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Between Ourselves

THE COVER

The picture on the Cover is that of the world-famous Court of the Lions in the Palace of al-Hamra' (the Alhambra) at Granada, Spain. The building of the Palace was begun by a Moorish King, Ibn al-Ahmar (1248 C.E.), and completed by his grandson, Muhammad III, about 1314 C.E. The principal decorator was Yusuf I, who rebuilt and repainted the Palace. Traces of his work are preserved in the Palace as it stands today. The picture of the Court of the Lions brings out forcefully the lightness and elegance of the columns and arches and the richness of ornamentation, which are truly unsurpassed and for which it is so deservedly famed.

THE CONTRIBUTORS

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RAMADHAAN

A résumé of the speech of Mr. Habib Bourguiba, President of the Republic of Tunisia, on Fasting during the month of Ramadhaan, and a plea for extension of “classical” exemptions from fasting under modern conditions

We have every now and then published articles which point to the emergence and rise of the new Ilm al-Kalaam (dogmatic theology) in the world of Islam. What the cumulative effect of all these mental efforts will be is not very difficult to foresee; for its modern thinkers like Iqbal and political leaders like Nasir, Muhammad Ayyub Khan and Bourguiba are exerting themselves to bring home to Muslims that Islam is not a doctrine of intellectual asphyxia and that it is an admirable code of life which should and can adapt itself to the essential facts of progress and that it can avoid being consumed by an attack of sclerosis; that above all, neither God nor the Prophet Muhammad has banned research and thinking out their problems anew.

President Bourguiba has taken up once more the campaign he started last year for a re-interpretation of the question of dispensations in the institution of fasting to suit the modern conditions. The burden of his theme this year, as last year, was: the fast diminishes the economic potential capacity of the Tunisian nation and, for that matter, of all the Muslim countries; it lessens the physical effort and is harmful to economic struggle for existence. He rebutted his critics by saying, “It has been said that I wish to suppress Ramadhaan and that amongst other things I wish the civil servants not to fast. I have never done such a thing.”

The history of the world of Islam shows that it has as yet known no intellectual revolution. It has for the last fourteen hundred years pursued a certain pattern of life set for it centuries ago. No change seems to have been envisaged in it by its various prominent thinkers which it produced in its various countries at various periods of its history, so that today as yesterday Islam and unchangeability came to be regarded as synonymous.

In dealing with fasting as conceived by Muslims as a body, President Bourguiba has attempted to say things which may be regarded as innovations. Besides, his views have to contend with tradition and habit, irrespective of the benefits to be derived from them.
On 8th February 1961, President Bourguiba delivered his Ramadhaan speech before a large audience at the Labour Exchange at Tunis. This important address lasted two hours. The President was accompanied by his wife and Mr. ‘Abd al-'Aziz Mehiri and members of the Praesidium. The audience included important high officials of the Destour Party and Ministers of the Tunisian Cabinet.

This speech must surely rank as the most important speech on a religious theme ever delivered in independent Tunisia as well as one of the most important utterances ever made by the Head of State of any modern Muslim power. The importance of the speech is thrown into relief all the more when one remembers that the State religion of Tunisia is Islam.

A Résumé of President Bourguiba's speech on Ramadhaan

The President dealt chiefly with the fast and the exemptions given to travellers and sick people in the Qur'anic verses dealing with fasting during Ramadhaan. He pointed out that this law had been laid down by the Qur'an and would so remain until the end of time. But although the cases of exemption, he said, are known and detailed studies of them have been made, some religious teachers do not mention them in their classes. Nonetheless these exemptions, he said, are authentic, and they remain valid. The President in pursuing his line of argument pointed out that the two exemptions — travellers and the sick — mentioned in the Qur'anic verses had been extended to cover other cases. He said, for instance, originally it was only travellers and sick people who were exempted, but later those taking part in the Jihad were also included, and still later on, in agreement with the 'ulema, people who might incur the risk of illness through fasting were also included in the exemption category, and going deeply into the matter and by analysing the motive for exemption, one came to the conclusion that this precaution had been taken for a common sense reason, namely, to save the Muslims from harm and suffering.

To give an example, travelling was a very tiring affair in ancient times when people were transported across the Syrian desert or elsewhere on the back of a camel. God ordained to spare the traveller undue discomfort; for if no dispensation had been given, there would have been a grave risk to health. If Muslims refrained from travelling during Ramadhaan, they would as a result have been condemned to idleness and unemployment. But the religion of Islam, far from encouraging idleness and inactivity, gives a dispensation to the traveller, or in other words, to whomsoever is obliged to make a physical effort and to work. The President said that illness also constituted a case for exemption, for fasting might aggravate the condition of a sick person whose physical condition did not permit him to undergo further privation; on the contrary, he needed extra nourishment to increase his strength.

President Bourguiba said that on reflecting on the requirements laid down in the Qur'an he was struck by the care taken to spare mankind from incurring unnecessary exhaustion or obstacles to work. He then explicated on the reason for the dispensation for the participants in the Jihad. As was well known, he said, it originated on the eve of the conquest of Mecca when the Prophet Muhammad ordered the "Faithful" to break the fast so that they could meet the enemy under the most favourable possible conditions.

The President stated that a very careful study of the conditions justifying exemption from the fast resulted in him coming without hesitation to the conclusion that one was justified in not observing the fast if it impaired national economic activity. President Bourguiba said that it was true that the Qur'an laid down the need to fast, but the object of this was to teach people to control their appetites and to evolve their higher selves. Things, he said, must be reduced to their real values. If fasting led to the lowering of the output of the Muslim community or diminished the capacity for work of a workman, then it must be dispensed with. In arguing his case further he pointed out that although travelling was on the list of dispensations as mentioned in the Qur'an, travel today differed greatly from what it was formerly: now one could travel with the utmost comfort in the armchair of an aeroplane. Yet the dispensation not to fast while travelling remained, he said, as valid today as in the days of the Prophet, although there were people who maintained that dispensation should only be given to a traveller on the verge of physical collapse. The President asked, But why is a dispensation given to the traveller surrounded by every form of comfort? Should it be denied, should it not be accorded, to an under-nourished workman whose constitution was undermined so that he could not effectively ply his trade? He is only allowed under existing conditions to break the fast after fainting for the second time! The President asked his audience if it considered this as logical.

President Bourguiba appealed to the intelligence of the Tunisian people to examine these affairs with the aid of their 'ulema and shaykhs and to familiarize themselves with all the facts. Intelligence, he said, has been given by God to distinguish between good and evil. He claimed that the real struggle was against under-development, and that when they were engaged in a life and death struggle for social uplift it was not the time to restrict production by artificial methods; it was necessary to have a carefully defined and sober conception of Islam.

The President maintained that faced with a decrease in the volume of production on a national scale as a result of Ramadhaan, the workers should benefit from an exemption to fast. Faced with the two imperatives of fasting and intensive work, the former should give way to the latter. The President mentioned in this connection that this difficult situation was similar to that arising from the Qur'anic laws on polygamy to the effect that a man who was afraid that he would be unable to treat several wives equally should refrain from marrying more than one wife as his efforts to treat several wives equally would be doomed to failure.

The President showed sympathy with those who tried to overcome privation and work and fast at the same time, but he claimed that by so doing they were working against the Divine will, which was opposed to inflicting excessive suffering, as was shown by according the dispensation to travellers. The President said that the Muslim people had remained in a state of bondage ever since the flame of knowledge had been extinguished and they had refused to interpret the Qur'anic laws to suit the ever-changing conditions of life. The struggle to raise the standard of living and the attempt to drag the Muslims from their underdeveloped economy inherited from a decadent age, he
opined, was a cause equally valid as that of the *Jihad* to qualify for exemption.

The President told his audience how his Minister of Defence, Mr. Bahi Ladgham, had recently informed him that of the 60,000 young conscripts only 6,000 at the most were fit for military service. This, he pointed out, showed that the health of the people left something to be desired. The medical bodies had reported to him that the illnesses of the rich were due to excessive over-indulgence and of the poor to malnutrition.

President Bourguiba stated categorically that he did not intend to engage in a controversy over a religious dogma, that he had no intention of forcing people to refrain from fasting if they did not desire to do so. He said he was merely expressing his own opinion and nobody was forced to follow his example. But President Bourguiba felt confident that his views were shared by the Tunisian youth and that they would be universally accepted within a period of twenty years at the most, if not sooner. President Bourguiba pointed out how many years ago led the Tunisian people against the French religious authorities who had announced that they would hold a Eucharistic Conference in Tunis in 1930 and had taken up the cudgels for Islam over the unfavourable remarks against the Muslims made by some French journals at that time. He gave a number of cases to show how the Tunisian religious leaders had failed the Muslims and how they had aided French imperialism during the period of the French Protectorate from 1881 to 1954-56, and had supported the French campaign for the French naturalization of Tunisian subjects. It may be remarked in passing that the scathing observations of the President apply equally to the Muslim *ulama,* with few few isolated cases, all over the world. They, as a body, do not seem to have given a lead in any sphere of the life of Muslims. Whatever new thought has emerged in the world of Islam has been despite them.

The President was particularly opposed to the parents whose children of both sexes fasted from an age of 9 years to 12; for he considered that puberty implied a state of full physical development. The President was convinced that the seed he had sown would be reaped by the youth within one or two years and other Muslim countries would follow suit.

The President in his speech went back to the cases of Mahdi Ibn Toumert, the al-Muwahhid ruler, and his successor, ‘Abd al-Mu’min, to show what appalling cruelty was exercised in the name of Islam. He cited the cases of Turkey and Iraq, where conditions in the past few years had led to revolutions, and claimed his only wish was to place all his strength at the disposition of his people and to place them on the road to material and moral progress and to arouse its conscience so that it could proceed along the road to progress.

President Bourguiba stated categorically that Islam was not a doctrine to produce intellectual asphyxias; the Prophet and the early Muslims had been men of the greatest possible courage and they applied the principles of Islam far more freely by adapting them to given circumstances than did the *ulama* during the decadent period. He cited the example of the Caliph ‘Umar, who had suspended certain penalties when circumstances so demanded.

Why, he asked, was not courage applied today on an equal scale? He argued to say that it was absurd to refuse to discuss certain matters because they had not been mentioned hitherto. He said that fasting was a part of all religions; the benefits derived from it under certain conditions when medically prescribed or as a form of discipline were not a matter of dispute. But the Prophet would not envisage the possibility of the Muslims now trailing behind others.

**IT IS VISIONARIES WHO BUILD THE FUTURE**

We earnestly commend the appeal printed elsewhere in this issue made by Dr. Mahmudullah Jung addressed, in particular, to the heads of the Islamic States.

Dr. Jung comes from a distinguished family of India. His ancestors, Sir Syed Ahmed, K.C.S.I., and the Maulavi Muhammad Sameeullah, C.M.G., led the Muslims of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent during the latter half of the 19th century for over fifty years.

Dr. Jung is an eminent thinker who has made an extensive study of the political systems of our time. He has visited all the important countries in Europe, the Americas and Asia in order to acquaint himself with their ways of life.

Dr. Jung is convinced that Islamic polity offers a well-balanced Welfare State, at once moral and virtuous in its operation. The Islamic Constitution, on the one hand, rejects the godlessness, the totalitarian concept, the regimentation of life and the aggressiveness of the Communist system, and on the other hand it rejects the exploitation, the iniquities and the immorality of the capitalist systems.

We, therefore, request our readers seriously to ponder over his thought-provoking appeal. Nay, we gladly join with Dr. Jung in his appeal to the heads of the Islamic States to offer him an opportunity to experiment with his Islamic system in a marked and restricted territory, perhaps a single district or a remote province, and in this way bring about the renaissance of Islam and thus open a way to a life in complete harmony with nature and founded upon Divine principles.
THE IMPORTANCE OF THE IDEAL, GOD, IN THE LIFE OF MAN

The key to happiness in life

The Sufi Approach to the problem of the Peace of Mind

"The flower plants that sprout from the earth in a garden perish eventually
"But the flowers growing from the heart know no decay."—(Rumi).

by DR. MIR VALIUDDIN

When does religion cease to be mysterious or dogmatic?

Health is harmony — a delicate balance of adjustment between spirit, soul and body. This harmony is dependent entirely upon the greater harmony between ourselves and God. Let us see how religion teaches to establish this harmony between ourselves and God.

“To be spiritual,” says Santayana, “is to live in the presence of the ideal.” The meaning of spirituality and its relation to religion are best expressed by Durant Drake in these words: “The disposition of the heart and will, through which a man comes to care for the highest things and to live in gentleness and inward calm above the surface aspects and accidents of life, we call in its inner nature Spirituality; when it is embodied in outward forms and institutions and spreads among whole communities, we call it Religion.”

If we argue that way, religion loses its mysterious or dogmatic and oracular character and becomes the intrinsic response of the soul in need. It is not something the “truth” of which we have to question and argue about and seek evidence for. It rests upon the recognition of a realm of higher values and a kind of instinctive sympathy with them and longing for them. We aspire for higher values of this realm, we do not confine ourselves to the pleasure and attractions of the nether world. We do not busy ourselves in absorbing merely the “hay and seeds” of life, and since religion always places the higher values before us, it does not allow our hearts to be busy always in enjoying the delights and pleasures of this beautiful world only! Religion keeps our attention engaged on these values and is therefore the loveliest thing in a man’s life.

What is the source of this Ideal, in the presence of which to live is to be spiritual? Can you comprehend the origin of the higher values, concentration on which is termed living a religious life? It is none but that which had been spoken of as the Good by Plato, and regarded by him as the absolute beloved of the whole universe!

The love for good is in the very nature of every individual; every mind is in quest of it and every eye looks forward to it. Does not every person wish himself well? What else is it which he is after? Good is the only cherished object before you when you exclaim:

“1 cannot keep my heart and eyes busy elsewhere. The object that my heart and eyes seek is the vision of Thy glory only.”

It is probable that every person had draped his beloved in a different garment, but in spite of all apparent variations, the same one light is manifest in the entire universe. Every man seems to be enamoured of this beloved! The difference
is marked by the degree of knowledge one brings to bear on it, but the object — the beloved — is only one. After comprehending this point you cannot deny it.

"He who had seen the dark and glossy hair of Layla,² knows well why Majnun³ was enamoured of her."

Plato’s philosophy regards Good and God as synonymous

The "Good" itself has been termed "God" by Plato. According to his system of philosophy Good and God are synonymous. All religions and sects have expressed the same truth in different languages. God, Yazdan, Allah, Ishwar, Haqq, etc., are the different names of the same One Being alone. The same one truth has been regarded as the source of all higher values. All the rays of values radiate from this prime centre of life that guards and preserves them. Religion, in the words of the German thinker Harold Hoffding, is the faith in God as the guardian and conservator of these values. Its love in human nature is a divine gift. Love of good and regard for values is another name for loving the Being of God alone. Regarding this Being as the source of all ideal values, and living one's life in His contemplation, is spirituality, is faith, is religion. It is through this process, as if piercing through the shadow one emerges before the original, one no longer merely hears Reality from a distance; one comes face to face with it. A gnostic has beautifully expressed the idea thus:

"When I hold the Beloved’s tresses in my hands, musk in liquid form drips from my fingers.

"When the Beloved comes into my arms, rays then emanate from myself and illumine the world."

I shall now give a brief description of the revolution wrought in life by living in the presence of this Ideal.

Purification of the self possible through “thought”, which alone is man’s reality

When this ideal absorbs all attention, the truth of the Persian hemistich is realized:

"When a person concentrates his attention on one object, he seems to be ubiquitous, and the man who is everywhere is, as a matter of fact, nowhere."

When such is the case, that is to say, when one gains unity of attention, moral vices begin to disappear and virtues begin to make their appearance instead.

How does this take place? It requires a little explanation. The real substance in man is "thought". This alone is his reality, and according to Rumi, all the rest found in him is "bones and fibres" and has no value.

The thought is affected by the thing on which it is concentrated. It fills the atmosphere of the mind with its effects. This atmosphere becomes, as it were, tinged with its colour. There is a famous saying to the effect that the liquid which drips from a vessel is what the vessel contains. The same thoughts are manifested in practice which are filled in the vessel of thought. In other words, thoughts and ideas take the form of practice in the world of effects. Thinking is a reality and action is its manifestation. Thought is the real substance and action is its shadow. After discovering this truth the gnostic of Rumi had loudly exclaimed:

"O brother! you are nothing else save thought, all the rest in yourself is fibres and bones."

"If you have ideas of flowers in your mind, you are, then, as it were, a garden."

"And if you have thoughts of thorns and dross you are like a kiln."

When one’s gaze is concentrated on good, on values, and his mind is engrossed in them, or changing the simile we may say, when the rooster of thought begins to keep watch on the egg of heart, the latter itself begets "ecstacy, noise and laughter"! If attention is concentrated on the flower and adverse thought does not enter the mind, that is to say, when the thorn cannot find its way in the atmosphere of the mind, the heart then finds all the effects of the flower in itself. Man begins to experience the same bliss, colour, perfume and felicity which have been bestowed on the flower by nature. On the other hand, if your gaze is riveted on the thorn, and the field of thought is full of thorns, your heart needs must feel their prick. The fuel for fire gets ablaze in the heart — sorrow, pain, anxiety or fear, is another name for these very states. When these states of the heart appear in the guise of actions or deeds, different forms of evil then make their appearance in the external world. They begin from the mind and terminate in the world.

If the ideal, the centre of gaze, is God, if it is the Whole whose different aspects alone are noble qualities and perfect attributes, it is evident, then, that the states of heart are pleasant and good, and deeds and actions are nothing but the manifestations or revelations of these states alone! All of them are good and are called good.

How to conquer evil conditions

If you desire for a further explanation of this principle, selecting a few from the list of moral vices and virtues, I would say that if you wish to remove the emotion of hatred from your character, you should carefully guard the conception of love; if you desire to dispel fear, rivet your attention on courage and valour. Similarly, instead of selfishness or egoism keep in view self-sacrifice and sympathy. Concentrate your mental forces on forgiveness instead of anger, on health instead of sickness, on good manners instead of rudeness, and on patience instead of fretting and fuming. You will then gradually become the ideal which is the object of your thought. The eminent Jami calls our attention to this principle thus:

"If the thought of a flower enters your mind, you would then be a flower as it were.

"And if the thought of a restless nightingale finds its way into your mind, you will then be a nightingale, as it were.

"You are a part and God is the Whole; if you reflect awhile

"On the whole, then, you too are the whole as it were!"

William James expressed this view in pragmatic terms:

"The drama of life is a mental drama, all the trouble is a mental one." It means that a trouble commences from the mind alone. If matters are smoothed here and the path is cleared, the difficulties of life do not arise at all.

Keeping this principle in view, it may be asserted that if you are in quest of the key to happiness you will not find it in any bazaar; do not search for it outside. You can obtain this key by changing your mind, by creating virtuous attributes within yourself and by giving special training to your thought. So the method of acquiring it is:

"Adopt virtue and be happy; always be looking at virtue and have a good opinion of others,

"Because these four things alone are the key to happiness."

The meaning of living in the presence of an ideal

In other words, if you have lived a virtuous life, if you have searched for virtue everywhere, considered always the good aspect of everything, given place to good thoughts
in your mind, formed a good opinion of others and experienced joy and felicity in such deeds, you have then mastered the secret of a happy life — the only way to a joyous and felicitous life!

Living in the presence of the ideal means that instead of concentrating your attention on vices, you should concentrate it on virtues, exert all your will-power in achieving it and stamp it on the mirror of your mind. This practice should commence from the early stages of life. The nature of children is usually simple and pure and their imitative powers are very acute. Their disposition should be dyed in the colour of virtues and the loveliness of “the colour of God” should be stimulated therein. The practice of keeping in view virtues and overlooking vices is very necessary. This practice creates virtuous attributes and keeps in check moral vices. It is imperative to know the basic moral virtues and vices. To aid the memory, a poet has expressed them in the following verses:

“The virtues and vices are altogether twenty in number.
If you are one of godly persons you should remember them well.
(The vices are) vanity, stinginess, conceit, love of riches, desire for eating and coitus.
Love for reputation, fury, jealousy and hypocrisy.
(The virtues are) patience, thanks-offering, piety, sincerity, fear of God, good thoughts, moderate fear and hope, repentance and resignation.”

In the above list of vices lying and back-biting have been omitted. The following quatrain covers all these vices:

“If you desire that your heart should become as clear as crystal,
You should clear your mind of ten vices:
Avarice, greed, stinginess, iniquity, back-biting,
Lying, envy, pride, hypocrisy and spite.”

These vices should be completely eradicated from the heart, and the way to do so is to make virtues the ideal and live in their presence. Darkness should be replaced by light and evil should be fought with good. It would be, as it were, layers of darkness one above the other, if darkness is matched against darkness. When these vices are rooted out from the heart, their offshoots, then, which are vices and wicked deeds, cannot play any mischief. The result is designated by the moralists as purity of heart and good manners.

Purification of heart results in happiness and bliss

Do you know in what do purification of heart, cleansing of mind or “Catharsis” result? Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and all the moralists of the world, have regarded virtue and happiness as twins. Virtue, piety, good deeds, good nature are synonymous. There necessary and universal effect is joy, pleasure, happiness and bliss! An example or two will make this important correlation between cause and effect clear.

Suppose you are by nature envious, that is, if any other person is favoured with blessings, you feel sad and despondent, you owe the man a grudge, and desire for his downfall. The pleasures enjoyed by him are a sore mortification for you!

You wonder why this happens. You wish to dispel your sorrow and it does not leave you, because you are helpless in depriving the man of the blessings he enjoys. But you have complete authority over your own self. You should wield that authority. Do not lose heart and you can eradicate the vice of envy. If a friend of yours happens to enjoy some favours you too should feel pleasure. Let this pleasure lucidly reflect in your heart. A little effort on your part will help you in achieving this. Only a little courage could effect this. A little reflection on love and satisfaction with what is given would suffice to accomplish it. After doing this you will see that the fire of jealousy which had been consuming your heart and nerves will be completely put out, and you will gain freedom from the tortures of Hell in this life.

In the same way think over the evils of anger! Suppose you are a victim of the emotion of maddening fury. A slight cause provokes you to anger. Your brain is filled with dark smoke. Now, in the external world everything is not arranged according to one’s tastes. If every crooked thing infuriates you, and fills your mind with dark thoughts, makes your blood toxic, you will not be able to differentiate between good and evil. The pure tides of love and friendship may be snapped, and one blow of yours may smash the relations of kith and kin. Then, pray tell me, can anybody claim friendship with a neurotic like you? Can you be ever destined to anything else save torments and tortures? Can you have any share of joy and peace of mind? Who has deprived you of all these values? Decidedly nothing from the external! All this is due to your mental disease, i.e., fury. Unless you cure this malady, no recipe of the Messiah even will help you to get rid of it and you will not recover! You need not even seek a Messiah! Give up anger, always be meek and forgiving, concentrate your powers of thinking on meekness and forgiveness and contemplate on them while sitting or walking. This will put out the flames of your wild fury and you will get rid of constant torment and torture, and you will be enlisted in the circle of “Those who control their anger and are forgiving towards fellow-beings” (The Qur'an, 5: 134).

You will be rewarded with peace of mind and ataraxia!

Similarly, reflect on all vices one by one. Their presence in your character is akin to a host of venomous insects infesting your garments and continually biting you. They do not even for a moment spare you! Or, changing the simile, we can say that your clothes are smeared with the worst stinking filth imaginable, the stench of which is intolerable for you for even one moment. The only way to tide over this difficulty is to change this dress, or to have it washed clean. From the beginning your aspiration, desire or prayer ought to be:

“O, God Almighty, wash my sins with the water of hailstones and ice and free my heart from sins, just as dirt is cleansed from a white cloth. Create a gulf between myself and my sin, as is found between the West and the East.

O Almighty God! make my mind pious and stainless!
Thou alone art the best Purifier and Thou alone art its Lord and Master!”

At the outset, living in the presence of the ideal is nothing but this, that the attributes of virtues should take the place of the attributes of vices. As soon as prayer, desire, aspiration, contemplation and austerity effect this change, the fountain of life-giving bliss wells out from the recesses of the heart, and one is blessed with everlasting joy.

“The flower plants that sprout from the earth in a garden perish eventually,
But the flowers growing out from the heart know no decay” (Rumi).

The change in the heart known in Sufi terminology as Takhliya-e Surr takes place when one lives in the presence of one’s ideal

By living in the presence of the ideal, a change takes place in the heart, which is expressed by Muslim Sufis by
the term Takhliyaʾe Sirr (Purification of the Secret). By keeping ourselves busy in purifying our hearts, we grasp the point intentionally and become convinced that such is the practice approved of God, and such is the settled or prevailing course of the perfect wisdom of the All-Wise, that the more a man is involved in bodily limitations, the more he is confined by external causes, and has his attention diverted towards material things, the more he suffers tribulations, mental worries, cares and forgetfulness of the remembrance of God. Further, to the extent he is engrossed in catering for his bodily needs or in nourishing his body, and in showing off his vanity, to that extent the condition of his soul deteriorates, his spiritual powers weaken, and his purity of mind and psychic forces decrease, and correspondingly his spiritual darkness thickens and his peace of mind disappears. After understanding this way of God, and this perfect wisdom of the All-Wise, those who live in the presence of the ideal regard austerity, striving and self-abnegation as the essential conditions of the Ṭariqa — the way of life. They hold that breaking the clinging bonds of self, or forsaking the world, is the prerequisite of the Ṭariqa.

The Sufis, who live in the Presence of God, enjoy peace of mind, felicity and pleasures of Heaven on earth

In the foregoing paragraphs I have made explicit the meaning of striving, austerity and self-abnegation in modern terms, which is, changing vices by virtues. Forsaking the world is the same as “journeying in one’s homeland”, a journey, as it were, in the human nature itself; it is a transference from vices to virtues. Disassociation with everything except God means keeping the same idea always in view. Seemingly, one should associate with created beings, but at heart he should be with God Almighty, Who is his Supreme Ideal.

This Divine law, or the practice approved of God, has been explained by a sage in the following couplet:

"If you follow the path that leads to the nurture of your body, blazing fire is ready for you!"
"And if you tread the path of heart, paradise would be your abode!"
"If you walk on the path of spirit, then my dear,
I shall cut my speech short and tell you that you will have a glimpse of your Beloved."

Peace of mind, felicity and the pleasures of Heaven on earth are enjoyed by those alone who, being contented with frugal eatables and drinks, spend all their energy in invigorating their mind and heart, never overlook their ideal, or in the words of pure-hearted Sufis, who live perpetually in the presence of God! Their gaze is turned away from the sordid things of the earth and their spirit, in a state of abstraction and ecstasy, always enjoys an indescribable bliss, being inwardly separated from all but God, seeing inwardly none but God, listening to none but God, and all this through a programme of strenuous activity useful to what the Prophet of Islam calls “The family of God”, or through devotion to the highest in life. In other words, their heart gets released from the captivity of the world, it becomes emptied of the thoughts of what is not God.

This is the picture of what the Qurʾān styles Ḳaʿba and An-Najd (Belief and Good Deed) — a life lived in the Presence of God, by eschewing from one’s thought and activity all that clogs the path of life, and creates internal tensions or frustrations, and in their place filling the mind with all that is noble and of goodly report, in other words, by absorbing the qualities or attributes of God and letting one’s mind become a home of harmony and the very seat of God.

1 Courtesy, The Hamdard, Karachi, Pakistan, for December 1960.
2, 3 In Arabic poetry two personal names of a woman and a man personifying the ideal love. The Arabic word layla means “night” and is the name given to girls, whereas the word majnun means “the one who is mentally ill” and is the name given to one who is madly in love with his beloved “Layla”.

THE DIVINE DIVAN

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Canst thou not hear His voice?
Saying to thee in the stillness of thine heart, “Rejoice!”
Be not afraid! I am thy Lord. I know the way.
Follow my Guidance and it shall be well with thee for ever
and a day!”
So shall thy feet be shod with righteousness
And wing’d with love,
Kindness and love for all mankind in graciousness.
The white, the black, the black and white, the brown, the yellow,
And the yellow, the white, the black, the brown —
What does it matter, the colour? The Lord is the Crown

Of life and of living, of acting, of doing, of giving.
The rich, the poor, the high, the low, the sick, the well — What does it matter? To all, to all thine heart should ring, as a sweet bell,
In kindness to all, in city and village, in vale and dell,
On mountains, in forests, in deserts or where the wild swell Of ocean comes tumbling — to all that on earth do dwell Let thy love shine forth from thine innermost heart of His Love.

He is thy Lord, He is their Lord, the One Supreme above.

William Bashyr Pickard.
THE MYSTICAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE INDIAN MUSLIM SAINT, THE SHAYKH NIZAAM AL-DIN AULIYAA’

The meaning of love of God in contrast to that of World

by DR. MUHAMMAD NUR NABI

The early days of the Shaykh Nizaam al-Din Auliya’

The Chishti Order in India was founded by the Shaykh Mu’inu al-Din Chishti. It was organized by the Shaykh Qutb al-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki and the Shaykh Farid al-Din Ganj-i-Shakar, but it reached its zenith at the time of the Shaykh Nizaam al-Din Auliya’.

The Shaykh Nizaam al-Din was born in Badaayun, India, on 9th October 1238 C.E. His ancestral abode was Bokhara. His grandfather, due to the invasion of Changez Khan, came to Lahore, which is the birthplace of both his father and mother. After some time these families shifted to Badaayun, where they settled permanently.

The Shaykh Nizaam al-Din was just a child of five when his father departed for the world beyond. It was his mother, Zulaykhah, who brought him up. Zulaykhah was a lady of fervent piety. She was his first teacher, whose influence was most lasting on him. It was she who kindled that spark of Divine love in him which later dominated his entire being and moulded his thought and action.

The Shaykh Nizaam al-Din, after the study of the Hadith, Tafsir, Surah, Nahw and Mantiq at his home-town, left for Delhi for his higher studies at the age of sixteen. There he was engrossed in study for four years and sat at the feet of the eminent scholars of the capital and earned a position of distinction in the academic circles.

The Shaykh Nizaam al-Din from a very tender age developed a faith in Baabaa Farid. In the company of the Shaykh Najib al-Din, the brother and successor (Khalifa) of Baabaa Farid, this faith grew incessantly. And one day he left for Ajodhan to visit the great Shaykh. The Shaykh welcomed him with the couplet in Persian:

Ay Aatish Firaqqat Dil-haa Kabaab Kardeh,
Saylaabhi Ishiyyaqqash Jaan-haa Kharaab Kardeh
(‘Oh you, the fire of whose separation has burnt hearts and the torrent of whose love has ruined souls’).

The Shaykh’s association with Baabaa Farid

On that very day the Shaykh Nizaam al-Din was initiated by Baabaa Farid. Baabaa Farid very soon granted the Shaykh the Khilafat Naamah (the successorship document) and appointed him as his successor.

The Shaykh passed the early days of his life in extremely straitened circumstances. Sometimes he passed continuously three days and nights without a meal. But these trials and tribulations, however, could not dissuade him from the path that he had chosen for himself. The Shaykh says: “It was the nature of my mother that when there was nothing to eat in the house, she used to say that they were the guests of God that day. I was always aspiring for such a day because it had a special interest and pleasure for me.” Thus, the Shaykh, even in extremely indigent circumstances, stuck like granite to his principles and allowed the storms to rage round him. Later on the time of ease and comfort dawned. The door of the Khanaqah (monastery) was thrown open. A stream of visitors flowed every day to the Khanaqah with enormous gifts. But not even this affluence could captivate the Shaykh. He firmly followed his own principles.

The Shaykh led a life of devotion and penitence. These penitences not only purified his inner life but opened his soul to the indwelling power of God. He was the living embodiment of those moral principles and precepts which he taught to the people. Behind every ethical principle which he expounded there was the force of his own example. He gave the message of “love” and “peace” to mankind irrespective of caste and creed. People visited him from far and near and basked in the sunshine of his spiritual favours. Thus, his Khanaqah was an oasis of love in a world of strife and conflicts.

The Shaykh not a propounder of a systematic philosophy

The Shaykh has not written any book which propounds a systematic and coherent philosophy. Yet he was a versatile genius. The author of Siyar al-Auliya’ writes about him that whenever any literary problem or difficulty arose, the Shaykh solved it with his clear, frank and lucid exposition. Being convinced by the convincing arguments of the Shaykh, people used to say that his answers were not the result of erudition but were the fruits of ‘Ilhaam (inspiration). It is through such books as Fawaa’d al-Fu’aad and Siyar al-Auliya’ that we become acquainted with the main ideas of the Shaykh.

Disciples and followers of the Shaykh used to visit him every day. They asked questions on different topics, to which the Shaykh answered. Sometimes the Shaykh himself narrated to them the stories of the distinguished saints and divines and at the same time explained to them the different problems arising out of those stories. Fawaa’d al-Fu’aad is the collection of such conversations of the Shaykh compiled by Amir Hasan Sijzi.

The Siyar al-Auliya’ was written by Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Mubarak Kirmani, known as Amir Khurd, a disciple of the Shaykh. It was written in 1351-88 C.E. Amir Khurd has given in this book whatever he heard from the Shaykh and from others.
An important feature of the philosophy of the Shaykh is that his thoughts are not the outcome of any systematic intellectual effort but are the expression of his experiences. He seldom puts forward any arguments in support of his experiences but very often quotes the experiences of other divines and saints. Now there is a lot of difference between communicating an experience and giving expression to an idea; and this is the difference between the Shaykh and other systematic mystic thinkers. Experiences do not follow one another like premises in a syllogism. A thought can be deduced from another thought but an experience cannot be deduced from another experience. Hence, while going through the conversations of the Shaykh, we do not get the picture of a coherent philosophical system but feel the presence of a dominating personality. His experiences, being the expression of a great personality, lack the logical sequence. It would be futile, therefore, to expect a logical sequence in these experiences. But in presenting his ideas we shall try to reduce them to a logical order so that we may view them as a coherent whole.

The Shaykh's idea of knowledge

Let us start our enquiry with what the Shaykh thinks of knowledge, because it will serve as a basis for a better understanding of his system.

Knowledge occupies an important place in the Shaykh's theological system. In the opinion of the Shaykh, knowledge bestows greatness on the individual who attains it. Knowledge has two kinds of uses. In the first place, a divine gets such relish from knowledge that it is difficult even for a king to attain it in his kingship. In the second place, knowledge makes him beloved of God. Knowledge for its seeker is like a beautiful precious tree. The way leading to it is beset with difficulties. A man who attains it is a fortunate man indeed.

Knowledge has two aspects

Again, knowledge has two aspects, the theoretical and the practical. After the acquisition of the theoretical knowledge, one should use it practically, because the knowledge for its seeker serves as a beacon. Practical knowledge has the following aspects:

1. Action pertaining to senses (Taur ‘Hiss), which in the modern terminology may be called "Empiricism", refers to knowledge acquired through the sense organs.

2. Action pertaining to intellect (Taur ‘Aql), which may be called "Rationalism", refers to conceptual knowledge, which is acquired through intellect. Intellect is a divine light which is bestowed on man by God. It develops with experience. According to a tradition of the Prophet Muhammad intellect is connected with heart (Qalb), mercy with liver (Jiṣar) and politeness and kindness with spleen. The faculty of understanding develops up to its maximum level from fourteen to twenty-four years of age, while intellect attains its full growth by the age of twenty-eight. The heart and the intellect of the prophets are angelic and heavenly (spiritual), but their lower soul (nafs) and body are physical. Intellect has two roots. On the one hand, through the obedience of God it gets access to His realm which is "Light" and on the other it serves His creatures and is related to this world. A man is responsible for his deeds only due to this faculty. But the intellect cannot comprehend essence and attributes of God, because it is limited within the sphere of imagination and understanding; and the essence and attributes of God are beyond the ken of imagination and understanding.

Intellect and love are fundamentally different and the Shaykh considers love superior to intellect

Intellect and love are fundamentally different from one another. Theologians (‘Ulama) are the men of intellect, while mystics (Dervishes) are the men of love (‘Ishq). The Shaykh considers love superior to intellect. He narrates that there was a man, ‘Ali Kokhi by name, in Multan. He did not believe in the piety and penitence of a man if he was not possessed of love. He further says that a particle of love, in the opinion of the Imam Razi, is better than the obedience shown by all men and jinns. In this connection he quotes the words of Baaba ‘Farid, his beloved master. When Baaba ‘Farid wanted to pray for a man he used to say, “May God give you dard (pangs)”. And this dard was the pangs of love. These examples clearly show the importance of love (‘Ishq) in the system of the Shaykh.

3. Action pertaining to intuition (Taur Quds), which may be compared to the "Intuitionism" of today, is very much like the ‘Ilm al-Mukashafa of al-Ghazzali with a little difference. Intuition in the system of al-Ghazzali is not in contradiction to intuition or ‘Ilm al-Mukashafa, but it is an indispensable factor for its realization. "Intuition" al-Ghazzali would say, "is the higher form of intellect, when the intellect is freed from the limitations of the senses."

But in the system of the Shaykh intellect is an impediment in the way of intuition. The Shaykh says, "One who is in the realm of intellect, attains something by means of self-evident or acquired knowledge, and gets satisfaction through it, but cannot have access to the spiritual region." But as intuition (‘Ilm al-Mukashafa) depends on divine grace in the system of al-Ghazzali, so it is for the Shaykh. Like al-Ghazzali, he also acknowledges that intuitive knowledge is not acquired and it is impossible to express it in exact logical terms.

This in short is the epistemology of the Shaykh. With this epistemology we now proceed further to examine the conception of God of the Shaykh.

The Shaykh's conception of God

The God of the Shaykh is a personal God. Personality is not synonymous with individuality, but is more than that. Personality involves self-consciousness, freedom, justice and grace. A being who is devoid of the above-mentioned attributes cannot legitimately and logically be called a person. But now let us see how the Shaykh explains the personality of God.

The Shaykh, quoting the Qur’ān, says that it is God who knows when the day of judgment will occur. He alone has the knowledge of tomorrow. He alone is aware of the place of a man's death; and He is the power who makes rain to fall. These are the facts about which humans have no fore-knowledge. Thus knowledge of God is more comprehensive than the knowledge of any other being. Obviously, consciousness and self-consciousness, which are true of man, cannot be denied of God.

In connection with the grace of God, the Shaykh says that intuitive knowledge (Taur Quds) is a divine gift. Man's
acquisition has no place in it.22 Again, in connection with "Love of God," he says that the love of the essence of God is based absolutely on the grace of God. Man cannot acquire it with his own labour.23

The Shaykh believes in the absolute freedom of God. He says that God is Omnipotent. He is the power who has bestowed relative perfection on man. He confers honour on whomsoever He wants and inflicts disgrace on whomsoever He wants. He causes a man to die and again infuses life into him. He is the only bestower. When He bestows something on someone, no power can check Him.24 He is the only creator; every action which a man performs, whether good or bad, has been created by God.25 He is the only governor. Even the kings are under His grip. He appoints either the kind-hearted or the cruel kings to rule over His creatures according to their deeds.26 All this, in short, implies the Omnipotence of God, and Omnipotence of God implies His absolute freedom in His creation.

So far as justice is concerned the Shaykh says that justice and grace are the basis of God's treatment towards His creatures. But the deeds of creatures, with regard to one another, are not always based on justice and grace but very often on tyranny as well. When the creatures tyrannize over one another, God judges their actions. No one, not even the prophets, can escape the punishment of God on the ground of His absolute justice.

According to the Prophet Muhammad, God will not be blamed of injustice and oppression, if He throws him (the Prophet) and his brother Moses into the hell-fire, because the entire universe is the property of God, and one who appropriates his own property cannot be said to be a tyrant.27 It shows the Shaykh's firm belief in the justice of God. These quotations clearly show what the Shaykh means by the personality of God. Thus, we can unhesitatingly say that God of the Shaykh is a personal God. He has a personal relation with His creatures. He responds to the call of His creatures affectionately and warmly. He confers on them high ranks and positions. He provides them with all sorts of things. He loves them and rewards them by granting them His own vision.

"God is immanent in His creatures. There is not a single particle of the universe which is separate from Him. Moses asked God, "O Benefactor! Are you near that I may call you slowly, or are you at distance, so that I may call you loudly. I hear your voice, but I cannot see you. Where are you?""

God answered, "I am in front of you and behind you, to your right and to your left, and everywhere. When any creature remembers Me, I am by his side, and when he calls Me, I am near him."28 God says to the Prophet, "O Muhammad! When people question you about my place tell them that I am near them. I am nearer to them than their jugular vein, and I am nearer to them than you are but you do not see Me."29 Nearness (in Arabic Qurb)30 is an attribute of God, and an attribute of God is most real; therefore, the attribute of nearness, when thought of in connection with God, will be more real than nearness to any other object. There is no possibility of distance in it. He is always and everywhere with His creatures. But the being together (Mut’iyat)31 of God with His creatures is not like the being together of a body with other bodies, or of a substance with other substances, or of an attribute with other attributes; but it is like the being together of soul with the body. He is with His creatures, but at the same time He is separate from them.32 In other words, God is immanent in His creatures, but at the same time He is also transcendent. His creatures endeavour to form a personal contact with Him which in the opinion of the Shaykh is possible only through "love."

Love occupies a unique position in the philosophy of the Shaykh

Love occupies a unique position in the philosophy of the Shaykh. He prescribes love of God as an ultimate end of man in this finite world. He says that mysteries are unanimously agreed to the point that the creation has been made only for the love of God.23

Love of God, in his opinion, is of two kinds:24 (i) Love of the essence of God (Mahabbat Dhaat); and (ii) love of the attributes of God (Mahabbat Sifaut).

(i) Love of the essence of God is a divine gift. Man's acquisition has no place in it.

(ii) Love of the attributes of God is an acquired love. For its acquisition the heart should be cleared of all things except God. After the purification of the heart one should absorb oneself, with a singleness of purpose and unity of mind, in the remembrance of God, because the love of God and the love of things other than God cannot go side by side.33 Absorption in God requires leisure (Faraaqah), and four things are impediments in its way. They are: creatures of God, mundane world, lower soul (nafs) and the devil. These things divert the attention of man from God. Hence a lover of God should abstain from these things.

For the avoidance of creatures, one should adopt solitude: to keep away from the mundane world, one should renounce the world; for renunciation, one should adhere to contentment (Qaana'at) and to safeguard against the dangers of the lower soul and devil, one should pray to God.34 The Shaykh says that if anyone claims the love of God, but he nurses the love of the mundane world in his heart, he is false in this claim, because love demands the sacrifice of all the lovable objects in the way of the beloved.35 And this is the spirit of love which has been inculcated by the Qur'an. The Qur'an says, "Ye will not attain unto piety until ye spend of that which ye love."36

Love (Mahabbat) has been derived from the Arabic word Hubb, the which word contains two letters, h and b. H represents the soul and b represents the body of the individual. Hence a lover of God should exercise his body also in the obedience of God, and there should be sincerity in it. Obedience should be of such a nature that there remains no difference between the lover and the beloved. The will of the beloved (God) should become the will of His lover. Thus a man who desires to attain the love of God, but does not put both his soul and body in trials and tribulations for the obedience to God, cannot attain his cherished desire."38

According to the Shaykh the heart has been created for the love of God

Each limb of the human body has been created for some particular purpose. If the limb is not used for its assigned purpose for a certain period, that limb becomes useless for that purpose. In like manner the heart (Qalb) has been created specially for the "Love of God."39 If the love of God has not been nourished in the heart, the love of other things takes its place. After some time this love (love of things other than God) becomes so deep-rooted in that
heart that it turns into a playground of the devil and its original purpose is defeated. The Prophet Muhammad says, "God loves the regard for long-standing love (friendship)." It is this long-standing love which is referred to in "Am I not your Lord?"

But due to the devil and the passions this love is often concealed, as it has been said, "The musk-pod which you are seeking is with you under your blanket, but unfortunately you have no smell (trace) of it." Thus, for the love of God, purification of the heart from the human infirmities and sensual passions is indispensable and muraqqaqabah (contemplation) is the best device for it. The Shaykh explains the effects of contemplation (muraqqaqabah) by a beautiful analogy. Suppose a man wants to clear away a dense forest. If he begins to cut each and every tree with his own hands, he cannot achieve his object even after strenuous labour over a long period of time. But if he sets fire to it, the whole forest will be cleared off within a short time. The same thing happens in contemplation. Contemplation burns all the vices and infirmities of the human heart. According to Yahya, a man begins to relish the love of God when labour becomes to him as sweet as sugar, poverty as tasteful as honey, and calamities as agreeable as the dates for his meal.

Love terminates itself in 'Ishq. It is a great force in human beings. When it overpowers man, it does not separate from him, unless it burns all his infirmities. As heat dries a tree, in the same way love (Ishq) purifies the human heart of all infirmities. A man burning in the fire of love (Ishq) forgets all things other than God. He absorbs himself in the remembrance of God and his absorption becomes so deep that he becomes oblivious even of the life and death of his relatives.

Instances to show what love means in the philosophy of the Shaykh

The Shaykh Qutb al-Din Bakhtiyyar, the mentor of Baaba' Farid, returned home after the funeral ceremony of his youngest son. Having heard the weeping and wailing of his wife, he began to lament. When the reason for the lamentation was asked, he said, "Now it strikes me that I did not pray for the life of my son. Had I prayed for it, I would have got it." The Shaykh Nizaaam al-Din, after relating the above story, says, "See the absorption of the Shaykh. The remembrance of God overpowered him so much that he could not even remember the life and death of his son."

A man of love surrenders himself completely to the Will of God. All his activities are for God. Even his food and sleep are only for Him. In this connection the Shaykh Nizaaam al-Din relates the story of a saint. One day he asked his wife to give food to a dervish who was residing on the other side of a river. His wife asked as to how she would cross the river. He said, "When you go to the bank of the river, tell the water to provide a way for you due to the respect for your husband who never conjugated with his wife." His wife was very much perplexed at these words of her husband, because she had many issues by him. But she did not utter a word. She went, taking the food with her to the water's edge, conveyed the message to the water and the water gave way for her passage. Having crossed it she put the food before the dervish and he took it in her presence. After his meal, the woman addressed the dervish, "How shall I cross the water?" The dervish inquired, "How did you come here?" The woman repeated the words of her husband. Having heard his words, the dervish said, "Go to the water and tell it to provide way for you due to the respect of the dervish who never took meals for thirty years." The woman, bewildered with this answer, came to the water, repeated the same words and got passage. Having returned to her home, she fell down at her husband's feet and implored him to tell the secret of the sayings uttered by him and the dervish. Her husband replied, "Beware, I have never conjugated with you for the satisfaction of my own sensual desire, but I have conjugated with you only to satisfy your desire. So, in the real sense, I have not conjugated with you. Similarly, that dervish, for a period of thirty years, has never taken his meals for his satisfaction or relish, but he took the meals only to gather strength so that he may obey God's command."

Not only this, but the whole life of the lover of God becomes the "remembrance of God." The moment he forgets His remembrance, he is no better than dead. The Shaykh Nizaaam al-Din, in this connection, relates the story of a saint, Mirak Girami by name. A dervish once wished to visit him. That dervish had miraculous powers. His miracle was that he never saw any false dream. He started for the place of Mirak Girami. In the course of his journey he dreamt that Mirak Girami had died. He very much lamented his death and made up his mind to at least visit his tomb. Having reached the place of Mirak Girami, he enquired from the people about his grave. All of them said that he was alive. Now our dervish was struck with wonder as to how his dream came out to be false. He went to Mirak Girami and saluted him. Mirak Girami responded to his greetings and said, "O Khwaja, your dream was true. I was always absorbed in the remembrance of God but last night I forgot him. Hence, God declared in the world that Mirak Girami had passed away."

Thus, God and God alone becomes the aim of the lover of God. The Shaykh Nizaaam al-Din says, "I shall abstain neither from thee nor from thy desire: I shall sacrifice my life in love." Besides the above-mentioned characteristics of the lover of God, there are some specific virtues which accompany the love of God, i.e., Sabr (patience), Ridha (resignation), Khawn (fear), and Tawakkul (trust in God), says the Shaykh Nizaaam al-Din. He explains these virtues as follows:

Sabr: When any unpleasant thing happens to a lover, he bears it and does not complain against it. This is called Sabr (patience).

Ridha: Ridha is a state of love in which the lover does not feel pain and suffering even in the midst of tortures and calamities. He cheerfully endures those calamities as pleasures, for he feels whatever is happening is happening by the will of his beloved.

The Shaykh Nizaaam al-Din Auliyya' tries to answer the dialecticians who object to this conception of Ridha. They contend that pain in the midst of sufferings and calamities is an indispensable fact. But it frequently happens that thorns pierce the foot of a traveller in the course of his travels and it begins to bleed, but the traveller, due to his haste and preoccupation with his destination, does not feel the pain at that time. Later on, at the time of ease, he realizes it. In the same way, a man engaged in fighting often does not know that he is wounded and does not feel pain until he returns to his destination. The Shaykh Hameed al-Din Naagauri writes that a man was whipped a thousand
times but he did not feel any pain. When the reason was demanded, he answered that while he was being whipped, his beloved was before his eyes, and it was the presence of his beloved which caused him to feel no pain.” This is an instance from the affairs of mortal beings and a mortal beloved seen by the bodily eyes. Consider then the position in which God stands as the beloved, whose perfect beauty is seen by the eyes of the heart. How grand, how majestic, how much full of splendour would it be?

According to al-Ghazzali, Ridha means “Ever to remain resigned in the will of God is a state that emerges from the love of God, as also from the virtue of the soul which it achieves when it approaches nearest to God; and the seeming contradictions and doubts involved in these workings cannot be completely resolved till one becomes gifted with the knowledge of God.”

He further says, “Some people, who believe that in suffering and in things against one’s will only patience is possible and Ridha is unimaginable, deny love altogether.”

Here we find a great similarity between the views of the Shaykh Nizaam al-Din and al-Ghazzali, and it shows the influence of al-Ghazzali on the thought of the Shaykh Nizaam al-Din.

Tawakkul (trust in God) is the highest stage of love. It is the absolute dependence on God. A mutawakkil (one who observes tawakkul) does not rely on anything except God. Without tawakkul, faith remains incomplete. The Shaykh says, “The faith does not attain its completion unless and until the whole creation for the believer appears (as insignificant) as the hair of a camel.” Tawakkul is of three grades:

The first grade of tawakkul is like the relation of a client to his pleader. A client, for the support of his case, appoints a pleader who is brilliant and has also friendly relations with him. Now he has no fears and thinks that his case is in safe hands and that his friend will plead his case in an efficient manner. But in spite of firm belief, he suggests to his pleader, from time to time, to plead his case in a particular way. The same thing happens to the mutawakkil in his tawakkul at this stage. Though a mutawakkil relies absolutely on God, yet he prays to God for his own benefits from time to time.

The second grade of tawakkul is like the reliance of a suckling child on his mother. The child does not question his mother’s decision to suckle him at this or that time. When hungry, he only weeps, because he has the firm confidence in the kindness of his mother. The same thing happens to a mutawakkil at this stage. He fully relies on God and never asks anything from God.

The third and the highest grade of tawakkul is like the obedience of the dead body to one who washes it. A dead body has neither any questions nor any movements of its own. It only obeys what it is ordered to do. In like manner a mutawakkil at this stage completely surrenders himself before the Will of God. He obeys the commands of God without any questioning.

But for the love of God renunciation of the world is an indispensable condition. It is the very essence of the religion. The Shaykh says that observing the fast in the daytime, keeping awake at night and visiting the Ka’bah, are not bases for religion: but the basic thing is the renunciation of the world: because the love of the world and the love of God cannot go side by side. So let us examine the renunciation of the world of the Shaykh.

The Shaykh emphatically condemns the love of the world and calls upon the people to renounce it. Love of the world, in his opinion, is the root of all evil. If all the sins should be placed in one chamber, the love of the world serves as the key to that chamber; while, on the contrary, if all the obedience should be placed in another chamber, the love of saints opens the door of that chamber.” Love of saints means leading a saintly life; and a saintly life is the life which is on the model of the life of the Prophet Muhammad. Thus the Shaykh invites mankind to follow the example of the life of the Prophet Muhammad, a life which is full of ambitions, activities, service and devotion.

What the Shaykh understood by “world”

Now it is necessary to find out what the Shaykh means by world. To explain it he takes four possibilities: Either a thing is world, both in its form and meaning, or a thing is not world, neither in its form nor in its meaning; or a thing is not world in its form but is in its meaning; or a thing is world in its form, but is not world in its meaning.

1. A thing which is world, both in its form and meaning, is to have more than one’s own requirements.

2. A thing which is not world, neither in its form nor in its meaning, is the sincere obedience to God.

3. A thing which is not world in form but is world in meaning is the obedience to God tinged with hypocrisy.

4. A thing which is world in form but is not world in meaning is the fulfilment of the duties imposed on behalf of God. For instance, a man meets the requirements of his own family members; though in form it appears as world yet in meaning it is not world.

These statements of the Shaykh indicate that the world in its limited sense applies only to two things. First, it applies to the possessions which are in excess of one’s needs; and secondly, to the obedience to God mixed with hypocrisy. The sincere service of mankind or striving for the welfare of humanity do not come under world, in its narrow sense. Service of humanity may be either intellectual or physical. All developments in the realm of science and philosophy come under the former. All material progress, in the interests of mankind at large, comes under the latter. Thus, the Shaykh does not prohibit people from scientific and intellectual pursuits and material affairs altogether. What he prohibits and condemns is hypocrisy and excess of wealth. The Shaykh Nizaam al-Din says that world, in the opinion of a saint, is not the gold or silver or the material goods, but it is one’s own belly. A man who takes a little food has renounced the world, but a man who takes his full diet cannot be said to have renounced the world.

The Shaykh’s own example to illustrate how to lead a normal life, yet to be above it

“Taking a little food” may not be interpreted as the hoarding of wealth by effecting a cut in expenditure on food, but it may be interpreted as the spirit of self-sacrifice on the part of the individual. It can be explained by the following example. A man has the capacity to take his full diet; but there resides another man in his neighbourhood who suffers from the pangs of hunger. In this situation the man does not take his full diet and gives some of it to the hungry man. Now this giving of food to the hungry man certainly
involves self-sacrifice on the part of this man. If he in this situation takes his full diet, he is undoubtedly indulging in the mundane world, and his belly is the entire world for him.

The Shaykh himself practised this principle. It has been mentioned in his biography that in spite of enormous wealth which used to come as gifts, the Shaykh observed continous fasts. Often he did not take his suhur (morning meal). When somebody insisted on it, he replied that there were so many hungry dervishes and saints lying in mosques and in the corners of the shops. How could he take breakfast under these circumstances?64

He propagated the virtue of charity. He says that distribution of food contains plenty of grace. A man who gives water to others in this finite world will enjoy its fruits in the world to come.65 He quotes Fatimah and another lady named Zeebaa in this connection. Fatimah says that a man who gives a piece of bread and a cup of water to others receives so much bonus, both in this world and in the one to come, that cannot be attained even with thousands of prayers and fasts.66 Zeebaa says (in the dream of the Shaykh) that she enjoyed the vision of God twice after her death due to the practice of distribution of food.67

Thus, according to the Shaykh, the renunciation of the world does not mean a life of monastic seclusion, a life which leads to passivity, death and destruction of the human qualities, but he wants to infuse in mankind an urge for active life: a life full of service to humanity but devoid of greed and mundane cravings. Renunciation of the world, he explains, does not consist of being naked or of wearing a loin cloth, but it means to wear clothes and to take food. The only condition which it implies is that one should keep it in continuous use whatever he earns and should not incline to hoard it: at the same time he should abstain from indulging in the mundane affairs.

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THE QUR’AN AND THE SUNNAH—THE TWO MAIN SOURCES OF LEGISLATION IN ISLAM

by AFZAL IQBAL

‘Abdullah Ibn Mas‘ud a companion of the Prophet Muhammad who exercised his judgment when no clear indication present in the Qur‘an

‘Abdullah Ibn Mas‘ud, the successor in this field of ‘Umar, was characteristically independent in his judgment in cases in which no clear text was available in the Qur‘an or in the Sunnah. Abu ‘Umar al-Sha‘bini tells us that sometimes he passed a whole year with Ibn Mas‘ud without even hearing the Prophet being quoted on any matter. The Iraqi school of thought, which later became famous for its advocacy of personal judgment and its contribution to the field of syllogism, owes much to ‘Abdullah Ibn Mas‘ud. This school of thought spread during the first and second centuries and some scholars like Rab‘ah al-Ra‘i added the word Ra‘i to their name, indicating that they belonged to this school of thought which advocated the use of Ra‘i or opinion or personal judgment. This particular scholar was the teacher of the Imam Malik Ibn Anas. The Iraqi school of thought which counted people like Hasan al-Basri among its adherents was later to have Abu Hanifa as its outstanding exponent. The reason why this school of thought was found so acceptable to Iraq was perhaps the lack of enough Hadith in this region. Most of the people who narrated from the Prophet lived in the Hijaz, and ‘Umar took care to warn his governors and preachers that they should be scrupulously cautious in quoting from the Prophet and not indulge unnecessarily in relating traditions, the exuberance of which, he feared, might cloud the clarity of the Qur‘an. Moreover, Iraq was in an advanced state of civilization on account of the influences that it had imbibed from Persia and Greece. This factor, coupled with the scarcity of Hadith, made the use of personal judgment more plausible in this region than in the Hijaz, where people were obsessed with the traditions, a large number of which were clearly fabricated. In fact, so great was the enthusiasm for the use of personal judgment in Iraq that it was not confined to concrete cases but people started formulating principles in great detail for hypothetical cases.

We have an interesting incident in al-Mu‘alaqat which throws a flood of light on the attitude of the people towards this field of intellectual activity. We are told that Asad Ibn al-Furat came to the Imam Malik and asked him questions about certain issues. Each time the Imam Malik answered a question Ibn al-Furat put another one, saying, “And what would be the answer if such and such a thing were to happen?” The Imam Malik was calm and conciliatory until one day he got fed up and told Ibn al-Furat that he could not possibly answer an endless chain of hypothetical questions; and if he was keenly interested in this field he should go to Iraq!

This attitude of mind created a large number of hypothetical issues which neither existed at that time nor were likely to confront the Muslim society for a long time to come. The reason why the Iraqi scholars indulged in this speculative field was perhaps the influence of Syriac logic which prevailed in Iraq long before the conquest by Islam. Although we cannot go into the details of this influence, suffice it to say that the Iraqis did not relate too much hadith and they were too little too critical of traditions for the acceptance of which they had laid down very rigorous rules. In fact, the extremists went to the extent of rejecting tradition altogether. It appeared that the influence of the section which was inclined towards rejecting Hadith as doubtful was fairly strong, for in the Imam Shafi’s book al-Umm we see a long chapter under the heading “The Chapter About Those Who Repudiate All The Stories.” The Imam Shafi in another chapter refers to the ideas of those who held that the Hadith should not be taken as genuine unless all narrators were agreed, and in case of a difference of opinion the Hadith in question should be ignored and personal judgment and study (Ijtihad and Qiyaas) should be resorted to.

The scholars of the Hadith school

Opposed to this school was the school of the Hadith, or the scholars of the Hadith. This school derived its inspiration from Companions like al-Abbas, al-Zubayr, ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar Ibn Khattab and ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Aas, al-Sha‘bi, who belonged to the second generation of Islam, from this school of thought. He said: “Take whatever these Companions of God’s Messenger have given you but throw in the fire what they have created according to their judgment.” If the leaders of this school of thought were asked about the solution of a problem they would look up the Qur‘anic text or the Hadith and suggest an answer, but in case they failed to find anything in these sources they did not advocate any solution. We are told that a man asked a question of Sa‘lim Ibn ‘Abdulah Ibn ‘Umar. Sa‘lim said that he heard nothing about it, suggesting thereby that there was no answer either in the Qur‘an or in the Hadith. The man asked for Sa‘lim’s personal opinion. Sa‘lim replied: “How can I do that? An idea occurs to me while you are here but I change my mind when you leave. How can I find you then and tell you of my new solution when you have left?” This was a genuine difficulty confronting this school. Ahmad Ibn Hanbal tells us that he asked his father, the celebrated Imam Hanbal, for his advice on matters in which there was no clear text either in the Qur‘an or in the Sunnah; in such cases, he asked the Imam Hanbal, should one depend on the Hadith of whose accuracy one was not certain or should one resort to one’s own personal judgment? The Imam Hanbal advised the former course because he thought that even a doubtful tradition was more dependable than one’s individual judgment.

This school of thought flourished in the Hijaz for exactly the same reason that the other flourished in Iraq. We have noticed the reluctance of this school in exercising its personal discretion as against a complete dependence on the Hadith even though it may, in cases, happen to be doubtful. The standards set by this school for judging the accuracy

* For the previous installment of this article please see The Islamic Review for January 1961.
of a tradition were much more lenient than those laid down by the opposite school of thought in Iraq. This school of Hadith was perhaps indirectly responsible for encouraging the movement of fabrication of traditions. Since it was reluctant to exercise personal judgment in the absence of a Hadith people started fabricating the Hadith in order to meet the requirements of a given situation which could not be otherwise met. ‘Atiq al-Zubaydi has stated that the Imam Malik included ten thousand traditions in al-Mu‘atta. He used to revise his collection every year and dropped the number of traditions until it came to what we have received today. Had he been alive he would have dropped all the traditions which he had included at first. Even Abu Hanifa, who is known for his use of personal judgment, depended a lot on the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad or of the Companions in each chapter of his book. He was known, however, not to have much faith in traditions except in a few limited ones.

There were extremists in both schools of thought. Some went to the extent of suggesting that the Sunnah came before the Qur’ān, others held the opposite view, which of course stands to reason. There was intense rivalry between the two schools, the adherents of which often used strong language in attacking each other. Traditions were freely translated to defend their point of view. The school of Hadith quoted the Prophet as saying: ‘I can imagine one of you relaxing in his chair and telling another one who relations my tradition that between us is the Book of God. Whatever is forbidden in it is forbidden to us and whatever is allowed in it is allowed to us: Nay, what the Messenger of God had rendered forbidden is as if God himself had rendered it so.” As against this claim the school of judgment quoted the Prophet as saying: “If you are told of a Hadith attributed to me, compare it with the Book of God; if it agrees with it then I have said it; if it does not then it is not from me. How can I say something contrary to the Book of God which has guided me?”

These contradictory traditions were related not only from the Prophet but also from Companions like ‘Umar, Abu Bakr, Ibn Mas‘ud and others. Some traditions favoured the use of judgment and others opposed it. The confusion was created by the enthusiastic followers of both the schools who, as we have suggested earlier, freely fabricated traditions in favour of their own stand. Between the two extremes, however, arose another school which favoured the middle path. It did not approve the use of personal judgment and at the same time accepted the Hadith. It drew up detailed circumstances in which the use of personal judgment was recognized. Among the leaders of this school were the Imam Malik and the Imam al-Shafi‘i. Thus the field of legislation expanded and benefited from a variety of schools, even including those who had wilfully fabricated traditions, because after all such traditions could not have been fabricated except with a deep understanding of the legislation which contemporary society thought was essential for it!

A brief review of the history of legislation during the time of the first three Caliphs

Let us briefly review the history of legislation in this era. During the days of the first three Caliphs, Medina was the centre of administration and, therefore, the centre of all legislative activity. We have already noticed that the first Caliph, Abu Bakr, used to consult the leading Companions in cases in which he could not find a clear Qur’ānic text or a suitable precedent from the Hadith. He is, however, not known to have appointed any judge anywhere for the administration of justice. It is stated that with the increase in his work he entrusted judicial affairs to ‘Umar. With the assumption of the Caliphate by ‘Umar an ear of expansion began. This resulted in the appointment of judges for the first time in countries such as Egypt, Syria and Iraq. With each judge was a group of Companions and Tabī‘is who were conversant with the traditions of the local inhabitants besides a sound knowledge of the Qur’ānic sciences. These Companions were consulted in difficult cases by the judges; in fact the Companions, by virtue of their knowledge and experience, became the leaders of legislative activity in their respective regions. The judgments and rulings became the basis of the special tradition of the countries in which they worked and set up legal precedents which were followed in similar cases by other judges. Different regions came to attach importance to the verdicts of different jurists. The inhabitants of Medina, for example, were inclined to follow the verdicts of ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar: the people of Mecca followed the rulings of ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbas: the Kufis followed the judgments of ‘Abdullah Ibn Mas‘ud: while the Egyptians preferred to take the lead from ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Amr Ibn Anas. The volume of these judgments and legal rulings grew with the passage of time as more and more cases were decided. A wealth of legal precedents was thus collected which was to prove useful to judges in different regions of the Muslim Empire in the times to come.

The Muslim Law not borrowed from the Roman Law

With the assumption of office of ‘Ali, the seat of Caliphate shifted, for a time, from Medina to Kufah, and later with the assumption of power by the Umayyads the centre shifted to Damascus. This was the period in which alien influences found their way into the thought of Islam. We have dealt in some detail elsewhere with the impact of the Roman, Greek and the Persian civilizations on Islam. Some Orientalists like Goldziher believe that Muslim jurisprudence in this era was influenced to a great extent by the Roman law. It will be recalled that before the Muslim conquest, schools of Roman law existed in Syria, notably in Qaysariyyah and Beirut. Law courts following the Roman code existed in Syria at the time of the Muslim conquest and they were allowed to continue for a considerable time after the conquest. It is claimed that the Syrians, after they entered the fold of Islam, adapted the existing law to the new circumstances. In support of this contention the Orientalists belonging to this school of thought quoted articles which they claimed have been taken literally from the Roman law. They also suggest that the Arabic word Fiqh, which means wisdom and knowledge, has been taken from the Latin word “jurist”, which means the same thing. They put forward the plea that Islamic jurisprudence has borrowed from the Roman law either directly or through the Talmud, which has in turn taken a lot from the Roman law.

It is difficult, however, to accept that the Muslim law has been borrowed from the Roman law only because of its superficial resemblance. All law, religious or secular, must be based on principles of justice. The Arabic word Fiqh in its original meaning denotes knowledge and understanding. Before the Arabs had an opportunity to mix with the Romans, the Qur’ān used this word in this sense. Later the use of the expression was limited to the science of law-making because this branch of intellectual activity needed the knowledge of the law. The Qur’ān and the traditions. Thus the meaning of the word came to be limited and it became a technical term. In the works available on Muslim
law we have been unable to detect any noticeable dependence on the Roman law.

AL-AWZA‘I

The first Muslim who is stated to have been influenced by the Roman law was al-Awza‘i, who lived in Beirut, the centre of the Roman school in Syria. He was the most important jurist of that region. Taking advantage of the loss of his work the Orientalists made bold to suggest that had his works been extant they would have provided an evidence of incontrovertible influence of the Roman law. A good deal of al-Awza‘i’s works can fortunately be found in the seventh volume of al-‘Um. Anybody who reads it carefully will come to the conclusion that al-Awza‘i was a protagonist of the school of Hadith and not of the school of personal judgment as Goldziher suggests. And the school of Hadith is the last to be if any has at all been affected by the Roman law. It must be admitted, however, that the Roman law proved useful to the Muslim jurists inasmuch as it helped them to study the different issues involved in a given case, but the final verdicts were always given in accordance with the Muslim law. It must be clearly understood that Islam set up unique precedents of tolerance and toleration. In the case of the administration of justice one can visualize the Muslim judges giving due consideration to the local customs and habits of the people and accepting them at times when they were not in conflict with the law laid down by Islam. In a supplement to Qudhat al-Misr it is stated that Khayr Ibn Na‘im, who was appointed a judge in 120 A.H. (737 C.E.), used to listen to the Copts speaking in their own language. Not only that, he talked to them in their language and listened to the witnesses in their language, and passed his judgments accordingly. This, however, does not suggest that the presiding judge, who was willing to show consideration to the local population inasmuch as he agreed to talk to them in their own language, also accepted their own law in dealing with the cases before him.

Abu Hamfa

The Umayyad dynasty, except for a few honourable exceptions like that of ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, did little to further the ends of legislative activity in Islam. The result is that during this period we do not see a jurist of the eminence of Abu Yusuf, who flourished during the ‘Abbasid period. The ‘Abbasid Caliphs conferred their patronage on eminent jurists, whose verdicts were respected and who were held in high esteem by society. We do not find any such example during the Umayyad period, except perhaps in the case of al-Zuhri, who enjoyed the patronage of the Caliph. Moreover, during this era the four creeds of Islam had not yet emerged. Towards the end of the dynasty, however, the two creeds, namely, that of Abu Hanifa in Iraq and that of Malik Ibn Anas in Medina, had emerged. Born of Persian descent in 80 A.H. (699 C.E.) in the days of the Caliph Abd al-Malik Ibn Marwan, Abu Hanifa lived for eighteen years during the ‘Abbasid dynasty. He studied jurisprudence from Ja‘far al-Sadiq, a member of the family of ‘Ali, and from Ibrahim al-Nakhi‘iy, a leading jurist of his time. He learnt the Hadith from Sha‘bi al-A‘mash and Qatadah. He had a special bent of mind for jurisprudence and his legal acumen won for him the fame of being the leader of the school of personal judgment during his lifetime. We have not received any of his legal works nor has it been proved that he wrote any book in which the principles of his creed could be studied at first hand. Two of his disciples, Abu Yusuf and Muhammad, have, however, recorded for posterity the achievements of Abu Hanifa.

Malik

The leader of the other school, Malik Ibn Anas, was born in Medina, where he lived, learnt, taught and wrote. While Abu Hanifa was of Persian descent, Malik Ibn Anas came from an old Arab family. He became famous during his lifetime as an authority on the Hadith and was considered the leader of the school of Hadith. He died in 179 A.H. (795 C.E.). His principal contribution is al-Mu‘atta, which although known as a book of Hadith is in fact a book on jurisprudence. Al-Mu‘atta is no mere collection of traditions which its author considered to be accurate, but it seeks to derive verdicts on principal issues from the Hadith collected in a volume which contains numerous personal opinions and views on a variety of matters.

We do not propose to enter into details of differences between the views of the two Imams, nor do we propose to discuss the principles on which they based their arguments, as this would be a subject too large to consider the contribution of the ‘Abbasid régime. It will be interesting, however, to mention in passing an interesting point which has been made by Ibn Khaldun. Discussing the reason why the creed of the Imam Malik had spread and flourished in North Africa and Spain, Ibn Khaldun says, “A state of nomadism prevailed in North Africa and Andalus (Spain). Their inhabitants were not cultured like the people of Iraq. So they were looked towards the Hijazis, who were bedouins like themselves. The Malik creed spread among them and was not affected by civilization and foreign cultures like other creeds.” If we were to review some of the differences between the two jurists we will find that Ibn Khaldun’s criticism is not very much off the mark. Abu Hanifa, for example, made it lawful to start prayers in Persian instead of saying Allah Akbar (God is Great) in Arabic, even in cases where the man saying the prayers knew Arabic. He also made it lawful to read the Qur‘an in Persian. Malik and Shafi‘i were opposed to this. Abu Hanifa also made lawful the marriage of an adult free woman without the existence of her guardian: Malik and Shafi‘i were opposed to it.

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PAKISTAN AND THE ARAB WORLD

Excerpts from the Address of President Muhammad Ayyub Khan of Pakistan at a National Union Rally at Cairo on 7th November, 1960

"May I tell you that in our country, too, some people complain against the Muslim world not giving us support in the gigantic struggle that Pakistan has been forced to go through by a very powerful neighbour next door to us. We have been subjected, although I must say that lately our relations with India have improved considerably, to a pressure of which you cannot really have the comprehension, apart from the Kashmir struggle, where the two armies are facing each other with loaded weapons even up to today. Some nine million refugees were thrown into Pakistan at the time when Pakistan came into being. You just imagine what nine million refugees mean when you consider the problem that is caused by about three-quarters of a million refugees from Palestine. So we, too, have been under pressure, and we are still under pressure, and it is only natural that our people should at times complain and expect open and substantial support from the Muslim brethren all over the world. I have been telling people that, although I can fully understand the reason behind such an expectation, one has got to be a realist and the realism is this: Now it's a hard thing to say, but one must face the facts of life, and the fact of life is that whether we like it or not, and we certainly should not like it, religion today is no longer the motive power as it used to be; it is national territorialism which is the motive power. So, therefore, it was unrealistic on the part of the people of Pakistan to expect that somebody else would come and resolve their problem, and I always used to say, and I am saying it today, that Kashmir and our problem with India is our problem and, God willing, we shall struggle on to resolve them in the most peaceful manner we can. The meaning of all that is this, that quite frankly when you are under pressure, and we have been under tremendous pressure, people are bound to get a little huffy, a little sensitive, and apt to misunderstand each other. I often pray that between our two countries such a thing will never arise again, and that can only be done if we have mutual understanding with each other, if we meet more often, if we try and understand each other's problems, then I am sure we will begin to have sympathy for each other and the cause for a new complaint will be removed.

"Having said that, may I tell you that we have never missed an occasion to support the Arab cause against Israel. And on every occasion we have done whatever was in our power to assist you morally and openly, and we mean to do so continually and, as I have submitted before, we expect nothing in return from you; we expect your better future, your happiness and your security; and at the same time, being human, we expect that for all the support we can give we do not want any credit, but at least it is recognized and understood.

"We also hope that the Arab world, like us, has got its independence after a long, long struggle. This is a very dear possession of any human community. I hope, and we all hope and pray, that your mutual differences are resolved in a spirit of large-heartedness so that your resources which are very badly needed for development and progressive work are not diverted into negative things, and that your pace of progress is speeded up all over the Arab world. This is our hope and prayer, and I hope it will come true, and there is no reason why it should not, in spite of misunderstanding that one sees from time to time.

Democratic system in Pakistan

"Finally, I might say it is a matter of real pleasure to have had the opportunity of seeing your people, the representatives of the people of your country, and to have had the opportunity of addressing you. We, too, in Pakistan, are trying to adopt the democratic system which our people can understand and work, and it is a very curious phenomenon that your leader and we have come to similar conclusions, although in details there may be differences as to what sort of institutions will be understood by our people and if they will be capable of working them so that we can maintain stability, because stability is the essential requirement of new emergent countries, because the essential requirement is to develop, and that really means that it can only happen if you have stable governments and you have people with will and courage. It cannot happen in the straits and stresses of the Western democratic system.

"Their development, if you study their history carefully, took place under almost a totalitarian system, and so we have got to remember that if we have attained our independence there is an object in attaining them, and the object is that we must do such things as will enable our people to better their lot, and that really means education.
A DESCRIPTION OF THE IMPACT OF THE KA'BAH ON THE MINDS OF
MUSLIMS AND NON-MUSLIMS IN THE WORDS OF TWO
NON-MUSLIM EUROPEANS

"The outstanding impression left by the whole scene is that of the
unsual. 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 lies in the edifices themselves
or in their arrangement, 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 Hajj. 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 explana-
tion 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
unwonted silence..."

"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 phase 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 towaf, and a few minutes

The Sociological Genius of the Prophet Muhammad
mendicant's garment) as an integral part

AT A PALACE WITH POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE

Left - President Field-Marshal Muhammad
 presenting the insignia of Pakistan to His Majesty King at
Riyadh, on January 15

Right - President Field-Marshal Muhammad
 Ibrar (the mendicant's sari; arriy
 the Sacred Mosque) to P. P.
('Umrah), where he will undertake Ka'bah seven times, as r does
beloved. Before God all are equal
of equality, all pilgrims, before
of outward distinction, resident
and uncut white she the dr
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 Ka'bah 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 Ka'bah

"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 Ka'bah. Sleeping, every night for some months, on a roof which overlooked that of the Ka'bah, 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 Ka'bah's roof bare and silent. The Shaybi, too, informed me that no delitement of birds is ever found there."


maconceived the unique institution of the Ihraam (the parb of the Hajj and 'Umrah (the minor Hajj)

AT THE HOUSE OF GOD IN IHRAAM (THE MENDICANT'S GARB)
and development in every walk of life: but in order to do that, you have got to have consistency, and that really comes down to that you must have political stability in the country, and political stability can only appear if you have political institutions which people can understand and they can work. We, like you, adopted the Western system of parliamentary democracy — it did not work in our country just as it did not work in your country.

"I say to myself, it is our fault, we are not ready: our circumstances are not what are required by our system to back it up, and so, if you have not got those circumstances, is it wise that we should be risking our independence and our security, and so wisdom dictated that instead of repeating borrowed ideas of other people we must get down to our own fundamentals, recognize them and build up political institutions on sound, solid bases, and once this is done I have no doubt, God willing, that countries that do that will prosper, will have stability, and will have all the good things that they can afford to have."

Excerpts from an Address of the President of Pakistan, Field-Marshal Muhammad Ayyub Khan. at a Special Convocation of Cairo University. which conferred on him the Honorary Degree of Ph.D. on 9th November, 1960

"To liberate the spirit of the religion of Islam from the cobwebs of superstition is one of the major demands on Muslim countries"

The importance of Islamic ideology in the life of Muslim nations, especially that of Pakistan

In emphasizing the need for collaboration among the Muslim countries, President Muhammad Ayyub Khan said:

"While looking after our material prosperity and progress we in Pakistan cannot ignore the fact that our country is the product of an ideology — the ideology of Islam. This is the foremost justification for our existence and we cannot be true to Pakistan without being true to this ideology. It is for this reason that we are trying to do all we can to promote a true and correct study and understanding of Islam in the context of modern science and knowledge.

"We have recently established an Islamic Research Institute in Pakistan and our new educational system provides a fine blend between religious and secular instruction. We shall pursue these objectives vigorously but our efforts alone are not enough. In this we seek the co-operation of Cairo and Damascus, which hold centuries-old treasures of Islamic traditions of learning and enlightenment. It is in this common endeavour of projecting and promoting the meaning and practice of Islam in the light of the modern world that we can all co-operate and collaborate fully without infringing each other's national policies and international commitments.

"Please do remember one thing. As Muslims we, all of us everywhere, owe to ourselves and God a loyalty which is higher than any other loyalty. This is loyalty to our faith. It is this greater loyalty which in spite of all external disorders and political disputes between governments binds the Muslim people everywhere in the world in unbreakable and indivisible ties of mutual goodwill and sympathy. These ties are stronger and more valuable than diplomatic and political relationship and so long as they remain intact the persecution of Algerian patriots, the miseries of Palestinian refugees, the sufferings of Kashmiri people and the aggressive threat of Israel will always continue to evoke an equal response in the hearts of the entire Muslim millat. Let us all pray that this reservoir of goodwill continues to grow deeper and larger and God may shield us from sacrificing it on the altar of momentary impulses or temporary expediences.

Decline of knowledge among Muslims

"As we started getting more and more away from the spirit of religion and drifted into mere conformism, originality gave way to superficiality, reason gave way to superstition and courage for enquiry succumbed to blindfolded subservience to tradition. The kingdoms and the crowns, which the Muslims have lost in the course of history, are far less important than the kingdom of free and searching minds which they have lost in the process of intellectual stagnation. The result was that while life kept moving onwards, knowledge and practice of Islam continued to lag centuries behind. Instead of remaining a complete and dynamic code of life, as it was intended to be, Islam thus became an object of external adoration to worship which one had constantly to look backward in a world which is moving constantly forward.

"To liberate the spirit of religion from the cobwebs of superstition and stagnation which surround it and move it forward under the focus of modern science and knowledge is therefore, one of the major demands on our system of education.

"Another tragedy that befell countries like the United Arab Republic and Pakistan was the pang of foreign domination. The systems of education evolved for them were not intended for their benefit: they were on the contrary designed to suit the ends of the imperial rule. This resulted in a serious crisis of character which in turn led to complete socio-moral and political collapse of the values of life and conduct.

"Like the United Arab Republic, in Pakistan too they were trying to overcome the evils of moral confusion, social stagnation and economic backwardness bequeathed by a long period of foreign subjugation. Now that we are blessed with independence, we have not only to catch up with this time lag but we have also to prepare ourselves to move forward and keep pace with the fast-moving world of today and tomorrow. This, like you, it our major problem, and I have no doubt that if we get a good long spell of peace and put in hard, sustained and well-planned work we are bound to make the grade."
What is being done in Pakistan to provide it with a sound political system

"Another sphere in which the revolutions in our two countries have brought us together is that of political and constitutional realism and stability. It is remarkable that in our search for a sane and sensible system we in Pakistan have also reached a solution which bears close resemblance to the one which you have evolved here. One of my foremost declarations after the Revolution was that power will soon be handed over to the people under a system of democracy which they can understand and operate. We have been working ceaselessly during the last two years to discover and construct such a system. Before a system is raised, we have to prepare a sound base for it. With this object in view we introduced radical reforms in landholdings, education, health, labour system, public administration, etc. Side by side we have created a network of political institutions throughout the country which have their roots right in the heart of the rural population.

"Of all the reforms which have been introduced in Pakistan, I feel personally proud of our educational reforms. The philosophy behind these reforms is the recognition of the fact that an abundant and increasing supply of properly educated people has become the absolute prerequisite of social and economic development in the present-day world. It is rapidly becoming a condition of national survival. No society can be fully effective if its members are educated less than the limit of their potential. So the basic principle underlying our reforms is that everybody must be able to receive full education not according to his or her needs but according to his or her merit and potential, according to the requirements of the country. The implementation of these reforms will no doubt put a great strain on our meagre resources, but it is my belief that education has become a most advanced form of capital formation today. According to the rules of economics, the basic capital investment of the society must be given priority over all avenues of national income excepting only national defence. It is on this basis that I propose to tackle educational reforms in Pakistan and I have no doubt in my mind that as a result of this our future generations will, Inshallah, be far superior to us.

"Islam is a progressive religion and it should be moving with the times. But is this happening? Muslim communities everywhere are backward. What has gone wrong? How can it be put right? Every Muslim should devote his mind to the problem and find out a solution, for the law of nature is clear: Those who do not move with the times perish."

MECCA

On 4th November 1960, President Muhammad Ayyub Khan visited the Plain of 'Arafat, where the pilgrims assemble on the 9th of Dhu'l Hijja as an essential part of the Hajj ceremonies. Without such attendance, especially during the afternoon of that day, no one can claim to have performed the Hajj.

Mecca is the first city of the kingdom of Su'udi Arabia. It is the honoured birthplace of the Prophet and the "home" of the Ka'bah and the Black Stone. The city is visited every year by millions of Muslims from all over the world. The Haram, or the Masjid al-Haram, consists of a quadrangle enclosed by a wall pierced with 24 gates and the citizens' dwellings. In the centre stands the sacred Ka'bah, draped in the black kiswa with gold-inscribed vessels from the Qur'an, surrounded by colonnades and the four minarets. The Ka'bah stands on a pavement 50 ft. high reached by a flight of wooden steps. Water supplied to the city comes from the springs at Wadi Nu'man, near Jabal 'Arafat and the famous 'Ayn Zubayda.

The township of Mina and the valley, once traversed by the Patriarch Abraham along with his son Isma'il, who was offered for sacrifice on the summit of a hill in this very...
sacred valley, springs to life during the Hajj, having remained practically uninhabited for the most part of the year. The valley of Mina, where the pilgrims sacrifice animals after the completion of the Hajj ceremonies, lies at a distance of four miles from Mecca and is reached by all available means of transport. At one end of this valley is the historic Masjid al-Khayf, said to have contained the tombs of more than 70 prophets. It is a square building surrounded by a lofty stone wall. It was rebuilt by the Sultan Salahuddin Ayyubi, the hero of the Crusades, and was later renovated by one of the Sultans, Baybars of Egypt.

‘Arafat

In the Plain of ‘Arafat is held the biggest Islamic congregation in the world on the Day of ‘Arafu, when the Imam of the Masjid al-Haram recites the khaibha before the Wuqaf (lit., station) begins, an indispensable part of the Hajj ceremonies. This vast empty plain, with the exception of the Masjid al-Nimra and the Jabal al-Rahmat, presents a picturesque view: a huge city of sprawling tents springing up almost overnight to be again vacated in the evening. In their tents the pilgrims, with voices choked and tears rolling down their cheeks, pray ardently for the forgiveness of their sins, those of their parents and relatives and the Muslim nation. The Masjid al-Nimra, despite its vastness, overflows with pilgrims, who, unmindful of the inclemencies of the weather, attend it for prayers. The Mash‘ar al-Haram is some three miles from ‘Arafat, where the pilgrims pass the night before returning to Mina.

The renovation and the extension of the Masjid al-Haram, which began in 1956, is still in progress. Only the eastern and northern wings have been partially completed, costing more than 40 crores of Su‘udi Riyals (10 Riyals=£1).
CORDOVA (SPAIN) UNDER ‘ABD AL-RAHMAN III

“During 711 C.E.-1102 C.E. Muslim Spain had written one of the brightest pages in the history of Medieval Europe”

“Education was extended to all classes in Muslim Spain, Muslim, Christian and Jew, and was so general that illiteracy was practically non-existent—and that in the tenth century C.E.”

by CHARLES C. FORMAN

Arab Muslims introduce Islam in Spain in 711 C.E.

In 632 C.E. the Prophet Muhammad died, and almost immediately there began the expansion of the Muslims from Arabia, a movement which extended itself as far west as the Iberian Peninsula by the year 711 C.E. ‘Ali, the last of the four orthodox Caliphs, was assassinated in 661 C.E. and the leadership of Islam fell to Mu‘awiyah after the abdication of ‘Ali’s eldest son, Hasan. The Caliph Mu‘awiyah founded the dynasty of the Umayyads and established the seat of their rule in Damascus, where it continued until the Abbasids seized power in 750 C.E. The Abbasids attempted to put to death the surviving members of the Umayyad House, but one Umayyad prince escaped and, after five years of wandering through North Africa, reached Spain, where he established himself in Cordova and continued the Umayyad line until the death of Hisham III in 1031 C.E.

As Islam spread alike to the east and west, conquering in every direction, it brought with it a culture that embodied a State which was at once political and religious in its structure. The account of Muslim culture and its development is one of the most interesting chapters in world history, and of especial interest is the account of the Muslim domination in Europe:

“ In 711 the victorious Arabs introduced Islam into Spain; in 1502 an edict of Ferdinand and Isabella forbade the exercise of the Muhammadan religion throughout the kingdom. During the centuries that elapsed between these two dates, Muslim Spain had written one of the brightest pages in the history of Medieval Europe.”

From Muslim Spain there came into Europe a new poetry and a new culture, and it was from this new centre in intellectual activity that Christian scholars first learned the Greek philosophy and science which was to satisfy their minds until the coming of the Renaissance. The purpose of this essay is to give some account of the history of Cordova during the reign of the most illustrious of the Spanish Omayyads, ‘Abd al-Rahman III. Let us first look briefly at the history of Spain from its conquest in 710 C.E. to the death of ‘Abdullah in 912 C.E.
A scion of the Umayyads of Damascus becomes the King of Arab Spain in 750 C.E. with Cordova as his capital

Spain was conquered in the years 710-712 C.E. and was ruled by governors appointed by the Umayyad Caliphs, until 756 C.E. In the massacre which the Abbasids carried out against the Umayyads the male members of all of the royal family seem to have been executed with the exception of ‘Abd al-Rahman I, grandson of the last Umayyad Caliph, Hisham. In 750 C.E., Spain was divided by Berber and Arab tribes and torn by internecine wars until there seemed little hope of bringing any peaceful end to their difficulties. It was with the desire of achieving some kind of unity that they willingly accepted the offer of ‘Abd al-Rahman I to cross over from Africa and become their king.

‘Abd al-Rahman I lost no time in making Cordova the seat of his government, and he declared himself independent of Baghdad when he ordered that prayers in the mosques should, from this point on, be offered for the Umayyad ruler, and not the Caliph of Baghdad.

North Africa soon followed Spain in her revolt against the Abbasid house. Abbasid rule ended in Morocco in 788 C.E. with the establishment of the Idrisite kingdom, and it came to an end in Ifrikia with the establishment of the Aghlabite dynasty.

The splendour that was to characterize the Umayyad capital in later years was already begun in the building projects of the first Amir, who built a new palace, several new mosques, including the Great Mosque, which was started in 786 C.E., baths for the residents of the city and an aqueduct which served all of Cordova.

The reputation that ‘Abd al-Rahman I earned as a cruel and ruthless despot was given deservedly. He had one great ambition: to found and rule over an empire comparable to that of his ancestors in the east. Every effort was motivated by that ambition. The boundaries of the domain which he won were extensive, and each Amir who succeeded him was to attempt to win back and control these same territories. It is also fair to say that he set the stage for military despotism by establishing the precedent of employing mercenary soldiers to carry out his ambitions and to put down revolts. Violence and tyranny were his strongest weapons!

Looking at the amazing success of ‘Abd al-Rahman I, the Abbasid Caliph Mansur could say:

“Although he had no other support to rely on but his statesmanship and perseverance, he succeeded in humbling his haughty opponents, in killing off his insurgents, and in securing his frontier against the attacks of the Christians. He founded a mighty empire, and united under his sceptre extensive dominions which had hitherto been divided among a number of different chiefs.”

In thirty-two years an exile had become an emperor!

HISHAM I

Hisham I, the successor to the throne of Cordova (788-796 C.E.), was a very different person. Piety and virtue were his characteristics, and he gave his full support to the establishment of the Maliki school of thought in Spain. All civil and religious appointments were given to the followers of the Imam Malik, and by the time of the death of Hisham I, the faqihs (jurists) had become a powerful class and were destined to have a profound influence in moulding the events of the following years. During the reigns of the two succeeding rulers the faqihs Yahya Ibn Yahya was the most influential figure in the land.

HAKAM I

Hakam I (796-822 C.E.) won the hatred of the powerful faqihs for his broad attitude in matters of conduct which, in the eyes of these puritans, earned him the unjust reputation of an irreligious ruler. Hakam’s reign of twenty-six years was filled with rebellion and opposition from the fanatical theologians of Cordova. He met their criticism and attacks in a tolerant manner, but when uprisings began to occur he used forceful measures to preserve his rule. When a wave of fanaticism swept Cordova, resulting in an uprisings of several thousand theologians and students, led by Yahya Ibn Yahya, the sultan did not hesitate to raze completely the Arrabel del Sur, their section of Cordova. However, he characteristically gave amnesty to the faqihs once more, even permitting the fiery Yahya Ibn Yahya to return to the capital. Hakam kept his throne by tyrannical measures and described his rule in these verses:

“Just as a tailor uses his needle to join different pieces of cloth, so I use my sword to unite my separate provinces.”

‘ABD AL-RAHMAN II

His difficult and violent reign was followed by that of the weak and ineffectual ‘Abd al-Rahman II (822-852 C.E.), who devoted himself to patronizing the arts, leaving the more pressing obligations of the realm to those who dominated him completely. Under the new Amir, Yahya Ibn Yahya assumed the theological and judicial powers which normally fell to the monarch. These powers were used by the faqihs in defending his fanatical views, and he ruthlessly sought out and punished heretics and infidels. The court was dominated by Ziryab, a musician, who shrewdly kept himself clear of political matters. Ziryab set the standards of taste at the court, and completely dominated the fashions of the day. The actual governing of the kingdom was left in the hands of the Sultanah Tarub, who shared the duties of administration with the cruel eunuch, Nasr.

There was rebellion on every side, but the greatest problem was a severe fanaticism which swept through the Christian communities, and desiring martyrdom, the Christians openly opposed and insulted the Muslim religion. The Christians had, at their head, two monks, Eulogius and Alvaro, who, in spite of the Christian Council, the bishop of which opposed the seeking of martyrdom, incited the people to acts of violence which frequently resulted in losing their lives for their faith.

MUHAMMAD I

Muhammad I came to the throne in the midst of Arab and Christian uprisings. He reigned from 852-886 C.E. and was universally hated by his subjects for his mean and selfish disposition. Muhammad’s support came almost exclusively from the faqihs, . . . who aimed at making him devout and inspired him with hatred of the Christians, whom he persecuted so terribly that, if we are to believe Eulogius, almost all abjured their faith.” Throughout the history of Muslim Spain a policy of extreme tolerance was exercised toward Christians as well as Jews. Only under Muhammad I was the history of the Spanish Emirate marred by religious persecution. Finally, Eulogius was executed on 11th March.
859 C.E., a date which marked the decline of the fanaticism of the “Christian martyrs”.

‘ABDULLAH

The place of succession fell to Mundhir, but he had been on the throne scarcely a year when he was murdered, and ‘Abdullāh began his unhappy reign of twenty-four years which ended in 912 C.E. The revolts which occurred under the previous Emirs multiplied in every direction. The aristocracy lived in open defiance of the king in Granada: civil war raged in Seville: the Berbers reverted to their old form of tribal government; independent chiefs ruled throughout the realm. In the face of all these disturbances ‘Abdullāh’s policies were inconsistent and vile, and within a period of three years he had lost a greater part of Andalusia!

“Split up as it was into numberless little signories, resembling rather estates or counties of feudal barons than portions of a once powerful realm, Andalusia could have offered but ill-directed resistance to a determined invader.”

During ‘Abdullāh’s reign Umayyad power fell so completely that there was little hope in any quarter that the full extent of the power could ever again be realized. The dominions of ‘Abd al-Rahman I were nothing more than a dim memory to the harassed and tired rulers and populace alike.

II

Accession of ‘Abd al-Rahman III to the throne of Cordova

Having outlined briefly the history of Umayyad rule in Spain from its beginnings until the death of ‘Abdullāh in 912 C.E., we are now ready to consider the main theme of this dissertation, the reign of ‘Abd al-Rahman III, Amir and Caliph of Cordova. Coppé remarks of this monarch:

“The notable reign of ‘Abd al-Rahman II has not received the credit which is justly its due, because of its position in the current history. It commenced nothing, and ended nothing: but in truth, it marks the most brilliant point in the career of the Spanish Muslims, as it contained the vivifying influence which gave superior popularity to the reign of his son al-Hakam II.”

‘Abd al-Rahman III had been named successor by his grandfather, ‘Abdullāh, but remembering that the young prince was not yet twenty-two and that there were numerous uncles and great-uncles, it is surprising that the accession was permitted. At this time there did not exist any fixed law of succession: customarily the oldest male was made king. Dozy declares that there was no opposition whatever to the new ruler.

“... princes and courtiers hailed the event with joy, and seemed to see in it a pledge of future prosperity and glory. The fact was that the young prince had already learnt how to win affection, and had inspired all who knew him with a high opinion of his talents.”

Lévi-Provençal does not give us quite the same picture, for while the uncles did not oppose his accession two of them were later executed for plotting a revolt of some sort. In addition to the executions of al-‘Asi and Muhammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Djabbār, three of the sons of Amir ‘Abdullāh disappeared from active political life and ended their days in obscurity. Suggestive of the firm policies the young potentate was about to inaugurate is the manner in which he dealt with these troublesome relatives. Lévi-Provençal comments:

“Tant crime contre la Sûreté de l’Etat même seulement présumé et quel qu’en fut l’instigateur, devait être expié dans le sang. Rares seront les Umayyades d’Espagne qui n’auront pas sali leur mémoire par des crimes de cette sorte, dont personne au surplus ne s’émouvait beaucoup à cette époque.”

Factors that led to the unification of Muslim Spain under ‘Abd al-Rahman III

There can be no doubt that the time was ripe for the appearance of a strong and popular king. The people of all parties were tired: the revolutionaries were dead: the old aristocracy was without leaders. The land had been torn by warfare long enough and there was no enthusiasm left among the people to be stirred by any deep feelings for the old controversies. The urban population desired peace in order to return to the pursuits of industry, while the peasants desired once more to care for their fields. War, they came to see, was a senseless pastime in which no one was the victor.

By fortunate coincidence, the mood of the times and the particular abilities of the new Sultan were so suited to each other that a brilliant new age was, in the course of a very few years, ushered in. ‘Abd al-Rahman III made it immediately clear that he would tolerate no rebellions of any kind. Furthermore, he summoned all disaffected nobles to submit as city after city, which had been in open rebellion, opened its gates to the Amir until even Bobastro, the ancient Christian stronghold, was defeated. When in 932 C.E. Toledo finally submitted, the dominions were once more restored to their full extent.

Another factor which contributed rather significantly to unification of Muslim Spain was the change in the war led by the rebel Ibn Hafsook from a political to a religious concern. At the outset of the rebellion Ibn Hafsook made no distinction between Christian and Muslim. When he, himself, later became a convert to Christianity and took the name Samuel he began to favour Christians and gave army appointments to none but those of his own faith. When he later discovered that this move had cost him the support of certain Muslim groups he thought to recant. This, however, only served to arouse the Christians, who did not care to fight under a Muslim, to question the sincerity of his conversion. Thus Ibn Hafsook lost both Muslim and Christian support. When the war became clearly a religious quarrel, the Muslims from the various parties united themselves in defence of their faith.

‘Abd al-Rahman III initiated acts of tolerance and generosity which did much towards winning the people to his cause. He began by lowering the taxes generally throughout the land and extending a policy of leniency towards Christians. From the beginning he had been the great opponent of the old Arab aristocracy, and now he set about to wrest all power from their hands. Since it was the nobles who had been abusive to the peasants, the latter rejoiced at the new social order and gave their support to the new Amir.

Once all the people were subjected to his power, he granted no prominence to any single party. The Sultan became the sole authority, ruling justly, tolerantly and with enlightenment.
A view of the Mihrab in the Great Mosque of Cordova, Spain, now turned into a cathedral. This part of the Mosque is the marvel, the wonder, the precious jewel of the entire building. The acme of beauty is reached here. "Between the elegant arches which appear rather to hang from the cupola than to support it, the marvellous façade of the Mihrab appears in the background, which glistens in the rays of the setting sun like a piece of brocade loaded with jewels" (A. F. Calvert in his Moorish Remains in Spain, London, 1960)

Stanley Lane-Poole has remarked that:

"After so many years of confusion and anarchy, the people accepted the new despotism cheerfully. There were no more brigands to destroy their crops and vines; and if the Sultan was absolute in his power, at least he did not abuse it. The country folk returned to the paths of peace and plenty; they were at least free to get rich and to be happy after their own way."

'Abd al-Rahman III was able to maintain an absolute control of his domestic policies because he kept the power securely in his own hands. All appointments went to parvenus who were without previous alliances and dependent upon the Amir. The power he used to maintain this central authority was the army, and this was headed by his own select bodyguard of Slavs, or purchased foreigners. With these Slavs he was able to put down religion and brigandage, as well as to use them in waging war in the north.

The two threats from without the territory of 'Abd al-Rahman III

Besides dealing with any attempt at civil war within his realm, 'Abd al-Rahman III was confronted with two threats from without his own territory. The first was the new Fatimide Empire to the south, in North Africa; the second was the growing power of the Christians to the north, who were already committing violence along the border. Altamira says:

"The life-work of 'Abd al-Rahman III was to defend that civilization (i.e., the Islamic) from the dangers that threatened it on the north and on the south, but first of all he had to bring his own subjects to obedience."

The young Muslim ruler had been on the throne scarcely two years when Ordoño II, King of Leon, carried a foray to cities in the near vicinity of Cordova itself. The Sultan sent troops which carried out a successful raid, and in 917 C.E. he sent his army against Ordoño II and suffered a severe defeat at the hands of the Christians. Recognizing that his own kingdom was threatened by the unchecked strength of Leon, 'Abd al-Rahman III led his troops in person on a campaign in 920 C.E., this time defeating the Christians generally. Ordoño II conducted a raid in 921 C.E. and two years later his ally, Sancho of Navarre, recaptured certain castles. The Sultan sent forth the following year, ravaging all the Christian territories as he went. With the death of Ordoño II occurring at this time, a civil war of succession broke out in Leon, thus leaving the Muslim ruler free to turn his attention to the pressing problem of the Fatimides in the south.

The Fatimide Caliphate had been established by the Ismaelite Shi'a, who, 'Abd al-Rahman III suspected, desired to capture Spain by the teaching of the doctrine of
the Mahdi. The Ismaelites, in teaching this doctrine, were aiming at a universal monarchy. The Umayyad king had good reason to suspect their motives since certain of their teachers had appeared in Cordova, as well as in other Spanish cities, to spread their message. Ibn Massura had been teaching this doctrine until the fatihah of Cordova began to persecute him. His books had been burned, but his life was saved by the interference of 'Abd al-Rahman III, who was insistently tolerant in such matters.

In 920 C.E. the Fatimides had besieged Fez and threatened the Idrisite ruler. 'Abd al-Rahman III came to the support of the latter because he feared the growing threat of the Fatimides. Since the Idrisites were too weak to be strengthened, the Umayyad took North Africa itself. In 926 C.E. his forces took Melilla and in 931 C.E. he occupied and held Ceuta. Because of continued trouble in the north he was unable to devote full attention to North Africa, but by making common cause with the native Berbers, and building a naval fleet second to no other power in the Mediterranean, he was able to contain the Fatimides and their ambitious programme. The struggle in North Africa continued for many years and, indeed, it was not until 973 C.E. that the Fatimides withdrew to the east.

From the time of the Spanish Amir's first interference in North Africa on through several centuries, Spain was the dominating influence in this region. The distinguished historian of the Spanish Empire, R. B. Merriman, says: "'Abd al-Rahman al-Nasir deserves an honourable place in the long list of rulers who have pointed the way to the foundation of the modern Spanish Empire.""11

"'Abd al-Rahman III, as a result of his growing power and prestige, adopts the title of "The Defender of the Faith of God"

Going back to pick up our story at the time of 'Abd al-Rahman III's return from his victory in the north, we find the ruler taking for himself a new and daring title: the Caliph 'Abd al-Rahman al-Nasir li-Din 'Allah — the "defender of the faith of God". Thereafter, annual expeditions were made against the Christians, thus entitling the Caliph to the name of defender of his religion. The act of assuming the title of Caliph in 929 C.E. suggests that 'Abd al-Rahman al-Nasir felt that he had succeeded in realizing at least a part of his ambition. Spain had become unified! Rafael Altamira says that his reign

"... represents the high-point in that enterprise of peace and of reduction of Hispanic Moslems to the homogeneity and social discipline which 'Abd al-Rahman I had begun, and his successors... had carried on. 'Abd al-Rahman III succeeded in quelling the anarchical situation that had made several cities and districts, among them Toledo and Badajoz, independent in fact. Subduing the rebellious and over-ambitious among his subjects, he assumed the title of Caliph... Thus commenced the period of great splendour... which was to be called for more than one hundred years the Caliphate of Cordova.""12

It seems altogether likely that al-Nasir regarded himself as the only monarch in Islam who might properly bear the title which designates at once the spiritual and the temporal head of the entire Muslim world. The Abbasids were practically prisoners within Baghdad, and had no power whatever outside the immediate environs of their capital. Similarly, the other Amirs were either politically impotent or heretical in their religious associations. Of the Caliph's attitude toward his own role in Islam, Lévi-Provençal has this observation to make:

"Une autre signification s'attachait encore a ce geste. 'Abd al-Rahman III estimait sa maison devenue assez puissante pour faire revivre l'ancienne dynastie umayyade déchue en Orient jusque dans la dignité califalienne. Les seuls héritiers légitimes du califat orthodoxe n'étaient pas les 'Abbasides, encore moins les souverains schismatiques de l'Ifrîkiya. C'étaient, en sa personne, les Marwînides qui avaient su transférer leur pouvoir de Damas à Cordoué et l'y maintenir en dépit de tous les obstacles accumulés devant eux."13

The importance of assuming this title cannot be stressed too strongly. The unity of Islam, the concept of community, was a dead notion, but it had once been implied under this very name. The previous Spanish Umayyads had been careful not to give offence by an unwise use of titles, and had kept rather closely to the usual title of Amir. By taking the name of Caliph and adding an honorific surname, 'Abd al-Rahman III was following the example of the rulers of Baghdad and of Kairawan. Perhaps, more than that, he was dreaming of the restoration of the unity of the Muslim faith.

The Caliph had now achieved the union of Arabs, Spaniards and Berbers, and with the reduced influence of the aristocracy, the solidarity of the Spaniards was being realized. With the passing of time, should his goal become an achievement, there would be "... the fusion of all the races of the Peninsula into a veritable nation".14

That the principles of government to which al-Nasir subscribed were those of absolutism cannot be doubted. "Plus qu'un simple émir, le calife va pouvoir disposer, sans contre-partie d'aucune sorte, d'une puissance absolue."15

To modern minds the notion of an absolute despot can, of course, imply nothing but the most profound horror. The equality towards which 'Abd al-Rahman III was working was an equality of subjection — a hateful notion to us! But we must not look at either the monarch or his subjects through modern eyes. In the 10th century men's demands for liberty were less than today.

"At bottom, their ideas of liberty were still very vague: they had no prejudice against absolute monarchy and administrative despotism: on the contrary, such a form of government was traditional to them: they had known none other under Visigothic kings or Roman emperors; and in this connection it is noteworthy that even when fighting for independence, they had made but feeble efforts to establish liberty."16

III

The achievements of 'Abd al-Rahman III in the realm of culture

We have now traced the first half of the career of the first Caliph of Cordova, and have now seen how certain of his ambitions were, during these years, realized. It is generally agreed that in the second half of the reign of Cordova's great monarch, he becomes a person more withdrawn and set apart from his subjects. He is now concerned with the building of great edifices and the cultivation of a brilliant court where scholars might discuss their mutual interests and where artists might be free to work and to produce whatever their talents permitted.
The Caliph’s court was, of course, in constant communication with the other great cultural centres of the 10th century. The Arab historians make frequent reference to delegations from various places being received by the Caliph of Cordova, as well as descriptions of the receptions of those ambassadors. There were rather close relations between ‘Abd al-Rahman III and the Byzantine emperor, Constantine VII, the latter of whom wrote the 10th century Book of Ceremonies which describes the various festivities and events of the Caliph’s court. This is regarded as the best book we possess on the subject of protocol. Lévi-Provençal makes an interesting observation that seems to be indicative of an aspect of the personality of ‘Abd al-Rahman III which became evident in his later years. “... elles devinrent de plus en plus somptueuses et minutieusement réglées par l’étiquette au fur et à mesure que ‘Abd al-Rahman III avança en âge.” It is interesting to discover that the Caliph also sent representatives to various courts on special occasions. “Wir hören, dass Abderrahman III, 956 den Bischof Recemond als Gesandten zur Zänzung Ottos des Grossen nach Frankfort sendet.”

Not only was Cordova on an equal ground with other distinguished courts of the world; it took the lead among the cities of Spain and in the Christian territories. The story of Sancho of Leon illustrates the way in which Cordova was also a centre for science. Sancho succeeded Ordoño III to the throne of Leon but was expelled by Gonzalez, who set up in his place Ordoño IV. Sancho fled to his grandmother, Queen Theuda of Navarre, who gave him protection. Because of some disorder Sancho was excessively corpulent, a condition which had cost him his throne since he could not even walk without support. Queen Theuda appealed to ‘Abd al-Rahman III to send some kind of help, in response to which the famous Jewish physician, Hasdai, was sent. After a series of treatments, Hasdai was able to cure Sancho, so that he began to lose weight, until he had reduced to a normal size. It seems reasonable to suppose that so eminent a physician had gathered other doctors about himself. Max Meyerhof takes this very point of view in his article on Muslim medicine where he maintains that just as Eastern Islam had a thriving medicine, so Western Islam also had a centre: the famous Hasdai Ibn Shaprut (d. 990 C.E.) was at once minister, court physician and a patron of science. Of Hasdai, Meyerhof says:

“In his younger years he translated into Arabic, with the help of the monk Nicholas, the splendid manuscript of the Materia Medica of Dioscurides which had been sent as a diplomatic present from the Byzantine emperor Constantine VIII.”

Having already discussed court life in Cordova, let us look briefly at the life of that city. Professor J. B. Trend gives this description:

“Cordova in the tenth century was the most civilized city in Europe, the wonder and admiration of the world, a Vienna among Balkan States ... whenever rulers of Léon, Navarre or Barcelona needed such things as a surgeon, an architect, a dressmaker or a singing-master, it was to Cordoba that they applied.”

The grandeur and prosperity of Cordova

There are many different sets of figures given for the population, number of residences, mosques, schools and the like, of Cordova in the 10th century. The following figures, based in turn on figures given by al-Maqqari, represent the figures for Cordova at its height, and are exaggerated in all probability: 113,000 houses, 800 public schools, 300 mosques, 50 hospitals, 900 baths, 600 hotels.

“Mögen diese Zahlen auch stark übertrieben sein, so steht doch fest, dass Cordoba vom neunten bis zum zwölften Jahrhundert der bevorzugte Sitz der Musen in Europa, wenn nicht in der ganzen Welt war.”

The general well-being and prosperity of Cordova can be attributed to two things: the extended era of peace under the long rule of al-Nasir and an extremely sound economy built upon advanced agriculture and a variety of industries. Artificial irrigation, improved and extended by the Caliph, made possible increased activity in agriculture. Perhaps the contribution of the Muslims to Spanish life does not exceed in any other area those agricultural advances. For not only did the Muslims teach the Spanish how to irrigate, but they also imported completely new crops from the Near East and made them native to Spain. Among the new crops introduced were rice, sugar-cane and cotton, all of which have contributed in making a significant change in the economy of the country. New fruits, native to the Orient, were also brought to Spain, where the climate was especially favourable for their cultivation. They include the peach, apricot, fig, date and pomegranate. New methods and new ideas of agriculture from Mesopotamia seemed singularly well-suited for trial in Spain. The peace that ‘Abd al-Rahman III brought to his realm made possible the re-establishment and improvement of this agricultural life.

The general prosperity was further increased by vigorous industrial activity. Mining was, of course, encouraged, and with the constant building and redecorating of public buildings and mosques in addition to the usual uses of metal there was a constant demand for all the miners could bring. Stock-raising was encouraged and certain of the breeds were noticeably improved. With the general increase of stock in the country, a new impetus was given to the textile and leather industries. Under the Caliph, Cordova could boast of 13,000 weavers within the city. The making of paper was introduced for the first time, thus replacing parchment, the usual writing material heretofore, in Spain. The art of stamping or embossing leather was also introduced, and this led to an entirely new industry in leather work centring around Cordova and giving its name to a certain leather (Cordovan). The glass industry flourished and cut-glass, crystal and marble were much in demand. The extensive building projects made an added demand for this product also.

The Muslim merchant marine was the largest sailing the Mediterranean, and from their three main ports, Seville, Málaga and Almeria, they carried on trade with North Africa, Egypt, Constantinople, the coasts of the Black Sea and Palestine.

The architecture of Cordova under ‘Abd al-Rahman III

It now remains to turn our attention to the architecture of Cordova. One of the greatest architectural triumphs in the world is the Great Mosque of Cordova. Professor Karl Eugen Schmidt speaks with great enthusiasm of Arab building:

“Bei weitem die hervorragendsten dieser erhabenen Ruhmsäulen arabische Kultur finden auch in der drei Städten... die Moschee von Cordoba, die Alhambra von Granada, die Giralda, der Alcazar und das Pilatushaus in Sevilla genügen, um die ganze unbeschrei-
THE GREAT MOSQUE OF CORDOVA

The Mosque of Cordova was erected on the site of a Christian church which, in turn, had taken over an old Roman temple dedicated to Janus. When the Arabs came to Cordova they divided the church with the Christians, each using half of the structure. Al-Maqqari, in speaking of this, tells us that it was customary among the Arabs to follow just such a practice of sharing a church with the Christians, harking back to such advice from the Caliph ‘Umar. ‘Abd al-Rahman I desired to erect a great mosque suitable for a capital city and selected the site of the Christian site because it was located on a pleasant hill. The Christians, at first, were not receptive to any offer from the Amir, but his price was generous and they preferred having a church independent of the mosque. The Christians gave up their moiety with the condition that they be allowed to rebuild and to hold their new church independently. These conditions were granted and the old church was demolished in 784 C.E. In 786 C.E. the Great Mosque was begun, but it was not completed until during the reign of the second Umayyad, Hisham. Al-Maqqari tells us that ‘Abd al-Rahman I spent 80,000 dinars towards the cost of the Mosque. He has preserved a poem by the poet Dihyah al-Baluni:

"‘Abd-r-Rahman has spent, for the sake of his God and the honour of his religion, of silver and gold eighty thousand dinars.

"He has employed them in building a temple for the use of his devout nation, and the better observance of the religion of the Prophet Mohammed.

"There thou wilt see the gold that covers the ceilings in profusion glitter as brightly as the lightning crossing the clouds."

Although the original plan for the Great Mosque was finally carried out during the reign of Hisham, he and his successors added to it from time to time, sometimes small details, and sometimes whole wings.

"... it can be safely said that none of the Sultans of the illustrious family of Omeyyah who reigned in Cordova failed to make some estimable addition, or contributed in some way, to the decoration of the sumptuous building."

THE TOWER OF THE GREAT MOSQUE AT CORDOVA

The outstanding contribution of the Caliph ‘Abd al-Rahman to the Great Mosque was the large tower with which he replaced a much smaller one. The new tower was 72 cubits high, and on the summit of the dome there were three apples, two gold and one silver, encompassed within two six-petalled lilies, surmounted by a pomegranate of gold. The tower was begun in 945 C.E., the foundation alone taking forty-three days, and completed thirteen months later. The tower was made of free-stone and mortar and was designed with two stairways, containing 107 steps in each. Al-Maqqari, from whom these details are taken, gives the
cost of the tower as 261,537 dinars and two dirhems and a half. After inspecting the completed tower, 'Al-Nasir went into the maqṣurah of the mosque, prayed two rak'ahs and retired.'25

We have yet one more building venture of al-Nasir to mention. In 936 C.E. he undertook a most ambitious project, the building of Medina al-Zahra', about four miles outside of Cordova. The project was begun as a summer villa for a favourite concubine, but in reality, it became a suburb of the city, providing the royal residence, containing mosques, baths, markets and all the necessities of a self-contained community. Al-Maqqari gives careful and detailed descriptions of the entire construction in his History. Forty years were required for the completion of al-Zahra', which was finally finished in 976 C.E. The descriptions of the hall of the Caliphs, with the striking use of quicksilver for effect, the baths and the handsome fountains, make it easy to believe that nothing in the Muslim world could compare with this great structure. The tragic end of al-Zahra' came in 1010 C.E., only thirty-four years after its completion, when it was sacked and razed by the Berbers.

The splendour of Cordova

During the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman III, Cordova was beautified by aqueducts, fountains, mosques and palaces, until it was the most brilliant city in Islam. Lévi-Provençal describes it as follows:

"Elle surpassait de loin les autres capitales de l'Europe occidentale et jouissait dans le monde méditerranéen d'une réputation et d'un prestige seulement comparables à ceux de Constantinople."26

Al-Maqqari tells us that, at the height of its splendour, Cordova measured ten miles in length, all of which "might be traversed at night by the light of lamps". There were twenty-one suburbs of the city, and its growth continued until the civil wars beginning in 1009 C.E.27

Muslim Spain made great advances in the field of education over the Christians in Spain, and, indeed, surpassed all other countries in Europe at that time. There was no public education, but in every town private schools existed which were maintained by endowments or tuition. The branches of learning cultivated in Muslim schools included poetry, history, philosophy, law and the natural sciences. The language of the schools for both Arabs and Spaniards was Arabic, but there is now clear evidence of the existence of a vulgar tongue showing both Arabic and Roman traits.

The curriculum of the lower school gave a place to the Qur'an, writing, poetry, letters and grammar, while higher education provided instruction in the Hadith, commentary, grammar, medicine, philosophy, jurisprudence and literary history.

Education in Muslim Spain

Education was extended to all classes, Muslim, Christian and Jew, and was so general that illiteracy was practically non-existent — and this in the tenth century! In a time when Europe had forgotten its heritage, the Muslims were learning these disciplines from the Greeks and "... they gave them a powerful development, and so they became the most cultivated people of those times".28

The prevalence of education was general throughout Muslim Spain; it came to a full flowering of intellectual activity in Cordova under the first Caliph. Al-Maqqari refers to Cordova as "the abode of science, the place of refuge of Sunnah and tradition...". Here came the learned of all countries to study the sciences, divinity or law. Among these scholars who came to Cordova was the Christian monk Gerbert of Aurvergne, who later became Pope Sylvester II. Among other things he studied geometry, mechanics and astronomy. It was he who introduced to Christian Europe the system of Arabic numerals and the clock with weights.

The interest in Arabic became so great that the Mozarabes gave up using Latin at all. A favourite passage which is always quoted by students of this period is the lament of the Cordovan Alvaro, himself a Moorab, who says:

"Many of my co-religionists read the poems and tales of the Arabs and study the works of Mohammedan philosophers and theologians, not with the idea of refuting them but of learning how to express themselves in the Arabic tongue with more elegance and correctness. All the young Christians illustrious for their talents are acquainted with the language and literature of the Arabs only; they read and study Arab books zealously; they expend huge sums collecting libraries of such works; and on every occasion they proclaim loudly how admirable this literature is."29

Cordova, as a literary centre, is described in an Arabic anecdote:

"When a rich man dies in Seville and his heirs desire to sell his library, it is sent to Cordova for disposal: when, on the other hand, a musician dies in Cordova and his instruments are to be sold, the custom is to send them to Seville."

THE LIBRARY OF AL-HAKAM II CONTAINED 600,000 VOLUMES

The library of Al-Hakam II, son and successor of 'Abd al-Rahman III, was established during the latter's reign and stood as the greatest monument to the intellectual life of Cordova. The Prince sent agents all over the Near East to collect acquisitions for his library, which came to number 600,000 volumes. Attached to the library were book-binders, transcribers and artists skilled in illuminated manuscripts. Al-Hakam established fifty public libraries throughout Andalusia. The destruction of this magnificent library, brought about by the usurper al-Mansur, in order to win the favour of the theologians and other fanatics, is one of the great losses to world culture.

Conclusion

While Europe lay in a decadent condition the Muslims in Spain were creating a civilization and an organized economic life that permitted them to become the transmitters of Eastern and classical cultures; the greatest single figure in this movement was 'Abd al-Rahman III.

'Abd al-Rahman III came to the amirate of Cordova in the midst of revolution and civil war, confronted with poverty and a profound despair. There was every indication that the Umayyad dynasty was drawing its last breath and in a matter of a very few years every remnant of Muslim power in Spain would crumble. In less than twenty years Spain was united, and neither the Christian provinces nor North Africa challenged the supreme authority of the Caliph. With his enemies, within and without, finally checked, and his subjects enjoying peace and prosperity, he was able to
turn his attention to the cultivation of the arts. It is, to be sure, true that he became a despot to achieve these ends, but his tolerance towards Christians and Jews, his unselfish concern for the well-being of his subjects and the enlightened methods of his rule, give evidence that he was not essentially a tyrant. The Arab historians describe the character and personality of al-Nasir in the most favourable terms, until he became the symbol of the ideal sovereign.

Lévi-Provençal is correct in discovering three main periods in the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman III. In the first he imposed his authority throughout his dominion; in the second he organized and fortified his kingdom to make possible the long peace which followed; in the third period the Caliph became a real despot "... toujours lucide et perspicace, mais quelque peu enviré par l'étendue de sa puissance et sa richesse illimitée".11

'Abd al-Rahman III, a genius in administration, a powerful leader, a ruler of cultivated taste and a man of personal piety, after ruling a half a century, died in 961 C.E. The historian al-Maqzari concludes his account with this curious statement:

"It is said that after the death of 'Abd al-Rahman a paper was found in his own handwriting in which those days which he had spent in happiness and without any cause of sorrow were carefully noted down, and on numbering them they were found to amount to only fourteen. O man of understanding! wonder and observe the small portion of real happiness the world affords, even in the most enviable position! The Khalif al-Nasir, whose prosperity in mundane affairs and whose widely-spread empire became proverbial, had only fourteen days of undisturbed enjoyment during a reign of fifty years, seven months and three days."12

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AN APPEAL TO THE HEADS OF MUSLIM STATES
84 Thurleigh Road,
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Dear Sir,

My soul is rooted in the traditions of Islam. Its revival is the breath of my life. I have sworn upon the altar of God against being a party to any system of government other than that which is pledged to the establishment of an order based on the Islamic concept as bequeathed to us by the Prophet Muhammad.

Today, as I see it, Islam is face to face with the deepest imaginable crisis. The world of Islam is rapidly drifting away from its classic purpose. The parting of the ways has come. A decision taken within this decade will determine the shape of things to come. Either the Muslim world accepts the Western pattern finally and irrevocably or it boldly takes up the challenge of the changing world and bends its energies once more to the implementation of the laws of God.

If the Islamic world does not uphold the Islamic ideology and, furthermore, supplement it by positive action and action alone, the future prospects are bleak; Islam will lose its high place in the "phalanx of modern society." Do the Muslims want this? Do they wish to go down in history as a generation which has forsaken its religion and its God?

For myself I cannot visualize God's world without God's laws. To me it is a strange phenomenon to witness States founded on laws utterly repugnant to the Divine laws — where "things" mean more to man than "human beings", where "matter" dominates the "spirit", where nations exploit nations sanctioned by man-made law, where society lives by television, H-bombs and split atoms all directed forcefully to the detriment and destruction of man. If there is one lesson of history or religion it is this: that along such a path lay the death of each civilization.

If it is this transitory and evaporating culture which the thoughtless rulers in the world of Islam are trying desperately to ape, how can the people prosper? How long will they survive? Every thoughtfuul Muslim is alarmed at the state of affairs prevalent in his country. He shares the universal feeling that something vital has gone wrong with the world of Islam. The picture is gloomy and dismal, the crisis imminent, there is confusion, instability, inertia, frustration and finally no vision and no ideology. In a word, the world of Islam has demonstrated its failure through lack of elementary loyalty to command fidelity to Islam.

The degenerate States of Islam are experimenting with alien systems utterly foreign to their temperament, upbringing, environment and sacred beliefs. I classify these unprofitable experiments under three separate groups:

First, those Muslim States which have completely succumbed to the Western pattern. Turkey is one such country. What has this experiment cost her? Spiritually she has lost the leadership of the Islamic world and gone down as a fifth-rate power among the more powerful Western States; morally her values have deteriorated; economically she has been on the verge of bankruptcy; her currency has no value; her industrial progress is next to nothing; her contribution, during her transformation in the realm of science, art and literature, has been infinitesimal; her military strength is the gift of others. She is existing on the charity of foreign States — a lost soul, thrusting her roots in foreign soil.

These are hard words. My heart bleeds to write them. No one should be permitted to play with the destinies of millions of souls with their history and their religion. My admiration and love for the people of Turkey is second to none. I have associated myself with her fortunes ever since the twenties, when I served in the first Turkish delegation that came to London under Karabuker Pasha. I was in Istanbul while the Greeks were being driven out of Turkey by Ataturk. The Turks are a brave, honest, upright and lovable people. They need leadership.

Secondly, I take the case of those unfortunate Muslim States which year in and year out have invited foreign experts to put their "homes" in order. I have in mind Persia, Afghanistan and the Arab States, all of whom have been independent for years, and none has profited much from the experts. The reason is manifest: these States were not ready for the reforms. Nothing grows in a barren soil. The fault is theirs and not of the experts. Where there are no values and no ideology nothing can succeed. This malady of inviting experts has reached such absurdity that one Muslim State actually invited a foreign constitutionalist to draft a so-called Islamic constitution. I happened to meet this legal expert. He expressed to me his amazement at being asked to help in the draft of an Islamic constitution of which he knew nothing. We have reached the limit of our ignorance and shame.

Thirdly, there are those new Islamic States which have deliberately befogged the real issue and permitted the simple-minded masses to believe that an Islamic constitution was in the offing; that it was on its way. In fact, quite a novel experiment was being tried. An attempt was made to produce a "hybrid" constitution — a mixture of the two diametrically opposed ways of life. A Divine system was being adulterated by a machiavellian code of morals. It was bound to fail. In reality the politicians know no better. Their orientation is anti-Islamic. They have received half-baked Western education. Their dreams are their immediate interests.

My task is made more difficult by the advent of dictators in the world of Islam. Now prestige, force and inexperience all there are combined. Be that as it may, their emergence on the political horizon is due to our corrupt politicians. I do not blame the military dictators. They belong to us. I
want to rely upon their patriotism and their innate virtues as inheritors of the Islamic faith.

I beg them to pause. I appeal to them to ponder. I venture to pass to the highest thoughts Islam has conveyed to me. First, I take their minds back to the glorious days of Islam. It was Islam that brought God and man together and gave it a meaning by implementing His laws. It was Islam that raised men of character, integrity, courage, who were obedient to moral imperatives of their faith. It was Islam that taught the Arabs democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance and social justice, which spread as the flag of Islam spread from one country to another and from one continent to another.

I now come to the final issue, namely, how to rehabilitate a Divine pattern in human affairs. I have experimented for thirty years with constitution making. I have held responsible offices in the government of my country. I affirm with all the sincerity I command that the Islamic political system is wholly competent to cope with all the complexities of an advanced industrial State. My contribution lies in the application of those basic principles which were formulated, initiated and practised by our Prophet in his first city-State — Medina. I believe these Divine principles can be extended with confidence to new fields. I have myself made extensive use of them in the construction of State policies; I believe these principles are dynamic, progressive and just. Above all, they are in complete harmony with human nature and the laws of creation. The Islamic jurisprudence is elastic, comprehensive, scientific and Divine in essence. It is capable of meeting all exigencies that the genius of man could ever devise.

I therefore approach the heads of the Islamic States to loosen the lock of their minds, shake off the inferiority complex, throw away prestige and humble themselves before the eternal principles and step by step, brick by brick, slowly but surely lay the foundation stone of the Kingdom of God on earth.

All I want from them is a small district — just remote province in their State, where along with my trained colleagues I could promulgate laws in the name of the government itself and through the medium of the State officers themselves. Is this too much to ask for in the name of Islam and to vindicate its honour? Let no doubts and suspicions linger any more. I claim no emolument, no salary, no remuneration except to remain on the soil as a loyal guest of the State and an instrument of God until the experiment is carried out and the Government is satisfied that a State constitution can be framed and worked on laws adumbrated by our Prophet and administered by his faithful companions and that it can today establish a social order, an economic structure and a political system capable of meeting all the requirements of the most industrialized and progressive State of our time.

In a word, I crave the same right and opportunity from the heads of the Muslim States — this time through peaceful channels — as it came to Lenin when in 1917 he established a Communist State in Russia and thence onwards Communism passed from being a theory into a living State.

Surely in the world of Islam there rules a king, a dictator, a government of the people with a conscience and fear of God who would respond to my appeal. Nay, I would like to take my message beyond the borders of the Islamic world, for humanity is in danger. The issue is crucial, the responsibility overwhelming. The very existence of life on earth is threatened.

To the rulers in the world of Islam I have this to say. If you reject my appeal, then in the words of a Western writer, “It would involve the positive assertion that Islam is irrelevant and unequal to contemporary living”. Will you allow these words to pass unchallenged? I beg you, men of destiny, to answer me. Do not humiliate Islam and with it our beloved Prophet and God. Pray, make the Islamic laws a criterion by which world constitutions shall be judged in future.

Do not pollute the stream of Divine Grace by harbouring false fears and denying to yourselves the blessings of the laws of God. Believe me, woven into my words is the call of God. The hand that writes is mine, behind it is the mediation of the spirit and the strength of Divinity Itself. I now await the first call.

Yours sincerely,

MAHMUDULLAH JUNG.

* * *

THREE MAJOR PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE WORLD OF ISLAM

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Dear Brother in Islam,

"Which, in your opinion, are the major problems of the Muslim world, the problems upon which the attention of the workers of Islam should be focused, and to the solution of which they should devote all, or the greater part of, their endeavours?" This was my question to my friend who has been working for Islam for the last thirty years. For a while he remained silent, and then replied: "I consider three problems to be responsible for the disastrous state of affairs in the Muslim world: first, the failure to distinguish between what God has laid down in His Book and the Tradition of His Prophet, and the elaborations derived therefrom by our jurists; second, the plight of the womenfolk in Muslim society; and third, the perversion of the meaning of 'obedience to those in authority' to denote abject subservience and shameless acquiescence to rulers, regardless of the extent of the wrongs that they might commit and the injustices which they might perpetrate."

This observation was followed by a long discussion which centred upon these questions, with a view to the full appreciation of the importance of these problems, and the realization of the need of earnest, unrelenting endeavour towards their solution. During this discussion I found myself keenly responsive to the need for appreciation of the importance of these problems, and as my learned friend expatiated on the subject, I had the feeling of a doctor's fingers probing sore spots. For these three problems do indeed occupy a pre-eminent position among those numerous maladies which afflict our body-politic. Moreover, these maladies are becoming chronic ones and as time passes we are getting used to them.

Distinction between Shari'ah and Fiqh

The first of these problems is our failure to distinguish between what has been laid down by God in His Book and the Tradition of the Prophet (Sunnah) on the one hand, and the elaborations on their basis by our jurists on the other hand. In deploring this failure, we neither wish to deny the value of the opinions of our Fuqaha (jurists) nor to slight
these venerable men in any way. On the contrary, we believe their work to constitute a great asset, a prized treasure of which we should feel proud. We believe that we should pore over the subtleties of their learning, and should derive the utmost benefit from it. What is necessary, however, is that we should at the same time be very clear about the following important points:

(1) That the Qur'an and the Sunnah alone constitute the Shar'i'ah (Divine Law) of God which is binding on Muslims; that these two alone form the ideological and practical basis of life for the Muslim nation.

(2) That there is nothing strange in the fact that disagreements exist among people with regard to the interpretation of certain Qur'anic verses, or the authenticity of certain prophetic traditions and their rendering, so long as people do not abandon the use of their intellect. What is important is that these disagreements should remain subject to arguments based on the texts of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and that the opinions of particular schools of Muslim Law on controversial points should not, either owing to negligence or ignorance, be elevated to the point where they begin to be considered more authoritative than the texts of the Qur'an or the Sunnah. Such a distorted view impairs our proper attitude towards the injunctions of God and His Prophet, as laid down in the Qur'anic verse:

"Judge between them by that which God hath revealed, and follow not their desires" (5 : 49).

Moreover, we should be careful that our attitudes on controversial points do not harden to such a degree that they prevent Muslims applying their minds to the understanding of the Shar'i'ah, although the Shar'i'ah itself remains the criterion for all differences of opinion; and every generation of Muslims has an ordinance from God to remain in direct and constant contact with the Shar'i'ah, as embodied in the Qur'an and the Sunnah:

"... and if ye have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to God and the Messenger" (4 : 59).

Abandoning reference to the Qur'an and the Sunnah (the way and practice of the Prophet Muhammad) and attaching an exaggerated importance to the opinion of one's own school of law implies also the adoption of an unrighteous attitude towards our Fuqaha of past generations who, though they disagreed among themselves, did not claim infallibility for their opinions. Their disagreements were based on the texts of the Shar'i'ah available to them, and with regard to its interpretation. It never occurred to our Fuqaha, however, that they would become an impregnable wall preventing the radiation of the light of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, or that they would be depriving all other Muslims of the right to apply their intellects to the understanding of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The Imam Malik has epitomised his view on the question in these fine words:

"I am a human being. I can be right and I can be wrong. Examine every one of my opinions: accept those which conform to the Qur'an and the Sunnah: reject those which do not conform to the Qur'an and the Sunnah."

(3) That the Shar'i'ah of God, as embodied in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, does not bind mankind in mua'amalat (worldly dealings) except by providing a few broad principles of guidance and a limited number of injunctions. The Shar'i'ah only rarely concerns itself with details. The confinement of the Shar'i'ah to broad principles and its silence in other spheres are due to divine wisdom and mercy. For the divine knowledge embraces human life in its totality: in all its spheres, in all stages of its development, and in all periods of human history. Now, God was not incapable of laying down, had He considered it good to do so, an injunction for every minor issue and a law for every new problem that might arise. The fact that the Shar'i'ah is silent on these points — and we should bear in mind that as the Qur'an remarks, "God is not forgetful" — means only that the application of the general injunctions of the Shar'i'ah to the multifarious details of human life, and the confrontation of new problems according to the dictates of maslahah (public good) have been left to the discretion of the body of conscious Muslims. Moreover, if the Shar'i'ah has refrained from laying things down definitively in the form of clear-cut injunctions regarding matters about which God knew that people would disagree, and if it has not fixed regulations in respect of the problems which, of course, God knew would arise in human existence, all this is due to God's mercy, for He wanted comfort, not discomfort, for human beings, and breadth, not narrowness, in human life. The Qur'an says:

"God desireth for you ease: He desireth not hardship for you" (2 : 185).

The Prophet Muhammad explained this by saying:

"God has enjoined certain commands, so do not abandon them. He has imposed certain limits, so do not transgress them. He has prohibited certain things, so do not fall into them. He has remained silent about many things, out of mercy and deliberateness, as He never forgets, so do not ask me about them."

The Prophet (peace be on him!) stressed this point repeatedly. Most illustrative of this basic characteristic of the Shar'i'ah is his authentic saying:

"Leave me as long as I leave you. Too much questioning brought only disaster upon people before you. Only if I forbid you doing anything, then do not do it, and if I order you to do something, then try to do whatever you can of it."

Since God has granted this freedom, and has left a wide margin of choice open to human beings from sheer beneficence and mercy, it would be utterly ingratitude and stark disregard for the spirit of the Shar'i'ah to impose upon its ageless and merciful features the variety of rigorous regulations in matters of minor detail which was formulated by our legislators in the past. These interpretations and elaborations of the fiqh have been gradually misconceived as matters of indisputable validity, so much so that as soon as the word Shar'i'ah is mentioned, they instantly come to mind and impair the eternal freshness of divine revelation and the beauty and grace of divine mercy.

We who strive for Islamic regeneration should make it abundantly clear to people that: this is the Shar'i'ah — the lenient Shar'i'ah — embodied in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and God binds you to this and nothing else. As for our juristic heritage, handed down to us by our great ancestors who earnestly endeavoured to interpret the Shar'i'ah in the face of continually new problems of life regarding which the Shar'i'ah had observed silence, in the light of maslahah (public good) and with a due regard for the circumstances of their age — while profiting from this heritage, our attitude towards the Shar'i'ah should nevertheless be the same as that of our ancestors. Following in their footsteps, we should apply our minds to understand it. We should also treat the circumstances of our epoch as they did theirs,
and try to face our special problems in the light of maslahah, as they did. And bearing all this in mind, our recourse to the vast, rich fiqh heritage at our disposal should serve to strengthen our bonds with the Qur’an and the Sunnah, rather than prevent direct reference to those two original sources. It should help us to apply the Qur’an and the Sunnah to the circumstances in which we live in the same way as our ancestors did for their part. It is altogether unrealistic to seek from our legislators of the past solutions to the problems of our own age — an age of which they could have no knowledge — or to impose upon ourselves regulations devised to fit circumstances which no longer exist. And it is altogether unworthy to abandon the use of our intellects to understand Islam (for it is that power of rational discernment, with which each one of us has been endowed, which makes us answerable to God), thereby reducing ourselves to the position of parasites, living perpetually on the fruits of labour bequeathed us by our ancestors — by their heavy intellectual toils, unremitting efforts and patient endeavour.

It can be asked: "Where do you draw the line of demarcation between the Qur’an and the Sunnah, and the interpretations thereof of the fuqaha? Are the interpretations not the true meaning of the fuqaha? Are the interpretations of the fiqh to arrive at the true meaning of the Qur’an and the Sunnah?" These are certainly reasonable questions. The reply is that our desire to distinguish between the two does not mean that we wish to dispense with fiqh as such. On the contrary, all we wish for it to be clear that the texts of the Qur’an and the Sunnah are the true sources of guidance, the norms for our lives; that they alone constitute the Shari‘ah which is binding upon us; that all opinions must be weighed with the Qur’an and the Sunnah as the criteria; that every human being after the Prophet Muhammad is fallible; that in every matter where there are no texts to bind us, the consideration of maslahah (public good) alone is binding; and that the precepts of maslahah change with changing circumstances and ages — as the earlier fuqaha have said, "Where there is maslahah, there is the path of God".

This distinction between the divine Shari‘ah (as embodied in the Qur’an and the Sunnah), which is eternally binding, and the details opined in its light by the fuqaha, should have a thoroughly healthy influence on contemporary Muslims in a number of ways. It invests Islamic ideology with simplicity that should help cultivate deep in the hearts of Muslims genuine faith in their Lord and in their Prophet. It restores the clarity of the original message of Islam. It restores also the lustre to the Islamic ideology which it owes to the words of God and His Prophet. It provides a rallying-ground for all Muslims, notwithstanding the existence of various schools of thought among them. Moreover, it should keep Islam intact in its original broad and vigorous forms, in a form which provides scope and ease for the human mind, and not discomfort and restriction.

It may also be asked, "Do you want to make the Qur’an and the Sunnah a tool of any impostors who step forward to interpret them according to their whims and desires once the door for their interpretation is flung open?" The reply, obviously, is "No". For when we talk of "opinions" in Islamic matters, we mean "opinions" and not whims and desires, and we presume piety and godliness to be basic with regard to problems relating to Islam. Further, there is no harm in trying to devise sound rules, of a scientific as well as of an administrative nature, which could effectively ensure specialization in studies relating to the Shari‘ah as embodied in the Qur’an and the Sunnah, just as is attempted by all legal systems the world over. Rather, it is our duty to ensure this. We shall thus have saved the Shari‘ah from pollution by the whims and desires of false claimants to its interpretation. At the same time, however, we should try to ensure that specialization does not lead to the creation of priesthood in Muslim society, and that the door remains open for the consideration of all opinions, whatever their sources, purely on the basis of their intrinsic worth.

**Plight of womenfolk in Muslim society**

The second problem is that of the position of womenfolk in Muslim society. In this regard also, as in regard to our social life as a whole, we are in a state of complete chaos, a hotch-potch of competing forces: the remaining Islamic influence, our inherited traditions and extraneous influences which have crept into our life as a result of the enveloping wave of blind imitation of the West. This has created a myriad of problems in Muslim society, among which deserving of special attention is the problem of womenfolk. This is not so merely because women constitute something more than half the community. It is particularly pressing because it is a problem which affects the family, the very basis of our social life, and because of the deep and inherent relationship that it has with those factors which make for the cohesion of our society. It is in fact a problem that affects in its ramifications most of the aspects of our national orientation.

It is strange that we Muslims should have neglected the important position of women. The Shari‘ah has placed such emphasis on it in connection with the lives of those great men whom God entrusted with high tasks and whom He chose as the recipients of His revelation — those noble souls ordained to deliver God’s message to mankind. In the story of Moses it is his mother, Pharaoh’s wife and the daughters of Mada‘in who constitute great figures. In the story of Jesus, his virgin and virtuous mother is a great pillar of the story. The principal in nobility and virtue among those who stood faithfully by the side of Muhammad in his prophetic mission was Khadijah, the compassionate and noble lady of Mecca. Indeed, the numerous verses of the Qur’an and the large number of prophetic traditions which speak of woman’s status and of her rights and responsibilities are quite sufficient to determine our attitude towards womanhood. The Qur’an refers to the position of women in various ways. Sometimes it refers to their position while comparing it with the position of men in the sight of God and proclaims it to be one of complete equality:

"I shall not let the work of worker, male or female, be lost. You issue from one another" (3 : 195).

On other occasions it mentions the rights and duties of women as akin to those of men before mentioning man’s administrative leadership of the family:

"And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men), according to what is equitable, and men are a degree above them" (2 : 228).

On still another occasion we find Islam pointedly stressing gentleness and good behaviour in the treatment of women. Said the Prophet in his last address:

"I advise you to be good to women."

It is not my intention to discuss the position of womenfolk in all its ramifications. What I have to say will be quite brief, but nevertheless of serious importance, for the time has come when we should be very clear on a number of questions relating to this problem and devote a good deal of our thought and attention to the solution thereof.
It should be very clear in our minds that woman, according to Islam; is intrinsically like her male partner. She is a human being endowed with the same essence of nobility which is shared by the whole human species. As far as human quality is concerned, men and women are absolutely alike:

"O mankind! Revere your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and from that created its mate, who thereafter brought forth a multitude of men and women" (4 : 1).

Moreover, each one, man as well as woman, will be held responsible for one's own individual self:

"... and every one of them will come to God, on the day of Resurrection, alone" (19 : 95).

This means that those who either believe, or whose behaviour reveals the unconscious concept that woman is an inferior who has to be subjugated, that she is a servant who has to be commanded, and whose job is only to obey, or that she is merely an instrument for the self-indulgence of man — such people require a radical reorientation of their attitude towards womankind. Such people, by clinging to such unhealthy ideas, or through their unhealthy conduct, are grossly distorting God-given human nature and are killing potentialities of thought, feeling and vitality in their partners of life.

It should also be clear that the unbridled self-will of certain women in other societies, or of those of our own women who blindly imitate them, should not be countered by extremism on our part: by imposing on women what God has not imposed upon them, or by forbidding them what God has not forbidden. We should remember that women in the Western world began to lean in the wrong direction from definite causes, at least some of which were undoubtedly related to social injustices, under the dead-weight of which women had languished for so long, imprisoned and ignorant, with no will or personality of their own. They revolted against this injustice — and this revolt was a completely natural and genuine one. Then they began to lean in the wrong direction, becoming stubborn and headstrong. The same type of injustice continues to have its strongholds in our own society, where there are still people, though very few, who are proud of the fact that since the wedding night when their wives were driven home they have not seen the street once. There are still others who consider themselves entitled to beat their wives if they dare to disagree with their views and advance an opinion of their own. Again, there are those who spend year after year with their wives and daughters without sitting down to discuss a problem with them or attempting to make them share their views.

Who would claim that any of these has anything to do with Islam? On the contrary, it is Islam which elevated women to heights of prestige which have neither precedent nor parallel in human history. At a time when womanhood in the West was held in such a state of impurity that even a woman's touch was an evil pollution of the Bible, the Qur'anic manuscript was a trust with the Lady Hafsah at Medina. At a time when the Romans held conferences to debate whether woman was a "person" or a "thing", Muhammad stood up to declare that "women are but the sisters of men" and to shatter the pre-Islamic era of darkness and injustice, so that a woman could argue with the Prophet in the courtyard of the mosque and say, "I have been deputed to you on behalf of women!" Indeed, it was Islam which, for the first time, established the status of women as full-fledged members of human society and granted them the right to own whatever they earned, since the Qur'an proclaimed:

"Unto men of fortune from that which they have earned, and unto women of fortune from that which they have earned" (4 : 32).

Whatever standards of decency Islam has laid down in matters of dress and behaviour between men and women, they are all with the sole intention of ensuring the sanctity of the home and the inviolability of marital intimacy. Not one of these standards could ever imply an attitude directed towards humiliation of women as regards her social status or her role in her relationship with man. When a newly married girl complained to the Prophet that her father had chosen her husband without consulting her, he immediately gave her permission to annul her marriage, to which she replied, "I have no personal objection to my husband and I accept him, but I wanted it to be known that a father has no right to impose a husband upon his daughter without her consent." In contrast to the then prevailing ignorance and brutality of tribal traditions, Muhammad enjoined the quest for knowledge, as an integral part of faith, for men and women alike. He praised highly the women of the Ansar (Helpers of the Prophet Muhammad) with:

"Blessed be those whose modesty never prevented them from seeking knowledge."

Far from being rough or rude, Muhammad's consciousness of women's tenderness and delicacy was so intense that even in the impelling harshness of the desert, he gently appealed to Anjashah, the caravan driver:

"O Anjashah! Slow down a little, for thy camels are carrying glasses!"

This is only a glimpse of Islam; thus, how could we possibly be justified in so grossly distorting it by all sorts of misconceived traditions and beliefs? What could be more unjust, whether to Islam or to ourselves, than to misrepresent as we do, or rather to deform, the beautiful features of Islam? And consider when? At a time when we are encountering the movement of so-called progress and emancipation which is advancing like a storm and wreaking havoc in our lives.

It is imperative to realize that the really weak points in our society are those which provide genuine cause for feminine revolt, which can subsequently take an extremist turn and ultimately lead to unbridled feminine self-will. If we are serious about resisting these unhealthy trends, it is our duty to call a stop where God has done so, and combat the deceptive misleading elements we are encountering by adhering to what God has laid down for us. We should neither depart from anything which God has decreed from weakness or compromise, nor add anything to it from extremism and severity.

These things concern Muslims. But they are of particular importance to those who are actively engaged in the revival of Islam. I fervently wish that such people would put these ideas into effect: would stop at the point where the Shari'ah stops, and have the courage to proclaim and insist on what God has made binding on us, and that alone. This is essential in creating a strong wall around whatever of virtue and purity remains in our society. It is to be hoped that by so doing the workers for the cause of Islam will have created a real barrier, one strengthened by the word of God and of His Prophet, against the sweeping, devastating storm which threatens Islam today. For, if matters are not clarified, and confusion is allowed to reign.
as it does today, if the good aspects are not separated from the bad, both in theory and by good example, the result of this confusion is bound to be this: the good elements will be mistaken for bad, and both will be swept away by the rising storm. This will not be in the least surprising. For there is neither a divine code which is being sincerely adhered to, nor is there any social system based on experience and clarity of outlook, and God has not appointed a policeman to regulate the conflicting traffic of good and evil.

A further consideration in this connection is that many of our women, like our men, do not possess an adequate knowledge of Islam. The picture of Islam they have deep in their minds is a confused and distorted one. It is the picture of Islam as it is practised in our countries. In addition to this, there is a dire absence of religious discipline among our people, while on the other hand there is the aggressive advance of moral laxity in our society, fully armed with formidable weapons: the attraction of the culture of our "colonial masters", which has cultivated deep down in the hearts of our young men and women an admiration for our "overlords" and their mode of life. It is armed also with the admiration of their civilization sown in our hearts by the pioneers of this culture: magazines, radio broadcasts, films, etc. And above all, it is armed with temptations, the potential response to which has been planted by God in the nature of every man and woman as the Qur'án says:

"Decorated for mankind is love for joys (that come) from women . . . " (3 : 14).

All this requires that our collective attitude to the solution of this problem should be based on a full consideration of the magnitude of the impact of the cultural invasion of the West on those who are exposed or have fallen a victim to it. This should be borne in mind particularly when the problem requiring a solution concerns women, for with women the emotional factors are predominant. Hence, leniency itself is not enough. The approach to reform should be based on a careful distinction between what is good and what is bad. Moreover, we should not begin by condemning people for lacking honour and decency by falling into some of the widespread errors, for instance, the violation of limits in matters of dress, etc. For not every unveiled woman is a bundle of vices and immodesty.

I do not want what I am saying here to be underestimated, for incautious accusations against people and harshness in rendering advice has most seriously damaged the cause of Islam among women. This has unfortunately created a gulf between those who work for Islam and many basically good women. I have countless practical instances of this, although our sisters can recount many more. A large number of them, young and old, whose reactions against wrong traditions or clumsy approaches first put them in firm opposition to Islam and its workers, have subsequently become among the best champions of the cause once they were approached in a proper, understanding and decent manner.

Erroneous conception of obedience

The third problem is the degeneration of the construction put on the Qur'ánic expression "obedience to those in authority among you" to mean abject acquiescence to rulers, however wrong or unjust they might be. This is a malady which has afflicted the Muslim body-politic during the long centuries of our history. Most of our 'ulama' and self-made priests have, unfortunately, neglected coming to grips with the problem, although it was imperative for various degrees of reason. It was imperative to bring Muslims to a correct understanding of their religion. It was also essential to remind them of their duty to give proper advice to the ruler who commits a wrong-doing and to correct him. Instead, many of these 'ulama' were themselves instrumental in intensifying the abject spirit of acquiescence to tyrants and in making silence legitimate in the face of their injustices and extravagant blunders, either from fear of punishment or desire for royal patronage, or apathy for Muslim affairs. This malady, therefore, became deep-rooted in the body-politic, and Muslims gave up the practice of this commandment of their Lord:

"And whose affairs are decided by counsel among themselves" (25 : 38).

This negative attitude and apathy proved factors of appreciable assistance to despots in strengthening their tyrannical authority. An error, if it is left uncorrected, aggravates and recurs; and injustice, if not resisted, leads its perpetrators to excesses and consolidates the foundations of tyranny.

It is, moreover, surprising that all those who neglected to enlighten Muslims regarding their duty to fight against the unjust until he returns to the paths of justice, as well as those who, either because they were swayed by their own desires or because of their lack of concern for Muslim affairs, have helped in the consolidation of the authority of tyrants, all these people have tried to seek invalid support in the Qur'ánic verse:

"O ye who believe! Obey God, and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority" (4 : 59).

They have done this in spite of the fact that most of our learned ancestors such as Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid, 'Ata', al-Hasan, al-Basri and Abu 'l-Alí'ah, had interpreted the Arabic term "those in authority" as to denote the authority of their knowledge of Islam, rather than to mean the temporal rulers irrespective of what they possess of such knowledge. This interpretation is also supported by the content of the verse which reads:

"O ye who believe! Obey God and obey His messenger and those of you who are in authority, and if ye have a dispute concerning any matter refer it to God and the messenger" (4 : 59).

This means that obedience which has been ordained for believers is obedience of their Lord in respect of what He has laid down, and of His Prophet in respect of what the Prophet conveyed to mankind on behalf of God, and of the learned by virtue of the ordinance of God and His Prophet. The latter are to be obeyed in respect of whatever commandments of God and His Prophet they deliver to the people. And if there is any disagreement, then there is a reliable standard of judgment — the Qur'án and the Sunnah, and not the desires of people or the whims and interests of any particular group or class. Even those who interpret "those in authority among you" to denote temporal rulers are aware that this verse has placed an obstacle in the way of despotism by rulers by stipulating that they shall rule in conformity with the injunctions of God and the teachings of the Prophet. Such people also know that the Prophet has said, as it is authentically reported:

"Verily obedience is (only) in good."

He is further reported in another authentic tradition to have said:

"No obedience in disobedience to God."
The despicable negative spirit which has disseminated this wrong concept of Islam can only be countered by spreading the right concept of Islam, and it is the duty of those who are working for Islam to make this a definite target of their endeavours. They should devote attention to it in speech, in writing and in all their efforts to provide a rightful guidance for oppressed Muslims.

For it is not right that in its battle against falsehood, Islam should remain deprived of the zeal and enthusiasm of millions of its followers, even though Islam is the religion whose Prophet Muhammad proclaimed that the leader of the martyrs after Hamzah would be he who would stand up before an unjust ruler, would proclaim the word of truth, and be killed for proclaiming it. It is not right that there persists this neglect in rectifying the mental attitude of the nation, and that the energies of people should be allowed to be wasted, with the result that active minorities in many Muslim lands have been able to entrench themselves in power and manoeuvre Islam and Muslims despite the fact that the broad mass of Muslim peoples are believers, but scattered and confounded, not knowing what to do; or perhaps they are aware of what should be done, but are not aware that God will hold them responsible for the omissions and inaction.

All this is not intended to arouse emotions. It is not empty sentimental talk. The truth of what we say can be verified if one simply takes stock of the elections in Muslim countries. This will show that the predominant majority of those who are apathetic when it comes to casting their votes consists of genuine believers who, out of sheer negligence and apathy, are playing the role of disinterested observers in a battle which concerns their religion, their culture, and the most deeply cherished values of their life.

Yours sincerely,

SA’ID RAMADAN.

REFERENCES
1 Fiqh is an Arabic term attributed to Muslim jurisprudence. Fiqha are “Muslim jurists”.
2 Admiration which remains a hard reality, in spite of our emotional anti-imperialist slogans, our angry denunciations, and our vehement demonstrations against the West.
3 A title that suggests a knowledge of Islam.

* * *

BARRIERS BETWEEN MUSLIMS MUST GO
Flat 12, Top Floor,
Parasram Parumal Bldg. 314,
Bohri St., Nr. Punjabi Club,
Kharadar, Karachi 2, Pakistan.

Dear Sir,

I have been away from Pakistan for some time. This account for my belated observations on your excellent editorial in The Islamic Review for March-April 1960 entitled “Barriers Between Muslims Must Go”, by Mr. S. Muhammad Tufail, M.A., Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking. I assure you I was very pleased to read it.

This commendable article is one more step towards the laudable traditional policy of The Islamic Review — the building of the strong edifice of the solidarity of Islam. If the “sectarianism” in Islam is denied the place — as the venerable Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque has so ably discussed and repudiated it in the editorial under reference — it has wrongfully acquired in the body politic of Islam, and if the baseless religious distinctions of Sunnism, Sha’ism, Wahlhabism, Almadyaism and the like are abolished to merge into one unified and solidified Islam, the Renaissance of Islam, which lies so near the heart of the present Muslim generation, will be a reality in the not too distant future.

This editorial reminds me of my deputation by the Islamic Congress, Cairo (where I was a Director for four years, 1955-58), to visit Iran, in order to solicit and acquire the co-operation of the religious institutions and organizations in that country, in October 1955, for the benefit of the general and greater cause of the unity of Islam, and the unfortunate rebuff I got instead. A movement is afoot at present sponsored by some Muslim dignitaries in South-East Asian and Far Eastern countries for the unity and solidarity of the Muslims, with particular emphasis on social, cultural and educational sides of life. My humble contribution to this movement is in the shape of my suggestion that the so-called sectarianism be eradicated from the Islamic life, and the Muslims should be known as Muslims alone.

Yours, etc.,

Professor MAHMUD BREVI.

* * *

CHINESE MUSLIMS OF TAIWAN

No. 9, 2nd Lane,
Hsien Ho Road,
Fonshan, Taiwan.
22nd January 1961.

Dear Sir,

Assalamu ‘aleykum!

I have been a reader of The Islamic Review for years. I have learned much from it about the Islamic world. But it is with regret that I bring to your notice that in The Islamic Review little have I seen about the activities of our Muslim brothers in Taiwan (Formosa).

Perhaps you feel that such a minority can be easily ignored. But I am of opinion that the Muslim minority in Taiwan, who, although a part of the huge Chinese Muslim mass, are the only Chinese Muslims who live in the free country of Taiwan. I am certain a knowledge of their activities will be of interest to other Muslim brothers.

Yours sincerely,

ABDUL GHANI KOO-FU PAO.
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