revenue of the Zakāh, the State can demand more from those who can afford to give. There is a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad to this effect: “In wealth there is a due besides the Zakāh.” This scheme of additional taxation is an additional blow to hoarded wealth to provide social justice.

(6) A wholesale riddance of the age old capitalist system of banking cannot be achieved in a day. Also, this might cause some maladjustments between the different sectors of the country’s economy. Thus it is advisable that the mechanism of the Islamic banking may be evolved, if it be started with new private banks by the people under the proper patronage of the government. Once they come into existence, they will grow, aiming at replacing the existing banking system in the due course of time.

(7) A comprehensive state plan should be put into effect for the ultimate abolition of interest from the body politic of Pakistan. We think this system of Islamic banking is most harmoniously workable in Pakistan, since it is a part of the faith of the citizens of Pakistan, who will never think of waging war against God and His Prophet (The Qur’ān, 2 : 279). Islam seems to provide the best realizable synthesis of the two opposites; the incentive to work is retained by recognizing a restricted private ownership of property, unlike the economic planning of the U.S.S.R., which has practically involved the liquidation of private enterprise and of private property. Islam’s approach produces perfectly socialistic effects by providing compulsory distribution of the excess of income and property. The structure of the Islamic economy is capitalistic in outline, though restricted very largely by socialistic institutions.

It is to be hoped that social scientists and economists would ponder the practicability and feasibility of these suggestions to implement the Islamic conception of banking in Pakistan by the end of 1985.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

The Qur’ān prohibits the taking of the Ribā, an Arabic word which literally means increase. But all increases are not prohibited in Islam. The Qur’ān has allowed the increase from trade but not from a loan given to the debtor. The ‘Ijara are generally agreed that by the Ribā is meant usury interest which was in force in pre-Islamic Arabia. Still some people think that what Islam prohibits is usury and not interest. But we have established it beyond doubt that interest and usury are the obverse and reverse of one and the same coin.

(2) It is established by modern research that interest has nothing to do with influencing the value of savings. Practically, it is the rate of investment that determines the rate of savings. Islam prohibits interest but encourages investment. Also, we have seen that the Zakāh provides a powerful stimulus for investing the idle funds. This stimulus gains momentum from the fact that Islam allows profit and sleeping partnerships in which the profit as well as the loss is shared.

(3) The Islamic banking will be based on the principle of partnership. Therefore, this banking system which is free of interest can help establish certain institutions on the basis of Mudāharabah, where capital and labour can be combined together as partners in work. Islam has tried to bring about a lasting compromise between labour and capital by giving the whole question of relationship a moral bias and by making moral obligations on both as part of the faith. It is, therefore, quite possible to work out all industrial, commercial and agricultural enterprise on the principle of Mudāharabah, combining the various units of production.

(4) After analysing the mechanism of Islamic banking, the problem of short-term and long-term financing, was discussed. The short-term financing of industry, trade and agriculture can be done by an Islamic bank on a partnership basis. Since an ordinary deposit bank has a special liquidity problem, it is recommended that the specialised credit institutions like an industrial or agricultural development bank may be developed for long-term financing. Moreover, an Islamic bank may evolve the system of guarantee of loans for industries, working capital as well as for equipment. This guarantee may induce private capital to move into Muslim countries.

**THE ISLAMIC REVIEW & ARAB AFFAIRS**
(5) The importance of a consumption loan is recognised. But it is recommended that such loans may be made either by people's co-operative societies or by a government credit agency in an Islamic state against the deposit of evidence of fixed assets owned by the borrowers.

(6) As regards the bank's relations with depositors and entrepreneurs, it may be said that a bank in relation to its depositors has been considered the operator or business manager and the depositors deemed as capitalist. In relation to the entrepreneurs, however, the bank can be taken to be the capitalist and the latter the operators. In this case the conditions governing the capitalists' rights and the operators' obligation shall apply. Any profits realised by the entrepreneur, the operator in this case, shall be shared with the bank as capitalist in the agreed proportions.

(7) The practicability of partnership between businessmen and the bank can hardly be challenged. In the U.A.R., an experiment in interest-free banking, launched some four years ago, has now flowered into a flourishing institution.

(8) The superiority of the Islamic conception of banking over modern banking lies in the fact that Islam has eliminated the tyranny of interest. Islam has prohibited interest because it has nothing to do with influencing the volume of savings because it makes depression chronic by retarding the process of recovery; because it aggravates the unemployment problem and, finally, because it encourages an unequal distribution of wealth.

(9) Besides performing other modern non-banking services, like the general utility services of various kinds, it is suggested that an Islamic bank can contribute to economic development by extra banking activity, by which we mean the participation of banks in the process of economic growth by investing modest proportions of their resources (say 5% of their profit) in education and other social overheads for which the banks may not get immediate returns. But this is highly significant from the social point of view.

(10) We have explained that the Bayt al-Mál established by early Islam used to perform almost similar functions which the present-day central banks are doing except the issue of currency, supply of credit and control of interest. It is pointed out that the functions of an Islamic central bank can easily be fitted into the functions of the Bayt al-Mál to meet the growing needs of Muslim countries. We are confident that an Islamic central bank can work without the application of interest.

(11) For the exploitation of vast natural resources, the Muslim states from Morocco to Indonesia and from Mauritania to Malaysia possess a huge public expenditure, for which deficit financing is required. Since interest is prohibited on loans, it is proposed to establish a Muslim world bank on the model of the IBRD by pooling the resources of the Muslim world, to be supplemented by grants and aids from other sources. In explaining the structure of this proposed bank, it is felt that Pakistan may take the lead in this direction.

Lastly, since Pakistan has come into existence to fulfil a mission — a mission of achieving social justice based on the ideology of Islam — Pakistan has to adopt the Islamic conception of banking for which a number of suggestions, like the nationalization of banking, a full implementation of the Zakāh and a comprehensive planning, etc., are made. Of course, Pakistan and the Muslim world cannot have a model of maximum growth unless all injunctions of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah work concurrently in the economic system. They have to be practised in concert. Any one injunction working in isolation will produce a lop-sided state of affairs, as is the case now in almost all Muslim countries.

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NO ROAD TO VICTORY BUT THROUGH SACRIFICE BY THE RICH AND POOR ALIKE — Continued from page 25

bear witness that this is the right course. I shall begin with myself. I shall start with this furniture and furnishings which you see before you." It was not long after this when a voice came from one end of the hall, saying, "I will do the same, O Sultan! I shall bring to you all the gold and silver I own, and shall not leave in my house a single item of precious metal. It will all be given for the cause." And from other corners of the hall came similar pledges.

It was some time before the excitement and the commotion ended. The Shaykh then rose, saying, "'The sight of silk has caused pain to my eyes. But I am nevertheless happy, for I have seen justice being done. God has enabled me to speak the truth. I thank Him for this, and for making my burden and that of the Sultan lighter."

The old man proceeded towards the exit. There were tears in his eyes, glittering like pearls. He was muttering, "Thanks be to God . . . The road to victory is now clear . . . You shall be victorious, O Ibn Qalāwūn!"

The Sultan Ibn Qalāwūn was, in fact, victorious in his battle against the Mongols, and it was he who put an end to the legend that the Mongols were invincible; and peace and freedom returned to those who went back to the teachings of God.

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How and When the Hegira Era Began

By Dr. HASAN IBRAHIM HASAN

Events leading to the Emigration of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina

The migration of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medinah was the starting point of the Muslim era.

The birth of the Prophet took place in the year of the Elephant, in which year God brought about the defeat of Abrahah, the governor of the king of Abyssinia in the Yemen, who was trying to capture Medinah. Hence the year of the Elephant is regarded as an advent of a new era in the history of the national life of the Arabs. So important was this historical incident that the Arabs used to date their history from that year. It also paved the way for the acceptance of the Muslim faith and the struggle for its spreading.

Before the rise of Islam the Arabs made their offerings to their gods. In this society in which heathenism prevailed, Muhammad was sent to this world with a prophetic mission, proclaiming that there is but one God. He invited his countrymen to abandon idolatry, but his message received from them nothing but scoffing and contempt, and they viewed the progress of the new religion with increasing dissatisfaction and hatred. They realised that the triumph of the new teaching meant the destruction of the national religion and the national worship, and the loss of wealth and power to the guardians of the sacred Ka'bah. His followers had to endure the cruelest persecution.

As the Prophet Muhammad was unable to relieve his persecuted followers, he advised them to take refuge in Abyssinia, and in the fifth year of his mission (615 C.E.), eleven men and four women crossed over to Abyssinia, where they received a kind welcome from the Christian king of the country.

For three years the Banū Hāshim, the family to which Muhammad belonged, are said to have been confined to one quarter of the city, except during the sacred months, in which all war ceased throughout Arabia, and a truce was made in order that pilgrims might visit the sacred Ka'bah, the centre of the national religion. Muhammad used to take advantage of such times of pilgrimage to preach to the various tribes that came to Mecca.

The loss of his faithful wife, Khadijah, followed by that of his uncle, Abū Tālib, who supported Muhammad and defended him, plunged him into the utmost grief and exposed him again to insult and contempt. He set out for Ta'if, a city about seventy miles from Mecca; but his claims only excited the ridicule and scorn of its heathen people, who pitilessly stoned him and drove him from their city.

His return to Mecca, however, made his success more hopeless than ever, and the agony of his soul gave its utterance in the words that he puts into the mouth of Noah:

"O my Lord, verily I have cried to my people night and day; and my cry only makes them flee from me the more. And verily, so oft as I cry to them, that Thou mayest forgive them, they thrust their fingers into their ears and wrap themselves in their garments, and persist (in their error), and are disdainfully disdainful" (The Qur'an 71:5-7).

At the time of the annual pilgrimage Muhammad preached Islam in the encampments of the various tribes, but his words were rejected with scorn. Nevertheless, the pilgrims of Medina, then called Yathrib, had long been engaged in a most bitter deadly feud between the two Jewish tribes, the Khazraj and the 'Aws. When these pilgrims returned to their homes they invited their people to the faith.

When the time of pilgrimage again came round, a deputation from Yathrib met Muhammad at 'Aqabah and pledged him their word to obey his teaching; they returned to Yathrib as missionaries of Islam, and so prepared was the ground that the new faith spread rapidly from house to house.

Persecutions of the Quraysh grow fiercer and the Prophet decides to leave Mecca

The following year, when the time of the annual pilgrimage again came round, a band of converts came from Yathrib to Mecca and invited the Prophet to take refuge in Yathrib from the fury of his enemies and swore allegiance to him as their prophet and their leader.

As soon as the news of these secret proceedings reached the Quraysh, the persecution broke out afresh against the Muslims, and Muhammad advised them to emigrate to Yathrib; they set out in small parties. The Prophet himself set out accompanied by Abu Bakr. He left 'Ali behind to return some property entrusted him to their owners. 'Ali remained three days behind in Mecca and then joined the emigrants.

The Quraysh tribe, to which the Prophet belonged, wished to slay him and appeared in the morning at his house; but they met only 'Ali. They then rushed off to pursue Muhammad on the road to Medina. When he heard of this he hid with Abu Bakr in a cave, and God willed that a spider should spin its web at the entrance to his cave. When the Quraysh saw the web, they thought it impossible that anyone could be inside and passed by. The story explains the illusion in the Qur'an:

"If you will not aid him, God certainly aided him when those who disbelieved expelled him being the second of the two, when they were both in the cave when he said to his companion: Grieve not, surely God is with us. So God sent down his tranquillity upon him and strengthened him with hosts which you did not see, and..."
made lowest the word of those who disbelieved; and the word of God, that is the highest; and God is Mighty, Wise."

Along the road the supporters (ansār) came flocking up to the Prophet; they took the reins of his camel and begged him to settle among them. But the Prophet answered: "Let my camel go; it is obeying God's command."

The Prophet is said to have had a mosque erected and to have performed the solemn Friday prayer (Salāh al-Jumā'ah) for the first time with Banū Salīm, when he came among them on his way. Arriving in Medina he took up his abode with Abū Ayyūb.

The Inauguration of the Hegira Era by Caliph 'Umar

Not long after this, Muhammad was able to gather the Arab tribes and unite them under the banner of Islam, thus putting an end to the destructive tribal wars that had prevailed among them in pre-Islamic times. In this manner was established in Arabia a respected and strong central government. Therefore it is natural that the Muslims celebrate the Hegira and regard it as the advent of a new era in the history of the Arabs and date their history from that year.

Authorities are not agreed on the exact day of the Hegira. According to authentic sources it took place on 8 Rabi' I (20 September 622 C.E.). The fixing of the Hegira as the beginning of the Muslim era dates from the Caliph 'Umar. The traditions which try to trace it to the Prophet himself are devoid of all probability. According to another tradition, Ya'la Ibn Umayyah, Abū Bakr's governor in the Yemen, was the first to use it, but the view that it dates from the Caliph 'Umar is by far the most prevalent.

It is related that the Caliph 'Umar, after having regulated the administration of finance and made up the registers and the levies of taxes, found himself embarrassed about the dating, or, rather, he was reproached for not dating at all. Abū Mūsá al-Ash'ari wrote to him, saying: "Thou art sending us letters undated." The Caliph discussed the matter with his officers, and after investigating the customs of the Greeks and Persians it was decided to establish an era. Some proposed to date from the birth of the Prophet, but this date was not certain. 'Ali is then said to have proposed to have the Hegira as the beginning of the era, as it marked the date when the Prophet began to assume sovereign power. This decision was come to in the year 17 or 18; some, however, say 16, but the general view is the year 17.

Before fixing this date the Arabs were reckoning from the "Year of the Elephant". After the migration of the Prophet to Medina 'Umar chose the year of the Hegira as the year 1; but as the calendar was already fixed by the Qur'ān (9:36), the months were retained and Muharram was retained as the first month because business is resumed then after the pilgrimage. The era thus began, not with the day of the Hegira, but with the first day of the month of Muharram of the Hegira year. The first day fell upon a Friday, and corresponded to the 16 Tammūz (July) 933 of the Seleucid era, and 622 of the Julian Calendar.

Causes that led to the adoption of Muharram as the first month of the Hegira year

It is interesting to illustrate how Muharram was made the first month of the Hegira year. Muharram is an adjective qualifying Safar, being the first two months in pre-Islamic Arabia, and Muharram qualified the two Safars which belonged to the sacred months, and it gradually became the name of the month itself now called Muharram, i.e., the sacred month. The Arab year began, like the Jewish, in autumn. After the Prophet Muhammad had forbidden the insertion of the intercalary months in the Qur'ān (9:37), 1 Muharram, the beginning of the year, went through all the seasons as the year, which now consisted of 12 lunar months, had always only 354 or 355 days, as it still has.

The Qur'ān (9:37) reads:

"Postponing (of the sacred month) is only an addition in unbelief, wherewith those who disbelieve are led astray, violating it one year and keeping it sacred another, that they may agree in the number (of months) that God has made sacred, and thus violate what God has made sacred."

The sacred month is often referred to in the Qur'ān. It is recorded in 2:217:

"They ask concerning the sacred month - about fighting in it. Say: Fighting in it is a grave matter; and hindering it from God's way and denying Him, and (hindering men from) the Sacred Mosque and turning its people out of it, are still graver with God."

Al-Muharram, the first month of the Hegira year, has 30 days of which, in addition to the first as the beginning of the year, the following are specially noted: the 9th as the fast day of the Shi'ite ascetics; the 10th the anniversary of the tragedy of Karbala (61 A.H.), on which al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali was killed, and therefore the great day of mourning by the Shi'ah, celebrated by pilgrimages to the sacred places of the Shi'ah, especially to Karbala; the 16th as the day of the selection of Jerusalem as the Qiblah; and the 17th as the day of the arrival of the Elephant at Mecca from which the Arabs used to date their history.

Therefore, it is natural that the Muslims celebrate the first day of the Hegira Year. Nevertheless, it is not recorded that they celebrated this day either in the Prophet's lifetime or during the reign of the Caliph Abū Bakr. During the reign of the Caliph 'Umar they took special interest in celebrating this day, and since then the eve of the Hegira year has been celebrated with great pomp and glory and the organisation of the ceremony received particular interest from the 'Abbasid and Fatimid governments. The Caliph rode on horseback and huge multitudes of all ranks joined the procession, which passed through the main streets, and meals and gratuities formed a part of the celebration of this festival.

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

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Early Arab Fortresses before the Crusades in Syria, Jordan and Iraq

By Dr. A. RAHMAN ZAKY

The Arabs, before establishing their vast empire in Iraq, Syria and North Africa, built their primitive fortresses in the Arabian Peninsula. When they later came in contact with the Byzantines, the Arabs borrowed the plans of their foes and later modifed them according to their needs, exactly as the Byzantines did when they inherited the Eastern Roman Empire. The Byzantines were masters of many architectural characteristics in fortification. For centuries they strengthened their fortresses walls by providing them with square towers projecting a relatively small distance from the fortress walls. In Syria, on the right shore of the Euphrates, Halabiyah is a fine example of such fortification. In the Syrian desert there is Azark (Zerqa), which was a Roman fortress of the time of Diocletian and Maximian, used by Caliph Walid II (d. 744 C.E.), and was rebuilt by al-Malik al-Mu’azzam ‘Isa in 1236-1237 C.E.

Twenty miles east of Azark is another fort, of which the modern name is Qusayr al-Hallabat. Its nucleus was built by Caracalla in 212-217 C.E., the rest by Justinian in 529 C.E.

In this connection, two early forts may be mentioned. The fort of al-Muthaqqab, which was built by Hasan Ibn Mahawayh in 724 C.E. near Massisah by order of ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abd al-Aziz. The other fort is Massisah, constructed by ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, the Umayyad caliph, in 703 C.E. It contained a strong garrison, and later a small mosque was built on the top of the fortress hill. We shall later add a few notes about it.

Until now, we have noticed that most of the early Arab fortresses built in the Syrian desert or on the Byzantine frontier were of Byzantine inspiration. We notice later that Arabo-Byzantine contacts had later resulted in the evolution of indigenous Arab fortification as it also affected the design of the palaces of the Umayyad caliphs. A list of these palaces is given as evidence of early Arab fortresses:

1. al-Walid’s Palace at Minyah on Lake Tiberias, 705-715 C.E.
2. al-Walid’s Qasr at Jabal Seis, 705-715 C.E.
3. Hisham’s Palace (Qasr al-Hair al-Gharbi), c. 727 C.E.
4. Hisham’s Palace (Qasr al-Hair al-Sharqi), 110 A.H. (729 C.E.)
6. Walid II’s Palace at Mshatta, c. 744 C.E.
7. Walid II’s Palace (Qasr al-Tubah), c. 744 C.E.

The ruins of 3 and 4, Qasr al-Hair al-Gharbi and al-Sharqi, consist of two roughly square “castles” standing side by side, of which the western is a good four times greater than its neighbour. The walls of the lesser castle, flanked by round towers, are relatively well preserved. The interior of the fortress consisted of a central courtyard, around which were arranged vaulted chambers backing on to the fortified wall. The most interesting thing about the building is its single gate, on the west side, with two flanking towers. The gate is topped with a straight lintel, above which is a round relieving arch. Directly above the arch is a fine early double machicoulis.

The larger fortress to the west repeats the lesser fortress in its general scheme. There are the same fortified walls, two metres thick, built of the same stone, and similar round flanking towers. The gates, however — there are four — though similarly provided with machicoulis and surmounted

1 Ancient Zenobia (6th Century).
by a straight lintel, are relieved with slightly pointed arches. A ruined mosque stands in the south-east corner of the enclosure. If Professor Creswell is correct, and the layman must bow to his authority, the lesser fortress must dispute with the larger the honour of being the earliest fortified Muslim enclosure, and will claim to preserve in its gate towers the earliest known example of Muslim stucco work.

Rusafa

One of the forts built by Caliph Hishām bna ‘Abd al-Malik (728-729 C.E.). It lies west of Rakkah. It was a large town with walls and a palace, and a mosque. Hishām took his residence there.

Under the Umayyads, as under the Abbasid Caliphs down to the end of the eleventh century C.E., the frontier line between the Muslims and the Byzantines was formed by the great ranges of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus. Here a long line of fortresses (called al-Thughir in Arabic), stretching from Malatya on the upper Euphrates to Tarsus near the seacoast of the Mediterranean, served to mark and guard the frontier, these being taken and retaken by Byzantines and Muslims as the tide of war ebbed and flowed. This line of fortresses was commonly divided into two groups — those guarding Mesopotamia to the north-east, and those guarding Syria to the south-west. Of the former were Malatya, Zibatra, Hiss Mansur, Bahasna, al-Hadath, Mar’ash, al-Huraniyyah, al-Kansah and ‘Ayn Zarbah. Of the latter group lying near the northern coastline of the bay of Iskanerun, and protecting Syria, were al-Massiah, Hadhama and Tarsus.

We have dealt with some of these fortresses, and now we shall deal with the others.

Malatya (Melitene of the Greeks) was in early days one of the most important fortresses of the Muslim frontier against the Byzantines. The city of Malatya was rebuilt by order of the Caliph Mansur in 756 C.E., who provided it with a fine mosque, and then garrisoned it with 4,000 men. It was more than once taken by the Byzantines and retaken by the Muslims.

Mar’ash

This was a Byzantine fortress rebuilt by Mu’awiyah, the first Umayyad Caliph, in the 7th century C.E. It was strengthened by Caliph al-Walid bna ‘Abd al-Malik, and was later re-fortified by Hārun al-Rashid with double walls and a ditch. Its inner castle was known as al-Marwānī, being so called after Marwān II, the last Umayyad Caliph. In 1097 C.E. Mar’ash was captured by the Crusaders under Godfrey de Bouillon, and later became an important town of Little Armenia.

Hadath (Byzantine Adada)

It was taken by the Muslims in the reign of the Caliph ‘Umar. The town was rebuilt by the Caliph Mahdi in 779 C.E. and again restored by Hārun al-Rashid, who kept a garrison of 2,000 men. It had been taken and retaken by the Byzantines and Muslims. In 954 C.E., after many vicissitudes, it was finally taken from the Greeks and rebuilt by Sayf al-Dawlah, the Hamdanid, and later passed to the Saljūks.

Zibatra

Baladhurī and Istakhri, two early Arab historians, both speak of Zibatra, which the Byzantines called Sozopetra or Zapetra, as a great fortress on the Greek frontier, many times dismantled by the Byzantines and rebuilt by the Caliph Mansur and later by Mā’mun, and long continued a place of importance. In the Arab and Byzantine chronicles Zibatra is famous for its capture by the Emperor Theophilus, and again for its recapture by the Caliph Mu’tasim in his great expedition against Amūriyah.

Hiss Mansur

It was called by the Byzantines Perre. It took its name from its builder, Mansur, of the Arab tribe of Qays, who was commander of this frontier station during the reign of the last Umayyad Caliph, Marwan II, who was killed in 758 C.E. Hiss Mansur was re-fortified by Hārun al-Rashid during the Caliphate of his father, Mahdi, and it is described by the geographer Ibn Hawkal as a small town with a Friday Mosque. Like other fortresses in that region, it was ravaged and dismantled alternately by the Byzantines and the Muslims. In the 14th century C.E. Hiss Mansur was a ruin, and it is nowadays more often called Adamin.

The exact positions of al-Huraniyyah and al-Kansah are unknown, but they lay in the hilly country between Mar’ash and ‘Ayn Zarbah. The first took its name from its founder, Hārun al-Rashid, who built it in 799 C.E. The fortress lay in a valley to the west of the Lukkam mountains, a name by which the Muslim geographers roughly indicate the chain of the Anti-Taurus. Subsequently Hāruniyyah was rebuilt by Sayf al-Dawlah, the Hamdanid, but again the Christians took it, after which it remained a possession of the king of Little Armenia. Kansah (Church) was also a very ancient fortress built of black stones by the Byzantines, and later Hārun al-Rashid had it strongly fortified and well garrisoned.

‘Ayn Zarbah (Anazarbus)

This fortress, which the Crusaders knew as Anazarbus, still exists. It was rebuilt and well fortified by Hārun al-Rashid in 796 C.E. About the middle of this century Sayf al-Dawlah, the Hamdanid prince, spent, it is said, three million dirhams (about £120,000) on its fortification, but it was taken more than once by the Greeks from the Muslims. At the close of the next century the Crusaders captured it and left it a ruin. The names ‘Ayn Zarbah had in the 14th century C.E. become corrupted into Nawarza.

Al-Masjah (Mopsuestia), Adhana and Tarsus

The three fortresses which still exist are of Greek foundation. The Caliph Mansur restored Massiah after it had been partially destroyed by an earthquake in 756 C.E. At a later date Massiah, like its neighbours, passed into the possession of the kings of Little Armenia.

The fortress of Adhanah in Adhana had been in part rebuilt in 758 C.E. by Mansur. The fortress was on the eastern bank of the river and was connected with the town by a bridge, and Abhanah itself was defended by a wall with eight gates and a deep ditch beyond it.

Tarsus was, however, the most important of all the frontier fortresses, for it commanded the southern entrance of the celebrated pass across the Taurus known as the

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6 G. Le Strange: op. cit., p. 120.
7 The full name being the “Black Church” (al-Kansah as-Sawda).
Cilician Gates. Already under the earlier Abbasid Caliphs, namely Mahdi and Hārūn, Tarsus had been carefully refortified and well garrisoned at first with 8,000 troops. Tarsus remained the frontier city of Islam until 965 C.E., when the Emperor Nikfor, Nicephorus Phocas, having conquered many of the frontier fortresses, laid siege to Tarsus and took it by capitulation.

Ja'bar

It stands on the north bank of the Euphrates. It is so named after its early possessor, an Arab of the Banū Numayr. The original name of the castle was Dawsar and it was frequently mentioned in the later history of the Caliphate. In 1104 C.E. the Franks captured Ja'bar after they occupied Edessa during the time of the first crusade.

Harrán (ancient Carrhae)

Harrán was a pleasant town protected by a fortress, built of stones that was so finally set. In 1184 C.E. the town was surrounded by a stone wall. An Arab historian added that the circuit of the castle wall was 1,350 paces.

Jabalah

It stands near Ladhaiqiyah on the eastern Mediterranean coast. It was first taken by the Arabs in 638 C.E., and was dismantled. The town of Jabalah was rebuilt by Caliph Mu'awiyyah, who also constructed a fortress there outside the old Byzantine fortification. During the Abbasid rule, the Byzantines occupied the fortress in 969 C.E., but it was re-captured by the Arabs in 1051 C.E. It fell into the hands of the Crusaders in 1098 C.E., but was taken back by the Muslims in 1188.

Qasr Kharanah

A desert castle in Jordan, which seems to have been built with a defensive purpose in mind. It is an imposing, four-square fortress, with a round tower at each corner and a half-round one between, the high walls pierced below the band by arrow-slits, and above by small windows. The only entrance is on the south, flanked by quarter-round projections, and a large window, and a row of decorative arches above. As to the date of this castle, there is a painted Kufic inscription, over the door of an upper-storey room on the west which has the date of 92 A.H. (711 C.E.). Qasr Kharanah is built of large blocks of undressed stone, with rows of smaller stones laid between the courses. The face of the structure was completely plastered over to emphasize its appearance of solidarity.

We shall turn now to a purely Arab castle-palace in Western Iraq. Ukhaydir, the evergreen.

Ukhaydir

This fortified palace is one of the most impressive Arab buildings. It lies in the desert about 120 miles south of Baghdad and 30 miles west of Kerbela. It consists of a fortified rectangular enclosure measuring 175 by 169 metres, with a gateway in the centre of each side. There are four round corner towers and ten intermediate half-round towers, not counting the peculiar gateway towers, on each side. Within this great enclosure, and in contact with its northern face, is the Palace proper.

As for the date of Ukhaydir, it must be placed on architectural grounds between 720 and 800 C.E. Professor Creswell gives the name of the builder as 'Isā Ibn Mūsā, the powerful nephew of Caliph al-Saffāh and al-Mansūr; and fixes the date of its construction in 776 C.E. The east gateway of the arched entrance in Ukhaydir is set between two round towers, which project exactly the same distance as the others. To right and left is a groove about 20 cms. wide and 30 cms. deep, which shows that there must have been a portcullis here. Now supposing Ukhaydir were about to be attacked, the portcullis would be kept in a hauled-up position, until a party of men entered the outer archway to try to break down the door behind the inner archway. At a signal, given by men looking through the slits in the vault, the portcullis would be released and molten lead or boiling oil dropped on the storming party trapped below.


One of the large rooms in the Qasr al-Khahanah (built in 711 C.E.), Jordan.
What our readers say...

CHILDREN’S BOOK ON ISLAM
8 Bryndrydden Gwananor,
Port Talbot, Glamorgan,
South Wales, England

Dear Mrs. Toto,
Assalamo alaykum!

My wife and I are pleased to learn from The Islamic Review that you are writing a book for our Muslim children. I read your article, “Fifty Questions and Answers”, in The Islamic Review for October 1968. I was so much impressed by them that I decided to read them out to my children who, it will interest you to know, after listening to them, had a radiant look in their eyes. This shows the interest aroused in their little minds by your article and the credit for all this goes to you.

I wish other Muslims would also come forward to do something practical, for today’s children are a nursery for tomorrow’s nation. We Muslims must implant the seeds of righteousness and the real spirit of Islam in our children’s minds. For this is the only way by which our present generation can emerge as a healthy and promising nation of Islam. I am glad to know that you are doing something positive in this direction.

Hoping that the book will soon see the light of day, I am,
Yours sincerely, SYED M. HUSAIN

THE MALAISE OF HONORIFIC STYLES IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

31 Heather Road, Fawley, Southampton

Dear Sir,

In your Editorial in the May-June 1968 issue of The Islamic Review you dealt with “The Malaise of Honorific Styles in the Muslim World” and you made a particular reference to the widespread practice among some Muslims who have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca of adding the style al-Hajj. Hajj or al-Hajjah to their names.

Quoting from the Arabic monthly, al-Wa’y al-Islamî. Kuwait, for March 1968, you dealt with this malady authoritatively. Indeed, the Muslims must be careful not to follow the footsteps of the followers of other religions by adding practices to their religion which were never taught or sanctioned by the Prophet Muhammad and his immediate successors.

It is saddening that such a practice of “pilgrimage advertising” is carried out among Muslims. But it is even more deplorable that Muslim religious leaders, or Imams — some of whom are highly learned — should help perpetuate or encourage such practices. May I quote from the otherwise excellent book Muhammad, the Last Prophet, by the Imam Vebhi Ismâ’il, who observes on page 6:

“In doing this (performing the pilgrimage to Mecca) they fulfill their religious duty of pilgrimage, and when they return to their homes, they are allowed to place the title ‘Hajj’ before their names.”

One may well ask, allowed by whom? And there is no answer. The Qur’an, in the clearest language, condemns all boasting, advertising, or showing off.

Yours sincerely, K. A. BUSAIDY

Book Review


For many years Mr. Ishâq al-Nabi has been studying the complex question of the pre-Islamic calendar at Mecca, which remained in force even in Islam up to the Farewell Pilgrimage of the Prophet Muhammad, that is, just three months before this latter’s demise. The present work is the translation from the Urdu.

There are two main obstacles in admitting the thesis of Mr. Ishâq al-Nabi:

1. He gives corresponding tables for the Meccan (intercalary) era and the Gregorian one for the lifetime of the Prophet, and bases himself on Wüstenfeld. Everybody knows that according to Wüstenfeld, lunar months are always alternately of 29 and 30 days: Muḥarram has always 30 days, Safar 29, Rabî‘ al-awwal 30 ... Sha‘bān 29, Ramadān 30 and so on. But astronomy tells us that sometimes the lunar calendar has up to three consecutive months of 29 days, and up to four consecutive months of 30 days. Such being the case, to base oneself on Wüstenfeld and declare right or wrong the precisions in Islamic historical works on the events of the life of the Prophet, leaves very much to be desired. With the help of electronic machines, we must determine which months in Mecca-Medina of which year had 29 days and which of 30 days. Until this preliminary work is done, all assertions are baseless and far from convincing, if they follow the tables of Wüstenfeld.

2. It is well-known that during the Last Pilgrimage, the Prophet Muhammad abolished the nasi‘ (intercalation) from the Islamic calendar. In his khutbah he is reported to have said:

“The time has reverted to the condition on which it was on the day when God had created heavens and the earth”,

and it has always been interpreted to mean that the intercalary and the pure lunar reckonings had in that year of the Farewell Pilgrimage coincided (since the two time-reckonings get to diverge by one month roughly once every third year, and it takes 33 years when both methods concur on same months and to begin to diverge again after three years). Mr. Ishâq al-Nabi rejects this interpretation and thinks that even in the year of the Farewell Pilgrimage, there was a difference of several months between the pure lunar and the lunisolar methods. The reasons given are not convincing, and the proof advanced is insufficient. A blind faith in Wüstenfeld vitiated the arguments and takes away all scientific value from the conclusions at which he has arrived.

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Conference of Muslim Nations to be held at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 21 to 25 April 1969

A Conference of Muslim Nations will be held from 21 April to 25 April 1969 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This was announced by the Chairman of the Organising Committee, Haji 'Abdul Rahmân bin Ya'qûb, who is Minister of Lands and Mines in the Malaysian Cabinet, recently.

Haji 'Abdul Rahmân, who only recently returned from a tour of Muslim countries in Asia, the Middle East and Africa, said that so far five countries had fully indicated their intention to participate in the Conference, namely, Pakistan, Kuwait, Jordan, Morocco and the United Arab Republic and that he expected to receive replies from another 14 countries soon. The declared aims of the Conference are:

1. To foster a feeling of brotherhood among the Muslims in the spirit of Islam;
2. To establish a pattern of co-operation among Muslim countries in matters of common interest to all Muslims; and
3. To bring about a degree of uniformity in matters which have given rise to conflict in the interpretation of the Qur'an and the Hadith so as to keep abreast with trends in this fast-changing world.

It is expected that the Conference will discuss problems pertaining to permissive aspects of Islamic law as practised in various countries, in particular those relating to marriage, divorce, inheritance, Zakâh and Fitrâh, fasting and prayers. It will also discuss other matters of common interest and seek to lay down a basis for maximum co-operation which would promote the dignity of the Muslims in line with the spirit of the age.

It is also hoped that the Conference will agree on the establishment of a research institute to study and provide findings on any religious questions, which could form the basis for a guide to Muslim countries.

The idea of a Muslim Commonwealth, as it was then called, was first mooted by the Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahmân, on 19 March 1961 in his address at the Shâh Jehân Mosque at Woking. In it the Prime Minister suggested that Muslim countries should get together and form a loose association after the pattern of the British Commonwealth of nations. The aim of such an association, he declared, was to re-affirm and re-establish a form of brotherhood among Muslims in the world; to provide a forum in which Muslim leaders and scholars could get together to discuss subjects of common interest to all Muslims and to interpret Islamic laws, concepts, teachings, etc., in line with the spirit of the age.

The idea expressed by the Prime Minister received little response and, indeed, in some quarters, it was received with misgivings. This was due mainly to the political conflict in the Arab world, some of whom saw in this an attempt to create a political pact or bloc, although the Prime Minister had made it clear that the Muslim commonwealth would be concerned only with religious matters and questions affecting the welfare and progress of Muslims in general.

Before the Conference of Muslim Nations takes place a meeting of Muslim religious leaders and scholars representing the various states (there are 13 of them) in Malaysia will be held to discuss working papers which have been prepared by experts on religion, education and economics. It is hoped that the conclusions reached at this meeting will provide some useful basis for discussion and, to that extent, contribute towards making the proposed Conference of Muslim Nations a more stimulating and profitable meeting.

ENCOUNTER—Continued from page 16

isn't any money. American aid, Jewish appeal funds, German reparations, account for a great deal of Israel's present assets. The greatest asset of the lot, however, was the land of Dr. Hadawi and the woman at Baqa'a, for at the end of the mandate in 1948, Jewish landholdings in Palestine accounted for only 5.66% of the land of Palestine. Where would the compensation come from? From the Jewish businessman? From the long-suffering American people? Or do we just wait for another miracle?

And now something else has gone wrong. The heady wine of victory has turned sour. For, despite the enormous territorial gains, the crushing Arab defeat, peace is as far away as ever. No Arab government will negotiate with Israel, let alone recognize her. Nasser has not fallen, nor Husayn. Her temporarily relieved economy cannot support indefinitely a nation under arms along vastly extended borders. The Suez Canal is still closed. The fedayeen raids have increased, and Jordan no longer takes any steps to stop them. The attempt to expel further Arabs from the occupied areas has failed, since Jordan has had to close her border to them; Israel now has more Arabs than ever before. The young Israeli used to be able to travel fairly freely within the country: now he encounters road-blocks between Tel Aviv and Haifa. Even the lies have begun to run out, as more and more Westerners catch glimpses of the truth.

Suppose the United States should frankly recognize the disaster to her interests in the Middle East as a result of her uncritical support of Israel? Or suppose she should suffer a recession and the dollars dried up? Or suppose Americans got sick of the influence of the "Jewish vote", as once they got sick of the "prohibitionist vote"?

These are things that must not be thought of.

So the young Israeli swings his sub-machine gun and shouts, "Cover it!" But what else can he do? It must be covered. The American Jew is an American, and the English Jew an Englishman, but the Israeli Jew lives on stolen land and borrowed time, and if he has the courage to admit it he is a citizen without a land, an exile from nowhere. He is trapped by the lies of his elders. So that when a bomb goes off in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv, young Israelis begin to mill about like ants in a box: they do not know what to do.

They stream towards the Arab quarter to do a pogrom.

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