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Continued on page 2

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JULY 1956
Between Ourselves

THE COVER

The beautiful picture on the Cover is that of the Mihrab of the Yeni Jami' (The New Mosque), one of the famous mosques for which Istanbul, Turkey, is rightly famous.

The Yeni Jami' is the result of piety of the mothers of three successive Sultans of Turkey. The building was begun in 1598 C.E. and completed some time in the middle of the seventeenth century. In the picture the strikingly beautiful lettering can be observed.

Turks are famous for the exquisite mural engraving of Arabic. This art, however, owing to the introduction of the Latin script in Turkey, is fast dying.

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The Islamic Review

JULY 1956

Contents

Editorial :
The Suez Canal ............ 5
Islam and International Relations .... 7
by Muhammad Zafrullah Khan
Jesus and St. Judas Thomas at Taxila, Pakistan .... 12
by al-Hajj Khwaja Nazir Ahmad
Balans Festival in Peking's Oldest Mosque .... 13
by Chi Yeng-Lang
The State Letters of Caliph ‘Umar .... 15
by Dr. Kurushid Ahmad Fariq
Impressions of English Non-Muslims at the Ka‘bah, otherwise known as “The House of God” .... 20
by al-Hajj David Cowan, M.A.
The ‘Id al-Fitr (1375 A.H.) Sermon .... 22
The Attitude of Islam towards Figurative Painting .... 24
What They Think of Us .... 30
Culled by Zafrul Haq Khan
Jiddah .... 32
Early Arab Navigation: Indian Ocean .... 33
by M. D. W. Jeffreys
What Our Readers Say .... 35
Book Review .... 37
Flowers from the Garden (iv) .... 38
by W. Bashyr Pickard

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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

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THE SUEZ CANAL

Nationalization of the Canal

When the American and the British Governments announced their abrupt withdrawal of aid to help Egypt finance the Aswan High Dam project, the attention of the world was focused on Cairo, and the question was asked, what would President Nasser do? Would he go to Russia for aid and tie Egyptian economy for years to come with that of Soviet economy? Would he be aware of the dangers involved in such a policy? The answer to such speculation was certainly a surprise that has left Western observers in a state of utter confusion. However, the answer, the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company, was the legal, logical as well as practical response to the sharp challenge of withdrawing the promised aid by the West.

The nationalization of the Suez Canal Company is a legal act for many obvious reasons. The Suez Canal Company is an Egyptian limited company (joint stock) subject to Egyptian legislation which obviously implies nationalization among other rights of sovereignty. When Egypt nationalized the Company she was strictly within the limits of her domestic jurisdiction as a sovereign State. Nationalization is a legal and economic term meaning public ownership. Several industries and public utility schemes were nationalized in both the United Kingdom and France on a large scale after the Second World War. It is true that most of the shares of the Suez Canal Company are held by Western Governments and European shareholders, but in the Law of Nationalization, the Egyptian Government promised them compensation according to the closing prices of the Paris Stock Exchange on the day preceding nationalization after the assets of the former Suez Canal Company held abroad had been handed over to the new authority in Cairo. This readiness on the part of Egypt was a significant attempt to forget the shady and high-handed manner in which most of the shares were acquired, a characteristic of the greed of European economic exploitation of the natural resources of African and Asian nations in the nineteenth century. There is no legal ground for the objection of foreign shareholders to any government deciding on nationalization provided they are justly compensated. When the British Government nationalized the British Railways in 1946, there were many foreign shareholders, a fact which did not prevent the Government from nationalizing such a big enterprise; nor did anyone hear of such objections as voiced over the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company. The United Nations Charter, further, in Article II, Para. VII, stated clearly that “Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State...” Nationalization is thus a judicial act which any sovereign government can practise within the scope and confines of her domestic jurisdiction and in accordance with the word and spirit of the Charter. If nationalization was judicial for Britain and France, it is just as judicial for Egypt. “What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.”

The Economic Aspect of the Nationalization of the Canal

The economic aspects of the nationalization of the Canal are also worth considering. Economically, it meant that instead of being promised aid, and then being arrogantly denied it, a country should logically answer by taking legal possession of its own resources which are being exploited in favour of wealthy shareholders at the expense of the poor. The net profits of the Canal Company last year amounted to over £10 millions, which were paid to shareholders and directors after having allowed for reserves, maintenance expenses, etc. This money could be rightly and adequately canalized into such economic and social schemes that would eventually raise the miserable standard of living of the Egyptian peasants. That is a just, human and rightful course. The Aswan Dam project needed roughly £400 millions, a which £100 millions are needed in foreign currencies over a period of ten years to pay for equipment, technical and engineering works which would be bought outside Egypt; the remaining £300 millions are to be raised in Egypt to pay for labour, constructing materials, etc., bought locally over the same period and to be provided by the Egyptian Govern-
ment. Economically, the Canal could provide, not the cost of building the Dam, but the foreign currency needed to be spent abroad (which were to be provided in the form of aid: $70 millions from both the United States and Great Britain and loans amounting to $200 millions from the International Bank).

The importance of the Aswan High Dam project is vital to Egypt, and every Egyptian, including President Nasir, is deeply concerned in bringing this scheme into actual reality. It would increase Egypt's present electric supply by ten times, allowing for industrial expansion, and would add 2 million more acres to her cultivable land in twenty years. This is not only an ambitious scheme but a very necessary one to meet Egypt's growing population. A statement issued by the Egyptian Embassy in London on the 29th July said: "Egypt declared that the profits of the Canal would be utilized to provide the necessary foreign exchange needed to build the Aswan High Dam. One word about the High Dam: it is not a scheme on which President Nasir is staking his future; it is a scheme on which every Egyptian is staking his future. It means, to the Egyptian people, a bold and speedy economic relief and source of livelihood to Egypt's population, which is increasing at the rate of half a million yearly. In Mr. Selwyn Lloyd's words: 'This project, if it could be realized, would affect the standard of living of all those people who live on the banks of the Nile.' It is a scheme which was studied long ago by Egyptian and international experts, but was as usual frustrated for reasons beyond the purpose of this statement."

Egypt, again, is being denied the right to deploy, for the benefit of her own people, any of the profits accrued from dues on the Canal. She is, further, being asked to utilize all such profits entirely to widening and deepening the Canal. Yet, apart from maintenance, both objection and condition imposed today on Egypt were never mentioned when the Canal was under the control of the former Company. No such conditions or objections were uttered when, for instance, in the last five years the former Company distributed over £51 millions to shareholders, while spending only £17 millions in the same period on maintenance.

The alleged excuse given when withdrawing aid, namely, that Egypt's economic conditions would not permit the execution of such a scheme, is absolutely unfounded, apart from the wrongful intentions implied in throwing doubts on the country's economy. Letters from the World Bank to the Egyptian Government — already made public by Egypt — stated in clear-cut terms that both the Egyptian economy and the High Dam project were on sound economic grounds which would allow the Bank to offer Egypt the necessary loan.

The political implications of the nationalization of the Canal

The political implications of the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company are of equal importance. For the confusion aroused in the West — genuine or fabricated — was because of mixing two separate issues and presenting them to the public as one. The two usual questions involved are first the act of nationalization — which is strictly the uncontestable right of a sovereign state — and, second, the freedom of navigation in the Canal, which has been repeatedly assured by Egypt. The legal and economic aspects have already been expounded. As to the freedom of navigation, President Nasir and all Egyptian spokesmen have declared insistently that Egypt is intent upon safeguarding freedom of navigation, and is abiding by the 1888 Constantinople Convention, safeguarding all international shipping in time of peace and war. Further, Egypt would not interfere with the freedom of passage, for the obvious economic advantage in keeping the Canal in the most efficient manner so as to encourage more shipping to use it, and consequently increase her revenues.

The role of France and Great Britain as upholders of international obligations

Much has been said about Egypt not abiding by her international obligations. The irony of this accusation is that it comes from France and Britain. The French record in North Africa does not permit France to put any claim to international law or morality, for she violated not only her direct pledges to the Arabs of North Africa, but also the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As to Britain, one could only repeat what one reads to British historians that she has, on record, broken over sixty-five promises to evacuate Egypt. There are countless examples of doubtful historic validity which illustrate that, by any moral standards, France and Britain are far from being the upholders of international law and morality, and that they are still in the 500 years' old game of power politics. Indeed the very crisis over the Suez Canal adds another fresh example to the point. In the British House of Commons and the French National Assembly the heads of the two respective Governments stated publicly that they would not leave the Canal under the unfettered control of one nation, not even after 1968, when possession of the Canal would have passed to Egypt without nationalization. What is that, if not a violation of a Convention and of the natural rights of a sovereign state? Yet, ironically, again, what is not considered a violation of an international Convention; while Egypt — in their eyes — must be accused in advance of obstructing navigation! This is not the language of countries abiding by international law or morality: it is simply the language of power. But it will not prevail this time; for the Egyptians as well as all Arabs will keep their Arab Canal at whatever cost. That is the answer to power in the twentieth century. Meanwhile Egypt pledges herself and stakes her interests in keeping the Canal open, and that is all a country can do.

In Britain and France, the reaction was neither rational nor logical. Economic measures were sharply decided upon and operated. Military preparations are being taken and publicly declared in the most hysterical manner. At the time of writing these lines a conference is being organized, with invitations extended to twenty-four nations, chosen on inexplicable grounds, yet all of them are told in advance "all you need do is to make sure to have a rubber stamp to endorse our unilateral decision to internationalize the Canal; a decision which, whether you like it or not, we will use our troops — now on the spot — to enforce." Where is the United Nations, and where is international law and morality? They are not applicable in this case! That was the common sense of London and Paris. Egypt said to Britain what amounted to "if you took up arms, though inferior, to fight Hitler in 1939 to defend your freedom, we will also do the same". To France, Egypt's answer is radically different; for Egypt reminded France that Egypt would not repeat what France did in 1940; Egypt will not surrender in days and will have no "collaborateurs".

These are the facts of a serious situation. It is one which calls for reason and rational judgment. It must be handled not in the context of power politics, but in the framework of a new age of emancipation of people politically oppressed and economically exploited, which is the overriding character of the twentieth century. Everyone stands to lose by violence. But if that course is imposed upon Egypt, she will find great sympathy among all Muslims, indeed in the whole of Africa and Asia.

6 THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
ISLAM AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
A study of the ways and means by which Islam seeks to regulate International Relations in peace and war

By MUHAMMAD ZAFRULLAH KHAN

The very name of the faith of Islam proclaims that its objective is to establish, maintain and foster peace

Islam is an historical faith. Its beginnings and development have taken place in the full light of history. Complete records of its teachings, rise and spread have been preserved and are easily accessible.

The best approach to the subject would, therefore, be to go to the original sources, that is to say, to the Holy Qur’an, which is the record of the verbal revelations received by the Prophet of Islam (on whom be peace!) and to the chronicles of the Prophet’s own life and actions. This would furnish first-hand material for a survey of the subject and for formulation of the principles laid down by Islam for the regulation of international relations. The evaluation of the application of these principles by Muslim States is the task of the critical historian.

The word “Islam” means “peace”. The Muslim greeting throughout the world is “The peace of God be on you”. Thus the very name of the faith proclaims that its objective is to establish, maintain and foster peace.

The message of Islam is universal. It is addressed to the whole of mankind. The Qur’an states that the Prophet of Islam has been sent to all men (7:159) and that he is a mercy for the universe (21:108). These concepts are in themselves powerful incentives towards the establishment of peaceful and friendly relations between all sections of mankind.

There are several aspects of human relations: domestic, national, international, inter-religious, etc. All of them act and react upon each other. No society can establish and maintain peaceful relations with other societies unless it is itself founded upon just and peaceful principles which help to foster beneficence and the welfare and prosperity of all sections. Islam lays down directions for this purpose. The promotion of this purpose inside Islamic society tends towards the establishment of beneficial relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims.

The Qur’an on the importance of right thinking

One of the essential conditions for the establishment of peaceful, co-operative and beneficial relations between different sections of mankind is that our thinking should transcend national and even continental boundaries and should embrace humanity, the universe and indeed eternity in its scope. This is necessary to enable us to adjust our perspective to our needs of today and tomorrow. It is, therefore, imperative that our thinking should take on newer and vaster dimensions. It follows that our concepts of God, life and humanity must possess the characteristic of universality.

The Qur’an opens with the following brief verse: “The perfect worthiness of all true praise belongs to God, Who nourishes, sustains and stage by stage leads towards perfection all the universes” (1:2). Thus at the very outset our thinking is lifted to the level of the universe. Indeed, we are reminded that there are universes beyond universes and that they are all evolving towards perfection through ever-increasing beneficence. All this beneficence is for the service and benefit of man, who is God’s vicegerent on earth.

“God has subjected to your service whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth: All this is from Him. In this surely are Signs for a people who reflect” (45:14).

This has reference to man as such and not to any particular individual or section of mankind. “God is He Who has appointed you (mankind) His vicegerents upon earth. Know, then, that he who fails to recognize this dignity and
to act in accordance therewith shall be answerable for his neglect” (35:40).

As the first step towards the regulation of international relations, Islam seeks to establish the universal brotherhood of man as deriving directly from the unity of God, which is the central theme of all Islamic doctrine and teaching. It is only the relationship of men to each other through God that makes them brothers. “Hold fast all together by the rope of God and be not divided. Remember the favour of God which He bestowed upon you when you were enemies and He guided your hearts in love, so that thereby, through His grace, you became as brothers. You were on the brink of a pit of fire and He saved you from it. Thus does God explain to you His Signs that you may be guided” (3:104).

The concept of human brotherhood in Islam

The concept of human brotherhood is emphasized by Islam through the abolition of all privilege based upon race, colour, family, rank, wealth, etc. The sole standard of honour and dignity set up by Islam is the purity and righteousness of a person’s life. “O mankind! We have created you from male and a female and made you tribes and nations for greater facility of intercourse. Truly, the most honourable among you in the sight of God is he who is the most righteous among you. Surely God is All-Knowing, All-Aware” (49:14).

The objective thus set before men and women for which they should strive is the perfection of goodness and beneficence. “Everyone has a goal to which he addresses himself, so vie with one another in good deeds” (2:149).

Thus Islam sets up a wholly beneficent standard of values and excludes all other measures and standards which are apt to complicate and to vitiate human relationships. It seeks to bring about a balance through adjustment and acceptance of life rather than through negation or rejection of life, its expressions and needs. It is only through achieving this “balance”, neither transgressing nor falling short of the measure set up by God, that life on earth can become beneficent in all its aspects and relationships: domestic, national, international.

“We sent Our Messengers with manifest signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance that men should conduct themselves with equity” (57:26).

“The heaven He has raised high and set up the measure so that you may keep the balance with equity and neither transgress nor fall short of the measure” (55:8-10).

Islam thus starts by regulating Muslim society upon a beneficent basis and adjusting it for carrying on international relations in beneficent co-operation with the rest of mankind, who are equally God’s creatures and servants, the whole constituting one universal brotherhood.

The attitude of Islam towards other faiths

When we seek to discover the attitude of a faith towards the establishment and regulation of international relations, the first question that presents itself is: What is its attitude towards other faiths and those who profess them and how does it propose to put its message across to mankind?

The Qur’an teaches that God has sent His Revelation to all peoples from time to time and that no section of mankind has been left without divine guidance. “We have sent thee with the Truth as a bearer of good news and a warner and there is not a people but a warner has gone among them. . . . Their messengers came to them with clear arguments, and with Scriptures and with the Illuminating Book” (35:25-26).

Indeed Islam goes further and requires belief in the truth and righteousness of all the prophets who have appeared from time to time for the guidance of mankind, and through this requirement it establishes in the minds of Muslims sentiments of honour and respect for the founders and the divinely inspired teachers of all faiths. “Say: We believe in God and in that which has been revealed to us, and in that which was revealed to Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob and the tribes, and in that which was given to Moses and to Jesus and in that which was given to all the prophets from their Lord; we do not make any distinction between any of them and to Him we submit” (2:137).

Islam is unique in laying the foundations of peaceful and friendly relations between the followers of all faiths by inculcating not only respect for but belief in the truth and righteousness of all prophets wherever and among whatever people they may have appeared. In fact Islam claims to be the culmination of divine Revelation, the “whole truth”, the revelation of which had been promised to mankind through earlier prophets.

This does not mean that Islam accepts the body of doctrine which different faiths today put forward as part of their belief and teaching. It is obvious that some of these doctrines and teachings are so much at variance with each other that they could not all be accepted as true. But Islam is unique in the sense that it brings about reconciliation between the followers of different faiths with regard to fundamentals and also establishes a basis of respect and honour between them. It also holds out to the followers of other faiths the hand of co-operation and friendship on a permanent basis. “Surely, those who have believed, and the Jews, and the Sabaeans, and the Christians, whose believes in God and the Last Day and acts righteously, on them shall come no fear nor shall they grieve” (5:70). And again, “Say, O people of the Book! Come to a word equal between us and you in that we worship none but God and that we associate no partners with Him and that some of us take not others for lords besides God” (3:65).

Islam teaches respect and tolerance for the beliefs and doctrines taught by other faiths even when they depart from its central doctrine of the unity of God

Islam bases itself uncompromisingly on the unity of God. Nevertheless, it teaches tolerance and respect for the beliefs and doctrines taught by other faiths even when they depart from the central doctrine of Islam. Indeed, this is carried so far that though idolatry is severely condemned, and is regarded as a degrading practice, abuse of idols and false gods is prohibited as likely to lead to recrimination and to engender ill-will. “Do not use harsh language towards those whom other people worship besides God lest in their ignorance they should indulge in abuse of God as retaliation. Each people is devoted to that which it holds sacred. All will ultimately return to God and He will make manifest to them (the evil of) what they practice” (6:109).

In the presentation of Islam recourse must be had only to reason and kindly, dignified exhortation and discussion. Muslims are directed to put forward the beneficence and excellence of Islamic teachings and to avoid getting into wrangles and recriminations concerning the doctrines and teachings of other faiths. What is needed and would be most effective is the exposition of the wisdom and philosophy underlying the teachings of Islam.

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
The Prophet was commanded, “Say: This is my way; I call to God on the basis of the certainty of knowledge—I and those who follow me” (12:109). And again, “Call to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and discuss with them on the basis of that which is best. Thy Lord knows best him who strays from His path, and He knows best those who are rightly guided” (16:126).

Islam then proceeds to proclaim and establish complete freedom of conscience, belief and worship. Again it is unique in this respect. It bases itself upon reason and observation, invites people to the consideration of its teachings through reason and reflection and forbids recourse to any compulsion or coercion.

“There shall be no compulsion in faith. Guidance has been made manifest from error” (2:257).

“The truth is from your Lord, so let him who wishes believe and let him who wishes disbelieve” (18:30).

“There have come to you clear proofs from your Lord, whoever will therefore see, it is for the good of his own soul, and whoever will disbelieve it shall be against himself” (6:105).

Islam exhorts Muslims to strive for peace and condemns everything that tends to create international tension

The history of mankind reveals many sad periods of religious strife, bigotry, persecution and conflict. The Muslims have not always acquitted themselves in their dealings with other peoples in accord with the teachings of Islam. Their conduct has often been regrettable, sometimes even reprehensible. These are, however, instances of their falling short of the standards laid down by Islam. There can be no manner of doubt that the teachings of Islam proclaim and insist upon complete freedom in matters of conscience and tolerance and respect for the beliefs of others, thus eliminating one of the principal causes of international misunderstanding and conflict.

But Islam does not stop there. It exhorts the Muslims to strive actively for peace. “O you who believe! Enter into complete peace and follow not the footsteps of Satan. Surely he is your open enemy” (2:209). There is severe condemnation of the conduct of one who “when he wields authority, strives to create disorder in the land and to destroy tillah and offspring. God loves not disorder” (2:206).

Everything that tends to create international tension or to disturb international relations is sought to be avoided and mischief has been stressed. For instance, Muslims are admonished not to put credence in rumours or news the source of which is open to doubt, for carelessness in this respect might occasion unpleasantness and create tension with another people. It is our common experience today that rumours which originate either in deliberate mischief or are the product of a too-active imagination sometimes lead to international incidents and even bring about grave crises in international relations. The Qur’ān warns the Muslims to be extremely careful in this respect. “O, you who believe! If news comes to you from an untrustworthy source, look carefully into it lest you do harm to a people in ignorance and then be sorry for what you did” (49:7).

At the same time the tendency to broadcast all manner of news, even those that may have the effect of disturbing people’s minds and agitating public opinion, is condemned. “When there comes to them a matter of security or of fear, they broadcast it; if they had referred it to the Prophet and to those in authority among them, those of them whose task it is to investigate would have discovered the truth of the matter. Were it not for the grace of God upon you and His mercy, you would certainly have gone astray, save a few” (4:84).

Islam’s guidance in the matter of diplomatic exchanges and negotiations

One of the factors that often contribute towards international misunderstanding and tension is the use of ambiguous and equivocal language in diplomatic exchanges and negotiations. The use of similar language in the text of treaties, agreements and conventions gives rise to controversies with regard to their meaning and construction and often leads States and Governments to suspect each other’s sincerity and integrity of purpose. The Qur’ān insists upon the use of straightforward language on all occasions, particularly in the matter of contracts, covenants, engagements and treaties, etc. “O you who believe, act righteously in the fear of God and always say the straightforward word; He will bless your actions with beneficence and will eliminate the consequences of your defaults” (33:71-72).

The Qur’ān on some factors that cause disturbance in the world

Another element which tends to arrest the smooth operation of international relations and to cause disturbance is conduct inconsistent with one’s undertakings, declared policies and professions. If those in authority in a State habitually go on proclaiming certain goals of policy and certain standards of conduct and constantly fall short of those standards in their dealings with other States, their conduct would raise doubts concerning their motives, and in the case of strong and powerful States, may occasion fear of their designs. The Qur’ān, therefore, emphasizes the necessity of complete conformity of conduct to professions and declarations. “O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not? Most displeasing is it in the sight of God that you should say and do not” (41:3).

The Muslims have been warned against indulgence in needless suspicion of other people’s motives and seeking to discover excuses for differences and disagreements. “O you who believe! Avoid indulgence in much suspicion, for surely, suspicion in certain cases may do much harm; and do not spy on nor backbite others” (49:13).

Arrogant behaviour by a stronger people or section towards a weaker people or section often becomes the cause of sectional or international tension and friction. This is condemned and prohibited. “O you who believe! Let not one people behave contumeliously towards another people. Perchance they may be better than themselves” (49:12).

Political domination of one people by another and economic exploitation by more advanced peoples and better-developed countries of backward peoples and under-developed countries have, as we have seen in recent centuries, been fruitful causes of the disturbance of international relations, and have set in motion strains and tensions which continue to divide different sections of mankind. Such domination and exploitation have been emphatically condemned in the Qur’ān. It is pointed out that God does not approve of the division of His creatures into sections for the purpose of domination of some by others and that wherever such an attempt is made, God’s purpose works for the uplift of those who are oppressed. In this connection, the instance of Pharaoh and his treatment of the people of Israel is cited as an example. “Now Pharaoh had exalted himself in the
land and had divided the people into sections, humiliating one party from among them. . . surely, he was one of those who created disturbance. We desired to show favour to those who had been weakened in the land and to uplift them and to make them prosperous and grant them power and authority” (28:5-7).

Economic exploitation of one people or country by another is also prohibited and it is pointed out that the economy which would prove most beneficient and enduring is that which is built up on the basis of the development of a people’s own resources and not on the exploitation of others. “Do not raise your eyes covetously towards that with which We have provided different people of the splendour of this world’s substance, that We may thereby try them. The sustenance bestowed upon thee by thy Lord is best and more abiding” (20:132).

The Qur’án on the sanctity of treaty obligations

When the Prophet of Islam and his small band of followers, who had been cruelly and mercilessly persecuted through a number of years in Mecca, were finally compelled to leave Mecca and migrate to Medina, the Quraish of Mecca started on a campaign of organizing opposition and hostility towards the Prophet and the Muslims throughout Arabia, and began to make military preparations to stamp out Islam by force. On the other hand, the Prophet had been chosen by the people of Medina, which included Muslim and non-Muslim Arabs and certain Jewish tribes, as their Chief Executive. This necessitated the settlement of a pact between the different elements in the population of Medina and the Prophet Muhammad which would be binding upon all sections of the commonwealth of Medina which was thereby set up. When the Prophet learnt that the Meccan opponents of Islam were actively canvassing support against the Muslims, he started a series of treaties and engagements with such tribes as were willing to enter into relations with him, the object being to keep inter-tribal peace and to enforce security. The Prophet illustrated, in the most difficult situations, by his example the Islamic teachings on the sanctity of treaties and engagements and on their complete and scrupulous fulfilment. The Qur’an is very emphatic on this subject. Islam insists upon the full observance of treaties by an Islamic State even where their strict observance should tend to operate to the prejudice of the Islamic State. This obligation extends not only to dealings with States who are in direct treaty relationship with the Islamic State but also to dealings with their allies. Even if it should be established that the other party to a treaty is determined upon its repudiation or breach, the Islamic State is not permitted to repudiate the treaty save after due notice, which should ensure that no prejudice or disadvantage would be occasioned to the other side through such repudiation. In other words, an Islamic State is not permitted to enter upon military preparations against another State with which it is in treaty relationship even when it is convinced of the bad faith or treacherous designs of that State, save after due notice that from a date specified the Islamic State will no longer be bound by the treaty on account of its actual or clearly intended contravention or breach by the other party. This is designed to ensure that time should be available for the removal of any misunderstanding that may have arisen or for a renewal of the treaty, if this should be feasible, and that in the last resort the other party should not be taken by surprise and should have as much time available to it as is available to the Islamic State for making security or other arrangements after it has become clear that the former no longer intends to adhere to the obligations undertaken by it. “Should you fear treachery on the part of a people, repudiate your treaty with them on terms of equality. Surely, God loves not those who act treacherously” (8:59).

A Muslim state must help Muslims who are subjected to religious persecution

It is one of the obligations of a Muslim State to go to the assistance of Muslims who are subjected to persecution on account of their faith. Even this obligation is, however, subject to the strict observance of existing treaties and engagements. “If they (i.e., those Muslims who are being persecuted on account of their faith) seek help from you in the matter of religion, it is your duty to help them, save against a people between whom and you there is a treaty. God sees all that you do” (8:73).

Islam regards war as abnormal and permits recourse to it only in exceptional cases, the principal occasion of recourse to war being the restraint of aggression. Should fighting be forced upon a Muslim State, its scope must be limited as far as possible and it should not be allowed to extend beyond unavoidable limits. In the language of the Qur’an, an attempt at starting fighting is an attempt to start a conflagration. The Qur’an says that whenever people bent upon mischief and disorder attempt to start the conflagration of war, God seeks to put it out. “Whenever they kindle the fire of war, God puts it out. They strive to make disorder in the land and God loves not those who create disorder” (5:65). This emphasizes that war is a destructive activity and that every effort must be made to limit it and to put an end to it as soon as possible.

The character of Islamic wars

Much has been said and written concerning the character of Islamic wars. It is not possible within the scope of this article to enter into a detailed discussion of the subject. It should suffice to go to the direct authority of the Qur’an for the purpose of defining the circumstances under which permission was given to the persecuted Muslims to take up arms in defence of the principle of freedom of conscience. The text is quite clear: “Permission to fight is given to those on whom war is made, because they are oppressed. Surely God is able to assist them — those who are driven from their homes without a just cause, save that they say: ‘Our Lord is God’. If God did not repel some people by others, cloisters, churches, synagogues and mosques, in which God’s name is much remembered, would be destroyed. God will certainly help those who help Him. Surely God is strong, Mighty — those who, if we establish them in the land, will keep up prayer, provide for the relief of poverty and distress and enjoin good and forbid evil. To God belongs the termination of all affairs.” (22:40-42).

Nothing could be clearer or more emphatic. Fighting is permitted against aggression entered upon for the purpose of destroying liberty of conscience and freedom of faith and worship. The Muslims are not permitted to enter upon aggressive war, or in the course of fighting, to adopt unduly aggressive measures. “Fight in the way of God those who fight against you, but do not commit aggression. Surely, God loves not aggressors” (2:191).

The Prophet Muhammad has stated expressly, “Never desire to meet the enemy in battle. Always pray God to give you security. Should you, however, be compelled to fight, then go through it with steadfastness” (The Bukhari).
Ethics of war in Islam

Islam does not permit the use of weapons or devices which are calculated to cause destruction on a wide scale, except by way of answer to their use by the enemy. It forbids the killing or capture, in the course of war, of non-combatants, ministers and teachers of religion, scholars devoted to the intellectual service of the community, women, children and old men; nor does it permit destruction of property or sources of wealth, for the sake of causing damage or injury to the enemy. Damage to property is permissible only where it becomes necessary for the direct prosecution of the war. In this connection the directions given by Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, to Osmaniah, who was commissioned to lead an army to the northern frontiers to stop a threatened invasion by the Byzantines, are clear and explicit: "Do not break your engagements nor commit any deception or treachery, nor dishonour the enemy dead. Do not kill children, old persons or women. Do not cut down date-palm or other fruit-bearing trees or burn them, nor slaughter cattle. You will come across people who have dedicated themselves to the service of religion, do not molest these nor interfere with things to which they have devoted themselves" (al-Kamil, Vol. II, p. 139).

The Prophet of Islam was particularly sensitive towards any injury being inflicted upon a woman in the course of fighting. He had laid down that in case of the death of or injury to a woman on the battlefield, it would be presumed that it had been caused without justification, unless there is clear proof that the woman had participated in actual fighting.

If in the course of war any of the enemy should seek shelter with the Muslims, he must be given shelter as he would, thus, have the opportunity of listening to divine revelation, but should he wish to return to his people, he must be conducted back to them in security. "If any one of the idolaters seek shelter with thee, give him shelter so that he may hear the word of God, then convey him to his place of safety. This is because they are a people who know not" (19:6). It would be difficult to match this provision in the laws of war of even the most civilized modern nations.

Islam does not permit the taking of prisoners of war save in consequence and in the course of a regular declared war

Islam seeks to establish peace. If war is forced upon the Muslims, they must fight courageously, bravely and with patience and perseverance. But the fighting should be strictly limited both in respect of territorial extent and in respect of the weapons employed, unless the enemy extends the area or the character of the conflict. Fighting must be carried on in a humane manner and as much courtesy should be extended to the enemy as is practicable during and is consistent with a state of war. Every effort must be made to bring the conflict to a speedy conclusion so that peaceful relations and conditions can be established as soon as possible.

If in the course of the fighting the enemy should propose a truce for the purpose of concluding peace, the Muslim State should be eager to avail itself of the opportunity to put an end to the fighting and should not, for the sake of pressing an advantage, decline a truce even if there should be reason to suppose that a truce is being sought by the other side for some ulterior purpose. "If the enemy should incline towards peace, incline thou also towards it and trust in God. Surely He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. Should the enemy intend to deceive thee, surely God is sufficient for thee. He it is Who straightened thee ( aforetime) with His help and with the believers" (8:62-63).

Islam does not permit the taking of prisoners of war, save in consequence and in the course of a regular declared war. The Qur'an utters a stern warning against attempts to kidnap people or to keep them as prisoners on superficial pretences, for instance, that they were engaged in a border raid or in a skirmish. Very often the object in such cases is to use such people for forced labour or to hold them to ransom. This is severely condemned and is forbidden (8:68-69).

Prisoners of war must be humanely treated and after the fighting is over, should either be exchanged or ransomed or allowed to work for their freedom or be released as an act of benevolence (24:34, 47:5).

While they are held as prisoners, they must be fed, clothed and maintained as average citizens. They should not be asked to perform work or labour which is too hard for them (The Bukhari).

The duty of Muslim states in case of hostilities breaking out between two Muslim states

Should hostilities break out between two Muslim States, it is the duty of other Muslim States to call upon the belligerents to stop fighting and to submit their differences to arbitration. Should one of them be unwilling to do so, they should all combine to compel it into submission. When arbitration is agreed upon, a just and fair settlement of the original dispute or difference should be made and enforced. Neutral States who intervene for the purpose of restoration of peace must not seek to derive any advantage for themselves out of differences of the two contending States (49:10).

These principles for the settlement of international disputes may well be adopted with advantage by all sovereign States. Experience shows that an unfair peace treaty, particularly if it seeks to embrace matters which have no connection with the original differences that led to hostilities and is designed as a retributive measure, often lays the foundations of fresh conflicts. The objective should be as laid down by the Qur'an that when fighting breaks out between two States, hostilities should be brought to a termination as soon as possible, even by compulsion or the use of force against the recalcitrant State, and that a settlement should be sought which is confined to the original causes which led to the fighting.

It is not possible to deal within the scope of an article with all aspects of international relations concerning which directions have been given by Islam. What is submitted above should, however, suffice to illustrate the spirit in which Islam seeks to regulate international relations in peace and war.

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TO OUR READERS AND PROSPECTIVE SUBSCRIBERS

As a result of increase in the cost of production, the yearly subscription rate of THE ISLAMIC REVIEW has been increased from 25/- to 30/- for 12 calendar months as from 1st July, 1956. The management feels confident that the readers of THE ISLAMIC REVIEW will continue to give it their valued support as heretofore.
Since my article "Jesus and St. Judas Thomas at Taxila" appeared in The Islamic Review for June 1956, I have received many letters from different quarters — some appreciative, some critical and some hostile. One friend brother of Jesus. For me it is enough that Acta Thomae says so and millions of Christians believe it to be a fact. Why should Judas, not Iscariot, be called Thomas or Didymous, both of which literally mean a twin? It is too late now to question this fact. I would, however, like to mention that Professor L. Salvatorelli in his remarkable work, Il Significato di Nazareno, on this and other factors opined that the Promised Messiah, if he comes, must be a twin and also called Nazir. I refrain from making any comments.

During this visit to Taxila I came across certain other remarkable facts. The statues to which I had referred in my last article had been excavated from a monastery named after an adjoining village called Julian. I asked various archaeologists of repute to explain the origin of this name, but none was able to give an answer. I pointed out that it was not an Indian name and it might have been named after Julian of Nisibis (Iraq), who, according to a recorded tradition, had accompanied St. Judas Thomas to Taxila. They could not deny the possibility.

I also came across an inscription in the Taxila Museum which had been excavated from Sirkap, Taxila. It is broken, mutilated and incomplete. According to Sir John Marshall, it belonged to the first century of the Christian Era, and formed part of a document in Aramaic preserved in the Taxila Museum. It dates from the first century C.E.

No attempt has so far been made to explain its presence at Taxila in the first century C.E.

an octagonal memorial pillar of white marble, built into one of the walls of a house in "Block F". The inscription engraved on this pillar is in Aramaic, a dialect of Hebrew, which Jesus and his disciples spoke. The existence of this inscription in Aramaic is of peculiar significance. But for the presence of Jesus and St. Thomas Judas at Taxila it cannot be explained on any other hypothesis. No attempt has so far been made to explain it, though soon after its discovery efforts were made to translate it. Transcriptions of the record were published by Dr. L. D. Barnett and Professor A. Cowley in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* and since then it has received attention from various other Western writers. The notes of the late F. C. Andreas, published by Dr. W. H. Winkler, created further confusion. The incompleteness and mutilation of the inscription coupled with their preconceived ideas and lack of knowledge of the real background has made confusion more confounded. They say that the inscription refers to a high official named Romadota and that it also mentions two other names, Naggardu and Priyadarsia. The rest of the translation is imaginative and, therefore, meaningless. They could not, I repeat, for lack of proper knowledge, appreciate that these three words might have been descriptive and not proper names. They could not avail themselves of the *Rohnuma* of Taxila by the Maulavi Muhammad Hamid Quraishi, Assistant Superintendent, Archaeological Survey of India, in which he mentions that the inscription referred to the construction of a Palace (Mahal) of Deodar and Ivory at Taxila. The Western scholars have also overlooked the fact that Naggardu literally means in Aramaic *carpentry.*

Romadota is really Rudrada (a son-god) and Priyadarsia stands for Peridesia (a foreigner). As admitted by Sir John Marshall, the Western scholar went on mere possibilities. They also ignored the fact that any pious and holy man in India in those days was invariably styled as a son-god or as a son of one of the other gods.

But if we put these facts together in their true perspective we are forced to look for and trace a foreigner in Taxila who was a carpenter, who was engaged in the construction of a palace at Taxila, and who was associated with a pious and holy man who could be styled as Rudrada (a son-god). St. Judas Thomas was, in fact, a foreigner, a carpenter, son of a carpenter, he did build a palace at Taxila, and was at Taxila with Jesus, a prophet of God.

I may also mention that M. Sylvan Levi mentions another remarkable fact in his notes which were translated by Mr. W. H. Phillipps and published in the *Indian Antiquary* in 1903. His *Supplementary Notes* also appeared in it in 1904. He says that Vasudeva of Kashmir, a contemporary of Gondaphares, was mentioned, in a slightly different form, in *Acta Thomas,* and that he had come in contact with St. Judas Thomas in Kashmir. This lends support to *Ikmal al-Din* and *‘Ain al-Hayat,* two very ancient Arabic books, which speak of the presence of the twin brother of Jesus in Srinagar at the time of the death of Jesus.

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**BAIRAM FESTIVAL IN PEKING’S OLDEST MOSQUE**

**Muslims under the Socialist régime in China**

By CHI YEN-LANG

I had an appointment with an old Peking Muslim to join him in the Bairam Festival, which marked the end of the fasting month of Ramadhan. It is a gaily celebrated annual event by all the Muslims in the city. My friend’s name is Muhammad Ibrahim Ma Ching-ju.

"If we don’t see the moon at 20:00 hours today, the festival will be put off until the next day," he added.

At 21:00 he telephoned that the festival was postponed because people who were sent to Chingshan, the highest hill in the city, saw only a moonless sky.

Incidentally, the festival fell on Sunday 19th May 1956. Early in the morning Ma and I went over the Niu Chich (street), a Muslim centre in the south-western part of the city where over 10,000 Muslims of the Hui nationality live.

Peking’s 960-year-old mosque, the oldest of eighty in the city, is located in this district. The building was in great disrepair through hundreds of years of neglect until it was repaired and restored to its original beauty and splendour last year.

We met some old Muslims in the mosque, most of whom were in their seventies or eighties. They said that they were very proud of the government’s efforts in repairing their time-worn and weatherbeaten mosque.
Women and children in their best dresses filled the mosque’s courtyard and corridors to the full. In the sanctuary over 1,600 white-capped worshippers, with burning incense in their hands, knelt on the mat-covered floor. The big newly-painted pillars which support the hall still look very solid in spite of the lapse of time. The hall can hold some 1,000 worshippers at a time.

In addition to Huis, Muslims of six nationalities in the city attended the service that day. They included students of the Institute of Islamic Theology and the Central Institute of Nationalities. Two Egyptian professors, Mr. Muhammad Muhammad ‘Abd al-Latif and Dr. Bahai al-Din Zayan, of the Institute of Islamic Theology, were also among the worshippers.

Part of the service was conducted in Arabic, especially in the reading of the Qur’an.

After the service, celebrations for the rest of the day were on. These included a round of visits to each other and exchanges of gifts of fried cakes, which were especially made and eaten on the occasion.

Our interview with the Imam of the Mosque was to be held after the service. As we still had time for a little sightseeing, we went to see the tombs of two Arab shaykhs who preached in this very mosque some 700 years ago. The two travelling Arab religious figures came to China from Arabia by sea and landed at Canton, which then carried on a flourishing trade with that part of the world. The tombs were located in a separate lot a little to the south of the minaret built in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644 C.E.).

In the interview given us in his cosy little room to the north of the minaret, Nur Muhammad Yang Teh-liang, the 62-year-old Imam, said that for thirty-seven years he had been Akhun (Imam) in the city’s various mosques. He is now a deputy to the Peking People’s Congress, the city’s supreme organ. In spite of his age, he is still in good health.

Stroking his spare goatee now and then to punctuate his answers, he said: “What impressed me most is that I was elected by both the Muslim and non-Muslim Chinese in my constituency. Before liberation racial hatred and social ostracism would never have allowed non-Muslims to elect a Muslim delegate.”

Yang was quite happy when he talked about the great changes that have taken place in Niu Chieh in the last few years. “There was no bus before. Now we have one. There was no hospital. Now we have that, too. Many new buildings have changed the face of our district.

“And even more significant than all this is the changed life of the people,” he added. “In my constituency, as well as in other parts of the city, the living standards of the Muslims have steadily improved. From 1951 to 1954, for instance, over 10,000 Muslims found work through the help of the city authorities. The forthcoming wage increases throughout the country, I’m sure, will still better their life, especially the wage-earning Hui workers and employees.”

Asked about his own life, Yang said that he has a large family of seventeen members. He has two sons. The eldest, who is 36 years old now, is a civil engineer. His younger 22-year-old son studies in the Institute of Islamic Theology. Besides conducting the service, preaching and teaching the students in his mosque, the Huis in this district often send for him to preside over weddings and funerals.

When at last I asked how he felt about his country engaged in Socialist construction, the Imam said: “As a Muslim I myself feel extremely fortunate and happy. Religious belief is free, as provided in the Constitution. And since our country has gone into Socialist construction, every citizen is able to lead a happier life than before. That is our blessing today. In Socialist construction we are all doing good and working for peace, which have always been the aims of Islam. For that we shall be rewarded after our death. That is our blessing tomorrow. Now we have a combination of the two blessings.

The Muslims of Peking, China, at prayers on the occasion of ‘Id al-Fitr, 1956

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14
A view of the city of Medina with the Five Minarets of the Prophet's Mosque. In the background on the right-hand side can be seen the "Green Dome" of the Mausoleum of the Prophet Muhammad which also contains the grave of the Caliph 'Umar, whose remains were laid to rest by the side of the Prophet Muhammad

THE STATE LETTERS*

OF

CALIPH 'UMAR (634-644 C.E.)

By Dr. Khurshid Ahmad Fariq

IV

41. To Abu 'Ubaydah Ibn Jarrah

"I understand that Muslim women go to the public baths with Christian and Jewish women. You should intervene and stop this practice" (Izalat al-Khafa', 2/111).

42. To Abu 'Ubaydah Ibn Jarrah.

In 18 A.H. (639 C.E.) (according to Ibn Ishaq, and 17 A.H. (638 C.E.) according to Sayf) parts of 'Syria were visited by a calamitous plague. It took an exceptionally heavy toll of the Muslims stationed in the Urudun region. Abu 'Ubaydah did not move to a safe place as he thought that it ill became the Muslims to fly away from the inevitable. Our reporter, Ibn Ishaq, says that 'Umar wrote the following letter to take Abu 'Ubaydah out of danger.

"Peace be on you. I want to consult you on an important matter and want you to be here. I urge you to leave immediately on receiving my letter" (Tabari 4/201, also with certain variations in Kanju al-'Ummal of Muttaqi Burhanpuri, Hyderabad, India, 2/324, on the authority of Tariq Ibn Shihab).

43. To Abu 'Ubaydah Ibn Jarrah

Abu 'Ubaydah discerned the purpose of the Caliph. He felt that it was very dishonourable for him to leave the army and himself retire to safety. So he requested the Caliph to exonerate him from the obligation of coming. "I am in the midst of the army," he wrote, "and am loath to get away from them. I wish to be with them until the hand of death separates us." The Caliph's eyes were filled with tears as he read the letter of the Commander-in-Chief. The people around him asked whether Abu 'Ubaydah had died. He said,

"No, but one may well regard him as dead." He addressed this letter to him:

"Peace be on you! You have stationed the Muslims in a low-lying terrain. I should like you to leave it and occupy a healthy and elevated place."

44. Another version, Kanz al-'Ummal 2/324, on the authority of Tariq Ibn Shihab.

"Urudun is a low-lying region in the grip of plague, while Jabiya is a pleasant and healthy town. You should leave Urudun and camp at Jabiya."

45. To Abu 'Ubaydah Ibn Jarrah

The following letter is taken from the Futuh of Waqidi. Like Azzi and Baladhuri, the author of this book places the victory of Qaysariyyah in 19 A.H. (640 C.E.), but unlike the other two he says that Qaysariyyah and Egypt (most probably Fustat) were conquered by 'Amr Ibn 'As in the lifetime and under the Supreme Command of Abu 'Ubaydah.

In other words, according to him Abu 'Ubaydah must have been alive till the year 20, when in the opinion of most historians, Egypt is said to have been conquered. As far as I know, the only early historian to assign the conquest of Egypt to the lifetime of Abu 'Ubaydah is Sayf, but he places the conquest in 16 A.H. (637 C.E.) and not 20 A.H. (640 C.E.).

As for the context of this letter it is said in the Futuh that the envoy of the Commander-in-Chief who brought the tidings of the great victory was clad in silken robes taken from the Roman spoils. The Caliph disliked ostentation and luxury. He at once objected to the dress of the envoy. He had already had evidence of the slackening of the religious earnestness among many Arabs and their drift to luxury.

* The third article in this series appeared in The Islamic Review for May 1956.

JULY 1956
“In the name of God, the most Kind and Merciful.
From 'Umar Ibn Khattab to Abu 'Ubaydah Ibn Jarrah. I praise God, besides whom none else is fit for worship, and invoke His blessings on His Messenger Muhammad.

“I am glad to know that God has conferred a great victory and the treasures of the Roman Emperor on the Muslims, as promised by our Messenger. I am sure that you will soon get the treasures of the Persian kings also. I offer my thanks to God. I learn that the Bedouin Arabs are getting enamoured of the world and its pleasures. The world has spread out its net before them. Worldly delusions are powerfully attracting them and they have turned their eyes from the delights of Paradise. They walk boastfully in clothes of silk and satins and have taken to sweets and bread of wheat. These things have made them unmindful of the hereafter. Ibn Jarrah! I also learn that they have begun to disregard the prayers and have given up the prescribed ones. You must send cavalry to punish them. Don’t let them have their own way, but take stern action or you will come to grief at their hands. If anyone does not perform the duties prescribed by God, inflict on him the punishment fixed by law.

“You should bear in mind that you are a ruler and that every ruler is responsible to God for the conduct of his subjects. God says: ‘If we establish them (in power) on earth, they will offer prayers, pay Zakat, and will enjoin good acts and forbid from bad ones.’ The Messenger has styled you Amin al-Ummah (the Trustee of the Nation) and you must justify this title. If, therefore, you find any Muslim giving up the prayers, do punish him well. We would be busy conversing with the Messenger, but as soon as the prayers would be announced, we would at once give up talking and devote ourselves so thoroughly to the prayers that we forgot one another. The Messenger is said to have observed: ‘God the Exalted and Great says that the mosques are my abodes on earth and those who worship there are my visitors, and blessed indeed is a man who visits Me after having cleaned himself well at his house and that it is up to the master of the house to honour such a visitor.’ The Messenger has also said: ‘All duties imposed by God on me are binding until lifetime except the prayers which I must offer even in Heaven.’

“Ask 'Amr Ibn 'As to make an advance on Egypt. He should have due regard for 'Amir Ibn Rabi'ah ‘Amiri and other senior Companions and should benefit by their advice. You should also send an army, if you can afford, to the lands of Rabi'ah and Judd Ibn Sahh. I pray God to bless you with His help. Peace and mercy and the blessings of God be on you” (Waqidi, Cairo, 2/21).

47. To Abu 'Ubaydah Ibn Jarrah

A’tham Kufi has also cited a letter of ‘Umar said to be in reply to the one announcing the victory of Qaysariyyah. But here, the writer is Yazid and not Abu ‘Ubaydah, and its contents differ entirely from those embodied in the letter from Waqidi just mentioned.

“I have received your letter and learnt about the agreement concluded with the people of Qaysariyyah. I thank the Exalted and Mighty God for this victory and for the successful conclusion of your last campaign in Syria. I am also grateful to Him for relieving us of anxiety (over the long and hard siege), for providing the Muslims with better means of living, for humbling our foe, and for helping you to realize your aspirations. You also join with me in thanking the Glorious God for all this kindness; for by doing so, you will deserve more favours and ensure stability of your prosperity.

His favours, however, are so many that one cannot count them. Peace and mercy of God be on you” (A’tham, p. 55).

46. To Abu ‘Ubaydah Ibn Jarrah

According to the Futuh of Waqidi when the conquest of Sham (Syria including Palestine and Jordan) and Misk (Egypt) was completed, the Caliph addressed the following letter to Abu ‘Ubaydah, who had supervised the operations in both the lands:

“In the name of God, the most Kind and Merciful.

From 'Umar, Commander of the Faithful, to Abu 'Ubaydah Ibn 'Amir Jarrah.

Peace be on you! I praise God, besides whom none else is fit for worship, and invoke His blessing on His Messenger, Muhammad.

“You have done your best to destroy the disbelievers and please the most powerful God. I am sure your meritorious services will entitle you to a good reward on the Day of Judgment. We have never found you remiss in the discharge of your duties. You have followed with sincerity and devotion the Sunnah (practice) of the Messenger and have spared no effort in the cause of Islam. May God accept your and our endeavours and may He forgive your and our faults.

Now (that Syria and Egypt have been subjugated) you should despatch a force under 'Iyad Ibn Ghann to the country of the tribes Rabi'ah and Bakr (Mesopotamia). I hope that God, the Exalted and Glorious, will make him conquer that land. I urge him to fear God, do his utmost to please Him and wage war with determination. He should
follow the example of the truly faithful and sincere warriors and carry out the order which God gave to the Chief of the Messengers: ‘O Messenger, wage war with the disbelievers and the hypocrites. Peace and mercy and blessings of God be on you and all the Muslims’ (The Futuh of Waqidi, Cairo, 2/57).

48. To Yazid Ibn Abu Sufyan

Over twenty-five thousand Muslims lost their lives in the plague of ‘Amawas which broke out in 18 A.H. (638 C.E.) (17 A.H. (637 C.E.) according to Sayf). Among its victims were the Commander-in-Chief and many other noted Companions. Before his death Abu ‘Ubaydah entrusted his charge to his dear friend Mu‘adh Ibn Jabal. Some days later, Mu‘adh also succumbed to the raging pestilence and appointed ‘Amr Ibn ‘As to succeed him. ‘Umar wanted ‘Amr elsewhere and so he gave the supreme command to Yazid Ibn Abu Sufyan. Yazid possessed admirable qualities. Azdi in his Futuh says: "Yazid was intelligent, forebearing, kind, courteous, peace-loving and popular."

"I have appointed you Supreme Commander of the Syrian forces. I have informed them about your appointment and asked them to co-operate with you and obey your command. You should march to Qaysariyyah and lay siege to it. The conquest of Syria cannot be complete until this city is conquered. The Greek Emperor will continue to create trouble as long as he is assured of following and support in Syria. The conquest of Qaysariyyah will strike the last blow to his hopes in that land. I hope that God, the Exalted and Mighty, will graciously extend His help to acquire this city" (Azdi, pp. 250-252).

50. To Mu‘awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan

Conflicting dates have been advanced by the annalists with regard to the conquest of Qaysariyyah (Cesarea). Abu Ma’shar and Waqidi assign it to 19 A.H. (640 C.E.), Ibn Ishaq to 20 A.H. (640 C.E.) and Sayf to 15 A.H. (636 C.E.). Azdi and Baladhuri are in favour of the year 19 A.H. (639 C.E.), that is to say, the year following the death of Abu ‘Ubaydah when Yazid was Commander-in-Chief. According to Azdi, Yazid laid siege to Qaysariyyah under orders from ‘Umar (vide letter 48). This heavily fortified city offered fierce resistance for several months. Yazid was compelled for shortage of fodder to go back to his headquarters, Dimashq, with the greater part of his cavalry. He left his brother Mu‘awiyah in charge of the siege, and the latter with intensified efforts succeeded in forcing the great citadel to capitulate. This view of Azdi is endorsed by several other historians. Sayf, however, takes a different line, as is his wont, and says that ‘Umar gave Mu‘awiyah direct orders to conquer Qaysariyyah.

"I have appointed you to conquer Qaysariyyah. March to it, praying God to help you in your mission. Let these words of the Holy Book be frequently on your tongue — La Haula Wa la Quwwata Illa Billah — Man has no power to do anything but with the help of God. He is our Lord and sustainer. In Him we put our trust, to Him we direct our hopes. He is our guardian, and a very powerful guardian and helper He is indeed" (Sayf, Tabari, 4/156).

51. To ‘Iyad Ibn Ghannam

There is a sharp difference of opinion among early annalists with regard to (a) the year of the conquest of the Jazirah, (b) the details of the military operations there, and (c) the commanders who conquered it. Placing the conquest in the year 17, Sayf Ibn ‘Umar says that the princes of the Jazirah, alarmed at the penetration of the Arabs into Syria as far north as the banks of the Euphrates, entered into a military alliance with the Romans and marched against Hims, the headquarters of Abu ‘Ubaydah. They also seized a number of routes by which his lieutenants from their respective zones could help him. Unable to fight in the open, Abu ‘Ubaydah took shelter in the citadel of Hims and sent for immediate help from Medina. The Caliph gave Sa‘d, the Governor of Iraq, urgent orders to rush 4,000 cavalry to Hims and send another force to subjugate the Jazirah. When the princes of the Jazirah, now concentrating on Hims along with their Roman allies, learnt about the invasion of their country by the Muslims, they hastily withdrew to guard their heartths and homes. ‘Iyad and his three generals besieged the chief Mesopotamian cities. Soon the princes sued for terms and the whole province came under Muslim domination.

According to Ibn Ishaq, the Jazirah was conquered in 19 A.H. (640 C.E.). It is held by him that when the conquest of Syria and Iraq was completed in 19 A.H. (640 C.E.) the Caliph asked Sa‘d to send an army to the Jazirah and that the latter sent one under the command of several officers with ‘Iyad Ibn Ghannam as the Commander-in-Chief.

According to some other narrators ‘Iyad was entrusted with the conquest of the Jazirah by Abu ‘Ubaydah some months prior to his death. Another view is that Abu ‘Ubaydah on his deathbed appointed ‘Iyad to succeed him, that Umar, relieving ‘Iyad of the Supreme Command soon after, gave him charge of the districts of Qinnasrin and Hims, bidding him at the same time make an advance on the Jazirah and that ‘Iyad entered that land in Sha‘ban 18 A.H. (639 C.E.).

The unnamed reporters of the Futuh of A’tham, however, differ from all that has been mentioned and hold that after or about the death of Abu ‘Ubaydah great military preparations were made by the Romans in collaboration with the princes of the Jazirah to overthrow the Arab regime in Syria and that news of an impending attack was brought to the Caliph following the fall of Qaysariyyah, and that to meet this threat he appointed ‘Iyad Ibn Ghannam, a modest and straightforward Muslim and a close associate of the late Commander-in-Chief, to cross into the Jazirah. The following letter is based on this background:
“From ‘Umar, Commander of the Faithful, to ‘Iyad Ibn Ghann. Peace be on you! I have always found you keenly devoted to the interests and problems of the Muslims. Like your predecessors you have always urged them to live righteously and fear and obey God. I take this opportunity of rejoicing with you by my fervent belief that a worthy reward awaits you in the hereafter and good reputation shall adorn your name in this. I am quite sure that with the fine qualities of your character you shall be blessed with success in both the worlds and will leave behind an enviable reputation.

“I hope that you are aware that the Romans have massed large forces in the Jazirah to use against us. I want to send an army to disperse them under a Commander who must be God-fearing, shrewd, brave and a real warrior. I personally considered this matter and also consulted my advisers, and our unanimous choice fell upon you. We felt that none else could be able to carry out this campaign more efficiently than you. On receiving my letter, take as many troops from ‘Iyad Ibn Abu Sufyan as are needed by you for your purpose and set out in right earnest to the Jazirah. Taqwa (fear of God) should be your guiding principle. You must not displease the All-Knowing Being who is aware of your acts and thoughts equally well. In solving your problems you should turn to the Book of God and the practices of the Messenger and his first successor, Abu Bakr. Let not the large numbers of their army and the small numbers of your own upset you. In the past small forces of the Muslims have overpowered large armies of the disbelievers. You must be aware that the Messenger of God had prophesied on the occasion of the battle of Khaadq that God would enable us before long to conquer the empires of the Kisra (the Chosroes) and the Roman Emperor and bestow on us their wealth. ‘Iyad, you have seen that God has fulfilled the prophecy of His Messenger and brought the realms of the Kisra and the Qaysar (the Caesar) under our control. The armies of the disbelievers have been defeated and captured and everyone has recognized our sovereignty and agreed to pay the Jizyah. Heraclius, the leader of the disbelievers, has fled in panic to Constantinople. We should, however, remember well that all that we have acquired is due to the graciousness of the Exalted God and that it is our duty to be grateful to Him. ‘That is the favour of God. He confers His favour on whomsoever he likes’ (The Qur’an).

“I have asked ‘Iyad Ibn Abu Sufyan to give you as much army as you may require to deal with the enemy. With this force and under the blessings of God cross into the Jazirah and set about your task.” (Atham, p. 54).

52-53. To ‘Iyad Ibn Ghann

The first Muslim gain on the entry of ‘Iyad into the Jazirah was the important city of Raqqa, which capitulated on stipulated terms. The next objective of ‘Iyad was the capital of the land, Ruha, which after a feeble resistance surrendered on terms corresponding to those of Raqqa. ‘Iyad had not yet embarked on the next enterprise when 2,000 cavalry under Busr Ibn Abi Artat (a Companion) joined him as reinforcements from Syria. Busr asked ‘Iyad for a share of the spoils got in the first two campaigns, but the latter refused on the ground that the two cities had been conquered exclusively by his troops without any help from Busr’s cavalry. Busr did not like this attitude and some angry words were exchanged between the two. To prevent any untoward development in the rank and file of the army, he told Busr that he did not want his help and that he (Busr) should either go back to Syria or stay where he was. Busr went back to Syria and complained to ‘Iyad of the unkind treatment of ‘Iyad. ‘Iyad referred the matter to the Caliph and the latter addressed the following letter to ‘Iyad to get acquainted with the real situation.

“‘Iyad Ibn Abu Sufyan had sent an army under the command of Busr Ibn Abi Artat as a reinforcement to you. It has been brought to my notice that you have sent back that force. It was sent to help you, to add to your strength, to deter your enemy and force him to speedily surrender by showing that reinforcements were pouring in to you. I am unable to understand your action. On receiving my letter let me know what has prompted you to act in this way.”

‘Iyad in reply said: “Both Raqqa and Ruha had been acquired before the arrival of Busr and the booty had already been distributed. When Busr asked a share for his troops, I told him that as the two towns had been conquered prior to his coming and without his help he had no right to a share, that he would be given his due when we got booty with his help. This enraged Busr. I feared lest he might become hostile to me or cause a rift in the army, thereby encouraging the enemy and retarding our own progress, so I requested him to go back. Moreover, I did not need his help.”

This explanation set at rest the suspicions of the Caliph. He appreciated the wisdom of ‘Iyad and wrote him the following letter:

“I am in receipt of your letter which sets forth your plea for sending back Busr. I am satisfied that your action was sound. May God, the Exalted, give you a good reward for your services to Islam and the Muslims. I pray God that I may be able to keep you in office as long as I am alive. When I die, I shall recommend to my successor to keep you in office as long as you are alive. Be happy and carry out the Jihad to the best of your ability” (Atham, p. 56).

54. To ‘Iyad Ibn Ghann

“In the name of God the most Kind and Merciful. Peace be on you. I thank God the Mighty for enabling the Muslims to subjugate the province of the Jazirah, and for making them prosperous after dire want. Now I have no fear of their poverty, but do fear that they may become vain by the abundance of wealth and be destroyed. ‘Iyad, you have done very well, have spared no endeavours to liberate the Jazirah and have left there a praiseworthy legacy. May God reward you in a fitting manner for your services to Islam and the Muslims.

“On receipt of this letter, you should appoint one of your senior commanders, trusted in his word and deed, as your successor and go back to Syria. ‘Iyad Ibn Abu Sufyan (the Commander-in-Chief) is ill and if he were to die before you take over from him, Syria might be lost and the affairs of the Muslims thrown into disorder. You should, therefore, hurry to Syria” (Atham, p. 60).

55. To Mua’wiyyah Ibn Abu Sufyan

On his way to Dimashq to take over from ‘Iyad, ‘Iyad made a short halt at his headquarters, Hims. Here he fell ill and passed away after a few days. ‘Iyad had already been ill and he also died some days after ‘Iyad. His death is placed by Baladhuri towards the end of the year 18 A.H. (639 C.E.).

Mua’wiyyah, the brother of ‘Iyad, had been on the Syrian front from the very beginning. By his industry and good common sense he had been able to make rapid progress. At the time of ‘Iyad’s death he was master of the great sea
fortress, Qaysariyyah. Impressed by his able record as an army commander, 'Umar entrusted to him the charge of the Syrian forces. As Commander-in-Chief he conquered several coastal towns still in Roman possession.

"God has made Islam sovereign, debased the disbelievers and thus fulfilled His promise. Also the prophecy of the Messenger that Syria and other lands will be conquered by them and the treasures of the despots will come under their possession has come true. Of special significance is our latest gain, Qaysariyyah, famous in Syria for its strong fortifications and regarded by the Romans as impregnable. You should now undertake an advance on Ghazzah and 'Asqalan (coastal towns). The Messenger has said: 'You will make conquests in Syria and I rejoice with you in the tidings of the conquest of two bridges, Ghazzah and 'Asqalan.' He has also said: 'Before long a section of my followers will settle on the shores of the sea and I recommend to you 'Asqalan. When disorders break out in the East and West and it is difficult to live in the towns and villages, then you should go to live at 'Asqalan. Every place has an agreeable spot, and the agreeable spot of Syria is 'Asqalan.'

"On the receipt of my letter you should march without delay to 'Asqalan and try hard to liberate it and the surrounding country. I hope that God would enable you to conquer that district. When you reach 'Asqalan do keep me informed about the day-to-day happenings there" (A'tham, p. 61).

57. To Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan

This letter is found in a number of books with textual variations. Some writers say that it was addressed to Abu 'Ubaydah. Jahiz in his al-Bayan wa al-Tabyin and Ibn 'Abdi Rabbihi in his al-'Iqd al-Farid are among those who think it was written to Mu'awiyah.

"I write you a letter in which I shall try my best to see that you and I act in accordance with the dictates of justice. If you adhere to the five principles enunciated below, you shall keep your faith unharmed and deserve the best divine favour.

(a) If a suit is brought to you, you should demand of the plaintiff two trustworthy witnesses and of the defendant an unequivocal oath.

(b) Be kind to the wronged that he may be encouraged to state his complaint fearlessly.

(c) Pay due regard to a stranger who has come over a long distance to lay his grievance before you: for if you are indifferent to him or detain him for long, he would feel frustrated and go back home abandoning his claim, and none but you will be responsible for the harm done to him.

(d) Do not discriminate between the plaintiff and the defendant.

(e) If you fail to arrive at an appropriate decision in a case, try to bring about a reconciliation between the contending parties. Peace be on you." (Bayan of Jahiz, Cairo 1932/2/75; Abu Yusuf, Cairo, p. 117; Ibn Iauzi, History of 'Umar, Cairo, p. 132: Izalat al-Khaifa, 2/119 and 180, al-'Iqd al-Farid, Cairo, 1913, 1/45).
THE KA‘BAH

A description of the Ka‘bah in the words of Richard Burton

"The Kaabah stands in an oblong square (enclosed by a great wall) 250 paces long, and 200 broad, none of the sides of which runs quite in a straight line, though at first sight the whole appears to be of a regular shape. This open square is enclosed on the eastern side by a colonnade. The pillars stand in a quadruple row; they are three deep on the other sides, and are united by pointed arches, every four of which support a small dome plastered and whitened on the outside...

"Some parts of the walls and arches are gaudily painted in stripes of yellow, red and blue, as are also the minarets. Paintings of flowers, in the usual Muselman style, are nowhere seen; the floors of the colonnades are paved with large stones badly cemented together.

"Some paved causeways lead from the colonnades towards the Kaabah, or Holy House, in the centre. They are of sufficient breadth to admit four or five persons to walk abreast, and they are elevated about nine inches above the ground. Between these causeways, which are covered with fine gravel or sand, grass appears growing in several places, produced by the Zem Zem water oozing out of the jars which are placed in the ground in long rows during the day. There is a descent of eight or ten steps from the gates on the north side into the platform of the colonnade, and of three or four steps from the gates on the south side.

"Towards the middle of this area stands the Kaabah; it is 115 paces from the north colonnade, and 88 from the south. For this want of symmetry we may readily account, the Kaabah having existed prior to the Mosque, which was built around it, and enlarged at different periods. The Kaabah is an oblong massive structure, 18 paces in length, 14 in breadth, and from 35 to 40 feet in height. It is constructed of the grey Mekka stone, in large blocks of different sizes joined together, in a very rough manner, with bad cement. It was entirely rebuilt, as it now stands, in A.D. 1627...

"The Kaabah stands upon a base two feet in height, which presents a sharp inclined plane. Its roof being flat, it has at a distance the appearance of a perfect cube. The only door which affords entrance, and which is opened but two or three times in the year, is on the north side and about seven feet above the ground. In the first periods of Islam, however, when it was rebuilt in A.H. 64 by Ibn Zebyr (Zubayr) chief of Mecca, it had two doors even with the ground floor of the Mosque. The present door (which, according to Azrak, was brought hither from Constantinople in A.D. 1633), is wholly coated with silver, and has several gilt ornaments; upon its threshold are placed every night various small lighted wax candles, and perfuming pans, filled with musk, aloeswood, etc.

"At the north-east corner of the Kaabah, near the door, is the famous 'Black Stone'; it forms a part of the sharp angle of the building, at four or five feet above the ground. It is an irregular oval, about seven inches in diameter, with an undulating surface, composed of about a dozen smaller stones of different sizes and shapes, well joined together with a small quantity of cement, and perfectly well smoothed: it looks as if the whole had been broken into many pieces by a violent blow, and then united again. It is very difficult to determine accurately the quality of this stone, which has been worn to its present surface by the million touches and kisses it has received. It appeared to me like a lava, containing several small extraneous particles of a whitish and of a yellowish substance. Its colour is now a deep reddish brown, approaching to black. It is surrounded on all sides by a border composed of a substance which I took to be a close cement of pitch and gravel of a similar, but not quite the same brownish colour. This border serves to support its detached pieces; it is two or three inches in breadth, and rises a little above the surface of the stone. Both the border and the stone itself are encircled by a silver band, broader below than above, and on the two sides, with a considerable swelling below, as if a part of the stone were hidden under it. The lower part of the border is studded with silver nails."

British Non-Muslims at Mecca as "THE HOUSE OF GOD"

"Abdul Wahid and I therefore went together, duly performing our ablutions before starting. Twenty minutes' walk brought us to the gate of the Haram, and passing through we found ourselves at last in the great square that encloses the little group of buildings we had come to see. Before our eyes was the Kaaba, its black covering almost startling in its contrast with the dazzling white of the sunlit marble pavement. From it our awe-struck gaze travelled in turn to the plain masonry dome that covers Zemzem's holy well, to the strange objects that mark the "makams" of Mohammed, Abraham and Ishmael*, and the curious stone hut of the Shafei sect; and then passed onwards to lose itself in the twilight of the surrounding colonnade.

"The outstanding impression left by the whole scene is that of the unusual. It is not beautiful, it could not fairly be called majestic, but it awes one by its strangeness. One feels instinctively that one is looking on something unique: that there can be nothing else in the world the least like it. Whether the genius loci resides in the edifices themselves or in the setting, or whether it is auto-suggested by the tremendous belief concerning the small square building in the middle (Moslems interpret the expression "house of God" in its most literal significance. Many Mohammedans fear to look upwards near the Kaaba on the day of the Haj. By some the flapping of its curtain is thought to be caused by the wings of angels), I cannot decide, but it is there. Be the explanation what it may, the effect is almost uncanny. Few pilgrims gaze on the scene for the first time unmoved: the most reckless are awed into un-wonted silence."

*In Arabic "Ibraheem", "Ismael".

"All this time immense numbers of pilgrims had been thronging into the city, and the crowd in the streets increased daily. For a week past it had been quite difficult to get about. The Friday prayer in the Haram was really a most imposing ceremony. Scarcely a square yard of the great space remained unoccupied. The uniform movements of this vast concourse during prayer, and the strange stillness that pervades, appeal strongly to the imagination. During the segeda, that phrase of prayer when the forehead is placed on the earth, not a sound but the cooing of the pigeons breaks the brooding silence; then, as the hundred thousand or more worshippers rise to their feet, the rustle of garments and clink of weapons sweeps over the space like a sudden gust. The moment the prayer is over there is a rush to perform the tawaf, and a few minutes later the roar of that human whirlpool may be heard at a considerable distance from the Haram.

"There are as many pigeons here as in the square of St. Mark's at Venice, and they are as nearly tame. Grain is sold in the Haram for the purpose of feeding them, but they get so much food one way and another that they can seldom be induced to partake of it. Burton remarks that they are said never to defile the Kaaba as they might be expected to do; this I believe is perfectly true, whatever the explanation may be."


The Behaviour of the Pigeons at the Kaaba.

"These pigeons are of a pretty blue-grey colour. There are thousands of them in Mekka, and an endowment fund exists for supplying them with grain. Two little stone troughs, sunk in the ground of the open quadrangle, are constantly kept filled with water for their use. One man holds the office of dispenser of the grain to the pigeons, while another holds that of waterer to them. This gives some idea of the manner in which work is found for the eight hundred servants of the Mosque. It has been asserted by Mekkans, in all ages, that neither the sacred pigeons, nor any other bird, ever perches on the roof of the Kaaba. Sleeping, every night for some months, on a roof which overlooked that of the Kaaba, I had a good opportunity of testing the truth of this assertion. I have repeatedly searched the roof of the sacred building, and have never once seen there either a bird or any other living thing. At times when the roofs of the makams of the imams, and the grounds below them, were covered with myriads of pigeons, I have constantly seen the Kaaba's roof bare and silent. The Shaybi, too, informed me that no defilement of birds is ever found there."

THE ‘ID al-FITR
(1375 A.H.) SERMON

By al-HAJJ DAVID COWAN, M.A.

"By assiduously cultivating an unshakable sense of
duty, a love of good work well and truly done for its own
sake, we Muslims can most certainly bring about a new and
permanent Renaissance of Islam."

"I take refuge with God from the accursed devil.
In the Name of God the Compassionate, the
Merciful.

"Made fair to men is love of the joys which come
from women, offspring and stored-up piles of gold and
silver and horses at pasture, and cattle and tilled land.
That is the provision of this life but with God there is
a fairer abode.

"Say: shall I tell you what is better than that?
For those who fear God there are with their Lord
gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them,
and pure mates and the approval of God, for God tells
his servants.

"Those who say: Our Lord! we believe so forgive
us our sins and protect us from the torment of the fire.

"The patient, the truthful, the obedient, those who
spend in charity and ask forgiveness in the late watches
of the night.

"God bears witness that there is no God but He
and so do the angels and those with knowledge, main-
taining justice, there is no God but He, the Mighty, the
Wise.

"Surely the religion with God is Islam and those
to whom the Book was given did not dissent but after
the knowledge had come to them, through transgression
among themselves. And if anyone disbelieves in God's
signs, then surely God is quick in calling to account"

"Dear Brothers and Sisters in Islam,
Assalamu 'alaikum

"On this happy day which sees the end of the sacred
month of Ramadhan, and which is the lesser of the two
great festivals of Islam, it behoves us Muslims to consider
the great favour which God in His mercy has conferred on
us in sending His Messenger Sayyidina Muhammad, the
last of the Prophets, to establish on a firm and unassailable
basis His religion, the true religion with God as is stated
clearly in one of the verses from the Holy Qur'ān which I
have quoted above. I propose to draw your attention in this
short sermon to some of the virtues of Islam which if we
Muslims strove night and day to realize would elevate our
moral and material position to the eminence Muslims once
enjoyed in the heyday of Islamic civilization which shone
forth to light the world when the rest of humanity was
steeped in barbarism and superstition. It is an agreed fact
that whenever the world was sunk in ignorance and dis-
belief, God sent one of His messengers or prophets to lead
mankind to a better life. We Muslims believe in the divine
mission of all these 'friends' of God, many of them are
mentioned by name in the Book of God, whereas there are
others whose names have been lost in the sea of time. But in
Islam as taught by Sayyidina Muhammad we have the cul-
mination and perfection of God's solicitude for the welfare
of His creators. God says in His Noble Book:

"'Today I have perfected for you your religion
and completed my favour upon you and chosen for you

Islam as a religion.'

"In these simple words we Muslims have the assurance
that our religion is the most perfect which has lighted the
world and it is the duty of each and every one of us, high
and low, to do everything in our power and to give an
example to the world in our every day behaviour so that
God may once again look upon us with favour and elevate
the Muslim peoples to that world leadership which they lost
through disobedience of God's dear commands.

"Let us consider a few of the points which make up
ture Islam, the basis of man's happiness on this earth and in
the Hereafter. The main cornerstone of Islam is a belief in
the oneness of God and that He is for ever solicitous of man's
welfare and will reward him for his good deeds and punish
him for his evil ones. Let us never lose sight of the fact
that God is watching us in our every deed and action. The
fear of God must enter into every heart; for only in the
fear of God will man feel that he is responsible for his
actions. What is needed in every country, and this is no
less true of the lands of Islam, is a sense of duty, an aware-
ness of the individual that God sees every action. This must
be a personal matter for every man and woman who is
proud to proclaim Islam as his or her religion and way of
life. Let us feel that not only God's eyes but the eyes of
the whole world are on us. How can Islam spread and
prosper and be honoured throughout the world, which is
God's express design for His religion, if we Muslims,
individually or collectively, show a bad example? Some years
ago in an 'Id sermon I extolled the virtue of hard work and
urged it upon my Muslim brothers. Today I am happy to
say that the entire Muslim world, from the Pacific to the
Atlantic, is showing a new spirit and bustle with activity.
No longer are Muslims content to follow in the train
of Western civilization, picking up a few crumbs here and
there. No, the Muslim world is firmly decided to take its
own fate in its hands and to work out its own destiny.
"To our non-Muslim friends who have honoured us with their presence here today, I would say that this does not mean that the Islamic world is inimical to the Western world. No, most of the thinkers and men of action of Islam, the men who are today building the destinies of their peoples, have a sound appreciation of all that is good in Western civilization and a desire to incorporate it into their own way of life. Islam has cast off the shackles of a lethargy which has fettered it for centuries and if the virtues of Islam, charity, honesty, obedience, discipline and diligence, virtues which are preached time and again in the Book of God, go hand in hand with the new awakening of the Muslim world, then the second half of this troubled century will without doubt see the re-emergence of Islam as a light and beacon guiding errant humanity, whose values have been shaken by two destructive world wars, back into God’s haven.

In this last Renaissance let the watchword of each and every Muslim, man and woman, be: I shall not waste one minute of the time God has allotted to me on this earth. All work, no matter how humble, must find favour with us as it finds favour with God. Have we not before us the personal example of our great Prophet Muhammad himself who, even at the height of his power, used to patch his own shoes? The material and spiritual well-being of Islam can only be achieved by the efforts of every one of us, and this is a personal responsibility. If we are sincere in our desire for the regeneration of the Islamic world this must be our guiding light and constant aim. This is our twentieth century Jihad and in it he who sits down in despair or sloth by the wayside is lost or becomes an intolerable and slogging burden on his community. By assiduously cultivating an unshakable sense of duty, a love of good work well and truly done for its own sake, we Muslims can most certainly achieve a new and permanent Renaissance of Islam and while we strive thereby for the glory and renown of Islam, God’s religion chosen by Him for His creation and expounded by Muhammad, the last of the prophets and messengers of God, God will surely help us to achieve our material well-being and write the greatest chapter of all in the long story of mankind’s progress towards the perfect world which God desires to see. The brotherhood of Islam must become as it was in the time of the Prophet and his immediate successors, to the temporal powers of the Muslim State, a reality and shining example to the whole world. If this ideal of brotherhood is achieved, then all the petty differences and quarrels separating Muslims from Muslims must be resolved in a manner satisfactory to all. Indeed the brotherhood of Islam is a fact for all the world to see, and in these days of hatred and rancour and man’s methods of destruction, it is worth while pointing out to all our friends here in the West that, with all their differences of opinion and jealousies, war between any two Islamic peoples is absolutely unthinkable. When the Islamic peoples, so long in the rearguard of the march of civilization which they once proudly led, begin to take their rightful place, to develop at once the moral, spiritual and material potentialities of their sons and daughters, then the torch of culture and civilization will shine with a lustre which has never been since God created the world.

"Matterially, there is little to fear for the Islamic world: for with the spread of education — and none are more thirsty for this than the Muslim youth and none more solicitous about it than the enlightened of the virtuous of Islam, — the Islamic world should within a foreseeable span of time be able to lift its head high and compete with any other civilization in truly civilized acts of science, medicine and literature. But an indispensable factor in bringing about this change, which we are only too anxious to achieve, is that the Islamic peoples achieve a true democratic spirit and an elevation of their masses to be the true masters of their destinies. Only then will they be able to withstand destructive forces which would seek to undermine the very foundations of our Islamic way of life and replace them by values quite foreign and injurious to Islam. Without the masses there can be no unity or true brotherhood in Islam, and until the humblest peasant or artisan in his satisfied and honoured existence and feels that he is a pillar of society, we have no right to call ourselves Muslims. These are problems which are exercising the best minds in the Islamic world today, and, especially in Egypt, much has been done, and still more is being planned, to raise the humble peasant or worker and to imbue him with a sense of being an integral and indispensable part of the nation.

I pray to God that He will guide aright all those in authority in the Muslim councils and who hold it in their power to be an example and, under God’s guidance, to pave the way for the re-emergence of Islam as a controlling force in the destinies of mankind.

"Before we conclude the religious duties enjoined upon us on this happy ‘Id al-Fitr and depart to our merrymaking and friendly intercourse, I should like each one of you, my brothers and sisters from many lands, to join with me in a moment of prayer, first for our brothers and sisters of Algeria in their sore trial, and secondly for our Palestinian brothers and sisters, so cruelly driven from their homes and forced to live in squalor and misery and despair through no fault of their own. May the Almighty and All-Seeing God strengthen their hearts, give them hope and fortitude and help them to be true Muslims and servants of God in all their troubles and afflictions, as we ourselves would wish to be! I wish you all a very happy ‘Id.”

This notice board is erected at the entrance of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, England.

Our picture shows an Indonesian visitor to the Shah Jehan Mosque.

JULY 1956
THE ATTITUDE OF ISLAM TOWARDS FIGURATIVE PAINTING

The views of European Orientalists on Figurative Art during the days of the Prophet Muhammad

By ZAKY M. HASAN

"Thus we come to the conclusion that pictorial art, in its different forms, was disliked in the Prophet's time. The theologians, however, may have exaggerated in putting into Muhammad's mouth those traditions which mean strict and absolute prohibition. On the other hand, we do not believe that the objection to pictorial art was meant to be general. In fact it is not a part of the Muslim credo. Further, the fundamental cause of that objection was the horror of idolatry and the suspicion with which a statue or a picture was regarded "through apprehension of the possible influence it might exercise on the faithful by leading them astray into the heresy most abhorred by Muslim theologians, shirk, or the giving of a partner to God. It cannot be meant for all times and circumstances, especially when Muslims get far away from the pagan life of pre-Islam and when they become a powerful nation full of confidence in their faith and power, and lastly, when picture-making proves to have so many scientific and artistic uses, which nobody can deny."

The words of the Prophet Muhammad on painting

Azraqi (d. 850 C.E.) wrote that when the Prophet Muhammad entered the Ka'bah after he had conquered Mecca, he said to Shaybah Ibn 'Usman: "O Shaybah! Destroy every picture in the place except what is underneath my hands." Azraqi continued that when the Prophet removed his hands, there were underneath the pictures of Jesus, son of Mary, and his mother.

Some Orientalists have taken the above passage as a proof that painting was not forbidden or disapproved at the time of Muhammad.

It is admitted that the Qur'an does not forbid painting or sculpture. The condemnation of pictorial and plastic art is based on the Traditions (Hadith) ascribed to the Prophet. He is reported to have said:

1. "Those who will be most severely punished by God on the Day of Judgment are the painters."
2. "The angels will not enter a house in which there is a picture or a dog."
3. "Those who make images will suffer on the Day of Judgment: they will be called upon to breathe life into the forms that they have fashioned."
4. "Those who will be most severely punished on the Day of Judgment are the murderers of a Prophet, one who has been put to death by a Prophet, one who leads men astray without knowledge, and a maker of images or pictures. A head will thrust itself out of the fire and will ask, 'Where are those who invented lies against God, or have been the enemies of God, or have made light of God?' Then men will ask, 'Who are these three classes of persons?' It will answer, 'The sorcerer is he who has invented lies against God: the maker of images or pictures is the enemy of God: and he who acts in order to be seen of men, is he that has made light of God.'"

The views of a thirteenth-century Muslim legislist on painting

Nawawi, the Shafi'i legislist of the thirteenth century C.E., in his Commentary on Muslim's Book of Traditions.

summed up the orthodox view on the subject in the following passage: 3

"The learned authorities of our school 4 and others hold that the painting of a picture of any living thing is strictly forbidden and is one of the great sins, because it is threatened with the above grievous punishment as mentioned in the Traditions, whether or not it is intended for things to sit on or to trample under foot. So the making of it is forbidden under every circumstance, because it implies a likeness to the creative activity of God; whether it is on a robe, or a carpet or a coin, gold, silver or copper, or a vessel or on a wall, etc. On the other hand, the painting of trees and mountains and other things that have no life is not forbidden. Such is the decision as to the actual making of a picture."

As to using things with pictures of living beings the decision is as follows: It is forbidden to make use of any object on which a living thing is pictured, whether it be hung on a wall or worn as a dress or a turban, or is on any other object which is not in an inferior status by being sat upon or trampled under foot. But if it is on a carpet trampled underfoot, or on a pillow or cushion or any similar object of inferior status, then it is not forbidden. In all this there is no difference between what casts a shadow and what does not cast a shadow. This is a short report of the decision of our school on the question.

"As to the Companions of the Prophet and their immediate followers and the learned of succeeding generations were of opinion confirming ours; it is also the view of Thawri, Malik, Abu Hanifah and others.

"Some authorities in the past believed that the prohibition referred only to objects that cast a shadow, and saw no harm in objects that had no shadow. But this view is quite wrong, for the curtain with the picture to which the Prophet objected was certainly condemned, as everybody admits, yet the picture on it cast no shadow; and the other Traditions make it clear that there is no suddenness in this case."

"Al-Zuhri holds that the prohibition refers to pictures in general, and similarly to the use of objects containing them and to the entrance of a house in which they are found, whether it is a case of a design on a dress or any other design, whether the picture hangs on a wall or is on a robe or a carpet, whether in an object of inferior status in common domestic use or not, as is the clear meaning of the Traditions, especially the one called the Numuzqah, which was related by Muslim. 5 This is a sound view.

"Others admit pictures on textiles whether on objects of inferior status or not; they dislike pictures casting a shadow or painted on walls and similar objects, whether a design or not. They state that the Prophet said in some of the Traditions of this chapter, "except what is in the form of a design on a dress". This is the view of al-Qasim Ibn Muhammad."

"All authorities agree in forbidding pictures which cast a shadow and to destroying or mutilating them. Al-Qadi takes exception to dolls for little girls to play with, but Malik does not like a man buying such dolls for his daughters. Some authorities hold that the lawfulness of dolls for girls is nullified by the Traditions which are the object of this commentary."

3 We give here Sir Thomas Arnold's translation of the part which he translated of this passage in his Painting in Islam, pp. 9-10, except for some changes which were necessary. The rest of the passage is our own translation.
4 i.e., the Shi'ite school.
5 The Sahih, by Muslim (Cairo 1333 C.E.), Vol. 6, p. 166.

European Orientalists on the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad on painting

That is the orthodox view on the subject summed up by Nawawi, the Shi'ite legist of the thirteenth century.

But some Orientalists and historians of art hold that the Prophet did not dislike or forbid painting, and that hostility against it started among Muslim theologians in the second half of the second century A.H. (eighth century C.E.). They argue that Traditions attributed to the Prophet on this subject are apocryphal and represent only the view of the theologians living in the time when the Hadith was collected and written (ca. third century A.H.—ninth century C.E.). One of the pioneers of these Orientalists and art historians was R. P. Lammens, who wrote an article in the Journal Asiatique for September-October 1915, pp. 239-279, entitled "L'Attitude de l'Islam primitif en face des arts figurés". His thesis in that article was to prove that the Prophet was not hostile to painting or sculpture and that no such hostility existed in the first century A.H.

One of the most fervent advocates of this theory today is Professor K. A. C. Creswell, head of the Institute of Muslim Archaeology in the Cairo University. He adopts it in his monumental work Early Muslim Architecture (Vol. I, pp. 269-271).

But we disagree with that point of view. We believe that hostility to images goes back to the time of Muhammad and that it emanated from a horror of paganism and idolatry and from fear that the Arabs might return to the cult which was prevailing among them before Islam. There was, furthermore, the aversion to luxury during that early period of Islam, when the "Faithful" led a simple life of devotion and fought for the Faith of God.

Modern Muslim theologians on the attitude of Islam towards painting

The Shaikh 'Abd al-Aziz Shawish, one of the leading modern authorities on Muslim theology, wrote the following: "If the Prophet disallowed having any images, whether detached or engraved or painted, it was only because his followers were fresh from leaving idolatry and it was feared for them that they would be attracted by what was worshiped by their ancestors and was familiar to them for a long time."

We believe, too, that the unlawfulness of painting and sculpture depended on whether or not the object was in a place of honour. The theologian who registered the Traditions about the prohibition of images did not ascribe to the Prophet something which was altogether of their own creation. All that could be held against them is that they made the prohibition in these Traditions absolute and all-sided. The Shaikh 'Abd al-Aziz Shawish develops this view in the following passage:

"The theological objection to pictorial art was not intended to be general for all times and all nations. In fact such an interdiction would have no raison d'être if it is sure that the worship and veneration due to God remain for Him only. How could picture-making be completely prohibited when it could be a means of safeguarding legal rights, as is the case with pictures of unknown drowned and dead, pictures which the government exhibits to the public so that these people may be identified by their relatives. Thus can judgment be passed about inheritance, matrimonial matters, liabilities, etc. . . . Pictures may be a means of warning the public against stealthy thieves and impostors who cover up their tracks and conceal themselves from the government. When their pictures are published, the public can trace them and direct the authorities to their hiding places. Other pic-
Argument against the views of those who hold that early Islam did not forbid or disapprove of painting

Let us now answer the arguments of those who hold that painting was not forbidden or disapproved of in early Islam.

The paintings of Mary and Jesus in the Ka'bah at the time of the conquest of Mecca by the Prophet Muhammad

1. The retention, by the Prophet, of the paintings of Mary and Christ, when going inside the Ka'bah after conquering Mecca, and his order effecting the removal and obliteration of the rest of the paintings, is a matter of doubt. Some theologians believe that the Prophet did not enter the Ka'bah before all the paintings and statues were obliterated. But Azraqi, the authority for the story of keeping those two pictures, died in 244 A.H. (858 C.E.). He is earlier than Bukhari, in whose Sahih we read that the Prophet had all images removed before he went into the sanctuary. Bukhari died in 256 A.H. (870 C.E.). If, however, we admit that the Prophet ordered that all the pictures should be rubbed out except that of Mary and Jesus, this could be explained by the high opinion the Prophet held of Christianity and the respect he bore for Jesus. Furthermore, Muhammad may have esteemed that it was no source of danger and that none of his followers, all pagans before Islam, would defy that Christian image.

We doubt, however, the veracity of what the same Azraqi adds about that picture having remained in the Ka'bah until years later, 683 C.E., when 'Abd Allah Ibn al-Zubayr was being besieged in the Holy City by the Umayyad troops. According to Azraqi, it was said to the Prophet that the picture perished in the fire which destroyed the Ka'bah. We think it more probable that the picture was obliterated at the same time as all other images in the Ka'bah. Some traces of it, however, may have remained until they were completely destroyed in the fire of the Ka'bah.

In fact the authority who is credited with having seen that picture before the fire clearly says that he saw it with traces of obliteration on it. This was passed over in silence by Arnold, who made use of this story.

2. One of the arguments given by Professor Creswell to prove that there was no hostility to painting in the Prophet's time is that 'Muhammad's wives were acquainted with fabrics woven or embroidered with figures of human beings and animals, and employed them without any religious scruples'. His authority for that are some Traditions in Bukhari. Professor Arnold, however, was more precise. On examining the same Traditions he came to the conclusion that the Prophet does not appear to have objected to the figures of men or animals on the woven stuffs with which his house in Medina was decorated, so long as they did not distract his attention while engaged in prayer, and so long as they were in their proper place, being either sat upon in cushions or tramped underfoot in carpets. When he found that A'ishah had hung up a curtain with figures on it at the door of her room, he exclaimed that those who thus imitated the creative activity of God would be most severely punished on the Day of Judgment; but he was quite satisfied when his wife cut up the offending fabric and made cushion covers out of it.

The Attitude of the Companions of the Prophet to Painting

We are not aware of any Traditions which show that the Prophet accepted at his house, and allowed his wives free use of, woven stuffs with figures of men and animals. (3) It has also been argued that the Companion of the Prophet, Sa'Id Ibn Abi Waqqas, appears to have been troubled by any iconoclastic scruples. When he entered Ctesiphon after winning the battle of Qadisiyyah in 637 C.E. he held a solemn prayer of thanksgiving for the victory of the Muslim armies. The place where this prayer was held, and which he turned into a mosque, was the Chosrae's Iwan, the great palace of the Sasanian kings. Tabari expressly states that Sa'Id paid no heed to the figures of men and horses. He did not even touch them. Neither he nor his troops refrained from holding prayers in that palace because of these figures.

This does not prove, however, that there was no objection to pictorial art in early Islam. If we admit what Tabari wrote, we can explain it by the fact that Sa'Id Ibn Abi Waqqas and his troops were deeply moved at their great victory in capturing the capital of Iran. They also had such great confidence in themselves and in their faith. The first thing they did was to hold prayer in the greatest building of the captured city. So anxious were they that they did not care to remove or obliterate the paintings which decorated the Chosraes' Iwan. These images did not expose the Muslims to danger, because they had not been acquainted with them before Islam and because they had not been worshipped by the Persians. Besides, the Muslims themselves were not in any way responsible for the images.

We cannot refrain from pointing out that victorious armies do not always act according to religious principles.

Some of the paintings in the Chosraes' Iwan survived up to Buhturi's time. This poet, who died in 284 A.H. (897 C.E.), mentions them in his famous poem about that palace of the Sasanian kings. The description of the painting, which represented the fighting between the Persians and the Romans at the siege of Antioch by Amurshirvan in 538, is as follows:

When I saw the picture of Antioch, I stood in awe of the multitudes of Romans and Persians,

With death overhanging and Amurshirvan pushing the columns under the large standard

8 Ibid. See also the similar view of the Shaikh Muhammad 'Abduh, the most authoritative of Muslim modern theologians, in Tarikh al-Ustaz al-Imam al-Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh, ed. by Muhammad Rashid Rida, Vol. 2, pp. 499-501; see also my article in the Thaqafah, No. 90, about "Pictures, Paintings and Statues in Mausoleums and Mosques."

9 See their arguments in Azraqi (Mecca ed.), Vol. 1, pp. 104-105.

10 Dr. H. Haikal adopts this view in his biography of the Prophet, Hayat Muhammad, 2nd ed., p. 409, where he writes that the Prophet ordered all the pictures in the Ka'bah to be obliterated.

11 See Azraqi (Mecca ed.), Vol. 1, p. 106.

12 Painting in Islam, p. 7.


Having a haughty deportment and dressed in green, yellow and red
And the fighting of men before him all quiet and without the least noise,
Some warrior charging with his spear
And another protecting himself with his shield.
They appear life-like and seem to have between each other signs like those of the dumb.
I could not believe that they were merely pictured before
I felt them with my hands.

(4) Neither can we deduce that there was no condemnation of pictorial art in early Islam from the fact that some Companions of Muhammad and other Muslims felt no hesitation in retaining in their possession woven stuffs and vessels decorated with figures of men and animals. In fact they were eager to make use of these stuffs and vessels, and they were not responsible for the images on them. Further, it is recorded that some of the Muslims destroyed the images and that some of the stuffs were divided between the "Faithful" in such a way as to distort the make-up of their pictures. This was the case with the famous carpet of the Chosroes, which the Caliph 'Umar distributed among the Muslims.17

COINS AND MEDALS BEARING THE EFFIGIES OF THE UMAYYAD AND ABBASID CALIPHS

(5) A further argument of those who hold that there was no theological objection to pictorial art in early Islam is that some Arabic coins had figures and drawings. Maqrizi mentioned in his treatise about Muslim coinage that Mu'awiya struck dinars on which there was a figure gilt with a sword.18 We do not know of any of these coins today, but a number of coins with the effigy of 'Abd al-Malik have been preserved. The Caliph is represented holding a sword in his right hand.19

But we do not think this argument is solid. In fact it is not safe at all to consider the Umayyad Caliphs as authors in theological subjects. They were far from being model Muslims from the religious point of view. Moreover, such figures on coins were, most probably, not intended to be actual portraits. As Professor Arnold suggested, they were merely a modification of the design which portrayed the Emperor on the Byzantine coins to which the inhabitants of Syria, Palestine and Egypt had been accustomed under the old régime.20 But this transitional concession to the popular conception of current coinage did not last long. Maqrizi adds that the companions of the Prophet did not object to anything in those new coins except the figures on them.21 Later on, about 696 C.E., 'Abd al-Malik struck new coinage without any pictorial representation.

18 See al-Nuqudd al-arabiyah wa 'Ilm an-Mummiyyah ou Monnaies Arabes et Numismatique d'après les Meilleurs Auteurs de Langue Arabe par le P. Anastase-Masie de St. Elie (Cairo, 1939), p. 33. Professor Creswell (op. cit., p. 95, writes that Mu'awiya himself was represented on these dinars. Silvestre de Sacy (Bibliothèque des Arabiant Francois, Vol. I, p. 19) wrote: "Muavia fit encore frapper des dinars sur lesquels il était représenté coint d'une épee."
20 Ibid.
21 P. Anastase-Masie de St. Elie, op. cit., p. 34.
23 See H. Creswell, The Mosque of the Cafer (pp. 176-177.
25 See H. Lammens, Etude sur le Règne du Calife Omayyade Moawiya Ier, pp. 384 et seq.
26 Creswell, ibid., pp. 270-271.

We do not want to deal here with other coins and medals bearing effigies which were struck by some Abbasid Caliphs and by princes belonging to dynasties of Turkoman origin. Mention may be made of a medal bearing on one side the effigy of the Caliph Mutawakkil and on the other a man leading a camel. On another medal the Caliph Muqadhir is represented with a cup of wine in his right hand and a weapon in his left. On the obverse is a musician playing a lute. On a third medal, the Caliph Mut' that is represented "holding a wine-cup in his hand, with an attendant on either side of him, one holding a musical instrument, the other a cloth with which to drive away flies; on the obverse is a musician playing a five-stringed lute."22 Coins struck for Saladin in Northern Mesopotamia bear his effigy sitting on the throne.23

WHY JOHN, PATRIARCH OF DAMASCUS, DOES NOT MENTION EARLY ISLAM'S CONDEMnation OF STATUES AND PAINTINGS

(6) P. Lammens and Professor Creswell use a further argument to prove that early Islam was not uniformly hostile to all representation of living forms.24 This is that John, Patriarch of Damascus, did not mention the Muslims amongst the enemies of images. John was one of the Bani Sardjoun Christian family who served the Umayyads in financial administration for more than half a century.25 He was a boon companion of the Caliph Yazid II, but he lived long after him, and retired to lead a solitary life in one of the monasteries of Damascus. He gave himself up entirely to writing polemic works on the superiority of Christianity to other religions until he died in 754 C.E. It is known that John was one of the most bitter adversaries of iconoclasm. It is argued that had he known that the Muslims were iconoclasts, he would never have failed to mention it and attack them in that field.

On the other hand, one of his disciples in the monastery to which he retired in Damascus won great fame and had the opportunity, fifty years after his master's death, to state that Muslims did forbid painting and sculpture. His name was Theodore Abu Quarra. He lived long enough to become a contemporary of Harun al-Rashid and al-Ma'mun, and was the first father of the Church to write in Arabic. He was also a bitter enemy of the iconoclasts. Abu Quarra did not actually mention the Muslims in connection with iconoclasm, but wrote of "those who assert that he who paints anything living, will be compelled on the Day of Resurrection to breathe into it a soul". Lammens pointed out to Professor Creswell that although the Muslims were not actually named "la citation presque verbale du hadith musulman prouvent qu'ils sont visés, et de plus que le hadith en question était déjà en circulation parmi les musulmans au temps d'Abou Quorra". Professor Creswell concludes that the iconoclastic movement in Islam may be placed towards the latter part of the eighth century.

We can hardly accept this proof. We think that if John of Damascus did not mention that statues and paintings were forbidden in Islam it is because he lived in Syria and saw the Umayyad castles decorated with paintings and various objects of art. But we know that the Umayyad Caliphs did not keep on the straight and narrow way in matters of religion. The only one of them who is known to have kept on the right path was the Caliph 'Umar Ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz. We read in his biography a story which shows to what extent he had a good taste and good taste painters. He had an artist (d. 1200 C.E.), the biographer of this pious Caliph, wrote: 

"Husain Ibn Wardan related to us that Umar Ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz passed by a bath bearing a picture. He had it rubbed out and exclaimed, 'If I could only find out who painted it,
I would have him well beaten."

Abu Qurra, on the other hand, got in touch with the jurists of Iraq. He knew Arabic well and could judge the Muslims by what he read in their books and not only by what they practised. No wonder that he was better acquainted with his master John of Damascus with the attitude of Islam towards pictorial art.

A CRITICISM OF THE VIEWS OF LAMMENS AND CRESWELL, WHO BELIEVE THAT IMAGES WERE NOT PROHIBITED IN THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S TIME

(7) P. Lammens and Professor Creswell draw an inference that images were not prohibited in the Prophet's time from the fact that Arabs in the Hijaz did not know any graven images at that early time of Islam. "Un seul texte (the Qur'an, 22:31) nous laisse en suspens," wrote P. Lammens. "Il recommande d'éviter l'impureté des  awthanz. Faut-il comprendre images ou fétiches, le terme awthanz comportant cette double signification? Idoles ou fétiches, la Quran n'en interdit 'graven image' explicite que nous le verifions. Cette interdiction n'avait pas de sens en Arabie. Quant à la peinture, le recueil n'y fait jamais une allusion explicite. On y rencontre bien le terme soura, mais dans la langue qorânique il désigne non — comme plus tard — les images, mais les formes extérieures, les dimensions géométriques des corps. Comment expliquer cette attitude, cette indifférence de Mahomet à l'endroit des idoles? Par la nature spéciale du polythéisme à son époque et dans son Arabie à lui, celle du Hijaz et du Nagd limítrophe, à l'exclusion du Yemen, de l'ancienne Nabatée et des cantons soumis à l'influence des régions syro-mésopotamiennes. La religion préislamique de la Péninsule, ainsi délimitée relevée entièrement du fétichisme. C'est un culte à l'usage des Bedouins — race médiocrement religieuse — culte d'origine nomade, même lorsque — c'était le cas pour la Ka'bah — le centre se trouve fixé dans une agglomération citadine. Ce culte sans temple, sans liturgie, sans hiérarchie proprement dite, ne fabrique pas ses dieux: il les rencontre dans la nature. Au lieu d'effigies divines, il honore les pierres et sous les formes les plus variées, rochers, blocs erratiques, stèles, obélisques. . . . Toutes les âmes, idoles plus ou moins Kabbalistes: Manat, Al-Lat, Ozza, Dou 'l-Halasa, Fals, Sa'd, Oqaisir, etc., appartiennent à la catégorie des acheropistes, pour me servir de ce terme emprunté à l'archéologie chrétienne: pierres brutes, protubérances rocheuses, blocs tenant encore au sol, bizarrement corrodes par les agents atmosphériques et où, avec de l'imagination, on croyait parfois découvrir de vagues linéaments humains."

When Professor Creswell read the arguments which we give in this article, he wrote to me: "In the time of Muhammad this question (horror of paganism and idolatry, and fear that the Arabs might return to the cult which was prevailing among them before Islam) did not arise. It is very doubtful if any graven images existed in the Hijaz, for the Arabs practiced litholatry, worship of shapeless pieces of stone. When the Muslims got far away from the pagan (i.e., litholatry) life, they found themselves in countries where there were statues in public places in the cities. It was then that the danger began, not before, in Arabia, where lumps of stone, because of their bizarre form of meteoric origin, were revered."

We think, however, that this argument is miscalculated. It is true that the Arabs worshipped stones before Islam. Ibn al-Kalbi wrote that this litholatry originated in an old Arabian inmemorial usage: no traveller left Mecca without carrying with him a stone from the Ka'bah, as a token of reverence to the house of the gods and of love for the Holy City. Wherever the traveller took up his quarters or pitched his tent, he used to put down the stone from the Ka'bah, and walk round it as he used to walk round the Ka'bah itself. Some of these stones were of a cubic piece of rock like "al-Lat" or a slab of white stone like "dhi al-Khalasa" or long pieces of rock "r'd" or a protruberance in the mountain resembling a human figure like "al-Fals." The pre-Islamic Arabs used also to worship some houses as they used to worship the Ka'bah in Mecca. Among such houses there are "Riam" in San'aa, the Ka'bah of Bani al-Harith Ibn Ka'ab in Najran, the Ka'bah of 'Iyad between Kufa and Basra, and the church of al-Qalis in San'aa.

But it is incorrect to assume that the pre-Islamic Arabs did not know any graven images except in the outskirts of the peninsula. The old Arab historians, and especially Ibn al-Kalbi (d. 204 A.H.-819 C.E.), mentioned among the idols worshipped by the Arabs some statues resembling human figures in the Hijaz and in the Ka'bah itself. Among these images was "Hubal", which was of red chalcedony, having the figure of a human being with a broken right hand. When the tribe of Quraish planted itself in this region, it made him a golden hand. The Kalbites in Daumat al-Djandal used to worship "Wadd", which was the statue of a powerful man armed to the teeth.

Among such images there were also Isaf and "Na'ilah". They are thought to have been originally a man and a woman of the tribe of the Jurhum. They once entered the Ka'bah, and seizing the opportunity, when nobody was watching them, were guilty of misconduct. They were metamorphosed into two stones which the Arabs placed near the Ka'bah as a bad example and a warning to anybody who failed to respect the holy temple. They remained there a long time, and when the Arabs began to practise idolatry, these two images were among the idols they worshipped."

The meaning of the Arabic words Asnam, Awthanz and Ansab.

Moreover, the Arabic lexicographers and writers differed in opinion about the definition of "Asnam" in a way bearing witness to their having known real statues as well as natural idols. "Some of them said that idolized pieces of stone are 'Asnam'. If real statues, they are 'Asnam' and 'Aawthanz'. Others said that idols made of wood, gold or silver in the form of human beings are 'Asnam'; if made of stone, they are 'Awwthanz'."

In a verse of the thirty-seventh chapter of the Qur'an, al-Jawzi, Shirat Omar Ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, p. 80. cf. Arnold, op. cit., p. 46.

8 See C. Brockleman, F. N. Finck, J. Leipoldt and E. Littmann, Geschichte der Christlichen Literatur des Orients, p. 68.

9 Lammens, L'attitude de l'Islam . . ., pp. 242-244.


11 Ibid., p. 16.

12 Ibid., p. 34. See also D. Nielsen, Handbuch der Altarabischen Altertumskunde, p. 231.


14 Ibid., p. 59.

15 Ibid., pp. 11-12.

16 Ibid., pp. 44-45.

17 Ibid., p. 45.

18 Ibid., p. 46.


21 Ibn al-Kalbi: Ibid., p. 10. 56.


28 THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
mention is made of carving. The following is related of Abraham when his tribesmen came back to him with hasty steps. He said: “Worship ye what ye carve when God hath created you and that ye make?”

We have also to relate what the Arab historians and learned men of the Hadith reported about the 360 images found in the Ka’bah when Mecca was conquered by the Prophet. If we admit that there was not enough space in that temple for such a large number of idols, it is nevertheless true that the Ka’bah contained many idols for different Arab tribes. At least some of these idols are spoken of by historians as having faces and eyes.

There is no doubt that the Arabs knew real statues before the Muslim conquests. They ascribed their introduction into Hijaz to ‘Amr Ibn Luhayy, who brought the first statues from Palestine and put them around the Ka’bah.

We should bear in mind, moreover, that many of the Arabs of Hijaz before Islam were familiar with Syria and the Yemen. They used to carry goods and conduct caravans between the north and south parts of the peninsula. Nielsen thinks even that it is in Northern Arabia and not in Southern Arabia that the representation of Gods in images was known.


Wellhausen mentioned that the Arabs used to engrave some of the holy stones in order to create a similarity between them and human beings. From this, he mentioned that the concept of shirk, the giving of a partner to God, cannot be meant for all times and circumstances, especially when Muslims get far away from the pagan life of pre-Islam and when they become a powerful nation full of confidence in their faith and power, and lastly, when picture-making proves to have so many scientific and artistic uses, which nobody can deny.

PEN PALS

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Ahmed Khawfa, P.O. Box 41, Beaufort West, C.P. S. Africa. Aged 20, wishes to correspond with students all over the world, both male and female. Interests: Reading, tennis, Islamic literature and travel.

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Otto Karl Duesow, Sybilenstr. 14, Bad Godesberg/Rh., Western Germany. German writer and poet, North African experience, contributor to important German periodicals and newspapers and to *The Islamic Review*, student of Islam, author of the first history of Libya Stone age to date, 38 years of age, speaking and fluently writing English. French, German, studying Arabic, typist, commercial experience, wants situation anywhere in the Islamic world for collecting further knowledge and material.
WHAT THEY THINK OF US . . .
Stanley Lane-Poole on Muhammad

Culled by ZAFRUL HAQ KHAN

Stanley Lane-Poole, the famous historian and Orientalist, was born in London on 18th December 1853. From 1898 to 1904 he was Professor of Arabic at Trinity College, Dublin. He was closely related to another famous Orientalist and Arabic scholar, Edward William Lane (1801-1876), the author of the Arabic-English Lexicon. Stanley Lane-Pool was educated at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and Dublin University. His numerous publications include Histories of the Moors in Spain (1887, 9th Edition, 1915); Turkey (1888, 6th Edition, enlarged, 1908); The Barbary Corsairs (1890, 3rd edition, 1915); Egypt in the Middle Ages (1901); Medieval India (1902, 9th Edition, 1915); Essays in Oriental Numismatics (3 volumes, 1874, 1877 and 1892); Studies in a Mosque (London, 1893): The Thousand and One Nights (3 volumes, 1906); The Art of the Saracens of Egypt (London, 1886); Medieval India from Contemporary Sources (1916); A Short History of India in the Middle Ages (1917); The Life of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe (1888); The Life of Sir G. F. Bowen (1889); The Life of Sir Harry Parkes (1894); The Life of Sir R. Church (1890); The Life of E. W. Lane (1877); Aurangzeb (1892); Saladin (1898); Babur (1899); and Watson Pasha (1919).

His grand-uncle, William Edward Lane’s translation of the Arabian Nights, with notes and illustrations, designed to make the book a sort of encyclopaedia of Eastern manners, appeared between 1838 and 1840. A useful volume of Selections from the Kūrān was published by him in 1843. He spent seven years (1842-49) in Egypt collecting material for a great Arabic lexicon, which the munificence of the Lord Prudhoe (afterwards the Duke of Northumberland) enabled him to undertake. The most important of the materials amassed during this sojourn was a copy in twenty-four thick quarto volumes of the Shaikh Murtada’s great lexicon, the Taj al-‘Arus, which, though itself a compilation, was so extensive and exact that it formed the main basis of Lane’s subsequent work.

Returning to England in 1849, Lane devoted the remaining twenty-seven years of his life to digesting and translating his Arabic material in the form of a great thesaurus of the lexicographical knowledge of the Arabs. He worked at this Arabic-English Lexicon with unflagging diligence till a few days before his death at Worthing on 10th August 1876. Five parts appeared during his lifetime (1863-74) and three posthumous parts were afterwards edited from his papers by S. Lane-Pool.

What Lane-Pool said of the Prophet of Islam and the religion of Islam may interest our readers.

"One has but to refer to Muhammad's kindness to the prisoners after the battle of Bedr, to his patient tolerance towards his enemies at Medina, his gentleness, his love of children, and the dumb creation, and above all, his bloodless entry into Mecca, and the complete amnesty he gave to those who had been his bitter enemies during eighteen years of insult and persecution and finally open war, to show that cruelty was no part of Muhammad's nature.

"To say that Mohammad, or any other Arab, was sensual in a higher degree than an ordinary European is simply to announce a well-worn axiom: the passions of the men of the sunland are not as those of the chill north. But to say that Mohammad was a voluptuary is false. The simple austerity of his daily life, to the very last, his hard mat for sleeping on, his plain food, his self-imposed menial work, point him out as an ascetic rather than a voluptuary in most senses of the word. Two things he loved, perfume and women: the first was harmless enough, and the special case of his wives has its special answer. A great deal too much has been said about these wives. It is a melancholy spectacle to see professedly Christian biographers gazing over the stories and fables of Mohammad’s domestic relations like the writers and readers of 'society journals'. Several of these marriages must have been entered into from the feeling that those women whose husbands had fallen in battle for the faith, and who had thus been left unprotected, had a claim upon the generosity of him who prompted the fight. Other marriages were contracted from motives of policy, in order to conciliate the heads of rival factions. Perhaps the strongest reason — one of which it is impossible to over-estimate the force — was a natural wish that he should have a son who should follow in his steps and carry on his work; but the wish was never gratified. Mohammad’s sons died young.

"After all, the overwhelming argument is his fidelity to his first wife. When he was little more than a boy he married Khadija, who was fifteen years older than himself, with all the added age which women gain so quickly in the East. For five and twenty years Mohammad remained faithful to his elderly wife, and when she was sixty-five, and they might have celebrated their 'silver wedding', he was as devoted to her as when first he married her. During all those years there was never a breath of scandal. Thus far Mohammad’s life bears microscopic scrutiny. Then Khadija died, and though he married several women afterwards, he never forgot his old wife, and loved her best to the end. 'When I was poor she enriched me', when they called me a liar she alone believed in me, when all the world was against me she alone remained true.' This loving, tender memory of an old wife laid in the grave belong only to a noble nature; it is not to be looked for in a voluptuary.

"His whole life is one long argument for his loyalty to truth. He had but one answer for his worshippers: 'I am no more than a man, I am only human.' 'Do none enter Paradise save by the mercy of God?' asked Aisha. 'None, none, none,' he answered. 'Not even thou by thy own merits?' 'Neither shall I enter Paradise unless God cover me with His mercy.' He was a man like unto his brethren in all things save one, and that one difference served only to increase his humbleness, and render him the more sensitive to his shortcomings. He was sublimely confident of this single attribute, that he was the messenger of the Lord of the Worlds, and that the words he spoke came verily from Him. He was fully persuaded — and no men dare dispute his right to the belief — that God had sent him to do a great work amongst his people in Arabia.

"Surely the character of Mohammad has been misjudged. He was not the ambitious schemer some would have him, still less the hypocrite and sham prophet others have imagined. He was an enthusiast in that noblest sense when enthusiasm becomes the salt of the earth, the one thing that

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
keeps men from rotting while they live. Enthusiasm is often used despitefully, because it is joined to an unworthy cause, or falls upon barren ground and bears no fruit. So was it not with Mohammad. He was an enthusiast when enthusiasm was the one thing needed to set the world afame, and his enthusiasm was noble for a noble cause. He was the chosen of the happy few who have attained the supreme joy of making one great truth their very life-spring. He was the messenger of the One God, and never to his life's end did he forget who he was, or the message which was the marrow of his being. He brought his tidings to his people with a great dignity, springing from the consciousness of his high office, together with a most sweet humility, whose roots lay in the knowledge of his own weakness. Well did Carlyle choose him for his prophet-hero. Verily, no man was ever more thoroughly filled with the sense of his mission or carried out that mission more heroically.

"Many have sought to answer the questions: Why was the triumph of Islam so speedy and so complete? Why have so many millions embraced the religion of Mohammad, and some even without belief? Why do a thousand Christians become Muslims to one Muslim who adopts Christianity? Why do hundreds of millions of human beings still cling to the faith of Islam? Some have attempted to explain the first overwhelming success of the Mohammedan religion by the argument of the sword. They forget Carlyle's laconic reply, 'First get your sword.' You must win men's hearts before you can induce them to peril their lives for you, and the first conquerors of Islam must have been made Muslims before they made 'fighters on the path of God.'"

"Decidedly Islam itself was the main cause of its triumph. By some strange intuition Mohammad succeeded in finding the one form of monothelism that has ever commended itself to any wide section of the Eastern world. Christianity has never gained a firm hold upon the East. Islam not only was at once accepted (partly in earnest, partly in name, but accepted) by Arabia, Syria, Persia, Egypt, Northern Africa and Spain at its first outburst, but, with the exception of Spain, it has never lost its vantage-ground. It has seen no country that has once embraced its doctrine turn to another faith, it has added great multitudes-in India and China and Turkestan to its subjects, and in quite recent times it has been spreading in wide and swiftly-following waves over Africa, and has left but a small part of that vast continent unconquered to its creed. There must be something in the religion to explain its persistence and increase, and to account for its present hold over so large a portion of the dwellers on the earth.

"Men trained in European ideas of religion have always found a difficulty in understanding the fascination which the Muslim faith has for so many minds in the East. 'There is no God but God, and Mohammad is His Prophet.' There is nothing in this, they say, to move the heart. Yet this creed has stirred an enthusiasm that has never been surpassed. Islam has its martyrs, its recluses, who have renounced all that life offered, and have accepted death with a smile for the sake of the faith that was in them. It is idle to say that the eternity of happiness will explain this. The true martyrs of Islam, as of Christianity, did not die to gain paradise. And if they did, the belief in the promises of the creed must follow the hearty acceptance of the religion. Islam must have possessed a power of seizing men's belief before it could have inspired them with such a love of its paradise.

"Mohammad's conception of God has, I think, been misunderstood, and its effect upon the people consequently underestimated. Mohammad conceived of God as the Semitic mind has always preferred to think of Him: his God is the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Just. Irresistible Power is the first attribute he thinks of: the Lord of the Worlds, the Author of the Heavens and the Earth, Who hath created Life and Death, in Whose hand is Dominion, Who maketh the Dawn to appear and causeth the Night to cover the Day, the Great, All-Powerful Lord of the glorious Throne: the Thunder proclaimeth His perfection, the whole earth is His handful, and the Heavens shall be folded together in His right hand. And with the power He conceives the knowledge that directs it to right ends. God is the Wise, the Just, the True, the Swift in Reckoning, Who knoweth every ant's weight, of good and of ill that each man hath done and Who suffereth not the reward of the faithful to perish.

"'God! There is no god but He, the Living, the Steadfast! Slumber seizeth Him not, nor sleep. Whosoever is in the Heavens, and whatsoever is in the Earth, is His. Who is there that shall plead with Him, save by His leave? He knoweth what was before and what shall come after, and they compass not out of His knowledge, but what He willeth. His Throne overspreadeth the Heavens and the Earth, and the keeping of both is no burden to Him; and He is the High, the Great' — Koran, ii, 256.

"But with this power there is also the gentleness, that belongs only to great strength. God is the Guardian over His servants, the Shelterer of the orphan, the Guider of the erring, the Deliverer from every affliction, in His hand is Good, and He is the Generous Lord, the Gracious, the Healer, the Near-at-Hand. Each Sura of the Koran begins with the words, 'In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,' and Mohammad was never tired of telling the people how God was very Forgiving, that His love for man was more tender than the mother-bird's for her young.

"The doctrine of one Supreme God, to Whose will it is the duty of every man to surrender himself, is the kernel of Islam, the truth for which Mohammad lived and suffered and triumphed. But it was no new teaching, as he himself was constantly saying. His was only the last of the revelations. Many prophets — Abraham, Moses and Christ — had taught the same faith before: but people had hearkened little to their words. So Mohammad was sent, not different from them, a simple messenger, yet the last and greatest of them, the 'Seal of prophecy', the 'most excellent of the creation of God'. This is the second dogma of Islam: 'Mohammad is the apostle of God.' It is well worthy of notice that it is not said, 'Mohammad is the only apostle of God.' Islam is more tolerant in this matter than other religions. Its Prophet is not the sole commissioner of the Most High, nor is his teaching the only true teaching the world has ever received. Many other messengers had been sent by God to guide men to the right, and these taught the same religion that was in the mouth of the preacher of Islam. Hence Muslims reverence Moses and Christ only next to Mohammad. All they claim for their founder is that he was the last and the best of the messengers of the one God.

"Islam lies more in doing than in believing. That 'faith without works is dead' is a doctrine which everyday's routine must bring home to the mind of devout Muslims. The practical duties of the Mohammedan religion, beyond the actual profession of faith, are the performance of prayer, giving alms, keeping the fast, and accomplishing the pilgrimage."
JIDDAH
The Port of Mecca

On the west coast of Sa‘udi Arabia, a short distance from the holy city of Mecca, lies Jiddah—a bustling city of 100,000 inhabitants who are riding the crest of the largest wave of prosperity this Red Sea port has ever experienced. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Jiddah had thrived as the port of entry for millions of Muslim pilgrims making the annual pilgrimage to Mecca and as a transit point for Indian and African merchandise bound for Egypt and northern markets. But the harbour city never experienced “boom town” prosperity until the discovery of oil on the eastern coast of Sa‘udi Arabia in the twentieth century.

The discovery of rich oil deposits in 1938 created a new demand for imports and banking facilities, which brought overnight wealth to the mercantile houses of Jiddah. Merchants and artisans from all over the Arab world flocked to the city and, with the exception of the war years, business boomed.

A new wave of immigrants arrived in 1948, after Sa‘udi Arabia opened its doors to Palestinian refugees made homeless by the creation of the state of Israel. Thousands of these refugees eventually came to Jiddah, where a large number entered the construction field as skilled labourers and contractors. Others established shops, took positions with Sa‘udi firms, or worked for the Sa‘udi government.

Thus twentieth century Jiddah is a far cry from the town described by a seventeenth-century traveller as a place “accursed by nature and debarred of heaven’s blessing.” The climate is still hot and humid for most of the year, but commercial profits have brought a new water system, electrical power and such conveniences as air conditioning and refrigeration. Lush gardens now decorate modern sections of the city, and new buildings are rising everywhere.

During the past six years the population of Jiddah has more than doubled, and the historic great wall which once surrounded the ancient town has been torn down—burst at the seams, so to speak, by the city’s sudden growth and activity. The wall was originally built in the sixteenth century to protect the town from sea-launched invasions, for ever since Jiddah was designated as the port for Mecca in 646 C.E. it had been subjected to waves of foreign domination. By the end of the eighteenth century the wall had crumbled from hard abuse, and it was rebuilt as a defensive measure against a prospective French invasion. In 1925 when the forces of Ibn Sa‘ud established the late king’s rule over Jiddah, the wall was breached for the last time and the flourishing seaport has since remained in Sa‘udi Arabian hands.

Today the old Jiddah is disappearing, and a new city of modern outlook is rising in its place. Venerable high coral block structures with latticed balconies and delicately carved teak doors are being abandoned in favour of modern stucco villas and streamlined office buildings, many of Egyptian design.

Recent population growth has put a heavy strain on existing public utilities and buildings, but construction proceeds at a rapid pace. Jiddah now boasts a new port, complete with a two-berth steamer pier; a new airport with a modern terminal building and spacious hangars, and adjoining the airport, the city’s first completely air-conditioned hotel.
EARLY ARAB NAVIGATION: INDIAN OCEAN

Arab astronomical knowledge was drawn from Hindu astronomical knowledge and not from the Greeks and Romans

By M. D. W. JEFFREYS

Prior to the Saracens in the Mediterranean no one had any such knowledge of latitude and longitude as the Arabs then possessed.

A study of early Arab navigation makes one realize that Columbus's accomplishment was not so noteworthy after all. The Atlantic had been crossed from east to west long before. To establish that the Atlantic had thus been crossed it is necessary to review first of all Arab navigation in the Indian Ocean and in the China Seas.

Clerke (1929, II, 584) states that: “Arab astronomy, transported by the Moors to Spain, flourished temporarily at Cordova and Toledo. From the latter city the Toledan tables drawn up by Arzachel (Arabic: Zarqali) in 1080 C.E. took their name, and there also the Alphonsine Tables, published in 1252, were prepared under the authority of Alphonso X of Castile.”

Now, prior to the Arab or Saracen Empire in the Mediterranean, no one in Europe had any such knowledge of latitude and longitude as the Arabs then possessed. Mill (1929, X, 140) points out that: “The geographical learning of the Greeks and Romans enshrined in the writings of Ptolemy of Alexandria (150 C.E.) passed to the Arabs and was forgotten in Christian Europe, where the conception of the globe degenerated to that of a flat disc with Jerusalem at the centre. The Arabs trading with India, China and the east coast of Africa acquired before the year 1000 a sound knowledge of the Indian Ocean and a fair idea of the interior of Africa. Among the well-known geographical writers of this period were Abu Zaid, Mas'udi, Istakhri and Idrisi.” It will be noticed that there were no European geographers of this era. It was not until the days of Henry the Navigator, who was King of Portugal from 1434 to 1460, that any proficiency in nautical and navigational matters was achieved in Portugal. Thus Howe (1946, 58) writes that by the reign of King Henry the Navigator “cartographers had made great strides, for on the foundations laid by the Chinese and Arabs, learned men in Europe had built up the science of navigation.” I may admit, these learned men had by this time merely copied from the Arabs what was known of navigation, and as will be seen had not copied too well. Now the evidence points to the fact that Arab astronomical knowledge drew from Hindu astronomers and not from the Greeks and Romans.

McCabe (1935, 179-202) gives a brief summary of this aspect of Arab activity. He writes: “But when the (Christian) monasteries were captured by the Persians and the books examined, chiefly in the days Ma'mun in the ninth century, a new era opened for science. Astronomical observatories were built, the co-operation of Hindu mathematicians and astronomers was invited. ... It was not simply translations of a few ancient books that the Arabs gave to Europe. It was the results of several centuries of speculation, observation and experiment in thousands of observatories and laboratories. ... There were ... Hindu students of mathematics and astronomy even at the court of Harun al-Rashid. ... It was from these that the Arabs, who had hitherto expressed numbers only in words, borrowed and gave to Europe the Indian numerals we still use. ... In this intense preoccupation with astronomy, sustained through the centuries, the Arabs learned to make the finest instruments the world had yet known. Some of their armillary spheres were twenty-five feet in diameter, and their astrolabes were so famous in Europe even by the year 1100 C.E. that we find Abelard and Heloise in distant Paris christening their son Astrolabe.” Arabs not indebted to Greeks for their own name for the astrolabe

The Oxford English Dictionary traces the origin of the word astrolabe to the Greek noun astrolabos, a star, and the Greek verb alos, to take. The word astrolabe was first used by Ptolemy in his geography about 130 C.E. On the early use of this instrument by the Arabs, Commelin (1948, 241) remarks: “Portant d'Alexandrie l'astrolabe s'est repandu d'abord dans les pays orientaux, surtout l'Asie Antérieure et la Perse, mais on ne sait pas avec exactitude à quelle époque cette introduction a eu lieu. Mais, ainsi que le montre la littérature arabe, l'astrolabe avait déjà acquis sa popularité à l'époque où il réissait l'astronomie arabe, à savoir vers 800. C'est au Moyen-Âge que le connaissances en est venue en Europe occidentale sous l'influence de l'orient.” According to Price (1956, XVII, 155): “One of the first great Islamic astronomers, at Battuni (c. A.D. 1000) introduced the fundamental innovation of gearing into a simple calculator of this sort. The gears were so arranged that when a scale representing the place of the sun was set into position, another for the moon automatically fell at the correct angle. This is the first time that gearing had been used in such a way. ... By a miracle of preservation one of these instruments designed by al-Battani still exists. It was made in A.D. 1221 by a Persian craftsman, Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr, and may now be seen at the Museum of the History of Science, Oxford.”

The Arabs had their own name for the astrolabe and so do not appear to be indebted to the Greeks for it. Thus Ravenstein (1898, 26), commenting on Vasco da Gama’s first arrival at the Arab port of Melinde on the East African coast, remarks: “It is quite possible, as suggested by Dr. Bittner, that these pilots also invented the cross-staff (astrolabe), for balkestho, the name by which this instrument became known in Portugal, is more likely to be derived from the Arabic al-balista (altitude), than from the Latin ballista. ... According to the Mohit of Admiral Sidi Ali ben Hosein (1554) published by Dr. Bittner and Dr. Tomassheck (Vienna 1897) the pilots of the Indian Ocean determined relative latitudes by observing the altitudes of certain stars.”

Now a number of the navigational stars still carry their Arab names such as Aldenbaran. McCabe continues with his description of the astronomical and navigational instruments possessed and used by the early Arabs. “Of planisphere and globes they had innumerable specimens.” The Arabs possessed these globes centuries before the time when, as Curtis (1893, 41) points out: “The doctors of the University of Salamanca pronounced the theories of Columbus’s vain and visionary and contrary to the Scriptures, wondering that anyone could be so foolish as to
believe that the earth was round; that people walked on the other side with their heads downwards; that there was a part of the world where the trees and plants grow down instead of up.”

The extent of the Arab knowledge of navigation

It is thus evident that long before these days the Arabs were far ahead of the rest of the world in their knowledge of the globe, of astronomy and of navigation across the seas. Professor Lauf (1955, 16) remarks: “We have already seen how they, the Arabs, not only knew of the sphericity of the earth, but were able to measure it with great accuracy. Their astronomical knowledge was unsurpassed particularly as reflected in the scientific works of al-Biruni, circa 1000 C.E., under whom the construction of instruments and the preparation of star tables were improved to such an extent that al-Zarqali was able to determine the difference in longitude between his observatory in Toledo (Spain) and that in Baghdad as 51° 30‘ compared with the modern value of 48° 29‘. Furthermore, the Arabs devised a simple type of stereographic projection for the representation of the celestial sphere on a plane surface. . . . The only man of any importance which has been handed down to us from this period is that of al-Idrisi, prepared in 1154. . . . There seems to be little doubt that al-Idrisi’s maps contributed much to the portolan charts of the great navigators a century later.”

Such then was the Arab knowledge of navigation, of charts and of nautical instruments. It is therefore interesting to compare the corresponding European knowledge in these matters at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The Portuguese writer Seruya (1913, X, 76) describes Vasco da Gama’s meeting for the first time at Melinde the pilots of the Indian Ocean: “At Melinde four Indian’ vessels were in port, manned partly by Christian Hindoos and partly by Mahomedans, who showed great joy at the sight of the strange navigators. . . . It is contended by some writers that da Gama learnt from these Hindoos a new manner of taking the altitude of the sun and how to use the compass. It is said that da Gama’s astrolabe, which he showed them, did not astonish those men in any way, and that, on the contrary, they showed him much more perfect instruments, which, they asserted, were commonly used by the Arabs in the Red Sea, and by all other people who visited the Indian Ocean.”

The use of the compass by the Arabs

Now be it noted that da Gama at Melinde was introduced into the use of the compass, and a few words on the early use of the compass by the Arabs is necessary. Bailak Kibdjak, an Arab writer, shows in his Merchant’s Treasure, which was published in 1282, that the magnetized needle, floated on water by means of a splinter of wood or reed, was employed on the Syrian seas at the time of his voyage from Tripoli to Alexandria in 1242 and adds: “The captains who navigate the Indian seas use, instead of the needle and splinter, a sort of fish made out of hollow iron, which when thrown into the water, swims above the surface, and points out the north and south with its head and tail.”

Navigational calculations are best and easiest carried on by the Arabic, or decimal system of numeration, whence came our modern arithmetic, earlier known as algorithm. Brown (1905, 11) points out that: “Before the end of the ninth century the Hindoo figures (including the zero) were known to the Arabs, and before the end of the tenth century they were in general use among them. By the eleventh century they had been introduced into Spain by the Moors.” McCabe continues: “They had ten different kinds of quad-

rants, some with a radius of fifteen feet, and a bronze sextant used to ascertain the obliquity of the ecliptic had a radius of fifty-eight feet and the arc was divided into seconds.” It is thus clear that in instruments needful for navigation the Arabs at this date were far ahead of their European contemporaries.

The Arabs with the knowledge obtainable with the above-mentioned astronomical and navigational instruments were able to devise sailing charts, and with them they also used the compass. Thus Butler and Thompson (1919, VI, 175) state “that the Arabs must have been acquainted with the compass, and with the construction and use of charts, at a period nearly two centuries previous to Chordin’s (1643-1713) first voyage to the East, may be gathered from the description given by Barros of a map of all the coast of India, shown to Vasco da Gama by a Moor of Guzerat (circa 15 July 1498), in which the bearings were laid down after the manner of the Moors, or ‘with meridians and parallels very close together, without other bearings of the compass, because as the squares of these meridians and parallels were very small, the coast was laid down by these two bearings of North and South, and East and West, with great certainty, without that multiplication of bearings of the points of the compass usual in our maps, which serves as a root of the others.” Now note that here were Arabs with sailing charts made on a type of Mercator’s projection — the meridians and parallels were plotted at right angles to each other and in the same size square, so that the maps sailing routes are loxodromes or rhumb lines. Now it was not until 1568 that Mercator, the Flemish geographer, first used the map projection now known as Mercator’s projection “with the parallels and meridians at right angles”.

Maps and charts well known in the Indian Ocean long before the arrival of any Europeans there

There is further evidence that maps and charts were well known in the Indian Ocean and China Seas long before the arrival of any Europeans in these regions. Thus one of the captains sent by d’Albuquerque to explore the Spice Islands was Antonio d’Abreu. He visited Bala, Banda, Amboyna and Ternate in 1510, but died on the homeward voyage. Cortesao (1944, I, 210) in his translation of Pires’s Suma Oriental writes: “If in what I say of these islands, together with Banda, I disagree with the pilots, it is not my fault, because in this I am relying on people who have been there. I have learnt this from Moors, from their charts, which I have seen many times, and if their charts are not to be trusted, let it be clear that this should be for reading and not for navigation.” It is thus clear that the Arabs of the Indian Ocean were abundantly supplied with charts and maps, and this fact must be borne in mind when the Arab activities in the Atlantic in pre-Columbian days comes to be considered. However, the most interesting chart is one collected by d’Albuquerque after his capture of Malacca in the fifteenth century. He received gifts for the King of Portugal. Sancue (1936, 184), quoting from d’Albuquerque’s letter to His Majesty, writes: “But perhaps the most remarkable object obtained from Java was a map designed by a pilot from that island. It showed, the Governor tells D. Manuel, “the Cape of Good Hope, Portugal, the land of Brazil, the Red Sea,
the Persian Gulf, the Spice Islands, and the navigation of the Chinese and the Gores with the courses followed by their ships. . . . It seemed to me, Senhor, the best thing I had ever seen, and Your Highness would have been delighted with it. The names were marked in Javanese lettering." Unfortunately, the ship carrying this map and other treasures was lost, but note that pilots in Java before 1511 knew that the Cape of Good Hope could be rounded, they also knew of Brazil and of Portugal, and the question arises of how they did become aware of this knowledge. To answer, one must know, having established the high navigational skill and knowledge of instruments by the Arabs, consider their early activities in the Atlantic.

REFERENCES


THE ISLAMIC CENTRE OF AMERICA
Mansfield, Ohio, U.S.A.
8th April, 1956.

Dear Brother in Islam,
Assalamo aleykum!

I was very happy to receive your letter inviting me to write something about the Islamic Centre of America.

About twenty-nine years ago when I came to Mansfield, Ohio, I was spiritually commanded by the Prophet Muhammad to work for the cause of Islam in America. A few days after this experience, I saw a very disgraceful article in the Mansfield newspaper by a malicious enemy of the Prophet. I was deeply hurt and could not find the right kind of material to write something about the sterling character of the Prophet and publish it in the same paper, as my English at that time was poorer than it is now. I went to the public library where, thank God, I found a copy of *Islam and Civilization,* by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, and I wrote something brief to the newspaper in which the unpleasant article appeared.

Fortunately a few months later *The Islamic Review of Woking* and *The Light of Lahore,* Pakistan, came into my hands. Since then I have been producing with my small income, earned from my work in a steel mill, booklets and circulars for free distribution. Some years ago I registered the Islamic Centre of America and obtained a certificate from the State of Ohio.

In 1954, the Editor of the *Mansfield News-Journal* wished to publish something about me and my religious activities in his paper, and sent a reporter to my residence to ask me questions about myself and my religious activities. Enclosed is a cutting from the *Mansfield News-Journal* for 8th June 1954 containing Mr. Bob Liston’s article. (This article is reproduced below. Ed., I.R.)

Thank God, during my twenty-nine years of slow but continued work I have received 950 letters from my readers and a number of non-Muslims have accepted Islam.

Respectfully yours,
MUHARREM NADJI.

"He Wants People to 'Know' Mohammed"
"By Bob Liston"

"A Moslem by faith, an Albanian by birth and an American by choice, Muharrem Nadji remains a living symbol of religious freedom in this country."

"From his residence at 610 Stewart Lane, the 62-year-old scholar operates the organization he founded 27 years ago — The Islamic Center of U.S."

"Nadji writes letters and books and translates material explaining the beliefs of those who follow Mohammed. His purpose? 'To correct American misconceptions about the Moslem religion,' he explains."

"He conducts the Center at his own expense. An employee for the last 28 years at Empire Steel, Nadji spends the bulk of his modest income on the cause in which he vehemently believes. Not the least of his expenses are the occasional full-page ads placed by him in the Saturday edition of the News-Journal."

"WHY does he do this?"

"There are two reasons: first, as Christians have done for 1,954 years, Nadji has received the call in the same way young men have entered the ministry. As Christ has spoken to Ministers, Nadji believes Mohammed, through a vision, ordered him to carry out this work."

"Second, Americans are misinformed about Islam. 'I have read many college textbooks about the Koran and the teachings of Mohammed. They contain many errors,' Nadji says."

JULY 1956
His desire is not to convert Christians or Jews to his faith. 'We all worship the same God, only in different ways.'

Nadjî was born in Albania in 1891, but left there in 1914 when the Greeks occupied the country. He went first to Argentina and came to the United States in 1917. He lived in Canton and various small towns in Pennsylvania before coming to Mansfield in 1927.

'It was soon after coming here that he says he received his vision from Mohammed. It came in a period when he was seriously considering returning to his native land. He was reminded that Moslems have never attempted to teach in America and that he was needed here.'

'The white-haired, soft-spoken Mansfield man is a member of the Sufi order of the Moslem religion. This is a mystic order in the religion made up of men capable of having higher divine experiences. Visions come to them in a variety of forms, dreams, spoken words or handwriting.'

'Nadjî explains it this way: 'While a Sufi is in a state of meditation and contemplation and he experiences anything which tickles his curiosity he utters the Arabic words "Ilahe Ani maksudi wa Rizaka mutlube" — My God, you are my Aim and Your will is my desire.'

'He says there are perhaps two dozen Albanian Moslems living in Mansfield. He is in many ways their religious leader, though they do not hold worship services in the Christian sense of the word. 'Each man is capable of saying his own prayers,' Nadjî says.

'He remains a simple, devout man, passionate in his love for America and its religious freedom and of God. He lives alone in his neat, modern apartment. It contains his books and a desk and filing cabinet necessary to his maintenance of the Islamic Center.

'He adjusts the rituals of his religion to American life, rearranging his fast days and prayer times to the exigencies of his work in the steel mill. Though he praises Turkish food as 'the greatest in the world,' he still eats an American diet, omitting only pork.

'And so, Muhtarrem Nadjî lives alone, eating simple meals, saying his prayers, reading the Koran and continuing his education work. I want to make people love God, so God will love me.'

* * *

AN ENGLISH MUSLIM ON THE IMPORTANCE OF 'ID GATHERINGS AT WOKING TO THE FUTURE OF ISLAM IN ENGLAND

Coombe Lea Hotel, Bickley, Kent.

My dear Brother,

As salamu 'alaikum wa rahmatu-Rah.

The 'Id gatherings at Woking, apart from their meaning and significance for us, are, I believe, an important means of making known to the people of this country, if only to some of them, the existence of Islam in their midst. I believe that the day will come when the truth of Islam will triumph over the ignorance of mankind and the self pride so apparent today throughout the world among both non-Muslims and Muslims. That day may be yet far off, or it may be nearer than we sometimes think, and in the meantime the work of the Woking Muslim Mission for the spread of Islamic knowledge in the Western world is an encouragement to other Muslims to play their part more courageously and with greater constancy in the great task which is before us.

I look forward to greeting you on the 'Id. Meantime, may God keep you safe and in good health.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) ABDULLAH,

(Lt.-Col. A. F. B. Baines-Hewitt.)

* * *

JEWISH-CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY

6 Queen's Ferry Close, Rugby,

England.

1st June 1956.

Dear Sir,

On 17th May 1956 the Jewish-Christian-Muslim Society was officially formed in London. The inaugural meeting, which took place at the Stratton Court Hotel, London, S.W.1, was attended by about thirty specially invited persons, who were in agreement with the general aims of the Society, circulated previous to the meeting.

The Chair was taken by Mr. A. I. Polack, M.A., Education Officer for the Council of Christians and Jews. After reading a welcoming address by Mr. Muhammad M. Ishaq, and talks by Mr. Salah-ad-Dien, Ph.D., Mr. 'Abdul Majid, Editor of The Islamic Review, Woking, stressed in his address the common basis of the three religions as represented in the Society and the importance of friendship between their members as serving one and the same cause. The meeting greatly appreciated the address. He was followed by Mr. George Arnsby-Jones, Ph.D., who spoke for the Christian members on similar lines. The Chairman then called upon Mr. G. Shepherd, who conceived the idea of forming this Society, to address the audience. Mr. Shepherd, in underlying the non-political character of the Society, emphasized that the political application of the ideals and aims of the Society would be in its contribution to the solving of problems in all spheres of human life: education, economy and politics. He said that the aim of the Society was to dispel the artificial mists of fear, distrust and hatred between Arabs and Jews and to rekindle the spiritual flame which first blazed in the East and has guided mankind right through the ages, by mobilizing and directing the latent idealism and goodwill amongst Jews, Christians and Muslims towards a spiritual renaissance. He proceeded to add that the representatives of the three religions would work in harmonious co-operation for the attainment of their common goal — seeking to enhance the peace and welfare of mankind — while each paid respect to the special characteristics of others and remembered the common basis of their spiritual message.

The following officers were elected:

President, Muslim Section: Mr. 'Abdul Majid;

President, Christian Section: Mr. Collins, of Cambridge, or alternatively, Canon Raven.

President, Jewish Section: Viscount Samuel, or alternatively, the Hon. Edwin Samuel.


Vice-Chairman: Mrs. Alice Shepherd.

Joint Secretaries: Muhammad M. Ishaq and George Shepherd.

Yours sincerely,

G. SHEPHERD, Secretary.
ISLAM IN THE NETHERLANDS

Study-address: Nieuwe Achtergracht 31
Blaricum, Post Laren N.H.
Prof. van Reeslaan 24,
Amsterdam C,
Holland.

Dear Sir,

19th May 1956.

The following information about Islam in the Netherlands may be of interest to the readers of The Islamic Review:

1. Islam is represented by:
   The Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission
   (Mr. Q. U. Haifiz, H.A.),
   The Mosque,
   Oostduinlaan 79, THE HAGUE.

   Foundation Nural Islam
   (Mr. Tkg. Abdullah),
   Frederik Hendriklaan 279, THE HAGUE.

   Perkumpulan Islam
   (Mr. Pak Nurali),
   Obrechtstraat 261, THE HAGUE.

   The Sheikh Mohammed Mian Trust
   (Mr. S. M. Tufail, M.A.),
   Stadionplein 11, AMSTERDAM Z.

2. Islamics are represented by:
   The University of Amsterdam
   (Professor Dr. G. F. Pijper),
   Dr. Catzlaan 3, Blaricum, Post LAREN, N.H.

   The University of Groningen
   (Professor Dr. J. H. Hospers)
   Noorderbinnensingel 124, GRONINGEN.

   The University of Leiden
   (Professor Dr. G. W. J. Drewes),
   Zoeterwoudse singel 109, LEIDEN ; and
   (Professor Dr. V. E. Korn),
   2de Schuytsstraat 65, THE HAGUE.

   The Royal Institute of the Tropics
   (Mr. R. L. Mellema, Phil. Drs.),
   Linneausstraat 2, AMSTERDAM 0.

3. Islamic circles are represented by:
   The Dutch-Arabic Circle
   (Mr. J. Haring,
   Jaarsveldstraat 90, THE HAGUE.

   We hope that there will arise from all these Islamic manifestations a real Muslim brotherhood in the Netherlands, for a religion without real brotherhood has no reason for existence. Christianity gives us in this respect a tragic example. Let us as Muslims try to realize Unity in Diversity in the case of interpretation of our Holy Qur’an, in tolerance.

Yours sincerely,

ABDUR-RAHMAN J. CRAMER.


This book is written by an Englishman who has had a lifelong association with the Turkish people extending from the Khazaks in the East to the Turks of the Turkish Republic. He sets out to tackle his task with a description of the introduction of Islam to the Middle East and his approach to the religion itself and its founder, and its impact on the people of Central Asia is by far the best that has come from the pen of a non-Muslim.

The Arab Empire in its heyday extended north-east as far as the domains of China and north to the borders of Siberia. It was here in 692 C.E. that the Arabs came upon the Turks, who were till then Shamanists, and who very readily adopted Islam as their own religion. The first movement of the Turks westwards began with the Mongol pressure and the Osmanli Turks got a foothold in Asia Minor somewhere about 1000 C.E. The Osmanli Turks took over from the Abbasid Caliphs and the Ottoman Empire was evolved. The author deals with the period from the formation of the Empire to the growth of the Republic under Mustafa Kamal. Russia is shown always to be the arch enemy. Trenchant comment is made about the attitude of the British Government on the assessment of Turkish nationalist aspirations and the policy pursued. It is rather galling to find that not only was the Government of the time bent on dismembering the country, but British troops occupied Baku and Trans-Caucasus in order to hamstring the Turkish nationalist movement in Anatolia. Mustafa Kamal, however, by a master stroke, spoiled these plans and by a succession of military victories against the Greeks regained the independence of Turkey. Few writers indeed have attempted to analyse the complex character of Mustafa Kamal either out of fear or veneration, or lack of material for making an assessment. Mr. Price has however succeeded in giving readers some insight into the strength and weaknesses of the founder of modern Turkey. In that alone is his contribution towards an understanding of Turkey in its generation period, and will explain her policy towards the Caliphate, internal and external policy, language reform and the establishment of the secular State, and all these have been dealt with in a very clear manner. It is bewildering to think now that the intervention of Emir Ali and the Aga Khan precipitated the abolition of the Caliphate: more important still the effect on the new generation that had grown up without any knowledge of the traditions of Islam or of the sayings of Muhammad. This very important aspect of Turkish life forms the concluding chapter of Mr. Price’s book. He tells how after the death of Ataturk there has been a realization of the need for a revival of religious teaching and the progress made since then.
There may be a measure of disagreement with certain conclusions reached by the author on the question of the influence of religion. Mr. Price contends that although Islam has been an immense civilizing influence over a large part of Asia and Africa for centuries, it had one weakness in the past, namely, its rigidity — his point being that it is very difficult for Muslim States to change their institutions to meet new conditions because Muslims held that “Islam regulated not only man’s spirit but his material life”. The Western Christian world held another and more elastic view on this great issue. They rendered unto Caesar the things that were Caesar’s and unto God the things that were God’s. In Judaism and Islam, however, people had to render unto God not only the things that were God’s but also the things that were Caesar’s. If these premises are correct, how is it that the Jews have succeeded and the Muslims have failed? While attributing the failure of the Muslims to keep up with modern developments to the rigidity of Islam, Mr. Price falls into the same confusion as most Muslims have done in not defining the difference between the Shari’ah and the Qur’an.

Some other explanation must be found than this. It is one voiced by those members of the Turkish Cabinet at the time who were in favour of complete secession from the Islamic way of life. It is by no means suggested that the old Mullahism and the sway of the priests was the right and proper order for a newly-created State, but a compromise would have been a better way than a total veto placed on the religion itself in its entirety.

The theme of the book is that “modern Turkey is the pillar of Western civilization in the Middle East and she forms the bastion of Western defence in this part of the world. Politically she is the most stable of all the Middle Eastern States”. Turkish policy, the author now claims, is that of facing West, and as she could not stand up to Russia singly, it was up to her to join a European defence system. She has preferred to be “a junior partner in a strong, well-organized Western alliance, rather than a senior partner in a firm of weak members whose recently-found nationalism has made them suspicious of everyone, even of themselves”. All this is very commendable if the Turks, who are contributing now a quarter of the armed forces of N.A.T.O., are being helped as they should be. At the moment there is a belief even among the Turks themselves that it is all very well being accepted as a junior partner in the committee of Western nations, ready to throw her soldiers into the field as she did in Korea, but uncommitted nations have been given much more material help — with little or no sacrifice being called for in return.

This is a fair and reasoned book which should be read by everyone interested in present-day Turkey.

---

**FLOWERS FROM THE GARDEN**

(IV)

**By Prayer shall ye Live**

Prayer is the breath of the life of the soul of man.
Prayer is the power that moveth the mountains of trouble,
that can
Solace affliction, lighten the darkness, give unto man
Wisdom and Beauty and Peace and Courage undaunted, that can
Make life’s brief span now wide as Eternity’s brow.

How should one pray? Where and when and for what should one pray?
Think of it thus: prayer is the cry love sends to Love,
Joy of the soul seeking the light sent from above.
So we may say:
“Wherever thou art, whenever thou wilt and for what thou dost need,
So shouldst thou pray.”

Prayer is the life-rope in all worldly storms.
Prayer is the power that fosters hope in myriad forms;
But of all stars of prayer the mighty Sirius bright
Is this: “O Lord, perfect my light! perfect my light!”

When the dawn breaks, when the night falls,
Pray.
When the golden blaze of noonday
Beats with heat upon the house wall,
Pray.

---

When the silver moon is riding
Through the sky,
When the pattern’d stars are gliding
By,
Seek thy Lord with joy abiding,
(He is nigh),
Pray.

William Bashyr Pickard.

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William Bashyr Pickard

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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
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