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The Yemen Tangle and its Solution

For the last decade or so, political and social upheavals in the Middle East—coup d'état and counter-coups—have been so frequent and sudden that it has become impossible for an observer to keep pace with them. Arabism, Arab nationalism and Arab socialism have become shuttle-cocks in the hands of soldier-politicians. The search by Arabs for a final definition of Arab unity has led them to numerous diversions and cross-purposes. Wholesale export and import of revolutions, political philosophies and socialist ideologies from one State to another have brought them more misery and bloodshed than freedom from foreign influence.

Both Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir and Michel Aflak, the founder of the Syrian Ba'th Party, profess the same brand of socialism and yet have failed to bring about constitutional harmony in the application of their socialism, or to form a confederacy of the Arab States on the basis of autonomous socialist republics. Clash of personalities is said to be at the root of most of the differences. The agreement of April 1963, signed between the Ba'th and Nasir, was followed soon by Nasir's declaration to refuse to co-operate, co-exist or even to declare a truce with them.

The present anomalous situation in the Yemen is one of a series of such situations in the Middle East. Like most of the other issues, it has divided the Arab States into two camps. The Socialist Republic in the southern Yemen, led by President 'Abdullah al-Sallal, is being supported by Egypt, whereas the Royalists are being patronized by Saudi Arabia. But it is not the purpose of these lines to take sides in this controversy or to justify one against the other. Rather is it to give the broad outlines of the situation in the Yemen in relation to the general points of view of the parties concerned.

Yemeni Coup d'Etat

The Imamate of the Yemen has been in existence for about a thousand years. For the last two hundred years until shortly before 1914 the Yemen had been fighting the Ottoman government for her right of autonomous existence. The Imam Yahya's policy of isolationism was not conducive to the modernization of the country. After his assassination in 1948, however, his son the Imam Ahmad tried to rectify his father's mistake by initiating a programme of development and reform.

The Yemen joined the United Arab States in 1958, but disassociated herself from Cairo when, in September 1961, Syria's secession maimed the United Arab Republic. On 26 September 1962 the outside world heard the news of the overthrow of the Imam of the Yemen by the Republic forces led by Sallal. At that time the Yemen was an independent State and a member of the Arab League. The news was received by the Muslims of the world with mixed feelings. To a great number of them the Yemen had the sentimental prestige of being the last fort of the Eastern Caliphate. To the others Sallal's coup d'état was a happy beginning of the end of centuries-old backwardness.

International implications

The late Imam Ahmad had been entertaining his claims to Aden and the West Aden Protectorate, for which he is said to have enlisted the help of Russia and certain Sheikhs. British ambivalence at the time of the Egyptian invasion of the Yemen was therefore understandable. Her relations with Su'udi Arabia, her interests in Aden, settlement of boundary disputes between the Yemen and the South Arabian Federation and the threat of penetration of Nasir's influence, however, prompted Britain to side with the Royalist's cause. For America the situation in the Yemen poses a great problem. She has not yet forgotten the lesson she has learnt since 1946 when she went back on her promise of a loan to Egypt for the High Dam. She is determined to prevent Egypt from going over to Russia at any reasonable cost.

Russian interest in the Yemen is said to be, apart from other interests, that she needs an air stage post there for her route to East Africa. The Yemen could be a very convenient springboard for her for that purpose as well as for her control over the Red Sea.

Nasir's position

Nasir's opponents blame him for exploiting the situation in the
Yemen for the furtherance of his policy against Su'udi Arabia. His personal ambitions to extend his sphere of influence is said to embrace Su'udi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Iraq and the Persian Gulf States. Su'udi Arabia being the most important of all of them. It is geographically almost the size of India. Within the Arab States it has a great strategic position while, in the Muslim world, it enjoys a unique spiritual status. After the fall of Su'udi Arabia the Persian Gulf States have gained one after the other. There would then be no one left to stop him from becoming the sole master of Arabia and the spiritual leader of the Muslim world. In view of the Yemen's indispensability for the fulfillment of Nasir's designs in Su'udi Arabia, it is said he has first tried to win over the Imam Ahmad and the Crown Prince al-Badr in 1955. But soon he realized that there was nothing in common between him and the princes of the royal blood. He is therefore believed to have arranged Sallal's coup in league with Russia and East Germany.

Nasir, on the other hand, blames his opponents for being reactionaries, agents of exploitative Capitalism and Imperialism. Egypt, he says, is the vanguard of the overall Arab revolution whose security is indivisible. Defeat of any free revolution in any Arab State is the defeat of the other free revolutions. Egypt is the base and vanguard of not only the Arab unity but also of the Socialist Union of the Arab Nation. Arabism, according to him, can be achieved only by uniting the Arabs in a co-ordinated and comprehensive way. Egypt, he claims, is organizing an Arab Socialist Union which is complementary to the political union.

After having remained a foreign-occupied base for more than seventy years, Egypt today is foremost among the independent countries of the world. After having forced the British to withdraw in June 1956 and after defeating the combined forces of Britain, France and Israel in October 1956, Egypt has been last been able to assume the responsibility of supporting and defending other freedom fighters who are moving with the tide of history. There is nothing new in Egypt's supporting the Yemeni revolution. She supported the Algerian revolution and the Moroccan people and the Tunisian people during the days when King Muhammad V was exiled from Morocco.

In addition to all such considerations that make it incumbent on Egypt to take an active part in the political movements in the Middle East, her policies are greatly directed by her strategy in relation to Israel.

Nasir claims justification for supporting the Yemeni Republics on the grounds that anti-Arab elements are supporting the Royalists, Israel, Zionism in America and the Imperialists being done. Similarly, he maintains, Su'udi reactionaries have made a common cause with the Yemeni reactionaries. President Sallal believes that all reactionaries and separatists are siding with Zionists and Imperialists.

According to Nasir, the Yemeni revolution should not be studied in isolation. It is only a link in the chain of events inter-related in the stages of Arab march towards freedom and progress. Nasir believes in peace on Arab soil, but it should be an Arab peace according to the Arab interpretation.

Su'udi Arabia

The general impression of Su'udi Arabia, especially in the West, is that of a medieval country run by autocratic feudal lords and princes with a corrupt administration. But the recent trend of changes which the country has taken under the wise and firm leadership of its Prime Minister, Prince Faisal is very hopeful. The 1964 budget shows some radical reforms. Out of a total of £210 m., £20 m. (£3 m. more than in the previous year) has been allocated to education. 100 new schools for boys and 62 for girls have been opened this year. Nearly £2 m. for medical education have been released. The Ministry of Health has enabled it to construct new hospitals. £5 m. for agriculture reflects an intensification of work on irrigation projects. The Privy Purse has been cut down by nearly £5 m. while restrictions on exchange has put a curb on the royal civil list. The scheme for arranging the money for the construction is being prepared by a Ford Foundation team, headed by a Pakistani expert.

Recently Prince Faisal, in an interview with a Lebanese paper, Le Soir, said: "We are always willing to extend to our Arab brothers any help ... they may like to have from us." The implication is that the Yemeni Royalists have asked for help from Su'udi Arabia, and that she was giving it. Su'udi Arabia claims that the country has been able to do it without the help of the other Arab States.

Again, while speaking of the position of Buraimi, Oman and the Yemen, Prince Feisal said: "We are, in principle, against the use of arms to settle any difference ... but when the people's interests run into danger, then we have no alternative but to defend them by all the means at our disposal."

Plebiscite the solution

When all is said and done, the fact remains that thousands of Muslims have been killed on the soil of the Yemen at the hands of their Muslim brethren. Egypt plus the Southern Yemen and Su'udi Arabia plus the Northern Yemen have been at each others' throats. Khurshiev gave a warning in 1962 that any interference in the Yemen by the United Nations would create a similar situation as in the Congo. In December 1962, the U.S.A. succeeded in bringing about a Disengagement Agreement between Egypt and Su'udi Arabia by recognizing the Yemeni Republic. Since then the United Nations has been keeping an observation mission there called the UNYOM, hoping that the situation would soon improve.

It is heartening to note that there are signs of a better understanding owing to recent high-level meetings between the two countries. After the Cairo Conference of the Arab Heads of State held in January 1964, both the President of Algeria and Iraq tried to arrange further meetings between the two governments. A communiqué issued jointly by Su'udi Arabia and the UAR on 4 March 1964, after the high-level meetings in Riyadh, shows signs of progress in discussion of a number of issues between them, in particular the problem of the Yemen. The Muslim world is anxiously waiting for the results and is praying for peace in the Arab world.

Meanwhile, let us remind these high-level personalities of the Middle East of the following verse from the Holy Qur'an:

"If and two parties of the believers quarrel, make peace between them; but if one of them acts wrongfully towards the other, fight that which acts wrongfully until it returns to God's command; then if it returns, make peace between them with justice and act equitably; surely God loves those who act equitably."

This Divine command lays down a general principle and enjoins on all Muslims to try to mediate equitably between the parties involved in a quarrel.

In the light of this verse and the general spirit of Islamic teachings, a policy of non-interference by the Muslim world will be tantamount to a sin of omission, if not of commission. Under the present circumstances in the Yemen the only feasible and practical solution seems to be a plebiscite to find out what the people of the country want for themselves. Even if they decide in favour of what is harmful for them, the solution does not lie in compulsion. Persuasion through education and understanding is the only just and reasonable way. All outside interference, however sublime its motives, should, in the interest of peace and well-being of the people directly concerned, be withdrawn. In other words, if the people of the Yemen look at the map, it seems, points to the fact that the majority of the people of the Yemen are still with the Imam al-Badr — are the ultimate judges of their destiny.
The two main sources of the principles and doctrines of Islam

The directions of the Holy Qur'ān and the pronouncements of the Prophet Muhammad on the doctrines of faith of Islam form the two main principles of the religion of Islam. Islamic jurisprudence is derived from these directions and pronouncements, which were sent to us Muslims from God and were expounded by His Prophet to form the basis of our belief and to provide us with the code which must govern our conduct in this world on diverse matters of everyday life — private relationships, politics, economics, etc., and to prepare us for deserving His rewards in the life hereafter.

The main doctrines and principles of the religion of Islam may be divided into two parts: first, those principles which relate exclusively to the worship of God and the belief in His oneness and divine attributes and essence, and, secondly, those directions which are intended to be applied in this world to ensure the smooth and harmonious running of society, the administration of the country's affairs — political and economic — the relationship between the State and the Individual and that between the individual members of the country. Thus the Holy Qur'ān has dealt with such matters as the law relating to business transactions and dealings, the status of the individual and constitutional and diplomatic matters, etc. Islam has given as much consideration to the matters affecting our life in this world as to those in the life to come. Islam claims to be a religion for this world: it is at once an inspired faith and a political constitution, and it is as much a factor for worldly happiness and welfare as it is for heavenly reward. As the mosque forms a part of the religion of Islam, so does the State and Government, which affect many aspects of our daily behaviour.

The provisions of the Holy Qur'ān have been made for the purpose of giving material happiness and prosperity to the people in their life in this world and in the next. Thus every act of a man in this life has a direct bearing on his eternal life. A provision as to the worship of God in this world or as to the conduct of commerce and trade, the government and administration of a country, international relationship between different States or the law of crime, all are necessary for this world and are also needed for our spiritual welfare. Such provisions show us how to offer to our Creator His due, how to ensure fair and honest dealing in our business transactions with our fellow men, how and when to submit to a ruler and accept his leadership, how to ensure the integrity of our nation and secure peace, and how all of us should behave to each other and refrain from transgressing on the rights and domain of others. They in their own turn have their direct effect on our position and status in the Final Day of Reckoning and Judgment.

The two lives are complementary

In view of this fact that the religion of Islam is intended for the material and spiritual welfare of man in this world and the next, it is imperative that the directions of this religion should be taken as one indivisible whole and a complete unit; and it is also necessary to understand that for the religion of Islam to achieve its purpose all its directions should be accepted and no preference should be made between the different topics they deal with — for they are all important and complementary.

According to the Qur'ān the failure to obey a command of God entails two sets of punishments — one in this life and the other in the life to come. God said: "O you who believe, retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the sin" (2: 178); also, "And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his punishment is hell; he shall abide in it" (4: 93). A student of the Qur'ān will hardly find any command in it, the breach of which is not sanctioned with punishment both in this world and in the next. In the cases where such commands appear to be found, then one should not forget the provision made by God to cover all general cases, when he said: "These are God's limits; and whoever obeys God and His Messenger, He will cause him to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide in them; and this is the great achievement. And Whoever disobeys God and His Messenger and goes beyond His limits, He will cause him to enter fire to abide in it, and he shall have an abasing chastisement" (4: 13, 14).

As Islam considers that existence in this world is only a part of man's greater life in the hereafter, so it is only logical that it should accord to man's life in this world its due share of consideration. Islamic ethics consider that this world is transitory, that the life to come is eternal and meritorious, that man is responsible for his acts in this world and is answerable for them on the day of final reckoning. If a man does good in this life he reaps his due reward, but if he does evil he is ultimately punishing himself only, and such punishment in this world will not mean that he will escape punishment in the next; for that happens only if he has fully repented and amended his ways with sincerity.
The laws of the religion of Islam contrast strongly with man-made laws in that they are rooted in the belief that they are from God. A Muslim obeys commands of God because to him that obedience is a form of worship which draws him nearer to God and earns him His pleasure. A true Muslim who finds he can commit a crime and escape punishment in this world will nevertheless refrain from committing that crime for the simple reason that he knows he will never escape chastisement for his offence in the next life. This no doubt is a very laudable provision which helps to encourage honesty and righteousness in the people and to ensure order in society. Man-made laws are on a different plane, for, far from inspiring a true sense of honesty and sincere obedience in the hearts of the people governed by them, they more often than not bring about evils worse than those originally intended to be remedied. Such laws are feared only when a wrong is caught by their machinery and his evil-doing is discovered. Thus the prospective offender feels that he is safe in his secrecy and slyness and is driven to utilizing his genius for the purpose of covering his offence from the eyes of those responsible for his detection and punishment. But the eye of God never sleeps and can never be eluded. We thus see that crime is rampant in those countries which have deteriorated in their morals, even though such countries may have stringent penal laws; and we also see that serious and hardened criminals in such countries are to be found in higher proportions amongst the more enlightened or educated class, due to the fact that members of such class have a weaker morality and are more able to escape being caught in the clutches of the law.

The commandments of Islam are indivisible

The doctrines of faith form one solid unit and are indivisible. The Qur'an expressly provides that all its provisions should be obeyed equally and that none should be disregarded or ignored. All which the Qur'an provided was God's wish, and we cannot say that the part of God's wish is to be accorded more reverence or weight than another. God said: "... Do you then believe in part of the Book and disbelieve in the other? What then is the reward of such among you as do this but disgrace in the life of this world, and on the day of resurrection they shall be sent back to the most grievous chastisement..." (2 : 85).

There are many verses in the Qur'an which provide clearly that the believers are not to disregard any of the directions of it: "Surely those who conceal the clear proof and the guidance that We revealed after We made it clear in the Book for men, these is whom God shall curse, and those who curse shall curse them (too). Except those who repent and amend and manifest the truth (the truth), those it is to whom I turn (mercifully), and I am the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful" (2 : 159-160). By "concealing" is meant here obedience to one provision rather than to the other and the belief in one doctrine and the denial of the other. God also said: "And that you should judge between them by what God has revealed, and do not follow their low desires, and be cautious of them, lest they seduce you from part of what God has revealed to you..." (5 : 49); "Surely those who disbelieve in God and His Messengers and (those who) desire to make a distinction between God and His Messengers and say: We believe in some and disbelieve in others; and desire to take a course between (this and) that. These it is that are truly unbelievers, and We have prepared for the unbelievers a disgraceful chastisement" (4 : 150-151).

The laws of Islam are distinguished by being laws legislated by God and of universal application. God sent these laws through the Prophet Muhammad to be given to all peoples of every race and colour, Arabs and non-Arabs, in the West as well as in the East. These laws were fit for every nation and tribe whatever their character, customs and history. In short, the laws of Islam are universal. They are the type of laws which legislators in this world aspired to in their dreams but failed to achieve. Of this, God said in His Holy Book: "Say: O people, surely I am the Messenger of God to you all..." (7 : 158); "He it is who sent His Messengers with guidance and the religion of truth, that He might cause it to prevail over all religions, though the polytheists may be averse" (9 : 33).

The laws of Islam are complete and permanent

The laws of Islam were revealed by God in a complete form. The revelation of these laws happened during a short period which started with the Prophet's mission and ended with his death, and with the revelation of the passage in the Qur'an which said: "... This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion" (5 : 3). This provision is a decisive proof of the fact that the laws are complete and permanent. The Qur'an also said that the Prophet Muhammad was the last Messenger of God: "Muhammad was never the father of any of your men but the Messenger of God and the last of the Prophets".

A close study of the provisions of the religion of Islam will reveal that these laws are complete. They cover every phase of relationship between private individuals as well as between groups of human beings and nations. They regulate the status, conduct and rights of the individual and all other matters affecting his daily life, and also regulate the affairs of State and government, political, administrative and social, etc. and they also lay down rules dealing with the relations between different States in peace and war.

The origin of the laws of Islam and man-made laws compared

We have seen how the laws of the religion of Islam have originated. We shall now proceed to say something about the origin of ordinary secular or civil laws by way of comparison. Laws made in a primitive and backward society are necessarily simple and meagre in their provisions and text. When that society develops or advances on the road of civilization, the laws which at an earlier age met its needs have to be enlarged and developed to suit the greater demands of that society; and it will be seen that with the advance and development of civilization in a society, wider, and sometimes more complicated, laws become necessary; and new legal theories and conceptions emerge with the development and advance in the life and thought of every community. These civil laws are made by a group of individuals who hold the reins of power in a country or society and they also effect variations and amendments to these laws. It is therefore the group or society which in fact legislates for itself in such a way as to meet its own requirements and suit its particular needs, and it constantly varies these laws when a change in circumstances warrants such action.

The jurists say that the first laws were made in the early Stone Age period when the small group or family came to be known, and that the next stage in the development of the law came when the greater group, e.g., the tribe and later the nation, appeared. The last stage in the development of the law was in the 18th century, and it was based on the
philosophical and social conceptions of that period. The legal systems of the world have made great strides since that time, and the governing principles of these laws at the present time are altogether different from those prevailing during the earlier eras.

The laws of Islam and secular laws are of a different nature

After understanding the ways in which secular laws are made it is not difficult to perceive that the laws of the religion of Islam are essentially different from such secular or civil and man-made laws, and that the basis and manner of legislation which brought about the Islamic laws are intrinsically different from those in the case of secular laws. Had the Islamic laws been of a similar nature to the ordinary secular laws, the former would not have been made in the manner they were made in, and one would have found that the Islamic laws would have been obsolete and unsuitable for our time due to the fact that they had not been changed, as secular laws are, with the change of time. But we find that the laws of Islam are, nevertheless, still highly suitable and appropriate for our time, and contain ideas, theories and conceptions which have only recently been perceived or developed by the modern legislator to suit the present needs of society. Had the laws of Islam been like the secular laws it would have been impossible for them to have such a quality of justice and perfection despite the fact that they have not been altered for many hundreds of years.

The main differences between the laws of Islam and secular laws

The laws of Islam differ from the secular or civil legal systems in three main aspects:

The First Aspect. The laws of Islam have been made by God while the secular laws are man-made. The heavenly quality of perfection and infinite wisdom can be seen clearly by a glance at the laws of Islam, while the defects of human failings and imperfections inherent in the secular laws can be easily detected. A law made by man cannot but portray the impotence and weakness inherent in man's nature. Thus, laws made by man are liable to be changed with the change and development in man's thought and intellect, and with the emergence of new circumstances and cases which were not expected or anticipated by man when the laws were originally made. A man-made law must necessarily remain imperfect so long as man is imperfect, and it will never reach a stage of perfection to compare with God-made laws so long as man remains so much inferior to his God and Creator. Secular laws will always be defective in so far as they cannot aim at covering all possibilities and circumstances that may arise in the future.

The laws of Islam, on the other hand, are made by God. God's infinite power, wisdom, greatness, perfection and complete knowledge of the past and future are all portrayed in His laws. God made his laws for all times and He is well aware of the current needs of man and of any changes that may come at any future time.

The Second Aspect: Secular laws are comprised of provisions and rules devised by the legislators to meet the immediate needs of society and to govern the affairs and relationships of its component members. Such provisions may either fall short of the contemporary needs of the society or may be fitting to such needs, but they cannot possibly be devised in such a way as to meet any future needs, because such future developments cannot be ascertained with any certainty by human beings. On the other hand, it may be noticed that laws, even in the most civilized and highly developed countries, are not always in keeping with the ever-changing circumstances of a society, but tend to be rather lagging in this respect.

But the laws of Islam were laid down by God to suit all possible eventualities in the life and needs of any society.

The Islamic laws and man-made laws are similar in that both are made for the express purpose of organizing the affairs of human beings and introducing order in their lives. The fact that the laws of Islam are permanent and need no variation or adaptation comes as a logical and natural result of the two main characteristics of these laws:

1. The provisions of these laws are flexible and not rigid or stale, and are also general and wide in their application, so that they cover the necessities and problems of any particular society at any future time, however changed and varied these may be from those that existed at the time when the laws were first made.

2. The provisions of these laws are so high in perfection that they are never lacking in their ability to deal with new circumstances, and always keep pace with the advance and progress in society.

The demands of reason and logic are well satisfied in the provisions and general scheme underlying the theories of the laws of Islam — in fact the soundness of the logic in these laws is one of their main characteristics and striking features. The provisions of this law have been admirably laid down in a general and flexible form and have at the same time reached the highest imaginable stage of perfection and justice.

Thirteen centuries have passed since the laws of Islam were enacted and revealed by God to His people. Since that time many changes have occurred, and these changes were frequent and sweeping in their nature. Major changes have happened in man's thought, intellect, knowledge and form of life, and there have sprung many industries and inventions which are highly revolutionary, if they are to be compared with the state of affairs existing at the time when the laws were first made. It would be admitted that such changes were never expected or anticipated by our earlier fathers. Civil laws have changed more than once in an effort to keep pace with these changed circumstances. It is impossible to find a civil law in force at the present day which can rightly claim to have come down, without major and sweeping changes in its provisions, from a law that was in force thirteen centuries ago (at the time that the laws of Islam were laid down). In the great majority of cases we fail to find any similarity in the provisions of such a law and its "ancestor" — and relationship between them has been severed very many years ago. In spite of all this, and of the fact that they were never changed or varied for all this long period, the laws of Islam continue to be superior to all civil laws and more suitable for the needs of our present society and more in keeping with the temperament and thought of the man of our time.

This is the testimony of history which it cases unambiguously in favour of the laws of Islam. A better testimony than that is the word of God in His Book, when He said: "... and take counsel with them in the affair" (3: 158); "... and their rule is to take counsel among themselves"
...and help one another in goodness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression" (5: 2).

The Prophet also said: "No evil or anything that may bring about evil in Islam". These are only a few of the provisions of the Holy Qur'an and the Traditions of the Prophet, which are flexible and in the highest degree and readily adaptable to any set of circumstances: they enact that the taking of counsel should be the basis of government and that such counsel should be of the kind that is neither evil in its direct effects or which may result indirectly in evil, sin or aggression; and they also lay down that there should be cooperation in producing goodness and piety. From such specimen provisions of the laws of Islam one cannot fail to see the reason why these laws should be acclaimed as the only perfect laws, which no man can hope to aspire to legislate.

The Third Aspect. The purpose of the laws of Islam is the organization of society and the bringing about of a state of affairs where the individual is good, where the group or society is united, happy and harmonious, and where the government is just and fair — in short, where every aspect of life is ideally good. To achieve this most difficult aim, the laws of Islam had, of necessity, to be of such a kind as is superior to all man-made laws. They were so superior when they were first revealed, and they continue to be so at our present day. The laws of Islam have contained and expounded principles and theories of justice and administration which were not discovered or appreciated by the non-Muslim world until very recently; and there are many other theories and ideas which have not as yet been perceived by the non-Muslim world. It was God himself who, recognizing the desperate need of man for a perfect law, took the task of making these laws for the world. He revealed His perfect work to His people and commanded them to follow His word, so that good may be universal and evil less rampant, and so that His people may come nearer to Him by obeying His wishes.

Civil laws are also intended for the organization of society, but civil laws are essentially passive and not active — they request the subject to refrain from the doing of evil or harm to his fellow man, but they are silent on the question of actively doing good. Such civil law never produces the good results which are intended by it. It was only in the last century that laws in some civilized and advanced countries started to be directed towards encouraging the doing of good, rather than to remain exclusively confined to the abatement of evil. States which have formulated a new policy or scheme or advocated a new idea have utilized their legal systems for the purpose of propagating such policies, schemes or ideas, as has happened in Turkey, Germany and Italy. Civil laws which may be considered to be highly developed have only achieved a small part of the perfection which the Islamic laws, laid down thirteen centuries ago, have possessed all through that time.

(To be continued)

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JORDAN WATERS

By B. A. Misri

It is not by accident but by design that the Israeli plan to divert the waters of the Jordan is being materialized in the summer of 1964. The time was deliberately fixed to coincide with the American Presidential election so that neither the Democrats nor the Republicans should be able even to raise a feeble voice to hold back the Israeli hand of aggression. On the contrary, both political parties have been observed to outbid each other in promising accommodation to the Zionist aims.

President Johnson announced at a dinner in New York field in honour of the Weizmann Institute of Science that his country would work in collaboration with Israel on an atomic plant to desalinize seawater. It has now been calculated by a Hebrew University Professor of Physical Chemistry that the contemplated project would cost $1,000 millions (about £357 millions). In spite of the claim that the U.S.A. is committed to keeping the formulae of atomic energy to herself and not to share them with any other power, she has, subject perhaps to certain reservations, decided to share research on atomic energy with Israel. It is too much to expect of Israel that she will not use the atomic know-how for destructive purposes.

According to the programme agreed upon between the Prime Minister of Israel and President Johnson in May this year, it is hoped that a reactor would soon be built of some 800 thermal megawatts, which would convert seawater into steam that will drive generators producing 200 megawatts of electric power before being condensed into 100-200 million gallons a day of pure water. One of the main matters to be considered is the size and type of distillation units to be recommended. The largest unit now in operation in the United States plans to scale-up the prototype call for the production of 10 m. gallon units by 1968 and 50 m. gallon units by the following year” (The Times for 11 August 1964). The same paper quotes an Israeli official as saying that six such units would give them an artificial Jordan.

It is of course apparent that the American offer of research in collaboration with Israel involving huge expenditure is a straw in the wind. It obviously indicates the enormous pains America is prepared to take in order to keep her Zionist citizens in good humour — citizens who are overtly committed, sooner or later, to relinquishing their American citizenship in favour of that of Israel. As such they are the least interested in keeping the international image of America bright. What they are interested in is to exploit their temporary Diaspora abode and then, in conformity with the Law of Return, beat a retreat “home”.

Israeli “David”

It is time the Arabs realized what lies in store for them and acted right from this moment so as to render nugatory the sinister designs of Israel. It is not for the first time that a fait accompli has been flung at the Arab face by Israel.

The poor Arab has had many a bitter pill to swallow in the past. When is this chain reaction of faits accomplis going to leave the Arab in peace? Unless the Arabs sink all their differences and offer a united front to the enemy, it is difficult to imagine how they can escape from the relentlessness of a fate fashioned for them by the cryptic but inexorable hand of Israel.

Mr. Simon Peres, Israel’s Minister of Defence, the man “mainly responsible for Israel’s military preparedness”, boastfully observed the other day in London that although “the Arabs were 45 times as numerous and occupied a territory 500 times as large as Israel” yet “the Israeli David
Arab opposition became so widespread that a Royal Commission was appointed to examine the feasibility of the project. A hydrographic survey undertaken at the instance of the Commission revealed that the Jordan River water was hopelessly insufficient to meet the requirements of both Jews and Arabs. The Jewish claim that there were vast unexploited hydrological sources in Palestine was thus falsified.

In spite of the authoritative report of the British hydrographers, the Zionists continued to mislead the world into believing that the Arab recalcitrance stood in the way of tapping the otherwise inexhaustible resources of the place. Accordingly Dr. Walter Clay Lowdermilk, Ph.D., D.Tech.Sc., a Jewish engineer considered to be one of the world’s leading authorities on soil and water, wrote a whole book entitled *Palestine, Land of Promise*, to prove that the hydrological resources of the Jordan Valley were sufficient for the needs of both Arabs and Jews. He thought that if a project was started on the lines of the Tennessee Valley Authority, and provided the whole scheme was treated as a single unit, the water would be sufficient for Arabs as well as Israelis.

In his introduction to another book, by James B. Hayes, *T.V.A. on the Jordan*, published in 1948, Lowdermilk observed: “There are few places in the world where mankind has a more favourable opportunity to a constructive approach towards the problem of the common man, removing the basic cause of conflict of war by the creation of abundance for all.” Lowdermilk’s ridiculous theory has since been completely exposed. But like any other Zionist he believes in telling lies loudly and repeatedly. Writing as late as 10 February 1964 in *Life International*, he has no scruple in drilling home to the world that “few have any real knowledge of this small river (the historic Jordan River), the sources of its waters, its relationship to Israel and surrounding Arab lands, or its unique geographic features. Its setting is ideal for a Jordan Valley Authority Power and Irrigation project which, if carried out in full, would greatly benefit both Arabs and Israelis”.

Arabs as “residuary beneficiaries”

Lowdermilk’s scheme was described as “visionary” by experts. It is the result of his overwrought imagination. Arabs rightly regard it as “mythical”. The British, and most of the Arab world, has established the fact beyond dispute that there is no substance in the proposals either of Lowdermilk or of Hayes. Lowdermilk assumes that there is enough water and enough land for both the Jews and the Arabs. Nothing is more absurd than this supposition. Neither water nor land is sufficient for either community. Apart from this very practical consideration, an important Arab area, namely Jordan, is to be treated merely as a “residuary beneficiary”. This means that water will first be utilized by the Israelis and in the event of any surplus it would be released for Jordan and other Arab lands.

It is not widely appreciated that the scheme’s primary aim is to irrigate the coastal plain of Israel and the Negev — an area far removed from the Jordan Valley proper.

The Zionist mind just does not realize the great injustice involved in the scheme. Why must the water of the valley be used in another region to boost Israeli settlements, and why should the Valley which sustains a million Arab refugees, the sons of the soil, be treated merely as “residuary beneficiaries”? It is the refugees and Arabs who are entitled to all the water of the Jordan and its tributaries rather than hundreds and thousands of those Jews who for millennia have

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been living in lands far removed from Palestine. It is a plain fact that the Jordan River and its tributaries can either irrigate in full the coastal plains and Negev or the Jordan Valley, but certainly not both. Lowdermilk is making a futile attempt to convince the world that the reverse is true. The general practice is, and nature demands it, that water should not be diverted from where it belongs. It is different if the need of the area is fully met and if there is still surplus water it might be used in another area. But in this case the position is that every single drop of water is needed for the Jordan Valley.

**Johnston plan**

The Lowdermilk project, subject to minor modifications, was officially adopted by the Government of Israel. This naturally made the Arabs exasperated and they adopted an uncompromising attitude to the Israeli plan. President Eisenhower thereupon sent Mr. Eric Johnston as his personal representative to study the situation and submit a report to him. Mr. Johnston accordingly started his assignment in 1953 and worked on it till 1955. He discussed the Israeli and Arab positions with all the parties concerned and ultimately submitted his report to the President on the Jordan River Development Plan.

Realizing that Johnston was nothing but his master’s voice — President Eisenhower — who was hell bent on accommodating the Zionist leaders and American Jewry, the Arabs, in the words of Don Peretz, shared “a general disposition to throw out, not only the plan, but Johnston as well” (The Middle East Journal, Washington, Vol. 9, No. 4). The Arabs were so much annoyed with Eisenhower’s representative that the Jordanian Prime Minister refused to grant an interview to him. Johnston soon realized that “there was no possibility of even discussing the proposals rationally, much less of obtaining an agreement”. Accordingly he went back to America empty-handed and had to come again and again to negotiate his plan, but to no effect.

Israel accepted Johnston’s plan but the Arabs rejected it. Finally the Arab League in 1955 rejected it lock, stock and barrel. Even Johnston had to concede that Jordan’s need for the Jordan waters was immeasurably more than that of Israel. He pointed out that Israel commanded sources other than those which the Jordan-Yarmuk system gave it. “Sufficient water was available to Israel from rivers, springs, fells and underground sources in the country of which only a small part could be provided by the Jordan-Yarmuk system”. But as far as Jordan was concerned the only source of water was the Jordan-Yarmuk system.

In spite of Jordan’s comparatively very limited resources she has to maintain about the same population as Israel, which includes over half a million Palestine refugees. There is no denying that these refugees, being the sons of the soil, have a greater right to the waters of the Jordan-Yarmuk system than either the Israelis or other non-refugee Arabs. Don Peretz significantly points out, “the geological structure of Jordan limits its potential irrigated land development on an economic basis to the Jordan Valley, whereas Israel’s potential is large in other areas”.

After the rejection of the Plan by the Arab League, the signatories to the Tripartite Declaration in May 1950, namely Great Britain, the U.S.A, and France, should not have allowed Israel to proceed on with its unilateral plan of diverting the Jordan waters. According to the Tripartite Declaration the Powers concerned guaranteed the status quo in the Middle East. The Government of Jordan made repeated protests to the Powers concerned that Israel was going ahead with its plan of diverting the Jordan waters and thereby acting contrary to the letter and spirit of the Declaration. All these protests, however, fell on deaf ears, and Israel was actually encouraged by the Powers to go ahead.

“A matter of life and death”

For Arabs the Israeli project is a matter of life and death. If the plan is allowed to work it is estimated that two to three million Jews would be settled in the Negev while a million children of the soil, forcibly ejected from their Palestinian homes sixteen years ago, would be denied the opportunity of settling down.

The UNO has been talking — a good deal perhaps — and adopting resolutions conducive to the rehabilitation of the refugees. It has, however, not been able to act. Perhaps she could not. At the same time Arabs could not afford to mark time. President Nasir set the ball rolling. He summoned the heads of the Arab States to meet at Cairo and face the critical issue.

*The River Jordan is to be “displaced” like the million and a quarter Arabs!*

The necessary atmosphere of concord and amity having been already created, the kings and presidents felt no inhibition to speak out their minds. An opportunity was thus afforded to let off steam. This policy paid handsome dividends to the Arabs beyond their wildest imagination.

President Nasir committed himself beforehand to sharing the decisions of the Conference with all Arabs. The Conference bluntly informed them that the Arab Governments lacked the wherewithal that would effectively stop Israel from diverting the Jordan waters this year. The Arabs therefore would not initiate hostilities. But the Conference decided that being upper riparians the Arabs would divert the courses of the rivers Hasbani, Banias and Yarmuk, the three tributaries of the River Jordan. If Israel is entitled to divert the River Jordan at its upper reaches and thereby starve the waterless State of Jordan, then by the same token the Lebanon and Syria are also entitled to divert the rivers that originate.
in their territories. This will leave the River Dan, which originates in Israel, the only feeder of the River Jordan. This means that the Jordan will lose about 77% of its flow. Some think that it is possible that the Arabs may be able to tap even a higher percentage of the Jordan waters. A Lebanese engineer has lately evolved a plan which may divert the total flow of the Jordan to Arab lands. He believes that the river would be bone dry when it enters or makes a semblance of entering Israel.

The Arab decision not to go to war over the issue of the diversion of the Jordan by Israel this year does not necessarily mean that there will be no war. Israeli aggression is an inevitable factor. It is bound to assert itself. It is bound to exacerbate and precipitate a war psychosis. The Prime Minister of Israel in a statement to the Knesset has already made it plain that in the event of Arab States attempting "to sabotage her water plan" she would not hesitate to "act". He is further said to have observed that "Israel will oppose unilateral and illegal measures by the Arab States and will act to protect her vital rights" (The Times, London, for 22 January 1964). This solemn statement made by the head of the Government of Israel to Parliament leaves little room for doubt that Israel is bent upon initiating hostilities if the Arabs make an attempt to use their waters in their own territory.

The Arabs have decided not to go to war against Israel when she intercepts water as it flows out of Lake Tiberias for diversion to the Negev. They are also committed not to interfere when Israel taps water for irrigation of the Jordan Valley. Dr. Walter Lowdermilk, the father of the Jordan water Diversion Plan, makes as blatant a declaration of war as Mr. Eshkol: "Their (Arabs') strategy is to divert the waters of the Jordan before they reach Israel. To prevent this, Israel may well go to war." Nothing could be clearer than this. There is at least one merit in these two militant statements: their forthrightness. Without mincing words and in a language as unambiguous as any, they have declared that Israel will surely go to war. Even Mrs. Meir had the temerity the other day to declare on the BBC television that the Arabs are afraid of the growing strength of Israel, that "little dynamo of a country" (The Jewish Chronicle, 17 January 1964).

Israel and her friends may rest assured that these idle threats, if at all substantiated, shall not fail to re-enact the Suez episode of the year 1956.

It is equally idle on the part of Zionists to expect of Arabs that they would acquiesce in their plans to induce the Jews to come from all over the world and settle in tiny Israel. She is already bulging at the seams with surfeit of population. Her economy on that account is getting disturbed. For her own good she should stop multiplying her embattled population continuously.

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**THE ABSOLUTE**

Beyond the pale of my frail imagination
Can missiles hurled from my brain ever reach Him?
Savants' theses — that are knowledge in perfection
Manage to quote all — all the Attributes of Him?

Lemurias may founder under high seas' surgings:
Pompiias sizzle in lolling lava pourings:
*Worlds* may burn, while *He* plunks, as His Gate to ashes,
Speck of spark from His Glory does He ever lose?

At His so wide Gate of free nation supply
Hundreds, like Husain of Kerbala fame, *did cry*
Out in thirst; yet, without water, they *all did die.*
Shall *er* the Munificent's fame tarnish thereby?

The lofty pinnacle of His Supremacy
That pierces through the very blue infinite
Isn't it sheer stupidity for martin mine's *clipped* wings
To try and soar up to guess *that* Glory, Greatness and Height?

At the glowing warmth of His e'er proximity
I know *this* heart's aglow at ev'ry tick of time:
But to get a peep at Him — Oh! What a pity!
That *these* eyes are so — so damned, blasted and blind!

In *His* Eden, where *e'en* Archangel Gabriel
Is unworthy to warble as its nightingale,
How can *this* stinking earthy dung-bin regale
In hopes, the scent of "Union-with-Him" to inhale?

Riding a colt, fiery, wild-beating, fleeting time,
To reach the lane where dwell noble souls has been mine
Endeavour. Alas! Can these attempts succeed,
When often they come to grief, too late to recover seat?

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1 From the Persian of the *Divan* of the Indian poet, Ameer Khusrau (1253-1325 C.E.).
RECONSTRUCTION OF IQBAL’S

"RECONSTRUCTION OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT IN ISLAM" *

By Dr. 'Ishrat Hasan Enver

Preface

It is one thing to be vehemently struggling for freedom and quite another to successfully maintain it with a philosophical vision. The increasing burden of responsibilities which the complex texture of national and international problems forces upon a free country becomes too much for it. Perhaps, in the present state of international politics, it is not so difficult to struggle for freedom and eventually to achieve it than to retain it when once it is achieved. In all probability it is because human nature even today is still not ready for co-operation, collaboration and co-existence. This problem exists not only on the level of international problems, but also on the plane of national interests. The problem also embraces relations between different races and communities on the one hand and individuals on the other.

It was in an atmosphere which was thick in conflicts and which boded desperate struggles for independence both in the national and the international plane that Iqbal commenced writing his Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam. In writing such a book, his one significant objective, to a large extent, was to stir up the Muslim mind. He wanted to prepare the Muslims to bear the strain of the increasing conflicts all around them and the still greater struggles for self-expression and freedom ahead of them. In the context of these conflicts and struggles which were being expressed in doubt, despair, suspicion and mistrust, he thought that it was best to meet force with force, wherever possible. Failing that, he believed in non-cooperation. 1 Non-cooperation was to make amends for personal weakness and individual infirmity which is oblivious of the basic unity of the human race and the essential “integration of the human spirit.” 2 This period in the history of India was a period of groping towards a not too distant freedom and independence. Thus, truly, it was the age of non-cooperation, full of struggling mistrust and increasing jealousies and rivalries as a consequence of individualism and personal infirmity. Everywhere mistrust, suspicion and growing tendencies of separation and partition, consequent to non-cooperation, were rampant. There was unceasing aspiration to find security and protection from self-imposed isolation. Very rarely a desire is expressed for a world which "has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls, "3 and "the mind being without fear and the head being held high", creation is new and all the stars shine" as in a cosmic unity and a creative harmony.

The directions on which the work of Reconstruction of Religious Thought could have been undertaken were, thus, already given in the situation. Iqbal could not only read the indications of the weather, but, having got the seismographic reflections, also seized the opportunity of devoting himself to the dangerous foundations of European thought and culture. The essence of European thought and culture was best epitomized by Nietzsche in his cardinal doctrine of the will-to-power. Will-to-power, however, cannot be conceived except as postulating an isolated ego. Accordingly, Iqbal hurriedly reduced “the will-to-power” of Nietzsche to “the will-to-eohood” of his own conception. He thought that, by changing the name, the Western doctrine had been more or less orientalized. But, even by the reduction of the former into the latter, the dangers of the incessant conflicts and configurations that were inherent in the former determination of the nature of existence were not the least reduced by the homo-centric enunciation of “the will-to-eohood”.

Iqbal, in all likelihood, was, in some remote way, cognizant of the situation and anticipated that phase of our existence when, to quote his words, “other views and probably sound views other than those” set forth in his lecture would be possible. It is these and such kindred statements of his which unmistakably discard any whimsical finality in philosophical thinking and positively take a dynamic view of reality. Being so encouraged, the present work of reconstruction of The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam is undertaken in all humility, earnestness and sincerity.

Knowledge and religious experience

There are under this chapter some important statements made by Sir Muhammad Iqbal, and I can do no better than quote some of them below, e.g.:

"Religion in its more advanced forms rises higher than poetry. It moves from individual to society. In its attitude towards ultimate reality, it is opposed to the limitations of man. It enlarges his claims and holds out the prospect of nothing else than a direct vision of Reality."

In this very context he further points out:

"The main purpose of the Qur’ān is to awaken in man the higher consciousness of his manifold relations with God and the universe. It is in view of this essential aspect of the Qur’ānic teaching that Goethe, while making a general review of Islam as an educational force, said to Eckerman: ‘You see this teaching never fails; with all our systems we cannot go and generally speaking no man can go further than that’."

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1 Both Gandhi and Sir Muhammad Iqbal were equally non-co-operative, but in different contexts and with different objectives - the former to overthrow the foreign power and the latter, being suspicious of the intentions of the majority community, to safeguard minority interests.
3 Tagore, Gitanjali, p. 27.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., p. 78.
7 Ibid., p. 8.
These two statements of Sir Muhammad Iqbal are the opus magnum statements. Their full significance, though not fully revealed to their author himself, are to be treated as the very foundations for any reconstruction of The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam. Perhaps in the whole range of The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam no other two such statements as best revealing the essential character of Islam can be found. It is, however, a peculiar case of self-contradiction that starting from a set of very authentic premises, Iqbal, as he proceeds father and farther in his work of reconstruction, draws quite the opposite conclusions than those which the very premises warrant. He interprets Islam as imposing certain limitations upon the human spirit and as emphasizing certain teachings beyond which, according to his own statement, man must need go.

Islam, of course, as admitted by Iqbal himself, is opposed to the limitations of man. What, then, are the full implications of these limitations? What is that teaching which, in the words of Goethe, and Iqbal himself, is inclined to support that view? There is no doubt that the essential spirit of Islam, in a moment of intuition and sympathetic appreciation, was more or less as authentically revealed to Iqbal as to Goethe. But Goethe, with his broad vision of the total possibilities of human life, was contented with an authentic appreciation of that spirit. Iqbal, on the other hand, was under the pressure of political urges to express himself in circumstances which were infected with anger, enmity and mutual rivalries. He, therefore, pragmatically curtailed something of the total possibilities of that unrivalled spirit so as to suit a practical purpose. While doing so, he overlooked his own statement that Islam, in its attitude towards ultimate reality, is opposed to the limitations of man. He further overlooked his statement that Islam holds out the prospect of nothing less than a direct vision of reality.8

One of the basic limitations of man is the inherent limit of his knowledge through reason and thought. Reason, as such, is the ultimate irrationality which is like a closed end. Those who accept it as a closed end falter or fail and, finally, give up for the higher possibilities of the human self. Those who take it as a mere hurdle overlap it with great enthusiasm, joy and a sudden jockey spur.

**Intuition**

Intuition, judged even from different angles, is eventually accepted as an opening for the infinite possibilities of infinite self. Seen from outside it may be turned into a method of knowledge which helps to transcend the limitations of knowledge. It is long after the discovery of the true self that the method of its discovery is retrospectively viewed. Certain characteristics, belonging to it, are established with a view to giving it the status of a method which must be treated as distinct from the discovery. Intellect, thus, is capricious enough not to leave the self to its own resources and to be true to itself, in which state the discovery has never been distinct from the discoverer.

There is, however, a sense in which intuition, as a method of knowledge, is distinct from the knowledge thus revealed in intuition. The scope of philosophy is confined to the understanding of the ultimate nature of things as they are. Judged from that point of view it is within the province of philosophy to investigate all possibilities of increasing knowledge. It is under the impact of this practical motive that an attempt is made to conceive with a retrospective effect the relevant conditions of the experience which is both supra-empirical and ultra-rational. In this attempt the experience of self as such is subjected to certain basic polarities of thought and understanding such as subject and object; knower and known; knowledge and the object of knowledge, etc. Therefore certain characteristics which flow over all possibilities of discursive reason are pointed out to be possessed by it such as incomunicability, unanalyzable wholeness, absoluteness, etc. There is nothing seriously wrong in this attempt to understand more exhaustively the nature of the experience which transcends all normal levels of experience provided it is conceded from the very beginning that the experience is a supra-mental act and will not be subjected to an examination except on its own merit. Iqbal was to an extent aware of the situation, while he wrote that "philosophy, no doubt, has jurisdiction to judge religion, but what is to be judged is of such a nature that it will not submit to the jurisdiction of philosophy except on its own terms".9 In the very next lecture, however, to the one from which the above quotation is given, he mysteriously reverses his own statement. He brings in the so-called "philosophical test of the revelations of religious experience". This would mean that philosophy is, in a peculiar way, allowed to judge that which, according to Iqbal, lies beyond its scope.

For Iqbal, it was but natural that he himself never openly claimed access to intuition. Instead of examining the so-called philosophical test in the light of his own experience of the ultimate truth (which he never claims to be his privileged possession), he submits "the revelations of religious experience to a philosophical test of his own conception. Thereby, by implication, he challenges the intuitive content of some of the great mystics of the world without having had any personal access to that experience, which the latter claim to have been accorded to them in a specific way.

Not indicating that he himself could rise up to intuition, Iqbal to a great extent depends upon its descriptions as given by others. On their authority he examines it in a pseudomystical, half-heartedly philosophical and semi-scholastic way.

In this context he enumerates five characteristics of intuition. While making an attempt to understand the essential nature of each, he imports into them his temperamentally inclination to feel isolated in the world. As a consequence he understands Islam as absolutely cut off from other historical processes of thought, feeling and action as elaborated in other religions of the world. Perhaps, being obsessed by his own infirmities, he implicitly concludes that isolation and, consequently, non-cooperation are more helpful for personal safety than healthy cooperation and collaboration with other trends of thought, feeling and action as best expressed in revelations other than his own. He thereby misses the very essential character of that historic revelation of the Qur'an which is so dear to him.

The first point to note in the context of intuition is, according to Iqbal, the immediacy of intuition. In this respect, according to him, it does not differ from other levels of human experience which supply data for knowledge. All experience is immediate. Regions of normal experience are subject to interpretation of sense-data, therefore the mystic experience is subject to interpretation for our knowledge of God. The immediacy of mystic experience simply means that we know God as we know other objects. Immediacy of intuition for Iqbal, thus, is on a par with the immediacy that is there in all experiences. By so conceiving the nature of immediacy that

8 Ibid., p. 2.

9 Ibid., p. 2.
is in all experience he, in fact, misses the true character of essential immediacy itself. For Iqbal the immediacy of mystic experience simply means that we know God as we know other objects. If, however, regions of normal experience are subject to the interpretation of sense-data, it is quite the other way in mystic intuition. This fact is by implication accepted by Iqbal himself as he brings in the other characteristics of intuition, e.g., the unanalysable wholeness and the consequent incommunicability of mystic experience. He further confirms this fact by concluding that it is rather a mode of dealing with reality in which sensation in the physiological sense of the word does not play any part.

**Immediacy of Experience**

Now if sensation, in the physiological sense of the word, does not play any part in intuition, it would be rather unjust to treat it on a par with other normal events of experience in which immediacy means the direct contact of the senses with the object under certain conditions. This contact of the senses with the object may be conceived, as in Nyaya, in at least six ways: “The first is mere conjunction as when we perceive a substance, e.g., a jar. The second is in conjunction, as when we perceive the quality or the genus of a substance, e.g., the colour of the jar. The third is in that which inheres in that which is in conjunction, as when we perceive the genus of the quality of a substance or the genus of the colour of the jar. The fourth is in conjunction as we recognize the quality of sound when the relation between the ear and the sound is one of inherence. The fifth is in that which inheres, as when we recognize the genus of the quality of sound. The last is the relation of the qualification and the qualified, as when we perceive the absence of the jar, since there is the union of our eye with the floor in which abides the qualification of the absence of the jar.”

In all the above possibilities of contact of the senses with the object the one thing, however, which is always obvious is that the knowledge that emerges out of such a contact of the senses with the object is largely inferential. Iqbal himself admits this view of the inferential character of our empirical knowledge when he says that “regions of normal experience are subject to interpretation of sense-data for our knowledge of the external world.” This very interpretative character of our normal level of experience, therefore, goes to suggest that our normal level of experience is never immediate in the real sense of the word. The given reality has to pass through an interpretational stage whereby it at once becomes mediate and loses the remotest possibility of being treated as immediate in any way. All our knowledge, thus, is in a way mediate. It was, in a measure, because of this character of knowledge reposing against the possibility of being mediate that Kant treated all knowledge as merely phenomenal. To say that knowledge is always of the phenomena is almost the same as saying that it is mediate and subject to the limitations of the self.

If, however, there is any possibility of the self being absolutely one with itself so as to demolish the subject and object relationship, then alone knowledge truly becomes immediate. It then overflows all distinctions of knower, known and knowledge, etc. The self in this state is knowledge per se, overflowing all limitations of knowledge as such. The supernormal level of experience is in no way a continuation of the normal level of experience as Iqbal inadvertently thinks it to be. It is rather surprising that though Iqbal, on the one hand, makes a distinction between the prophetic and the mystic consciousness and treats the former as quite distinct from the latter, yet in the case of mystic intuition he is seriously disinclined to treat it as a complete break from the normal levels of experience. He therefore emphasizes it as “not meaning any discontinuance with the normal consciousness.” It is this inherent inclination of his which induces him to miss the real character of immediacy in intuition.

**Unanalysable Wholeness**

The second point, with regard to intuition, which Iqbal discusses, is “the unanalysable wholeness of mystic experience.” In the mystic state, he points out, thought is reduced to a minimum, and such an analysis as of time and space orders is not possible. Now if he really means what he says, the question arises how far his interpretation of the basic character of intuition is in harmony with his interpretation of some of the other characteristics of intuition. According to him, for instance, there is in intuition an intimate association with the Unique other Self, and as a consequence of the same we know God as we know other objects. Whatever Iqbal has said in connection with “the unanalysable wholeness of mystic experience” is, of course, authenticated by the experience of the practical mystics as well. But the real point that the distinction of subject and object at best, though touched at the periphery, is yet not fully appreciated by Iqbal. It has, consequently, given rise to intricate complexities and contradictions in the statements pertaining to other characteristics of intuition. A separate study of this will be highly interesting from the point of view of both logical and intuitional consistency.

The unanalysable wholeness of the mystic experience as interpreted by Sir Muhammad Iqbal goes to suggest that he had no desire to distinguish the essential character of intuition from the specific trait of philosophical speculation. Though philosophical speculation deals with the whole of reality, it is yet analysable into the components of reality with which it is concerned. Religion through the heart (Fi’ud), which is the centre of inspiration and consequently of intuition aspires for a more intimate association with the Ultimate than philosophical speculation would warrant. It is, accordingly, in mystic experience that the self approximates to a true apprehension of the real unanalysable wholeness of the nature of Reality as such. It is some such very realization which in the words of the Qur’an requires us to accept that “both the East and the West belong to God,” or again, as it is pointed out in the very opening chapter, that “all praises are to God who is the Sustainer of the (countless) universes.”

Intellect, as it works out in these Qur’anic recommendations, of necessity falls a prey to its own inherent limitations of conceiving reality in the subject-object relationship. It, thereby, surely misses the true character of unanalysable wholeness that is afforded in intuition. Iqbal, as he in his own way interprets the nature of the unanalysable wholeness of the mystic experience, stealthily brings in the subject-object relationship as the pivot of his thought. But he brings it in such a way that he forgets to distinguish the pristine pure content of intuition from the interpretation of the same with an intellectual prejudice. Thus his own interpretation enjoys neither the authenticity of a mystic nor the consistency of a philosopher.
ISLAMIC and MODERN ARCHITECTURE
SHACKLES of TRADITION

By R. A. Jairazbhoy

“Muslim Architecture is not exclusively religious... If it is to have a future it will have to solve
anew all the problems of site, climate, use and idiom... The link with the past must be primarily
spiritual and not technological... Eclecticism is an impediment to novel thought and the desperate
resort of a dying culture... Islam has both to learn from modernism and also to be wary of some
of its failings... World unity in Architecture at the expense of individual identity is not a prospect
to be relished... Beauty may have a link with truth, but the two are not eternally bound... We
suggest the necessity of the backward glance for distilling the essence of the past, and not for the
selection of past motifs... The Muslim will not fall prey to the machine, because he has always
favoured poetry to prose.”

In at least a few respects traditional Muslim architecture foreshadows modern trends of the international style. One
does not have to point to such accidental similarities as
between the curvilinear roof of Bengali mosques and the
To take one basic point of resemblance, Muslim architecture
had a prepossession for plain surfaces shorn of mouldings,
and this was based on the knowledge that aesthetically it was
needless to mark off a zone or underscore a feature when the
tropic sun already played upon the planes and voids in its
own inimitable way. For the same reason there was no need
to design tri-dimensionally when the deep shadows of the
voids and overhanging eaves served to enhance the volume
and solidify the building. This lack of density and high relief
allied the Muslim with the modern style. Both insisted on
smooth finish and sharp precision of detail. Moreover, Muslim
architects had been conscious of grouping and contrasting
volumes, and on occasions had proved themselves capable of
rare restraint. Finally both refused to be bogged down by the
earth's gravity. In his History of Architecture Freeman
denounced the Alhambra because its thin columns were made
to carry such superincumbent masses, and he gravely for-
mulated “the great law that requires every weight to have
in appearance as well as reality an adequate sustaining mass.”
In this he was merely echoing the oracular pronouncements
of Ruskin, who wrote over a century ago: “Nothing can be
worse, either as judged by the taste or the conscience, than
affectedly inadequate supports — suspensions in the air and
other tricks and vanities.” Today these maxims hold no water.
The modern movement is increasingly employing insubstantial
curtain walls and slender supports above which huge per-
pendicular masses rise. The undercutting and suspension on
hairpin struts of our times would have scandalized the Vic-
torians, but the fact remains that beauty cannot be denied
by illiberal rules. The eye can and must be weaned away
from the old expectancies of load and support, and when that
is done the outsweeping cantilevers of modern structures can
register their full impact of surprise and delight. It should
not perturb us if the casing face gives the impression of being
flimsy so long as we are aware that the inner core is strong.

Modernism

We have suggested that Islam already contained in it
some of the germs of modernism. It should therefore readily
join the modern movement, though not as a quirk for fashion
but from an urge to embody beliefs that have proved them-
selves the natural product of our age. But we must also warn
against the complete abandonment of indigenous values. Mass
standards have trickled to the remotest corners of the globe,
and have begun to wash away the colours of the local scene.
How much poorer our environment will have become if all
the cultures of the world break with the past, and drift down
their tributaries to mingle at last in a common stream! World
unity at the expense of individual identity is not a prospect
to be relished. We suggest the necessity of the backward
glance for distilling the essence of the past, and not for the
selection of past motifs. Eclecticism or borrowing freely is an
impediment to novel thought and the desperate resort of a
dying culture. If Muslim artists hope to infuse new life into
their designs they should cease to rummage among worn-out
vestments and try to put on better garments. Their new con-
ceptions should bear only a faint impression of what has gone
before. The link with the past must be primarily spiritual; in other words, only the underlying values should continue to be relevant now. In accord with their past, nature might still be viewed as disembodied, allusive, picturesque, "far off" and unreal, while architecturally the preference might still be geared to relaxed or ruffled surfaces, and smooth unbroken shapes modelled into sky-vault curves flouting the earth's pull.

One thing is clear: Islam has both to learn from modernism, and also to be wary of some of its failings. To begin with, Muslim art will have to learn to adapt itself increasingly to the more pressing requirements that arise from social and domestic needs. It will have to meet the demands of day-to-day existence instead of administering to the elite, the leisurely class, or the monarchy. Muslim architecture, if it is to have a future, will have to solve anew all the problems of site, climate, use, and idiom. For it must be remembered that Muslim architecture is not exclusively religious; it embodies all monumental and domestic buildings, including schools, inns, tombs, palaces, fountains, fortresses, gateways and bridges.

From modern architecture Islam can not only learn the uses of steel-framed construction and the niceties of new facing materials, but also more abstract subtleties such as controlled perspective, organic rhythms, rambling compositions, informal planning and a humane scale. Modernism, like all rebellions that seek entrenchment of aim, was not free from excesses in its early days. In denouncing the confused and frivolous sentiments thriving in that age, it exalted the efficiency of the machine in the belief that a building reinforced with function could only have beauty dogging at her heels. In time the pioneers turned around and noted her absence, and then they were forced to admit that beauty may have a link with truth, but that the two were not eternally bound. The task of mellowing the turgidity of materials and the lean logicality of the designs is still proceeding apace. Not a few modern homes are still spare and immaculate abstractions — cold, aloof, dehumanized, and much more admirable than liveable. Worse still there are churches with correct auditoriums, neat upholstery, concealed lighting and flattened shadows. They are buildings without atmosphere where one might think one's religion, though surely not experience it in all its immediacy. It is conceivable that the Muslims will not fall prey to the machine because they have always favoured poetry to prose. At any rate it will be interesting to watch how they narrow the rift between the spirituality of their heritage and the technology of the times.

The Muslim "Trinity"

Architecturally speaking the Muslim is in a quandry. For what is to become of the arch, vault and dome — that trinity on which the whole concept of Muslim architecture is founded? Judging by the steel-trussed and concrete parabolic roofs that are so adaptable to buildings on a grand scale, it seems that vault forms have a future in store for them. But a less confident future may be presaged for the dome that has proved it cannot stand much tampering with. We have only to lift our eyes to the roof of some office block to behold those revolting mockeries chuck-full of cement, and shaped like bowler hats or ostrich eggs as stark as igloos. The modern Muslim architect has yet to design so fine a dome as that of Sir Edwin Lutyens' Vicerelal Lodge in Delhi (1928) where traditional elements are combined in a completely unprecedented way — a copper hemicylinder and a drum in the form of a Buddhist railing with the Mughal two-tone colour scheme and kiosks wedged at the base. On the other hand the dome of the new Baghdad University mosque by Walter Gropius appears to be the first real breakthrough from the past.

As for vaults, it is well-known what a wealth of types the old Muslim master-builders had created. These master-builders would have been amazed at the constructions of Luigi Nervi, who spans vast voids with beauty and daring. Here too if the Muslims adopt these engineering techniques they will only be continuing a tendency which long lay dormant in themselves. The vaults of the sīls or covered markets in the Middle East were exploited aesthetically only for their
interiors, but the architect Zehruss has brought out their long segmental undulations in his market at Bizerta-Zarzouna. It is the outside observer who can sometimes sooner detect the hidden potentialities of things. And it is undoubtedly the foreign architect who has been able to sense the, "atmosphere" of Muslim architecture and to embody it in modern style buildings. The American E. D. Stone in his U.S. Embassy building in New Delhi has used a talar pavilion with flat white eaves and a reflecting pool, all of Mughal inspiration (Pl. 1), while the enclosed court with growing palms and fronds that reach the roof could not have been conceived but for the Great Mosque of Cordova.

Among arches it would seem that the typical Muslim form, the pointed, has a limited future use: in the contest for designing Ataturk's memorial hardly one entry made use of it. Instead there were segmental, semi-circular, and even elliptical arches. Incidentally, competitions such as this are always fruitful and deserve every encouragement. In this particular instance a large variety of designs was submitted. Among them was a pencilled roof, a tent roof turbe on a Renaissance substructure, a fez-shaped dome, a pyramid with skyscraper storeys, a Trajan's column with spiral frieze resembling the funnel of a ship, while others were departures on the triumphal arch with bastioned salient entrances leading into Romanesque interiors. Turkey's world-wide search for idiom is a temporary phase, and can only last until she re-establishes confidence in herself. But to return to the arch, the parabolic form is not really an Islamic one, though the American interior decorator Melanie Kahane has used it effectively in a drawing room against the chequered texture of a mashrabiyya grille. And finally the American architect Yamasaki has used a grid of blind intersecting arches (as in Bijapur) with skill and sensitivity in his airport for Dhahran (Pl. 2).

Ornament subservient to structure

Bas relief geometric decoration on wall surfaces, so characteristic of traditional Islamic architecture, can be given a new lease of life providing the patterns are modernistic and are used in a bolder and simpler way. We offer one example of this from a modern home in Karachi (Pl. 3), where the relief-work forms a diapered texture, and the openwork parapet (another Islamic feature) over the wall in front of it repeats the design on a larger scale. In some cases, as in the Crown Law Offices in Nairobi in Kenya, the entire façade of a building is treated as a honeycomb grille with repeating cells of hexagons and stars. Another feature of Muslim origin in the process of revival is the screen wall perforated in ornamental diapirs, or in other words a "patterned ventilating wall". At the same time wrought iron grilles are weaving their fanciful lace designs across large sheets of plate glass in such cities as Teheran.

The use of polychrome tiles in contemporary Muslim buildings again poses a problem. Next to a sashed window they seem especially incongruous, and certainly the minute dabs stuck on the spandrels of commercial brick buildings in Iran are quite inadequate. The entire portal frames of the National Bank in Tabriz and the Officers' Club (1955) in the same city are encased in glazed geometric tiles, but the effect is not unbecoming since the patterns are bold and repetitive. For modern tile revetments Brazil is setting the lead. Istanbul has embarked on a modern form of glazed multi-coloured mosaic, and in the new Municipal Palace Kuzin-Gercin has used the motif of a schematized mosque with minarets in an interesting way on a pier. The lesson of modern architecture appears to be that ornament must be integrated with and be subservient to the structure, and even this must needs be in good taste.

Shackles of tradition

We will now briefly examine some recent developments in the two categories of buildings in which Muslims excelled — mausolea and mosques.

As regards mausolea, three distinct stages are discernible: There is a strong sentimental attachment to the past resulting in the production of works devoid of all originality. Such is the case with the Aga Khan Tomb at Aswan in Lower Egypt, which is practically a replica of the al-Guyushi Mosque in Cairo built under the Fatimid Shahi dynasty. It would be difficult to make a case out for copying.

There is the attempt to modernize a standard form from the past by streamlining it while retaining its original shape, and only rendering it in modern materials. An obvious example is the Ibn Sina mausoleum at Hamadan in Iran (Pl. 4), built on the occasion of his millenium of birth in 1952. There can be no mistaking that it is based on the famous Gunbad-i-Qabus in Gorgan of a thousand years earlier. There has been no break in tradition, nor yet has there been any unique result.

Finally, there is the visionary design which conceives what Islam might have done had it continued to evolve, and broken free from the shackles of an over-weighted tradition. Here we have in mind the Jinnah Memorial at Karachi designed by R. B. Roberts of Raglan Square in London (Pl. 5). This design won the award out of 71 entries in the competition announced in 1957. The structure consisted of a canopy of six concrete hyperbolic paraboloids (saddle shapes) on a hexagonal plan. These rested on triangular stone buttresses rising from pools. The projections of the 24 inch concrete vault (externally covered with gold mosaic tiles laid on a screed) stretched out obliquely to form a flying star. The marble revetted interior was to be ornamented with traditional Islamic patterns. The processionary way passed between and over ascending tanks of water. For reasons impossible to justify aesthetically this design was bypassed on the eleventh hour in favour of one submitted by an Indian Muslim, Mr. Y. C. Merchant. The domed cube is only a slight modification of the traditional Islamic qubba. It has been estimated to cost about £1,500,000, and is now nearing completion. It is regrettable that a great leader who brought a new nation into being and who lived only for the future should have a memorial steeped in the past and breaking no fresh ground. More original by far would have been the design by I. A. Burney, who prepared it as a thesis for

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1 Architectural Forum, July 1950, p. 18.
2 See More, December 1956, pp. 68-71 (Pl. 1).
3 Arkitekt (Istanbul), 1943, pp. 5-20, 59-66; 1944, pp. 51-65.
4 The Daily Telegraph, London, October (November or December) 10th, 1960.
5 Time, 18th January 1963.
8 See Architectural Review, CXXIV, No. 741, October 1958, pp. 258-60; and Illustrated London News, 12th July 1958, p. 64 (Pl. 5).
phagus or the coffin lay within a blue glass casket. The pavilion itself lay in a pool reached by a single ramp.

**Rays of hope in mosques**

We come now to mosques. In this category of building, conservatism is still more deep-rooted, though there are also a few signs of fresh thought. The first really modern design which comes to mind is that of the Warsaw mosque in Poland\(^\text{12}\) by Stephan Kolendo. It was apparently never built (Pl. 7). In composition and in proportion it is not a little reminiscent of the Taj in Agra, though the four minarets and pyramidal gradation emanate from Istanbul. A series of rectangles with sharp, crisp edges endow the mosque with a clean and contemporary look.

In Egypt we have the Mosque of al-Fuli at Minya (1945-46), erected by the Ministry of Wakfs.\(^\text{13}\) Modern materials have been used, including a brick core overlaid with artificial stone of chaste though pleasant texture, and a roof of concrete supported by columns of reinforced concrete. Traditional forms are modernized in an attractive manner: the steep unadorned dome, the arcaded gallery of the court, and the square minaret shaft organically connected beside the entrance with its superb termination (Pl. 8). The mosque complex of Washington D.C. (1949-56) is more conventionally Egyptian in style, though one radical departure is the use of blue enamel to ornament the exterior in a rather pleasant fashion. The most adventurous mosque built in Egypt so far is that on the Cairo-Ismailia road.\(^\text{14}\) There is a high ovoid entrance arch and dome to match, both of no definitely recognizable style, and there is a tall lanceolated minaret which is strikingly reminiscent of a rocket and certainly has no indigenous prototype (Pl. 9). The minaret of the new Karachi University mosque\(^\text{15}\) is witness to what elegant effects are possible with the barest economy of means.

In the Far East, the traditions of Islamic architecture being less entrenched, the newly independent nations are showing little hesitancy in adopting the modern idiom. This is true of the two national mosques of Indonesia and Malaya. The foundation of the Istiklal Mosque at Djakarta was laid on 24th August 1961, and it was designed by the architect F. Silaban to accommodate 35,000 people within and 65,000 in the court.\(^\text{16}\) Of the mosque Kuala Lumpur in Malaya (1963) somewhat more information is available (Pl. 10). It is a complex consisting of offices, library, conference hall and a mausoleum. The 16-pointed tent dome of 150 feet diameter over the mosque gives covered space for 2,000 worshippers. A 235 feet high minaret with a very tall spire rises from the centre of a pool. The architects are I. H. Albakri, I. Baharuddin, Ibn Abu Kasim and H. I. Ashley.\(^\text{17}\)

**Build for posterity**

When a nation builds a public monument it should remember that posterity will judge its taste and aspirations.

\(^{10}\) *Dawn*, Magazine Section, 4th October 1959 (Pl. VI).
\(^{11}\) The model is preserved in the office of the engineer on the site.

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\(^{12}\) Published by E. Kühnel, *Die Moschee*. Berlin, 1949, Abb. 38 (Pl. 7).

\(^{13}\) Ministry of Wakfs, *The Mosques of Egypt*. 1949, II. pl. 202f (Pl. 8).

\(^{14}\) *Illustrated London News*, 9th January 1960, p. 49 (Pl. 9).

\(^{15}\) *Dawn*, Revolution Day Supplement, 27th October 1960. The mosque was designed by Mr. Rizki in 1960.

\(^{16}\) *Indonesia Today*, V. No. 2, May 1962, pp. 22-23.

\(^{17}\) See also “Islamic touches in Malaya’s new Parliament buildings” (*Dawn*, 14th October 1960).
Plate No. VII. Projected Warsaw Mosque, Poland.  
(Architect: Stephan Kolendo).
"Conservatism is deep-rooted in the mosque building, though there are signs of fresh thought. This is the first really modern design of a mosque ... which was never built."

Plate No. V. Projected Jinnah Memorial, Karachi.  
"There is the visionary design which conceives what Islam might have done, had it continued to evolve and break free from the shackles of an over-weighted tradition."

Plate No. VIII. Mosque of al-Fuli at Minya, Egypt.  
(Ministry of Wakfs: 1945-46)
"Traditional forms are modernized in an attractive manner."
Plate No. VI. Qa'id-i-A'zam's (Muhammad 'Ali Jinnah) Mausoleum.

"Designed by I. A. Burney as a thesis for the College of Art in Manchester. The one that is being built was designed by an Indian Muslim, Y. C. Merchant and has been estimated to cost about £1,500,000."

Plate No. IX. A Mosque on the Cairo-Ismailia Road, Egypt.

"The most adventurous mosque built in Egypt so far. It has no indigenous prototype."

Plate No. X. The National Mosque, Kuala Lumpur, Malaya.

(Courtesy, the Malayan Ministry of Information, Kuala Lumpur).

"It consists of offices, library, conference hall and a mausoleum."
by it. The ideal contemporary mosque should reflect preferences and embody the technology of its own day, even at the expense of denying the validity of past solutions. Thus the congregational mosque of old may have satisfied the wants of the spirit, but it failed in some measure to provide the best solution in terms of plan and composition. On the one hand the piers or columns interrupted a view of the key features of the sanctuary (the mihrab and minbar) from many angles, and on the other the long-walled exteriors were scarcely determinate enough to be encompassed as a unity by the eye. There is no excuse for repeating these defects today. It is now, in fact, possible to build an enormous flat roof without more than a few visible supports. This indeed has been attempted by A. R. Kazi in his projected design for the Islamabad Mosque in Pakistan, submitted for his R.I.B.A. degree in London in 1961. A hall of nearly 30,000 square feet raised on a basement storey has only four columns supporting its roof. This roof is of light aluminium alloy composed into space frame in egg crate patterns. Over this are chipped wood slabs with aluminium sheets. This 15 ft. thick roof gives insulation for summer and winter. The floor of the hall is of sprung timber giving resilience over a pre-stressed concrete raft embedded with heating element. The lateral walls consist of 6-in. thick plate glass supported at 10 ft. intervals, and are opaque milky white up to a height of 10 ft. and transparent above. A 300 ft. high nine-storied minaret with continuous glazed slit window and staircase wound round the lift shaft rises from a platform in a pool. The mosque structure could be criticized for making concessions to Islam only from a ritual and not from an aesthetic point of view, but no one could carp at the light and airy hall of magnificent proportions fulfilling all the needs of comfort and convenience. Surely all this is a development too long postponed?

When once the techniques of contemporary construction have been mastered a new vision must assuredly arise, and a new decorative approach too which will invest Muslim buildings with an accent appropriate to them.

The Aims and Objects

“The Temple of Understanding”

at Greenwich, the United States of America

Throughout the ages man has worshipped in many temples and has followed many faiths and ideals. It is heartening to note that the modern age has provided considerable encouragement for the growth of universal tolerance and understanding, and has given birth to a number of international movements of this kind. A recent addition to this list is the Temple of Understanding, with its headquarters at 66 West Putnam Avenue, Greenwich, Connecticut. Among its directors and sponsors are some prominent names, such as the late Mahmood Shaltoot, Rector, the Azhar University, Cairo; Professor Muhammad ‘Abdullah al-Araby, Professor of Law Faculty, University of Cairo; Sir M. Zafrullah Khan; Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt; Dr. Radhakrishnan; and Dr. Frank Graham of the United Nations.

It was during a private conversation with Virginia Prout that Mrs. Dickerman Hollister conceived the idea of such a temple. Why should there be too little real communication among men in spite of all our rapid communication devices? In her own words:

“What if there could be one place in the world, we thought, one building, one focus of light, where all men could see how others worship, what they believe, and learn for themselves the wisdom contained in the scriptures and source literature of all the great living religions in the world? What if in such a building, we went on, there should be many wings, each with a small chapel which would faithfully fulfill the rituals of each of these religions, and would welcome visitors from other faiths? What if, between the chapels, each religion should be represented by a library which would include all the books needed to explain the history, the growth, the spread, the ritual, the divisions and denominations of each of the great religions? And finally, what if in such a place scholars versed in each of the religions were available to answer questions and teach visitors the essential meanings and significance for the believer of those customs which, to a non-follower, often seem so strange and inexplicable? The aims and results would surely be educational in the best sense; seminars, lectures, courses and discussion groups would help to make it possible for serious students as well as interested laymen to share the inherent insights of the great world cultures. Would not the very existence of such a centre, and the possibility of the millions who might learn from it, help to achieve a degree of world understanding by focussing upon unity rather than separateness, upon universals rather than differences?

“This place of understanding’ will prove to be far more than a mere building. It is hoped that it will render an inestimable service by stressing the spiritual values in human life. The end result of material abundance, we have learned, is not necessarily either personal happiness or peaceful co-existence. To emphasize the spiritual aspect of man’s humanity — leading to greater enlightenment and a more profound concept of happiness — will be an essential function of this Temple. As we are rapidly entering into a new era of global relationships, and the boundaries of both time and space are shrinking in dimension, it is felt that universal understanding must inevitably replace nationalistic limitations, and that such an understanding of our neighbours’ religious aspirations must, of necessity, be common knowledge for the citizen of the world.”

We warmly wish this movement success and share their hope that it will ultimately “stand in the eyes of the world as a symbol of the brotherhood of mankind and of our awareness and acceptance of this fact.”
Avicenna, one of the greatest of Oriental physicians and philosophers during the Middle Ages, taught that fervent love could kill those who were thus affected. There is, for example, the following tale — told from the Arabic original — of an early Islamic poet known as Urwa Ibn Hizam whom love slew, and every poem that he wrote was in honour of his cousin and betrothed who was named Afra. They had been brought up together, and their uncle had observed the deep affection between the two. Indeed, the former had even promised that they would eventually be mated. Yet Afra’s mother, being a worldly woman, had visions of a wealthy suitor, whilst Urwa was then but a poor man. So Urwa set out for Persia to seek his fortune, but not before telling Afra of his plans. The journey took many months, but his thoughts about Afra, which were ever-recurring, made the time pass quickly. On his arrival in Persia, where a wealthy cousin of his lived, he told his love story. As a result, the cousin furnished him with gold in plenty, sumptuous raiment and a hundred camels. Meantime, a rich Syrian who lived near Afra’s father became so enamoured of the beauty of Afra that he sought permission to make her his wife. The father refused, saying that she was already affianced to Urwa, who had gone abroad to seek his fortune. The mother, however, who was seeking a rich husband for her daughter, so plagued the father that he agreed to the mother’s avaricious wishes. There was a pompous wedding, feasting galore, costly gifts of raiment, with the whole tribe partaking in a round of pleasure, to say nothing of the handsome gifts which the bride’s parents received.

After three days of costly festivities the newly-weds settled in Syria. Afra’s father, knowing that Urwa would one day return and claim his bride-to-be, was worried at the prospect. In view of that, he went to the graveyard and retrimmed an old grave, making it look as though it were a recent interment. When Urwa did actually return home, his uncle told him that Afra was dead and took him to the supposed grave. Urwa was broken-hearted, and visited the grave daily so as to pray to God for the soul of his dear departed. One day a slave-girl who had watched his daily visits to the grave was impelled to tell him the truth. Urwa then left his tribe, and mounting one of his camels made his way to Syria. When he discovered the whereabouts of the newly-weds he made himself known as one of the Adnan tribe, into which Afra had married, and was received right loyally by all.

One day, at a tribal banquet, Urwa said to one of the slaves who was serving, “Will you do me a favour?” The slave agreed. The former then said, “Give this ring to thy mistress”. The slave answered, “Are you not ashamed to make such a proposal?” “No,” answered Urwa, “your mistress is my cousin, and all I want you to do is to drop this ring into her dish at meal-time. If she should chide you for doing so, just say that a guest had been using that dish previously.” The serving slave-girl did as she was requested. When Afra saw the ring she recognized it and sighed deeply, saying to her husband, “Do you know who your guest is?” He replied, “Yes, he is the Amir so-and-so.” Afra said, “You know, not at all, he is my cousin Urwa, but he did not like to let you know.” The husband immediately rose and chided Urwa for not revealing his identity, saying, “You are gladly welcome here, and I adjure you, by God, not to leave us.” Then the husband withdrew and left Afra and Urwa alone together, after having instructed a slave to listen to their conversation. In this latter the two past lovers comforted each other with the cruel fate which had befallen them, which was in due course reported to the husband. Meanwhile the two lovers were prostrate with grief. Afra begged Urwa to remain, but the latter replied, “Although thou art all the world to me, and thy kind husband has been very generous, I cannot remain here now that he knows the truth.” So the two wept, after which Urwa departed, although the husband begged him to remain, saying, “If you set out in your present afflicted state of mind you may die, and by Allah, I would never think of denying you access to Afra; and indeed, if you so wish, I will relinquish my claim upon her.” Urwa blessed the husband, saying, “My love for her was only my misfortune. Now I despair and bear my soul with patience, yet despair brings forgetfulness. I have business to attend to, and so I must return.” As he departed, the husband loaded him with costly gifts. Whilst on his way he was seized with faintness and palpitation, when someone spread Afra’s veil over him, for that she had given him on his departure. He continued his journey homeward and reached within a few miles of his tribe when Allah called him to the grave. Afra, who had heard of his death, died a few days later of a broken heart.

Another Arabic love story is, perhaps, best told in its verse form. It is that of Samau’al Ibn ‘Adiya, who was a Jewish poet who held the ancient castle known as the Qasr al-Abraq, which was nigh unto Taima’, in the days of the
famous poet Imru al-Qais when the latter was given shelter after being pursued by the King al-Mundhir of al-Hira. When the king advanced upon the Qasar al-Ablaq demanding that the property of the poet which had been left in his care should be handed over to him, Samau’al replied that he could not break his bond, although he had to endure the agony of seeing his son being slaughtered by al-Mundhir. That episode earned the appraisal of the Arabs, hence the saying “More faithful than Samau’al.” The beloved of Samau’al was named Batnha, and both belonged to the Banu Udra, a tribe noted for having hearts “like the hearts of birds which dissolve away like salt in water”. Samau’al died in Egypt in the year 701 C.E., although others say Syria. When he was on his death-bed he sent for his friend Ibn Sahl and said to him, “O Ibn Sahl, what sayest thou of a man who never drank wine, committed no shameful deed, never committed murder nor stole, and beareth witness that there is no god but Allah?” Ibn Sahl replied, “I think that he has attained salvation and hope that he will enter Paradise: but who is he?” “It is I,” replied Samau’al. “By Allah,” cried Ibn Sahl, “I do not think that thou wilt attain salvation after losing the charms of Batnha for twenty years.” To that Samau’al retorted, “May I be deprived of the intercession of Muhammad on the Day of Judgment if I ever harboured an evil thought against her.” Here follows his rhapsody on Batnha:

“O that the spring-time of youth were renewed,
And that the time that is passed might return, O dear Batnha.
We were happy then, as was our wont,
When thou wast near, even if thy favours were but slight.
O that I knew whether I shall ever spend another night
In the valley of al-Qura: Verily would I then be fortunate,
For I would meet my Batnha once again if no more.
And she would be generous to us in her affection, and we
would be generous also.
I was joined to her in love as a child and her love for me has not ceased,
Growing and increasing to this very day.
And I pass my life in the expectation of her promise,
And spend my time thinking of her, and it is ever fresh.
And I am not to be refused in what I am seeking,
Nor does love of her diminish as time passes.
And whatever I forget shall never be oblivious to her saying
As she approached my scrappy camel: ‘To Egypt art thou
going?’
Nor her saying, ‘If it were not for the eyes which see I would
visit thee.’

Therefore forgive me, and may my forbears be my redemption.
O my two friends, this experience of love is slaying me,
And my tears are a witness this day to what I say,
They cry, ‘O Samau’al, take part in a raid.’
But I can think of nothing but the fair.

If I say, ‘What is this love, O dear Batnha, that is killing
me?’
She says, ‘It is deeply rooted and will intensify.
And if I say, ‘Restore to me my rationality that I may live
Among men,’ she says, ‘That is far beyond thy powers to receive.’

I realize that many a tear will be shed
If one’s dwellings be far apart.
When she cogitates she says, ‘I have won his love.
My avopathy did not harm me. So why should I be generous?’
Verify, if my vitals were uncovered there would be found beneath them
A love for Batnha that is fresh and pure.

Each languid breeze reminds me of her:
Her breath is like the wind in the empty currant beds.
Sometimes the parted meet after separation:
Oft the end is attained, though it be far distant.
O wind of the North, dost thou not receive that I am stricken of love,
And, indeed, am visibly pining away?
Give me but one trail of the odour of Batnha
And do the favour to waft it to Samau’al,
O Batnha, all that my soul craves for.
Is the least part of thee — or less than the least.
A brother, closely related, has chided me about her;
Yet dear to him in his upraising was my walking the right
path.

He said, ‘Get well: how long art thou going to be delirious
For Batnha, ever beginning to talk about her, yet never ceasing?’
I answered him, ‘As to her, Allah has ordained what thou
hast observed.
In me, and in what Allah has ordained who can refuse?’
So whether the love of her to be right or wrong,
Such is my present state, and I am not responsible.’

An equally poignant love poem is that of Qais Ibn Dharrah, who was the foster-brother of Husain Ibn ‘Ali, by whose assistance he was married to Lubna, who is celebrated in his poems. As they had no children, and Dharrah was a man of wealth who did not wish to leave his property to marriage outside his own family, he (Dharrah) was anxious that his son, Qais, should wed one of his cousins, even after his marriage to Lubna, either by divorcing or retaining her. Qais refused such expedients, but suggested to his father that the difficulty could be solved if he himself would take another wife, and so perhaps Allah would give him a posterity in addition to that which he possessed already. This the father repudiated. Qais then suggested two other courses: that he himself should either go away with Lubna, or go away alone and try to forget her. Eventually the latter course was adopted and Lubna returned to her tribe, with a result that was fatal to Qais, hence this poem.

“Whenever I pass the night, O dear Lubna, sorrow is my
bedmate:
And since thou departed from me, my tears have flowed.
Whenever I remember thee, how deeply do I sigh,
That my ribs are now sundered from my heart.
I feign oblivion so that my heart may function as before:
Yet my longing only breaks out afresh.
O dear Lubna, may I be thy redemption to my people:
Will the days that are past not return to us again?
O crow, ill-omened bird of separation, tell me
What knowest thou of Lubna, for thou art all-wise.
Verily if thou impart not all that thou knowest,
Mavest thou never fly but with a broken wing:
And that thou hover around enemies among whom my
beloved dwells,
As thou seest me fluttering around my beloved one.
If my foot be numbed, I know who will rouse it.
For I then summon Lubna and call her by name:
Cry for her whose love — if my soul would but obey me —
I would tear it out and perish.
Lubna sharpened her darts for the chase and feathered them
As I feathered another like that and sharpened it.
When she shot at me and smote me with her arrow,
I missed her with the arrow which I had aimed.
Leaving Lubna was a blunder as fatal

(Continued on page 27)
The Demands and Beliefs of the Black Muslims in America

(The Honourable Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Black Muslims in America, has summarized the demands and beliefs of the Black Muslim Movement which we give below without comment. The political and religious significance of this Movement, in the context of the current racial problems of the world, demands very careful study of the text.—Ed., J.R.)

1. “WHAT THE BLACK MUSLIMS WANT”

“This is the question asked most frequently by both the whites and the blacks. The answers to this question I shall state as simply as possible.

1. We want freedom. We want a full and complete freedom.

2. We want justice. Equal justice under the law. We want justice applied equally to all, regardless of creed or class or colour.

3. We want equality of opportunity. We want equal membership in society with the best in civilized society.

4. We want our people in America whose parents or grandparents were descendants from slaves to be allowed to establish a separate State or territory of their own — either on this continent or elsewhere. We believe that our former slave-masters are obligated to provide such land and that the area must be fertile and mineral rich. We believe that our former slave-masters are obligated to maintain and supply our needs in this separate territory for the next 20 to 25 years — until we are able to produce and supply our own needs.

Since we cannot get along with them in peace and equality, after giving them 400 years of our sweat and blood and receiving in return some of the worst treatment human beings have ever experienced, we believe our contributions to this land and the suffering forced upon us by white America justifies our demand for complete separation in a state or territory of our own.

5. We want freedom for all Believers of Islam now held in federal prisons. We want freedom for all black men and women now under death sentence in innumerable prisons in the North as well as the South.

We want every black man and woman to have the freedom to accept or reject being separated from the slave-master’s children and establish a land of their own.

We know that the above plan for the solution of the black and white conflict is the best and only answer to the problem between the two peoples.

We believe in the Holy Qur’an and in the Scriptures of all the Prophets of God”

6. We want an immediate end to the police brutality and mob attacks against the so-called Negro throughout the United States.

We believe that the Federal government should intercede to see that black men and women tried in white courts receive justice in accordance with the laws of the land — or allow us to build a new nation for ourselves, dedicated to justice, freedom and liberty.

7. As long as we are not allowed to establish a State or territory of our own, we demand not only equal justice under the laws of the United States, but equal employment opportunities — NOW!
"We do not believe that after 400 years of free or nearly free labour, sweat and blood, which has helped America become rich and powerful, that so many thousands of black people should have to subsist on relief, charity or live in poor houses.

"8. WE BELIEVE in justice for all, whether in Goa or not; we believe, as others, that we are due equal justice as human beings. We believe in equality — as a nation — of equals. We do not believe that we are equal with our slave-masters in the status of 'freed slaves'.

"We recognize and respect American citizens as independent peoples and we respect their laws which govern this nation.

"9. WE BELIEVE that the offer of integration is hypocritical and is made by those who are trying to deceive the black peoples into believing that their 400-year-old open enemies of freedom, justice and equality are, all of a sudden, their 'friends'. Furthermore, we believe that such deception is intended to prevent black people from realizing that the time in history has arrived for the separation from the whites of this nation.

"If the white people are truthful about their professed friendship toward the so-called Negro, they can prove it by dividing up America with their slaves.

"We do not believe that America will ever be able to furnish enough jobs for her own millions of unemployed, in addition to jobs for the 20,000,000 black people as well.

"10. WE BELIEVE that we who declared ourselves to be righteous Muslims should not participate in wars which take the lives of humans. We do not believe this nation should force us to take part in such wars, for we have nothing to gain from it unless America agrees to give us the necessary territory wherein we may have something to fight for.

"11. WE BELIEVE our women should be respected and protected as the women of other nationalities are respected and protected.

"12. WE BELIEVE that Allah (God) appeared in the person of Master F. Fard Muhammad, July, 1939 the long-awaited 'Messiah' of the Christians and the 'Mahdi' of the Muslims.

"We believe further and lastly that Allah is God and besides HIM there is no God and He will bring about a universal government of peace wherein we all can live in peace together."

Some distinctive characteristics of the Black Muslims of America

The world has recently been hearing much about the Black Muslims and about their creed of reaction to racial discrimination in America. But very little is known of their inner working and the change this movement has brought into the lives of thousands of American Negroes.

When a Negro turns to the call of the Honourable Mr. Elijah Muhammad, he has to submit himself to a very strict discipline. He has, for example, to abstain from smoking, drinking alcohol, eating the pig, gambling, and so many other vices which are considered to be the cause of man's degradation. A follower of Mr. Elijah Muhammad must find a steady job and stick to it; keep himself and his house neat and clean; should make one meal a day as an occasion for a family get-together; achieve a very high standard of sexual life and show due respect to the fair sex. If a person is wanting in the above qualities, he is rusticated from the organization and asked to wait till he is strong enough to
observe these rules. The Honourable Mr. Elijah Muhammad believes that there is no place for lazy, immoral or dishonest people in the community of Islam.

Generally every mosque of the Black Muslims of the United States has an organization attached to it called "The Fruit of Islam". It is in no sense a military movement within the mosque. Its followers must never provoke any kind of violence, much to the disappointment of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who would only be too glad to get an opportunity to use force against this movement.

For women there is the "Muslim Girls' Training and General Civilization Class". There the members are taught to cook "Halal" dishes (excluding pig's meat in every form) and to sew their own decent and respectable dresses. Besides cooking and sewing, they get lessons in physical fitness, hygiene, English language, penmanship, refinement, art, and lessons on how to behave at home and abroad. All women over 13 years of age are asked to keep a certain weight level, failing which nominal fines are imposed for each excessive pound gained.

The organizations of "The Fruit of Islam" and "The Muslim Girls' Training and General Civilization Class" are again subdivided in various sub-sections for the general welfare of the community.

Members are expected to have fraternal relations with one another; to live in complete unity and to share the burdens of the "Nation of Islam". They also endeavour to help build up the economic self-sufficiency of the community as far as possible in the hostile and suspicious world they are living in. They have their own stores. Ministers, Captains and other officers of the organization are appointed by the Honourable Mr. Elijah Muhammad. They have their own small University at Chicago called "Islam University" where, besides other things as the Muslim prayer, students study the Qur'an and life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

Mr. Elijah Muhammad feels that December is a month when many evil deeds are committed in the name of Christmas parties. To keep his followers from the general atmosphere of abandonment, he has enjoined upon them to fast during this month.

Mr. Elijah Muhammad, the leader of the Black Muslims of the United States of America, has endowed his followers with a distinct personality of their own. One can single out the Black Muslims wherever they are for their dignity of behaviour from amongst the millions of the coloured population of the States

Our picture is that of a Black Muslim young woman. She is wearing the conventional form of dress as worn by the women followers of Mr. Elijah Muhammad

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**EARLY ARAB LOVE STORIES – cont. from page 24**

As if I approached Capella and fell headlong
O that I had died before I left her;
But when I did I cried, 'O that I could cancel an action
that is past'.
Now I have become to the old man my father as one whose
charger
Stumbles with him in the midst of the evening of the morning's
battle,
And springs up on the spot safe and sound.
Whilst his rider lies dead beneath the hoofs.
And if my love for Lubna be an error.
Then, O Dharrih Ibn Habab, a blunder it be.

Thou dost not find in me what thou didst hope,
And I have lost Lubna and life.
Then steel thyself to think of me as having died:
For I am for thee, O Dharrih, as good as dead."

There was no eroticism in the older Arabic love poetry.
The advent of the courtesan created the prompting for that.
Not that there was anything immoral or impure in it, for
indeed the entrancing story of Habbab, the beloved of
Caliph Yazid II, has been handed down from generation to
generation.

OCTOBER 1964
A PEEP INTO SUFISM

The various suggested derivations of the word Sufi

By M. U. H. Nanji

What is Sufism?

The term Sufi has been in vogue in the Arabic, Persian and Turkish languages, whereas the word Mystic can be traced back to the Greek Myein, "to close the eyes". The two terms, although synonymously used, are not strictly interchangeable in as much as the word Sufi has a religious tinge as also a more restricted meaning of a Mystic professing the faith of Islam. On the other hand, a Mystic is any person who has "his lips sealed by holy mysteries and eyes closed in visionary rapture".

Many attempts have been made to define Sufism, but without success. The movement is both elastic and rigid and therefore no generalizations are possible. The Sufis, though not a homogeneous group, still have an underlying similarity between themselves. They have no uniform practices, yet their goal of attaining spiritual progress is common to all. Then again, there is the earlier ascetic Sufi and the later pantheistic Sufi. With such divergences inherent in the system no attempts at rendering a closed-circuit definition can succeed.

It would be necessary to sound a word of caution here, as some persons tend to confuse a Sufi with a Dervish or a Faqir. Both are quite distinct. A Sufi is usually a man full of profound learning and wisdom, whereas a Faqir is a man not necessarily erudite, often possessing quaint mannerisms and usually living off charity.

A number of guesses have been made by different writers regarding the etymology of the word Sufi. Some authors have also helped to swell the list. The commonest tendency appears to be to link the word Sufi to the Arabic word Suf, meaning "wool"; most of the European orientalists accept this explanation. Thus the word Sufi, an adjectival nominal form, means in Islamic parlance one who dons a "woollen garb" or "camel-hair shirt" in token of his renunciation of worldly pleasures and adopting a life of penitence.

The word Sufi is of later origin. Although there were Muslim mystics before, they were known by different names, e.g.

(1) ’Ubbaad (devotional men).
(2) Zuhhaad (pious men).
(3) Muqarrabun (men near to God).
(4) Saabirun (patient men).
(5) Abraar (virtuous men).

The Persian mystics went by the name Pashmine Push, i.e., wool-clothed. "For they did not put on raiment soft to touch or beautiful to behold, to give delight to the soul. They only clothed themselves to hide their nakedness contending themselves with rough hair cloth and coarse wool." It is reported that the Prophet Muhammad himself elected to wear woollen dress in preference to softer material, and some of his Companions adopted this practice and in course of time they were also called Sufis.

In his book Mohammedanism, Sir H. A. R. Gibb writes on page 102:

"At first it (namely, the wearing of Sufi) was not a uniform but a mark of personal penitence, and some early ascetics condemned the use of it. Ibn Sirin (d. 729 C.E.) criticized some ascetics for wearing Sufi "in imitation of Jesus" (as he said): "I prefer to follow the example of the Prophet who dressed in cotton." It appears that a particular group of ascetics of Kufa in the eighth century were called generally al-Suhayyis. But by the fourth century the wearing of woollen garments had become the regular badge of the Sufis of Iraq and the name was commonly applied to all mystics."

Mas’udi’s Muruj al-Dhahab, while referring to the "Orthodox Caliphs", alludes to the fact that the Sufi hair shirt (also called a khirqa) was considered from the very early times as sign of simplicity and penitence.

Though some writers tend to criticize this derivations as only "symbolical", it would still appear to be the most apt for the particular reason that in the Arabic language the word Tasawwufa means "he donned woollen dress" — and a Sufi is none other than one steeped in Tasawwuf.

Ibn Khaldun also agreed with those who opined that the word Sufi is derived from Suf. And so did Abu ‘Ali al-Rudhibari, who, intera alia, remarked that a Sufi is "one who wears wool over his (his) purity, gives his lusts the taste of tyranny, and having overthrown the world, journeys in the pathway of the chosen one" (i.e., the Prophet). 2

The wearing of "wool" alone is not sufficient to transform a man into a Sufi. Self-negation, attainment of spiritual stature and tranquillity and nearness to God — these are the hallmarks of a Sufi.

There are some who trace the origin of the word Sufi to Ahl al-Suffa, i.e., people of the "bench" or "saddle cushion" — the equivalent of the European sofa — of the mosque of Medina during the lifetime of the Prophet. These men of the Suffa were approximately 500 Muhajirun (the Emigrants who left Mecca with the Prophet Muhammad for Medina) and other poor Muslims of Medina who had renounced the world and eked out their bare existence by

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1 Professor Dr. Annemarie Schimmel in Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society, Vol. VII, Part II.
2 The Doctrines of the Sufis or Kitab al-Tairiful Madhahaib ahil al-Tasawwuf, translated from the Arabic of Abu Bakr al-Kalabadhi by Professor A. J. Arberry.
selling firewood. Their plight was miserable but their love of God and His Prophet never faltered. They were content to earn their daily bread and never worried about storing for the morrow.³

It appears to be a little too far-fetched to say that the word *Sufi* is derived from *Suffah,* for were it so, such persons would not have been known as *Sufi* but some other adjectival nominal form of the word *Suffah.*

Still others there are who derive the word *Sufi* from *Saff Al-Awwal* (i.e., the first in line in prayer formation). These writers believe that the “Sufis” are those who are in the first rank (*Saff*) before God through the suppression of their worldly desires and complete subjugation to the will of God. This argument too appears untenable for in such a case the devotees of the cult would have been referred to as *Saffi* and not *Sufi.*

There is another powerful section who would like to trace the etymology of the term to *Safa,* meaning “pure.” They base their claim on the argument that the Prophet once remarked: “The *Safw* (purity) of this world is gone and only its *kadar* (impurity) remains.”⁴ Bishr Ibn al-Harith stated: “The *Safi* is he whose heart is sincere (*Safa*) towards God.” Another Sufi has said: “The *Sufis* were only named *Sufis* because of the purity (*Safat*) of their hearts and the cleanliness of their acts (*Aaithar*).” The Imam Qushiyri⁵ also holds the *Sufi* attribute is *Safa,* i.e., purity of the within and the without.

However, if *Safa*’ be assumed to be the source of the word *Sufi,* the resulting word should have been *Safawi* and not *Sufi.*

There are yet others who look up to Greek for the root of the word *Sufi.* Sir H. A. R. Gibb in his *Mohammedanism* traces the extraction of the word the Greek *Sophos* or *Sophia* (Wisdom) as “quite fanciful”, while Professor Massignon, quoting Noelleke⁶ has also refuted the suggestion by saying that “the Greek *sigma* regularly became *seen* (and not *saad*) in Arabic and that there is no Aramaic intermediary between the Greek terms and the word *Sufi.*

### A few opinions of some authorities on Sufism

Before we investigate Sufism any further, we may as well profit through a hurried scanning of a few opinions on the subject held by some of the acclaimed authorities on Sufism.

“Sufism is enmity to the world and love for the Lord.”⁷

“Sufism teaches how to purify one’s self, improve one’s morals, and build up one’s inner and outer life in order to attain perpetual bliss. Its subject matter is the purification of the soul and its end or aim is the attainment of eternal felicity and blessedness.”⁸

“A Sufi is one who possesses nothing and whom nothing possesses.”⁹

¹⁰ *Abu Husayn Nurī.
¹¹ The Imam Ghazali in his book *al-Munjidh min al-Dalā’il* (Rescuer from Error), under the citation “On the way of the Sufis”.
¹² Abu ‘Ali Qazwīnī.
¹³ Abu Muhammad al-Jurayrī.
¹⁴ Junayd.
¹⁵ Mansur al-Hallaj.
¹⁶ Amr Ibn ‘Uthmān Makki.
¹⁷ ‘Abū Muhammad Ruwaymī.
¹⁸ Mu‘taf Karkhī.
¹⁹ Dhu’l-Nūn.
²⁰ Shibī.

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3 Professor S. Rahman in his book *Introduction to Islamic Philosopy,* p. 210, says that the first individual to bear the title of *Sufi* was one Abū Hashim al-Sūdī ‘Abd Ahmad, and though there were Muslim mystics before him, none were called *Sufis.*
5 Another of the famous Sufi work *Rasā’il.*
7 *Abū Husayn Nurī.*
8 The Shaykh al-Islam Zakariyyah Ansari.
9 Ruwaymī Ibn Ahmad (vide *The Islamic Quarterly,* London).
most striking of which was the growing emphasis on spiritual self-realization to the exclusion of material pursuits. Hindu scriptures considered this mundane world as Maya (i.e., illusion), and enjoined a code of renunciation for the attainment of spiritual advancement of its devotees. Buddhism regarded the material world as a deadweight on the onward flight of the soul and urged the destruction of the "little self" and the severance of its ties with the "phenomena" of this world as the surest way for the attainment of the ecstatic and transcendental bliss of Nirvana. Christianity's reaction to this compartmentalization between the spiritual and physical aspects of life was to characterize this "world of flesh" as essentially the playground of Satan. Consequently there sprang into prominence the ascetic saint who was supposed to be the embodiment of all perfection.

Islam, on the other hand, advocated the development, as a whole, of the material as well as the spiritual aspects of a man's life — his "outer" and "inner" existence. The importance of this close association — even in the case of the prophets — is emphasized by the following verse of the Qur'an: "The Messiah, son of Mary, was no more than a messenger; other messengers had passed away before him. His mother was a truthful (saintly) woman. They both ate earthly food." (5 : 75)

The "external" duties enjoined on the adherents of Islam consist of act of prayers, observance of fasts, the zakat, the Haj (for the affluent), charity, truthfulness, kindness, etc. Equally essential are the "internal" duties of strengthening of one's faith, gratitude to God for his bounty, cleansing of the inner self, etc. It is these latter faculties which are developed through the practice of Sufism. Sufism, however, must not be confused with occultism, clairvoyance, the performance of miraculous acts or with the imposition of one's stronger will on others through psychic phenomena. Likewise, it should not be associated with asceticism, seclusion, self-abnegation, annihilation, etc. Such sensations may be a natural corollary to a life spent in complete remembrance of God but cannot become ends in themselves.22 “For want of a better term,” says a writer, “one might use the word mysticism, which in Islam means the method of the best individual behaviour, i.e., the means by which one acquires control over one's own self, the sincerity, the realization of the constant presence of God in all one's acts and thoughts, seeking to love God more and more. . . through 'mysticism.' Islam envisages a multitude of beliefs, beatification of the acts of devotion, taking the life of the Prophet Muhammad as a model to be followed in all activities of life, the amelioration of personal conduct, and the accomplishment of duties imposed by Islam.”

The Shari'at and the Tariqat

In the course of his spiritual progress, the Sufi involuntarily acquires certain powers of control over time, matter, etc., which to the average observers appear as miraculous. But such powers are not of the mystic's own seeking; nay, he is even loath to bear their burden or proclaim their acquisition to the world. Knowledge of the unseen should remain the exclusive domain of the creator and of those whom He in His infinite mercy has thought it proper to give its share.

Whether a person has been blessed with plenty or suffers from want, in both cases must he turn to God with a feeling of submission and humility. To be able to do this effectively he must crush his ego by subservience to the will of the Lord and feel His presence constantly.

For the followers of the Shari'at (i.e., the religious law) (as opposed to the devotees of the Tariqat (i.e., the way to God), it has been hinted that they turn towards God without reciprocating to the fullest the love which He bestows on them and therefore they are not as near to God as the exponents of Sufism.23 For the latter, on the other hand, it has been claimed that they absorb themselves in the will of God through self-abnegation and therefore feel the presence of God as a reality.

Orthodox Islam can never look with favour upon the pantheistic ideas of union of man with God. The Creator and His creation must always remain separate and distinct identities, however much the latter may try to get closer to Him. “The higher the level we attain, the more does God speak with our tongue, act with our hands and desire with our heart. There is an ascension and a journey of man towards God, but there is never a confusion of the two. Thus it is that a Muslim does not use the term ‘communion’, which may imply a union and a confusion.”

The spiritual ascension of a mystic is oftentimes termed as miraj, but it should be distinguished from the unique miraj (ascension) of the Prophet Muhammad, who experienced the rare privilege of being transported to the heavens into the presence of God, where the distance between the two “was of two bows’ length or even nearer.” Even this miraj of the Prophet was attained after passing through gradual stages — starting with the meditations in the cave of Hira, years of unique asceticism, a long period of trials and tribulations at the hands of the unbelievers, culminating in the Hijrah (migration of the Prophet from Mecca) and finally the conformation of Prophethood.

No short cut to spiritual perfection

As a rule there is no short cut to the attainment of spiritual perfection. In Sufism, which caters mainly for the evolution of the soul, the importance of the ego is suppressed by a growing realization of the proximity of God. To be servile to the will of the Omnipresent and suppress one’s own evil desires does not mean “inertia” or “mental captivity” as some would have us believe. On the contrary, it is by expressing one’s humility before God’s grandeur that one attains salvation. The Qur’an has therefore ordained: “As for those who strive in us, We surely guide them to Our paths and make God with the good.” (29 : 69).

Another noteworthy thing about the curricula of spiritual exercises is that there is no guarantee that once the chalked path has been traversed, the resulting product will be a thoroughly good Sufi. It may well happen that a person appearing as a holy saint may only be a devotee led astray from the “path of the righteous” by the wilful mechanizations of the wily Iblis (the being who disobeyed the command of God); see the Qur’an 2 : 34 : 17 : 51), or it may be an initiated novice still lingering in the intermediate stages of his flight towards the unknown. On the other hand it may well happen that a ruling monarch well-versed in the ways of sacrifice and renunciation may be a true ascetic despite his worldly exterior. In short, a saint is a saint because God

22 Introduction to Islam by Dr. M. Hamidullah (Publication No. 1 of Centre Culturel Islamique, Paris).

23 This view is erroneous, as the Qur’an has said: “. . . successful indeed are the believers who are devout in their prayer service” (23 : 1-2).
wishes him to be a member of that order and for no other reason.

The need of a master; for mere knowledge of a thing is of no avail

The reaction of the human mind to a known experience is different in individual cases; as such there is a fear that different individuals may arrive at different conclusions from one and the same premise. Such diverseness is undesirable in human affairs. Moreover, very rarely is man able to perceive his own defects and it usually requires an intellect superior to his to tell him to correct his faults. The need of a master is therefore keenly felt; the pupil will have due regard for the counsel of his tutor in correcting himself — a thing which he could not have so readily done merely through the advice of a friend or by reading or deliberating.

Mere knowledge of a thing is of no avail; it should be properly absorbed and assimilated and brought into use. The four-point formula of the mystics for the novice is: moderation in eating, moderation in sleeping, moderation in speech and moderation in contacts with the people at large. It does not impose complete abnegation which, in any case, is highly improbable in performance in the case of eating and sleeping. Over-indulgence in any of these things is bad, but doing just enough of each to sustain oneself for carrying out the will of God is an act of devotion.

The best way of establishing contact between man and God would have been incarnation, but this is not in the realm of possibility or in the best interest of anyone. It would be derogatory to the Lord of the worlds, for instance, to become a part of a microscopic section of His Own creation. Even in the highest stage of spiritual ascension or mystic annihilation man must and will remain one, a captive in various degrees of his own insufficiencies. God will always remain the transcendent Creator high above the morass of human weaknesses.

For all its finer points, Sufism has been misused by a class of lethargic Muslims. Loath to traverse the path of intellectual questioning or cramping their style by the bindings of a codified creed, they found an easy escape in the domain of mysticism, where they held undisputed sway as Ahl-Ma’rifat (the people of knowledge). The mind starved of its enervating foods of theology and true philosophy naturally found anchor in anthropolatry and easy pantheism.

Characteristics of Sufi experience

At this stage the questioning mind may well ask: “What are the characteristics of Sufi experience?” In trying to attempt an answer to this query, we could with profit refer to Dr. Iqbal’s views on the subject, which are broadly three:

1. Sufic experience, unlike other experiences is intuitive or direct and not inferential or indirect:
2. Mystic experience of Reality does not constitute a piecemeal undergoing of a series of experiences. There is an unanalysable unity in contact with the passage of Reality, which, incidentally, presents itself as a Whole, free from the distinctions of Subject and Object. This is why it is incapable of Description.
3. To the mystic, the mystic state is a moment of intimate association with a unique Other Self transcending and momentarily suppressing the private personality of the subject of experience; the private personality after suppression tends to merge into the Divine. The mystic state cannot be regarded as a mere escape into the haze of pure subjectivity; rather, in view of its content, it is a highly objective state.

Reality can be known either by sense perception or by inner self-reflection. The Sufis follow the latter path, which they regard as the superior branch of knowledge. The heart is considered to be a kind of “inner intuition” which brings one into contact with aspects of Reality not open to the faculty of sense perception. According to the Qur’an, the heart (i.e., Qalb or Fu’ad) is something which sees and does not report falsely if properly interpreted. It should, however, not be regarded as the exclusive faculty of the mystics but a general faculty which opens up the gates of Reality for all those who may care to make use of it. The functions of thought and intuition are not contradictory but complementary, the only difference being that while thought (which concerns itself with the spatial aspect of reality) gets only a fragmentary glimpse of reality, intuition (which concerns itself with the temporal side of reality) perceives reality as a whole. Thus the illuminative knowledge of a Sufi is different from the inductive knowledge which confronts the sense-perception through reflective observation.
THE QUR’AN and INDOLOGY

A Muslim Speculates on similarities in Names and Rites in the Qu’ran and Indian Lore

By S. M. Ahmed

The different theories man’s mind developed about God and soul

There are two features of life which, although not natural, are so common and indispensable that we may call them the offshoots of natural phenomena. These are religion and its debased form, superstition—a by-product of natural thinking and reason of mind. Mind must think, otherwise man will not know that he exists, as Descartes has aptly remarked.

I am talking of a sound mind. A deranged mind can think himself as a beast and act like one, and thinking brings him to the perennial questions: Whence, why and wherefore? Reason answers it in the form of religion, which is made up of the belief in the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. The mind does not, however, know their nature and attributes. It is guided either by national tradition or revelation. Originally they went side by side, but in the course of time one was lost for the other or was so inextricably mixed up that it only gave birth to a speculative philosophy, of which the Hindu mind was the pioneer and made most of it in the realm of religion.

What is God and what is the soul? Are they one and the same thing or different entities, and how are they related to each other? The creation in the world is a perceptible thing, and so the natural question arises whether they are created or uncreated. If they are uncreated, they are either an illusion to the eye or Maya, or, if matter, who is responsible for their birth, movement, growth and final disappearance? Is therein a self-created motive power or energy? Perhaps, and since it is not visible to the eye, it must be like air. The Hindu mind passed the verdict that this Atonal is both creator and created. Muslim philosophers, Ibn Rushd and Ibn Sina, who followed in the footsteps of Aristotle, have also considered matter as eternal and uncreated as God.

In Europe the greatest exponents of Pantheism are Hume, Hegel and Spinoza. Spinoza tried to separate God from nature, but only turned God into a mathematical problem or axiom, since, as a Jew, he knew not soul or its immortality. Muslim Sufis, too, have acknowledged it in their Wahdatul Wujood, and St. John, the Neo-Platonist Greek monk who wrote the Gospel of St. John and the book of the Apocalypse, reflects the same idea when he brackets soul or spirit with God. He has related that Jesus was questioned by his disciples as to why a man born blind suffers, and that Jesus gave a vague and evasive reply. It was really the question a Hindu always asks and answers in his own way in the theory of transmigration or reincarnation.

Muslims generally do not accept such a view, but forget to explain the breathing of the Spirit or Ruh of God in man, the Inspiration, God’s “nearness to man being much closer than his jugular vein.” Muslims say that God spoke to Muhammad, but how? God’s speech is inseparable from God, as man’s speech is inseparable from him. Is His Word created or uncreated? St. John brought this heresy into Christianity, and if Māmūn al-Rashid had not suppressed it with a strong hand, the ‘ulama would have become either Christians or half-Christians. The great traditionalist Ahmad Ibn Hanbal has given this heresy an honourable place in his book. But we know better since the invention of the telephone and gramophone that speech can be separated from the speaker and can be communicated through a medium. Angels carry out His message, or `Amr, which is distinct from God.

Why the personification of Jesus as the word of God came about

To my mind the personification of Jesus as the word of God arose by resembling God to a spirit. Had God been resembled to light, as in the Qur’an, the Prophet would be only a focus of divine light. By resembling God to a spirit, well, the incarnation followed in its wake, which is another name for Pantheism, or naturalism.

The Divine attributes in Islam, Christianity and Hinduism, and the pagan religions of the East, are expressed in a Trinity, Allah, Rahman and Raheem (the Absolute, Beneficent in Creation and King to the created beings of Islam), are the Father, Mother and Son in Christianity and Brahma, Shiv and Vishnu in Hinduism. The latter calls it Shakhti and Islam Sifat. We will not concern ourselves with the Egyptian and Babylonian Trinity, as it is beyond our present scope.

When the Hindus and Christians lost the Revelation and substituted tradition, they expressed the primary attributes of God in Islam in the grosser forms of Father, Mother and Son, or by fictitious names meaning the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. The Aryan minds of Greeks and Hindus personified the attributes of God, and this only contributed to their idolatry and superstitions. The expression of Mother for Divine compassion was beautiful, but the common people made Mary, the mother of Jesus, the merciful attribute of God, and the expression Son, which was meant for life preservation or safety, as in the Egyptian Trinity, soon regarded Jesus Christ as Saviour. But this Holy Ghost business, which is the third of the Trinity in Christianity, and which was substituted for Mother in the seventh century, was probably due to monkish hatred and contempt of the female sex or misunderstanding of the words Ruh al-Quds. Ruh is not exactly spirit, it is Reeh (breeze), which caused the confusion. Ruh is Angel, or commandment of God, a prophet or prophetess in Aramaic, and Quds is Holy, the word used for the angel Gabriel in the Qur’an. However, personification of the primary attributes of God in Hinduism and Christianity resulted in the course of time in the personification of other attributes of God, Mercy, Justice, Knowledge, and that brought into existence idolatry, or the worshipping of fetishes and saints in those religions. Pantheism gave way to polytheism in the Hindu religion, and the psycho-
logical effect of it on the mind was that the Hindus became slaves, both physically and spiritually. Christians, by a stroke of good luck, were saved from this dire calamity, for they had still in their belief the immortality of the soul, expressed in terms of Resurrection and Retribution, the one great incentive to a happy and just life and hope, and made a personal God as Saviour and Resurrector and Awarer. The Kingdom of Heaven, of which man was viceroy and vicergerent of God, remained in their hands.

References to Hinduism in the Qur'an

But I am tracing Hinduism in the Muslim Divine revelation, a difficult but not impossible task, and more speculative than positive. We will just make an attempt and leave it to the readers to form their own opinion. I will skip the story of Noah and his flood, which appears to be the common heritage of humanity. Noah is known to the Hindus in the form of Manu, and the resting place of his ark as Mount Merou. Judi would have been the correct one, but the Hindus are not the only ones who have made this mistake. The Jews, too, have placed it on Mount Ararat. But can we not draw any sane and plausible conclusion from the remarkable resemblance of Brahma to Abraham, or, for that matter, Shiva with Suwait? Well, the institution of Hajj, or pilgrimage, is a unique thing in Islam, and was instituted for the first time by Abraham. The Hindus have their counterpart in Yatra, and follow nearly the same ritual as was practised by Abraham. His Tawaf, or circumambulation round the shrine, is the Hindu Pheri. Of course, Muslims do not bathe, because in Mecca there is no river, lake or spring, but where it exists, as the River Jordan, early Islam had this feature, which is still known to the Christians as baptism, and John the Baptist is the one who performed this rite upon pilgrims. Muslims have substituted it by Wudhu in their daily prayer. The Hindu wears a particular dress in Yatra and shaves his head at its conclusion. Muslims do the same thing. Muslim historians have seen in the Hindu idol Somnath the corruption of Manat, the old idol of the pagan Arabs. What right have the Muslims to contradict them?

Buddha is the Dhul Kil of the Qur'an

But the most remarkable thing is the mention of two prophets (Hindu, Rishi, Muni and Avatar) in the Qur'an whose exact identity has so far remained inconclusive. They are Dhul Kil and Luqmán. Many conjectures have been made to identify them with some Biblical personalities. I, for one, believe Kilī is the Arabacised Kapil, and both have the same meaning — little or small. If you add to Kapil, Vastav, you get the name of the town, Kapilavastu, the birthplace of Buddha ("Vastav" in Prakrit and Sanskrit, and even in modern Hindi, is provision.) Thus we can identify Kapil (Buddha) with the Qur'anic Dhul Kil.

Buddha has many titles, and his real name is not known to anybody. He is called by the Hindus Shaka Muni, or the prophet of Shakas. Kapil Deo was another title of his, but later Hindus, not knowing the real significance, turned it into a mythical hero and god. But how can he be a prophet of Islam, if, as the tradition shows, he was an atheist or pan-

Luqman of the Qur'an is Krishna of the Bhagavat Gita

Now let us speculate about Luqman. In Sanskrit, Luqman, or Lokmanya, means revered by people, and more than one Hindu Avatar has borne this name. Lakshman, the younger brother of Rama, whom the Hindus consider as an incarnation of God, exactly as the Christians regard Jesus Christ as one. But this Lakshman has left no teaching which resembles what is quoted in the Qur'an. It is a solemn admonition to a person who is called son, real or putative, and contains general principles of ethics and monothism. Two prophets are said to have delivered their sermons in this form, calling their hearers as sons in endearment. One is King Samuel in Jewish apocrypha and the other Krishna, another Hindu Avatar in the Bhagavat Gita, which forms the supplement of the Hindu epic Mahabharrata. He, too, addressed Arjun with such endearment. I have read the Bhagavat Gita. But for incarnation and reincarnation, both post-Vedic, which has been probably put by the compilers of the book in his mouth, it nearly approaches the Islamic teaching, particularly with the ethics of Jihad, which is so incongruous with the Hindu mind now, and what is more, this very Krishna has been idealized in the Bhagavat Purar with the particular traits borne by David, Solomon and the Prophet Muhammad. A gallant Son of Man, making conquests over the enemies of faith as well as over the enemies of his own peace of mind. I am not personally. I personally am not of the rank of moral squeamishness, who consider impotency and cowardice as ornaments of man. So, if Lokmanya is a title, why could it not suitably be given to Krishna?

But whoever would have thought that the Qur'an would take notice of products which are purely Indian — Zanjibl (ginger or Jaiphal), Qash (sugar cane), Talh (plantain), Zaqqum (cactus), etc.?
By Professor Muhammad Wajid ‘Ali

UNIVERSE

I

The Universe, consisting of the heavenly bodies and the earth, were one composite piece, which split up into fragments as sun, moon, stars, planets, earth, etc. The Qur’an says:

“Have not those, who disbelieve, known that the heavens and the earth were of one piece, then We parted them.” (21: 30).

“Disbelieve ye verily in Him, who created the earth in two days and ascribe ye unto Him rivals? He is the Lord of the Worlds. He placed therein firm hills rising above it and blessed it and measured therein its sustenance in four days (in all), alike for all who ask” (41: 9-10).

“Then turned He to the heaven, when it was smoke, and said unto it and unto the earth: Come both of you, willingly or loth. They said: We come obediently” (41: 11).

“Then he ordained them seven heavens in two days and inspired in each heaven its mandate; and decked the nether heaven with lamps, and rendered it inviolable” (41: 12).

“God it is, who hath created seven skies and of the earth the like thereof” (65: 12).

“Then We have made the sun pilot of it (solar system)” (25: 45).

“And the earth shines with the light of her Lord” (39: 69).

“Oh! but I call to witness the planets, the stars which rise and set and the close of night and the breath of morning that this is in truth the word of an honoured messenger Mighty, established in the presence of the Lord of the Throne” (81: 15-20).

II

All the heavenly bodies and the earth are floating in space in definite orbits. The sun, stars, moon and planets are visible in the lowest sky. The earth is spacious and far away from the sky. The Qur’an says:

“And He it is who created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. They float each in an orbit” (21: 33).

“And He hath made subject to you the sun and the moon, both diligently pursuing their courses” (14: 33).

“And for the moon We have appointed mansions, till she returns like an old shrivelled palm-leaf” (36: 38).

(As the sun moves in its orbit, it exhibits two extreme positions in the east and west of the equator.)

“Lord of the two Easts and Lord of the two Wests” (55: 17).

“Blessed is He who hath placed in the sky the mansions of the stars, and hath placed therein a great lamp and a moon giving light” (25: 61).

“Who hath made the earth your couch and the sky your canopy” (2: 22).

“And We have made the sky a roof withheld (from them)” (21: 32).

“And He hath created the skies without pillars that ye can see” (31: 10).

“And the earth We have spread out, how gracious was the Spreader” (51: 48).

“From God, Lord of the ascending stairways, the angels and the soul ascend unto Him in a day, whereof the span is fifty thousand years (for people on earth)” (70: 3-4).

MATTER

There is none but God to claim the Sovereignty of the Universe and the Qur’an is a great challenge to mankind. He is the Maker, the Shaper of matter. Human beings can simply extract the matter from different sources and carry out synthesis or analyses in order to prepare something.

“God created not the skies and the earth and that which is between them except with truth (definite properties)” (30: 8).

“But His Command, when He intendeth a thing, is only that He saith unto it: Be! and it is!” (36: 81).

“He is God, the Creator, the Shaper out of naught, the Fashioner” (59: 24).

“See ye not how God hath made serviceable unto you whatsoever is in the skies and whatsoever is in the earth and hath loaded you with His favour both without and within?” (31: 20).

“Our Lord is He Who created things, its form and nature and, further, gave it guidance” (20: 50).

CONSERVATION OF MASS

According to the law of conservation of mass, the total quantity of matter is always constant. A man can at best alter the shape and nature of the existence of anything, but cannot
make it nil, nor can add to the existing amount without corresponding loss or gain on the other side. The source of matter also lies with God. The Qur'an says:

"And there is not a thing but with Us are the stores thereof. And We send it not down except in appointed measure" (15:21).

"He hath created everything and hath meted out for it a measure" (25:2).

"And the sky He hath uplifted; and He hath set the measure, that ye exceed not the measure, but observe the measure strictly, nor fall short thereof" (55:7-9).

STRUCTURE OF MATTER

The smallest particles of matter, as detected or conceived of by human beings so far, are called the fundamentals, like electron, proton, neutron, etc., which form the atom of any matter. The electrons and protons carry equal but opposite kinds of electrical charge and also occur in equal number to make the atom as a whole safe and neutral. Moreover, the atoms of all kinds of matter contain these particles, having the power of producing a flash of light or spark, and differ only in number and nature of arrangement between them. This common character of the atoms bears the stamp of the Unique Creator. The Qur'an says:

"God is the light of the heavens and the earth" (24:35).

GRAVITATION

I

There exists a gravitational force among all the infinite number of heavenly bodies, so that none of them deviate from the other at will, nor do they dash against each other to cause a state of chaos and confusion. A system of peace and tranquility prevails all through. Moreover, the earth, like any other heavenly body, has been given the power of gravitation at the time of creation. The leaves of the trees fall by the law of gravitation. The Imposer of the law knows it thoroughly well where it is followed and where not. The Qur'an says:

"Lo! God graspeth the heavens and the earth that they deviate not, and, if they were to deviate, is not one that could grasp them after Him" (35:41).

"And He holdeth back the heaven from falling on earth unless by His Leave" (22:65).

"Not a leaf falleth without His knowledge" (6:59).

II

The force of gravitation of the earth works strongly on a substance falling from a distance above. God has utilized this force in fighting against Abraha, the Abyssinian ruler of the Yemen, who invaded Mecca to destroy the Ka'bah just 55 days before the birth of the Prophet Muhammad. A swarm of flying creatures threw pieces of stone on the elephant and the soldiers of Arabia from above to annihilate them. The Qur'an says:

"Hast thou not seen how thy Lord dealt with the owners of the Elephant? Did He not bring their stratagem to naught, and send against them swarms of flying creatures, which pelted them with stones of baked clay and made them like green crops devoured (by cattle)?" (105:1-5).

THE COMPOSITION OF THE HUMAN BODY

The chemical composition of the human body shows that all its constituents are present in the clay or mud. Human beings are consuming the materials of the earth. So the constituents of the earth are likely to be transferred to the human body through foodstuffs and produce therein the sperm-drop, which is the source of further creation. But who created the first man and woman? The theories of evolution produced by one and cancelled by another from time to time give rise to confusion.

God says that He has created man from wet mud of the earth. The percentage of oxygen, being maximum in a human body and mud, bears proof of the accuracy even today in the tradition. The Qur'an says:

"Who made all things good which He created and He began the creation of man from clay" (32:7).

"Lo! I am creating a mortal out of potter's clay of black mud altered. So, when I have made him and have breathed into him of My spirit, do ye (angels) fall down prostrating yourselves before him" (15:28-29).

"God created you from dust, then from a little fluid, then He made you pairs (the male and female)" (35:11).

"Verily, We Created man from a product of wet earth, then placed him as a drop (of seed) in a safe lodging, then fashioned the drop into a clot, then fashioned We the clot into a little lump, then fashioned We the little lump into bones, then clothed the bones with flesh, and then produced it as another creation" (23:12-14).

"So let man consider from what he is created. He is created from a gushing fluid that issued from between the loins and ribs" (86:6-7).

"And He shaped you and made good your shape and unto Him is the journeying" (64:3).

"He it is who hath created for you ears and eyes and hearts. Small thanks give ye!" (23:78).

"And We sent not before thee other than men whom We inspired" (21:7).

"Lo! God preferred Adam and Noah and the Family of Abraham and the Family of Imran above (all other) creatures" (3:33).

PAIRS IN SEXES

It is observed in nature that two opposite sexes are essential for further creation. God has created the sexes in pairs. The Qur'an says:

"Glory be to Him Who created all the sexual pairs, of that which the earth growth, and of themselves, and of that which they know not!" (36:35).

"The Creator of the skies and the earth. He hath made for you pairs of yourselves, and of the cattle also pairs whereby He multiplieth you. Naught is as His likeness!" (42:11).

"Wherein is every kind of fruit in pairs" (55:52).
MY CHOICE OF ISLAM
By Hediye-Heidi Walser

It is now over a year since I embraced Islam. Very soon after I legally came of age, I felt a craving for a new code of behaviour and a fresh approach to human relationships. This search for a new system of life led me to Islam. It did not seem strange to me that it was Islam through which I realized my craving for truth and fulfilled my real self.

There is a great truth in the saying that every child is born a Muslim. In other words, every soul that comes to this world has its inborn and natural inclination towards the eternal Truth. It is only later on that children are conditioned away from that Truth. Basing this on my personal experience, I can safely say that those who are acquainted with the teachings of Islam would naturally be receptive to it and would, at least in their hearts, admit its truth and logic.

There is no doubt that for many centuries Christianity has given the European civilization its basic spirit. But today its guidance is limited to a few rituals. Conception of official monogamy, symbolic baptism and the usual burial ceremonies constitute almost the totality of “Christianity” for an average Christian. Thus the majority of people are Christians only in name and by traditional designation. Neither the educated nor the simple masses can understand or accept its beliefs and logic. The reform movement, either by the reformed or traditional Churches, has not been very helpful in preventing the catastrophic collapse of Christian dogmas in this rational age.

Even as a small child I could not bring myself round to believing in any man as God. I felt that our conception of the divinity of Jesus was not only impossible but also degrading. There is always some possibility of co-ordination between the metaphysical and the physical aspects of nature and existence. But when we are forced to believe that even the physical aspect of a mortal’s existence was supernatural and above the set laws of nature, we tend to lose confidence in the very truth of such a religion. Religion ought to be the greatest source of moral strength and a shield against human weaknesses. But persistence in unlogical and irrational beliefs ultimately leads him or her into a state of complete moral nakedness. The very meaning of civilization is distorted and the whole world becomes aimless. One has not to delve deep into the causes of the confusion and spiritual chaos in our modern society. In spite of all the sophistication of our daily life there is an utter lack of understanding in human relationships. We find ourselves too willing to adopt an attitude of passive indolence and cynical hatred of all that is honest, good, dignified, human and beautiful.

Miss Hediye-Heidi Walser

“The conception of the man-made God of Christianity had rendered God to me as an elusive and inconsistent being. Islamic doctrines made Him real, approachable and dependable God to me.”

Even some of the Eastern Muslims who allow themselves to be influenced by European culture fall prey to moral decadence. Christian milieu poses too strong a challenge for them. They try to imitate “Christian” behaviour and attitude to life and to adopt “Christian” physical values and metaphysical ideals. Most of these young Muslims, instead of improving their lot, end up in losing their moral stability and orientation in life.

We, however, do come across some of the Oriental Muslims in Europe who have successfully upheld their moral background even while leading a normal daily life surrounded by their European friends. It is through such people that we can understand even the real meaning of Christianity and that Christianity was a precursor of Islamic era. It was by coming in contact with such Muslims that many of us came to accept the necessity of a real moral basis in religion — the basis which was previously only a nominal one.

By living with Muslims and by studying and discussing various religious problems with them I was acquainted with the rationality and truth of the Islamic doctrines. The appeal
of Islamic teachings to an average mind and a simple soul became irresistible to me. The conception of the man-god of Christianity had rendered God to me as an elusive and inconsistent being. Islamic doctrines made Him a real, approachable and dependable God for me.

I sincerely hope that a much greater effort will be made to spread Islam in the Western world. People in Europe know practically nothing about Islam except a few things like polygamy. Women especially flare up at the very mention of it. They fail to realize that polygamy has been allowed in Islam under very exceptional circumstances and its practice has been subjected to very strict rules and regulations. European critics of such aspects of Islamic laws never care to seek the interpretation of such laws in human nature. I wonder, from a woman’s point of view, what they think is better: a man having more than one wife or a man having one wife plus a retinue of mistresses. If Europeans could appreciate the simplicity and liberalism of Islamic laws, the number of broken and unhappy marriages in Europe would not be so great as it is now.

The Federation of Islamic Associations in the United States of America and Canada

By Dr. Mahmoud Youssef Shawarbi

The Federation of Islamic Associations of the United States and Canada, New York, N.Y., whose objectives include "the teaching of the spirit, ethics, philosophy and culture of Islam to Muslims and their children in the United States and Canada," and "to participate in and contribute to the modern renaissance of Islam," is composed of scores of Islamic religious and cultural groups. Founded in 1954 by Abdullah Igram, a Cedar Rapids, Iowa, business man, and a group of Muslims, the Federation is generally regarded and acts as the official spokesman for close to a million adherents of the Muslim faith in North America.

The Federation has acquired the services of Dr. Mahmoud Youssef Shawarbi as its Director; he is an Egyptian Muslim from the United Arab Republic, where he is a full professor at (and at present on leave from) the University of Cairo.

Professor Shawarbi received his early education in Egypt. Later, after graduating from Cairo University, he studied in England, where he received a Bachelor’s degree from the University of Wales. He holds the Ph.D. degree from the University of London.

Dr. Shawarbi has long been active in the service of Islam, both at home and abroad, and is an executive member of numerous educational and cultural bodies in the Arab-Muslim world, such as the International Society for Dissemination of Islamic Culture (which is accredited to the United Nations as a non-governmental organization) and the Supreme Council on Islamic Affairs (United Arab Republic).

In the United States, Professor Shawarbi has served on the Board of Directors of the Islamic Centre, Washington, D.C. At present, in addition to being the newly-appointed Director of the Federation of Islamic Associations in the U.S.A. and Canada, he is President of the Islamic Council of New York. Dr. Shawarbi is also a Trustee of the Islamic Foundation of New York and Chairman of its Cultural and Religious Committee.

Besides his endeavours on behalf of Islam in America, Professor Shawarbi has also taught in the United States as a visiting professor at two leading universities (in New York City and Washington, D.C.). For three years, he was attached as Advisor to the Permanent Delegation of the Yemen to the United Nations. In 1955, he had the unique distinction of participating in the United Nations’ Tenth Anniversary celebrations as a special representative and appointee of Ambassador from all Islamic countries. His address before the august world body was accorded wide acclaim.

Professor Mahmoud Youssef Shawarbi is the author of over thirty books — one of which is a textbook used in the universities of Great Britain, the U.S.A. and other English-speaking countries. His published writings on Islam and related subjects include "Mutual Understanding Between Islam and Christianity", "What is Islam?", "Islam versus Communism", "Islam in America", "Islam and the Great World Problems", "The Status of Women in Islam", "Islam and Democracy" and "Universal Brotherhood of Nations in Islam".

One of Dr. Shawarbi’s fondest hopes is to see the realization of a long-cherished dream — of establishing a "University of Islam" in the U.S.A.

In discussing and analysing matters of religion, their similarities and their differences, it is first of all necessary to assess at what level the discussion is to take place — whether it is to be aimed at spotlighting the discrepancies existing within each professed faith, or whether the aim is to draw attention to the parallels of each with the other.

There is an urgent need for religious thinkers on all sides to re-assess the situation which has been allowed to develop between their respective peoples, and for them to bear some responsibility in countering the misunderstandings which have resulted with clearer and more precise accounts of the thoughts they really represent and propagate. As if in anticipation of this need Understanding Islam, by Frithjof Schuon has been published to clarify in Western minds what Islamic thought really represents.

As the blurb states, “Partly for historical and political reasons Islam has perhaps been more misunderstood in the West than any other non-Christian religious tradition.”

In this book the author sets out to eradicate these misunderstandings by showing to the Western reader, “the timelessness of Islam, the nature of the Islamic perspective, the doctrine about and the function of the Qurán, the rôle of the Prophet and Sufism and the path of spiritual ascent.”

The author approaches the problems raised with knowledge supported by deep understanding of the essentials involved in Islamic thought. In his descriptions of the nature and meaning of Islam and his comparative references to parallel Christian thought his analysis is rendered more lucid.

As an example, he writes, “When a Christian hears the word ‘truth’ he immediately thinks that ‘the Word was made flesh’, whereas when a Muslim hears that word he thinks first of all that ‘there is no divinity apart from the sole ‘Divinity’ . . . ‘Christianity is founded on an ‘event’ and Islam on ‘being’, on ‘the nature of things’. That which in Christianity appears as a unique fact (the Revelation) is seen in Islam as the rhythmic manifestation of a principle.”

There are many other works which explain the social implication of Islamic Laws relating to man, woman and society and this book makes no effort to further explain this aspect of Muslim life. It concentrates instead upon the deeper theological aspect of Islam and its effect on man as such, on collective man, and on man’s relationship with God. While these are specifically catered for in Islamic thought, they are not wholly comprehensible within Christian teaching. Not that Christianity has no solutions to offer to the problems raised, but because the nature of the “word” at its source has been such that by not anticipating the deviating manner in which the minds of mankind works, it has permitted too many digressions to occur so that the pattern of historical Christian thought has tended to conform with social and political circumstances rather than to remain a rigid consistent source of reference. This is not to say that its value or quality is in question, but rather that in considering Christian thought one must first define its historical period. This is unlike Islam which, learning from the deviations which had already occurred up to the time of the Prophet, has remained as it was at the time of its original concept. Thus it is that while Christianity has bent with the times, like a reed in the wind, Islam has remained a consistent force which has moulded societies around it.

A Muslim cannot, by his very reasoning, accept the Christian’s centralization of thought upon the event of Jesus Christ’s crucifixion, and its symbolic reference to the sacrifice God made for the salvation of humanity. This, perhaps, illustrates more clearly than any other example the different levels upon which these two spheres of thought operate. Christian thought concentrating itself mainly upon specific events which to a Muslim are but parts of a whole.

It can be said that Islam has two poles of thought. Reason and Intellect. The author describes it thus, it has “. . . two dimensions, the ‘horizontal’ dimension of the Will, and the ‘vertical’ dimension of the Intellect. The former we shall term the equilibrium, the latter union.

“Islam is in essence equilibrium and union; it does not primarily sublimate the Will by sacrifice, but neutralizes it by Law . . . the dimensions of equilibrium and union . . . concern man as such and the community; there is not identity here assuredly, but there is a solidarity which makes society participate in its own way and according to its own possibilities in the individual’s way to Union. The converse is also true.”

He continues to say, “One of the most important modes of realizing equilibrium is precisely an accord between the sacred Law relating to man as such, and the law relating to society. Empirically Christianity had, through force of circumstances, also reached this position, but it allowed certain ’fissures’ to remain and did not lay stress in the first instance either on the divergence of the two human planes or, consequently, on the need to harmonize them.” (p. 29).

An additional aspect with which to contend in this discussion is that of the definition of what truly constitutes civilization. The Western world tends to regard itself as being more civilized than its contemporary East, basing this assumption wholly upon the material differences between the nominally opposing societies. This is often assumed to be due to the influences of the differing religious forces. Christianity being seen as an encouraging influence and Islam as an inhibiting influence. These ideas, however, seem to
ignore completely the fact that the material development of the Western hemisphere has been mostly accomplished in opposition to the Church, and that in the history of learning and science Islam has done much to encourage its people.

It therefore becomes evident that what really constitutes civilization is a quality of much greater subtlety, and bears no true relationship to its material attributes. As Frithjoh Schuon explains,

"The gap of some thousands of years separating the Stone-age of the Red Indians from the material and literary refinements of the white man counts for nothing compared with the contemplative intelligence and the virtues which alone impart value to man, and alone makes up his permanent reality, or that something which enables us to evaluate him in a real manner, as it were, in the sight of the Creator."

While it must be admitted that there are fundamental differences between the physical standards of living between East and West, the true causes for this must be considered and understood, and an accompanying assessment should be made of what each hemisphere needs in order that a physical and spiritual balance can be achieved. While the easing of mankind's suffering in the face of the natural elements and poverty must be accepted, it remains to be seen if the material progress necessary for this can be separated from the material non-essentials which are what eventually capture man's attention and imagination. It should perhaps be realized that it is not necessarily the actual presence of material benefits that are seen as the cause of the ultimate destruction of mankind, but rather the accompanying absence of a contemplative atmosphere which is so necessary for the nourishment and development of man's Inner Being.

Recent history is showing that Christianity is lacking in the essential which is necessary in a society which has reached the zenith of economic and material development in the 20th century. Future events may show if Islamic thought can effectively dam the flood and direct it more constructively without the accompanying loss of what truly constitutes civilization. By the very nature of its construction in the thoughts of man and the position it holds within the community in which he lives there is evidence that the times for which Islam was originally formulated to control are approaching.

Though the author of this book has drawn upon some unauthentic hadith (sayings of the Prophet) to add to his work, it does not spoil in any measure his analysis of life as seen through Islam, and it can justifiably take its place as a valuable addition to Western literature on Islam.


Mr. Nuri Eren, diplomat, scholar and writer, Secretary-General of the Economic Research Foundation of Turkey, was offered the opportunity to sift and analyse Turkish affairs by Princeton University, N.J. Recognizing in this an opportunity to apply detached thought and analysis to the subject matter, he seized upon the offer made, and the result being this book "Turkey. Today — and Tomorrow", the most up-to-date account available of the recent political, social, economic and cultural developments in Turkey.

Long ago, after an assessment of the conditions then prevalent in their country, Turkish leaders decided that the democratic ideal as expressed on Western lines was a quality to be attained, and deliberately set out to model their country upon this ideal. This did not, however, mean a loss of the Turkish identity, it being seen as a substance to be developed and stressed. Ataturk himself founding the process not only by remodelling Turkish political life but also by creating the Turkish language itself, which had previously been non-existent.

Mr. Nuri Eren has organized his subject matter so as to present as far as is possible in one volume an all-embracing picture of Turkey as she was, and she is and as she hopes to be, and embraces all matters of social significance, from the Government and Constitution to Political Ideology, from the problems of Industrial Growth to the Status of Labour, from Educational problems to Turkish Literature, concluding his analysis with an account of Turkish Foreign Policy.

The book is well constructed and will be enlightening to all who are interested in their country. It concludes with a section outlining points of note contained in each chapter, and a more than adequate index.

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IN THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPELS. By Sadr-ud-Din. Published by the Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Sh'a'at-I-Islam, Lahore, West Pakistan. Price Rs. (Pak.) 2.00, or 2/-.

The author is the head of the Lahore section of the Ahmadiyyah movement, and for at least half a century has keenly studied the Gospels. It is his firm conviction that the teachings of the Gospels, when read with an impartial mind, do not conform with the doctrines of the Church. An great part of the book concerns itself with the task of showing that the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels, when studied without the interpretations of the various Churches, fall in conformity with the Muslim view of Jesus. He also upholds the view that the terms in the Gospels such as son of God and ascension are metaphorical terms and Christians have made the mistake of accepting them in their literal form. The person of Jesus concerns three main religions of the world, namely, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and all three naturally hold three different views about him. The author has chosen the right method for getting a true portrait of Jesus by basing his views on the facts contained in the Gospels. This is perhaps the best way in which these three world religions can reach a common and, as far as possible, a correct appreciation of the teachings of Jesus. The book provides sufficient study matter in a popular way for those interested in this particular subject.

For Information and Literature on Islam in

NIGERIA

you may contact:

1. Qazi Abdur Rashid, B.A., LLB., P.O.B. 983, Kano,
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2. Bashir Ahmad Minto, 48 Odumlamu St., Lagos, Nigeria

*Plans are well in hand for the publication of a Journal, The Muslim Renaissance, from Kano. For copies apply at the above address.
MISREPRESENTATIONS AND MISNOMERS ABOUT ISLAM

Fleet Farm Cottage,
Chart Sutton,
Nr. Maidstone, Kent.

Dear Sir,

In re-reading some past editions of *The Islamic Review* I found in the April 1961 issue a letter from Mr. Syed Muhammad ‘Ali, in which he registered alarm and disgust at a television programme which had been shown on ATV in a series entitled “Mighty and Mystical”. The particular programme which so distressed him was one about India, in which, it seems, a very distorted view of Indian Muslims, and indeed the Muslims of the world was given. The script for this programme had been written by that Indian writer and poet Dom Moraes.

Perhaps the personnel of Granada are not entirely to blame for the discrepancies which were allowed to occur in their production. After all, they had enlisted the services of someone who, to them, would appear to be an authority on life in India. The Indian, Mr. Dom Moraes. They perhaps were not to know that though he is, by race, an Indian, in spirit he can hardly be counted as one, and indeed as he himself has written, “My family was an entirely English-speaking one. My father and grandfather had been at Oxford. The background of my life had been English. In the streets of India I felt uneasy, knowing neither the language nor, because of not having come into contact with many Indians who were not from an English background, the people.” As such, he has also inherited the prejudices which the class of people (Indian or English) with that background inherited, and can therefore be assumed to have written of the Islamic influences in India with a limited knowledge well spiced with unlimited prejudice. It is a pity that he was chosen to write that script.

Another issue of *The Islamic Review* which also caught my eye particularly is that of April 1962, in which appears another reader’s letter, from Mr. K. H. Muntaz. In this he is deploring the use of misnomers in respect of Islam. As he states, so often Islam is termed Muhammadanism. Muslims are termed Muhammadans.

These seem superficially offensive objections, but I can assure you that they are not.

It is a natural and unintended ignorance which causes many people in the West to call Islam “Muhammadanism”, and the train of thought followed is that as this is the (supposed) religion of Muhammad, then it should be naturally termed thus. This misapprehension is understandable when it is realized that the West (and therefore in point of fact Christians) are only interpreting the terms in the manner in which they do for Christianity, i.e., Christians are the followers of Christ, so therefore it must be logically expected that followers of Muhammad are called Muhammadans. The same logic influences the use of the term “Muhammadanism” instead of “Islam”.

The logic which influences the terms used has a deeper significance, however, and it is also similarly thought that Islam is “the religion of Muhammad” — which of course it is not. It is the religion of Truth, interpreted through Muhammad. He was the vehicle through which God gave voice.

As perhaps the reader may have gathered by now, the sum effect of this course of logic completely misrepresents what Islam really is, and it is here that I really get the point of issue, which is that no Muslim or a better-informed non-Muslim should hear Islam, its Prophet (may peace be upon him!) or its adherents referred to in the manner described by Mr. Muntaz and myself, it is imperative that they immediately inform the speaker of the correct term to use, and, most important, why they are used. In this way not only will the ignorant be better informed, but the Truth of Islam would have been preached in the explanation, and a greater all-important understanding be promoted.

Yours very sincerely,

JEANNETTE D. WYATT.

PROPERATION OF ISLAM IMPERATIVE

12 Bahawalpur Road,
Lahore, Pakistan.

Sir,

There is no denying the fact that Islam is gradually losing its hold on its followers, for the simple reason that we have abandoned the effort, since long, to win other people to our ideology — which is the only way to keep an ideological community progressing.

The establishment of Islamic universities and missionary colleges in Pakistan, Indonesia, Turkey, Kuwait, Northern Nigeria, the Sudan, Algeria and other Muslim countries is the crying need of our times.

Yours sincerely,

MA SoOM UL-HAQ.
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