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JANUARY 1965
Between Ourselves

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ABDUL MAJID, M.A.
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AN OBJECT LESSON FOR FREEDOM-FIGHTERS

Black Muslims of America’s Programme of Self-help

When Gandhi started his hand-loom campaign against the British rule in India, the world laughed at him. But it was he who laughed last.

When Iqbal started singing his philosophical poetry, he was blamed for being an isolationist and an “irredentist”. But who can deny the fact today that his songs paved the way for Jinnah to create the second largest Muslim State in the world.

Today, 22 million Black People of America are passing through the most critical phase of their struggle for freedom. History is repeating itself there in great detail. Various political platforms are at work, each group trying to put up the fight in its own way.

The Black Muslims of America, under the able leadership of The Honourable Mr. Elijah Muhammad, have emerged as a very formidable force. Their emphasis is on morality and the “re-education into the knowledge of self”. But the practical side of economic stability is not being overlooked by them.

A recently inaugurated economic plan provides an interesting study of the problem in America. The Honourable Mr. Elijah Muhammad has hit the nail on the head when he told his people that the root-cause of their troubles was their economic dependence on the Whites. He has launched a very simple plan — almost as simple as the hand-loom of Gandhi. And it has every sign of proving equally effective.

The plan is called “The Muslims’ Three-Years Economical Savings Programme”. We cannot do better than to give the full text of the plan in Mr. Elijah Muhammad’s own words. Even to abbreviate it would rob it of its simplicity and effectiveness.

The Programme

“I appeal to all Muslims, Muslim sympathisers, and to all the members of the original Black Nation in America, to sacrifice at least 25 cents from each day’s work to create an Economical Savings Programme, to help fight the unemployment, abominable housing, hunger and nakedness of the 22 million Black People here in America who continue to face these problems. This will not interfere with the government’s programme for better housing conditions at all; it will only aid those who have never known anything in the way of help and those who do not even know that there is a Government Housing Act to help dependent people. There are thousands of our people living in worse conditions than dogs and pigs. At least they kill them to keep the uncleanliness and filth out that dominates and creates bad housing conditions.

“We hope to set up a committee to teach and force our people to be clean. This comes under the heading of the ‘Committee of Cleanliness’. We already have such a committee in effect among the Muslims. It compels our people to clean their bodies as well as their houses. If they only have one suit of clothing, they should wash it and press it each night so that they can wear it the next day. If you are not able to have your hair trimmed at the barber-shop, you should take turns and trim each other’s hair. You must shave yourselves and look like men. And women, clean up. You do not need to have a dozen dresses. Just keep the one you have clean and pressed. Until we enforce cleanliness among our Nation and get our people into the spirit of self-respect and the spirit of making themselves the equal of other civilized nations of the earth, we will never be recognized as being fit members of any decent society of the nations of the earth.

“Send your 25 cents every week to Muhammad’s Mosque No. 2, Chicago, Illinois. This 25 cents will be banked until we have a million dollars to begin building a banking system like we should have.

Continued on page 15
The Early Muslim Ascetics

Some early Sufis—Hasan al-Basri, Ibn Adham, Shaqiq, Bishr, Fudhail and Rabi’ah

By M. U. H. Nanji

The first four Caliphs, and many other Companions of the Prophet, were well-known for their piety and asceticism.

With the passing away of the Prophet Muhammad at Medina in the year 11 of the Hijra (632 C.E.), the duties of State governance were taken over in succession by the theocratic al-Khulafa’ al-rashidun, namely Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthman and ‘Ali. These four Caliphs were noted for their traits of piety and asceticism. Al-Kharraz the mystic gives the following account of the austere habits which these Caliphs had picked up in their close contacts with the Prophet:

“When Abu Bakr succeeded to the leadership, and the world in its entirety came to him in abasement, he did not lift up his head on that account, or make any pretensions; he wore a single garment, which he used to pin together, so that he was known as the ‘man of the two pins’. ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattab, who also ruled the world in its entirety, lived on bread and olive oil; his clothes were patched in a dozen places, some of the patches being of leather; and yet there were opened unto him the treasures of Chosroes and Caesar. As for ‘Uthman, he was like one of his slaves in dress and appearance; of him it is related that he was seen coming out of one of his gardens with a faggot of firewood on his shoulders, and when questioned on the matter he said, ‘I wanted to see whether my soul would refuse’. When ‘Ali succeeded to the Caliphate, he bought a waistband for four dirhams and a shirt for five dirhams; finding the sleeve of his garment too long, he went to a cobbler, and taking his knife cut off the sleeve level with the tips of his fingers.”

It is related by Abu Hurayra that the Prophet used to say: “If they knew that which I know, then little would they laugh and much would they weep.” This fear of God was retained by the successors of the Prophet. Abu Bakr had wished he were a bird instead of a man and had cried every time he recited the Qur’an. On one occasion ‘Umar had fainted on hearing certain verses about the wrath of God being read aloud. ‘Uthman was not prepared for a second lease of life on this earth at any cost. The prayers of ‘Ali kept him so engrossed that a painful thorn could be extracted from his leg without hurting him, in the act of prayers!

Not to be left behind by the piety of the Caliphs, all the early Companions of the Prophet, namely Salman Farisi, Abu Zarr, ‘Uways Qarni, Miqdad, ‘Ammar, Mu’az, etc., had also lived up to the standards of the orthodox Islamic code with rigidity. ‘Uways Qarni, for instance, was held in high esteem by ‘Umar and ‘Ali. He was so intensely attached to the Prophet that on hearing that the Prophet had lost two teeth in the battle of Uhud, he had his own front teeth removed. ‘Ammar, aged 90, was so devout that he lost his life fighting on the side of ‘Ali. Abu Zarr was bold enough to denounce Mu‘awiyah, the Governor of Syria, for misusing State funds, and also rebuked the reigning Caliph, for which he suffered deportation.

This spirit of asceticism which had come to the fore during the reign of the Umayyads had its roots earlier in the days of the Abbasid caliphate. It represented a revolt of a small but influential cross-section of the people against the moral decay, oppression and wasteful pomp which characterized the socio-political life under the Umayyads. This group developed a belief that the world is basically evil, and therefore men should not be absorbed in it. They were a self-satisfied lot, indifferent to worldly pleasures and free from needs and wants. A form of asceticism therefore arose during the first three centuries of the Muslim era in which men developed the negative outlook of worldly renunciation and started losing their zest for life and their drive and initiative in conducting human affairs. They abandoned society and started living secluded lives devoted to meditation, the service of God and preparation for the hereafter. Such men called themselves ahl al-Haqq (the People of Truth).

The Companions of the Prophet Muhammad are the fountain-head from which the ascetic Sufis drank.

The consultative guidance of the Companions of the Prophet which was made use of by the Khulafa’ Rashidun (the first four Caliphs) came to an end with the death of ‘Ali in the 40th year of the Hijra (662 C.E.) and the succession of Mu‘awiyah. A tradition of the Prophet had said: “For thirty years my people will tread in my path (Sunna); then will come kings and princes.” The capital of this new kingdom was shifted from Medina to Damascus. “When in due course an extravagant new capital, Baghdad, was built on the ruins of the old Persian empire in a land where Arabic was almost a second language, the course of degeneracy was fully run.”

With such a background of events, the religiously inclined preferred to withdraw into their shells; they would have nothing to do with the corrupt and tyrannical rulers of their time and their decadent way of life. When opportunities presented themselves, many of the lifetime companions of the Prophet fearlessly challenged the excesses of their rulers. Al-Fudayl, for instance, openly chided Harun al-Rashid for his impunity and condemned the lavishness of his court. Ahmad Ibn Hanbal had to fight with all his will to avoid the royal favours sought to be thrust on him.

The companions of the Prophet and their successors were, in a sense, the fountain-head from which the ascetic Sufis drank their fill. But however much the beliefs and

1 Kharraz, Kitab al-Sidq (tr. Arbbery), pp. 20-21.
2 See Shifa of Qadi ‘Iyad (Cairo, 1876), p. 113.
4 In this category we may include renowned saints like Abu Hashim, Ma‘aruf, Karkhi, Dhu ‘Nun, Misi, Bayazid Bistam, Hasan Basri, Abu Yazid, Junayd and Rabi’ah.
practices of these early Sufis were in line with those of the companions of the Prophet, there still existed one fundamental difference between orthodox Islam and the Sufis. The latter lay their emphasis purely on certain aspects of the Qur'anic message and put these into practice to the exclusion of the other teachings on which the non-Sufis laid equal stress. For instance, the average Muslim believes that Islam is a dynamic religion giving a message of action to the world, and that inaction is sheer waste of opportunity. The Prophet of Islam himself never adopted inaction as his creed. The Sufi attitude of self-abnegation and enforced quietism therefore did run contrary to the real message which Islam gave to the world.

Despite this minor inconsistency, the early Sufis were all good and well-meaning Muslims faithfully following their own ascetic creeds, which were mainly comprised of self-renunciation, self-denial, piety and retirement of the highest degree. It is obvious that their dread of Divine wrath sprang from a consciousness — however much over-stressed — of sin.

Hasan al-Basri

One of the earliest — perhaps the first — and most distinguished ascetic Sufi was al-Hasan al-Basri (d. 728 C.E.) who was so intensely pious and fearful of God that "it seemed as though hell-fire had been created for him alone." One day a friend of al-Basri, seeing him weep, enquired of the reason. Basri replied: "I weep for fear that I have done something unintentional, or committed some fault, or spoken some words which are unpleasing to God, then He may have said: 'Begone, for thou hast no more favour with Me.'"

Al-Basri was a devout ascetic and often repeated lines written by a poet: "Death is a door through which all must pass. Who will tell me whither it will lead me?" The answer to this maze he found in the pursuit of the Qur'an, as he himself says: "Whosoever recites the Qur'an and has his belief in it, will be permeated with fear in this world and weep continually." From Yunus, the son of Ubayd, we hear: "When al-Basri walks abroad, he looks as though he had just come from the depths of the grave; when he seats himself down, it appears that he is waiting for the blow of a sword on his neck; when he asks for fire he looks with that expression as if he himself were created only for the fire."

The ascetics were not only confined to the prominent centres of Muslim culture, namely Basra, Kufa, etc., but were to be found all over the Muslim world. In Khorasan we come across the eminent Ibrahim Ibn Adham, whose miraculous conversion from a life of princely abandon to one of austerity has a marked parallel in the story of Buddha.

Ibrahim Ibn Adham

Ibrahim was the king of Balkh. His royal lineage is revealed by the fact that when he walked in state, he was escorted by forty soldiers carrying golden scimitars and maces in front of him and behind. The royal sport of hunting was his passion, but it became the chief instrument of his conversion to asceticism. The story goes that when he was out hunting hares and foxes one day, a voice behind him said: "Awake! Thou wast not created for this." Not seeing anyone around, Ibrahim again spurred his horse when the voice spoke again: "It was not for this that thou wast created." Ignoring this warning Ibrahim again busied himself in his sport when for the third time the voice warned him clearly: "O Ibrahim! It was not for this that thou wast created.

This had the necessary effect and Ibrahim meditated: "... a warning has come to me from the Lord of the Worlds. Verily I will not disobey God from this day on, so long as the Lord shall preserve me. Then I returned to my people, and abandoned my horse; I came to one of my father's shepherds and took his robe and cloak, and put my raiment upon him. Then I went towards Iraq, wandering from land to land."

'Attar gives another version of why Ibrahim abandoned his kingdom: "One day I was seated on the throne when a mirror was presented to me. I looked therein and perceived that my destination was the tomb wherein I should have no friend to cheer me and that I had before me a long journey for which I had made no provision. I saw a Just Judge, and myself equipped with no proof, and my kingdom grew distasteful to my heart."

Whatever the precise cause of his conversion, this wanderer of blue blood went from place to place in search of honest livelihood, and at one time was known to have worked as a gardener in Syria. But it was not long before his true identity came to be known: to avoid any contact with the throngs he sought the oblivion of the desert, where he chanced upon some Christian anchorites. He profited a lot from this meeting, for through these Christians he received an insight into the meaning of gnosis. He recounts his experience as follows:

"I learned gnosis (Arabic: Ma'rija) from a monk, Father Simeon. I visited him in his cell, and said to him, 'Father Simeon, how long hast thou been in thy cell here?' 'For seventy years,' he answered. 'What is thy food?' I asked. 'O Hanifite,' he countered, 'what has caused thee to ask this?' 'I wanted to know,' I replied. Then he said, 'Every night one chick-pea.' I said, 'What stirs thee in thy heart, so that this pea suffices thee?' He answered, 'They come to me one day in every year, and adorn my cell, and walk about, so doing me reverence; and whenever my spirit wearies of worship, I remind it of that hour. Do thou, O Hanifite, endure the labour of an hour, for the glory of eternity!' Gnosis then descended into my heart."

A saying from Ibrahim runs to this effect: "O God, Thou knowest that in mine eyes Paradise weighs no more than the wings of a gnat when I compare it with the honour which Thou has bestowed on me in giving me Thy love. If Thou continueth to befriend me and make it easier for me to achieve the freedom from all else when I meditate on the greatness of Thy glory, then Thou mayest give Paradise to whosoever Thou wilt."

It is said that once when a stranger requested Ibrahim to take him to the nearest habitation, he immediately pointed out to the cemetery. "Two loves," he is reported to have said, "cannot exist in one heart. It is either the love of the world or that of God." Rejecting the offer of a man who offered him 10,000 dirhams, he commented: "Wouldst thou for such a sum of money erase my name from the register of Dervishes?" About a man reportedly studying grammar he remarked, "He is in greater need of studying silence" " Spurn the world, my brother," was his advice to a fellow ascetic, "for love of the world makes a man deaf and blind, and enslaves him. Say not 'tomorrow' or the 'day after tomorrow': for those that perished, perished because they abide always in their hopes, until the truth came upon them."

6 Journal Asiatique, June 1834, p. 543 (article by Caussin de Perceval).
7 Abu Nu'aim, Hilya VII, p. 368.
suddenly in their heedlessness, and wilful as they were, they were carried to their dark, narrow graves, abandoned by all their kith and kin. Devote thyself to God with a penitent heart, and an abounding resolve. Farewell!”

Shaqqi of Balkh

An attempt was made in the second century A.H. (8th C.E.) by Abu ‘Ali Shaqqi of Balkh (d. 194 A.H.—810 C.E.) to standardize the theological tenets of Sufism. Shaqqi, who was a pupil of Ibrahim Ibn Adham, was the first Sufi matakallim (dialectician) to introduce kalam (dialectics) into Sufism. He scholastically defined Tawakkul (trust in God) as the basis of Haad (the mystical “state”). Shaqqi was converted to an ascetic life by the chance remark of an idol-worshipping Turk, as is shown by the account of his grandson:

“My grandfather owned three hundred villages on the day he was killed at Washgird, yet he had not even a winding-sheet to be buried in, for he had given everything away. His raiment and sword hung up this hour, and men touch them for a blessing. He had gone into the lands of the Turks to do trade as a young man. among a people called the Khususiyath, who worshipped idols. He went into their temple and there met their teacher, who had shaved his head and beard and wore scarlet robes. Shaqqi said to him: ‘This upon which thou art engaged is false; these men, and thou, and all creation—all have a Creator and a Maker, there is taught unto Him; to Him belongs this world, and the next: He is Omnipotent, All-providing’. The servant said to him, ‘Thy words do not accord with thy deeds’. Shaqqi said, ‘How is that?’ The other replied, ‘Thou hast asserted that thou hast a Creator, Who is All-providing and Omnipotent; yet thou hast exiled thyself to this place in search of thy provision. If what thou sayest is true, He Who has provided for thee here is the same as He Who provides for thee there; so spare thyself this trouble.’ Shaqqi said, ‘The cause of my abstinence (zuhd) was the remark of that Turk.’ And he returned, and gave away all he possessed to the poor, and sought after knowledge.”

An instance of Shaqqi’s characteristic asceticism is available from his following conversation with Ibrahim Ibn Adham:

Shaqqi: How do you earn your livelihood?

Ibn Adham: “I do my best and when I obtain anything I thank God; if I fail, I remain patient and hope.”

Shaqqi: “This is done by dogs in our country.”

Ibn Adham: “What would you do?”

Shaqqi: “If I earn anything, I spend and help those who need; if I fail, I thank God.”

Shaqqi was not only the leading luminary on the firmament of the Khorasani ascetics but was also the first in their fold to attempt the systematization of the Sufi creed. Hatim al-Asamm, a student of Shaqqi, gives the following extract from his master’s views on the discipline of the self:

“If a man continued alive for two hundred years and did not know these four things, he should not (God willing) escape from hell: first, the knowledge (Ma’rifah) of God; second, the knowledge of himself; third, the knowledge of God’s commandment and prohibition; fourth, the knowledge of God’s adversary and his own. The interpretation of the knowledge of God is, that thou knowest in thy heart that there is no other who gives and withholds, hurts and advantages. Knowledge of self is to know thyself, that thou canst not hurt nor advantage, and that thou hast not the power to do anything at all; and likewise to oppose the self, which means to be submissive to God. Knowledge of God’s commandment and prohibition is to be aware that God’s commandment rules over thee and that thy provision depends upon God, and to trust in this provision, being sincere in all thy actions; and the sign of such sincerity is not to have in thee two characteristics, namely, covetousness and impatience. Knowledge of God’s adversary means being aware that thou hast an enemy, and that God will not accept from thee anything save it be as a result of warfare; and the warfare of the heart consists in making war against the enemy, and striving with him, and exhausting him.”

Incidentally, Asamm’s own views on death may not be out of place here. He says that a Sufi must be prepared for four kinds of death:

1. The White Death (i.e., hunger).
2. The Black Death (i.e., patience in the face of difficulties).
3. The Red Death (i.e., mastery over one’s passions).
4. The Green Death (i.e., use of coarse garments).

Bishr Ibn al-Harith

Another celebrated ascetic of those times was Bishr Ibn al-Harith al-Haafi, nicknamed the “Barefoot” (d. 227 A.H.—844 C.E.), who spoke of God directly as the Beloved (Habib). Born in Merv, he lived in Baghdad, where he became a pupil of Junayd. He studied the Hadith under the Imam Malik Ibn Anas and achieved such fame for leading a pious and ascetic life that the Caliph Ma’mun once remarked: “Nobody has inspired me with such respect as the ‘Barefoot’ Bishr.” Bishr resented orthodoxy in Islam. He used to say: “The scoundrel at whom everyone mocks is more pleasing to God than the parsimonious Sufi. Hunger purifies the heart, destroys desire and sharpens the mind. To fast is the same as shedding blood for God.” The Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, who was also an admirer of Bishr, once remarked about him: “If Bishr were to get married, he would be the perfect man.”

Bishr was violently opposed to the society of his time and asserted that the views of men were of no consequence and should be ignored, for “... they will lay a snare for thee. So choose for thyself and shun their society. I hold that the best counsel today is to dwell alone; for therein lies safety. . . . Be not concerned if any man desert thee, and despair not over losing him, for it is more fortunate for thee to have them afar than to have them nigh thee; let God be thy sufficiency, take Him for thy associate, and let Him be the substitute for them.”

Typical of the Iraqi school of asceticism was al-Fudhail Ibn ‘Iyad (d. 187 A.H.—803 C.E.), a Khorasani who died in Mecca. Prior to his conversion, Fudhail was a bandit chieftain. One night when he wanted to commit a foul crime, he overheard a person reciting the following verse from the

8 Ibid., pp. 18-19.
10 A. M. A. Shushtery’s Outline of Islamic Culture, p. 349.

12 A. M. A. Shushtery’s Outline of Islamic Culture, p. 349.
Qur'ân: "Is it not high time for those who believe to open their hearts to compassion?" Deeply moved by these words, he replied back in remorse: "Yea, Lord! It is indeed high time!" And with that he renounced the world and became a disciple of 'Abd al-Waâhîb Ibn Zayd, a celebrated ascetic of his time.

It is reported by one of al-Fudhâ'il's disciples that in his associations with his master over a period of 30 years he never once saw him smile or laugh, save once, when his son 'Ali died. Asked to explain the reason for his quaint behaviour he replied: "Almighty God desired a certain thing, and I desired what God desired."^13

Rabî'ah al-'Adawiyyah

At about the same time as al-Fudhâ'il, we come across in Basra a remarkable woman saint, Rabî'ah, also known as al-'Adawiyyah. A true mystic, she was kindled with a self-consuming love (mahabba) in seeking a unitive life with God ('uns). She had dedicated herself to asceticism and other-worldliness, but unlike the earlier Susis her goal of attaining union (wasi) with God was through the high-road of Pure Love, i.e., love of God for His own sake. Fariduddin 'Attar speaks about Rabî'ah in the following strain:

"She the secluded one was clothed with the clothing of purity and was on fire with love and longing and was enamoured of the desire to approach her Lord and be consumed in His glory. She was a second Mary and a spotless woman."^14

Rabî'ah led the way to the next phase of Sufism, namely Mysticism, wherein the fear of an implacable God gave place to the more noble concept of the love of divinity. In mysticism there is no place for the element of fear, and this is amply illustrated by the following version of a conversation reportedly exchanged between the two eminent male saints Hasan Malik Dinnar and Shaqiq al-Balkhi and Rabî'ah when the former called on her during her ailment. Said Hasan casually: "He is not sincere in his professions who will not blow the blows of his Master patiently."

Shaqiq corrected this as: "He is not sincere in his professions who will not rejoice in the blows of his Lord."

To which Rabî'ah replied: "He is not sincere in his professions who, gazing at his Lord, does not become entirely oblivious of His blows."

Rabî'ah was born in an abode of poverty. As her name suggests, she was a fourth child of the family. She lost her parents in early childhood and thereafter a child-lifter sold her as a slave to a rich merchant for six dirhams. She was made to work hard by her master, but despite her duties she used to observe the fasts during the daytime and pray for long hours at night. Once in the dead of night, on hearing Rabî'ah apparently talking to someone, the master of the house awoke and saw her engaged in prayers while overhead a lamp hung in mid-air without any suspending cords, illuminating the whole house. Filled with awe at this fantastic sight, the master freed her the next morning. From that day onwards she dedicated her whole life to seclusion and the all-exclusive love of God. To such men as proposed marriage to her she replied: "The contract of marriage is for those who have a phenomenal existence. But in my case, there is no such existence, for I have ceased to exist and have passed out of self. I exist in God and am altogether His. I live in the shadow of His command. The marriage contract must be asked for from Him, not from me."^16

Many disciples used to gather around Rabî'ah in Basra and still more would come to her for advice, to receive her blessings or to hear her discourses. Her unshakeable faith in Tawakkul (trust in God) made her spurn all offers of help from friends. To one such over-anxious helper she replied, "I should be ashamed to ask for this world's goods from Him to whom the whole world belongs; how then should I seek them from those to whom it does not belong?" A number of miracles have been attributed to this woman saint. It is said that food was delivered to her for herself and her guests by the angels. A camel which she used during her pilgrimage came back to life after suddenly dropping dead on the way. The radiance of the halo lingering around her was a substitute for the light she could not afford to burn. It is also related that after she had passed away, she appeared to a person in his dreams. The man asked her how she had replied to Munkar and Nakir when they enquired of her "Who is your Lord?" To which her reply was: "I said, return and tell your Lord, 'Notwithstanding the thousands and thousands of Thy creatures, Thou hast not forgotten a weak old woman. I, who had only Thee in all the world, have never forgotten Thee, that Thou shouldst ask, Who is thy Lord?'.^18

In Islamic mysticism Rabî'ah has played the role of a passionate lover of God to whom the formal rituals of prayer were sacrosanct only in so far as they brought her nearer the presence of God. The fear of Hell and the quest of Heaven were no concern of hers. "O my Lord, if I worship Thee from fear of Hell, burn me therein, and if I worship Thee in the hope of Paradise, exclude me thence, but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, then withhold not from me Thine Eternal Beauty."^19

Rabî'ah composed many verses and lyrics abounding in the element of love. and Tholuck therefore called her Altera de Guyon. The following verse is illustrative of Rabî'ah's poetry:

Two are the ways I have loved Thee: One, selfishly,
And the other, as is worthy of Thee.
In selfish love serenity do I find,
And to all save Thee I become blind.
But 'tis only when purest love seek Thee rapturously,
The veil lifeth for me to gaze on Thee.
Yet, not is the praise in that or this mine,
Methinks both ways the praise is wholly Thine.

The German orientalist Von Kremer is of opinion that the element of mysticism was first introduced into asceticism by women. Other writers of his way of thinking also cite the case of another woman mystic, Fatima of Nishapur (d. 837 C.E.), who was claimed by Dhu 'l-Nun Misri as his teacher. They contend that the basic ingredient of mysticism being love, women by their very nature were better able to grasp it than men. It is precisely for this reason that some Sufi writers are partial towards placing women mystics on a higher plane than men.

16 Attar's Tadhkiratu 'l-Awliya, p. 66 (quoted by M. Smith, Early Mysticism, p. 186).
17 The two angels who question the dead in the tomb concerning God, the Prophet, and the religion professed by the deceased.
18 Quoted by Margaret Smith in Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, p. 462.
19 A writer has claimed that Rabî'ah's poems resembled in spirit the prayer book of Saint Agnes.
Su‘udi Arabia under King Faisal

Emphasis on Industrialization, Education and Sanitation

By B. A. Misri

Since after the Second World War, the Middle East as a whole has been constantly in world news. The rape of Palestine, the Suez crisis and the intestine calamities of the various Arab States have kept the Arabs very much alive on the map of the world.

But Su‘udi Arabia seems to have attracted more world attention than any other part of the Arabian Peninsula. Because of its comparatively recent oil discoveries, it became the focus of attention of the capitalist nations of the world. For the Muslim world it is the cradle of Islam.

In 630 C.E. the Prophet Muhammad returned to Mecca as a conqueror, after eight years’ exile in Medina. There he performed his pilgrimage rites at the Ka‘bah — the House of God rebuilt by Abraham and his son Ishmael.

Since then it has become obligatory on all Muslim men and women to perform this pilgrimage at least once in their life — subject to certain conditions. The number of pilgrims this year was estimated to be more than one million. This huge influx of people demands very elaborate and complex arrangements by the government. It becomes necessary every year to reorganize the airports of Jiddah and Dhalran and the ports of Jiddah and Yenbo. The road to Mecca from Jiddah becomes an unbroken 43 mile-long chain of vehicles and pedestrians. To cope with the situation, the Su‘udi government moves to Mecca every year during the pilgrimage period. The ever-increasing number of pilgrims has necessitated the expansion of the Sacred Mosque (al-Masjid al-Haraam), which was carried out about nine years ago at the cost of £50 million. The responsibility of playing host to such a great number of pilgrims had become so great that in 1960 a special Ministry of Hajj had to be established.

Geography

Su‘udi Arabia is the most important part of the Arabian peninsula. It is greater in size than the whole of India. It comprises the Yemen, Jordan, Iraq, the Persian Gulf States and the South Arabian Federation. Most of Su‘udi Arabia is a barren desert without any means of irrigation. Whatever meagre crops are sown remain at the mercy of the locusts. The greedy sand is constantly advancing to bury in its fathomless depths any signs of civilization.

Because of its geographical position and the natural barriers of sand and lava which surround it, Su‘udi Arabia had remained comparatively isolated from the outside world. Non-Muslims have never had a chance to enter the Holy Cities, except those few who managed to enter incognito.

Landmarks of history

The Kingdom of Su‘udi Arabia was founded by the late ‘Abd al-A‘ziz, generally known as Ibn Su‘ud. The name “Su‘udi Arabia” is derived from his family name “Su‘ud,” who lived in Nejd. Riyadh, the present capital of Su‘udi Arabia, was under the rule of the House of Rashidis when, in 1902, Ibn Su‘ud conquered it. Although Ibn Su‘ud did succeed in defeating the Turks in Hesa in 1913, his position was not yet strong enough to get rid of them altogether. In 1914 he had to be content with his position as a Vali of the Ottoman Empire. It was only after the defeat of the Turks at the hands of the British in the First World War that Su‘udi Arabia became fully independent of the Turks. In 1925 Su‘udi Arabia snatched the Hejaz from the Hashemite King Husain. This possession became an additional source of revenue through the annual income of the Pilgrimage. Even after the death of King Husain, Ibn Su‘ud remained suspicious of his two sons — Faisal, the ruler of Iraq, and ‘Abdullah, the ruler of Transjordan.

In 1927, the Treaty of Jiddah between Ibn Su‘ud and the British was signed, whereupon Ibn Su‘ud assumed the title of “His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies.” The present name of “Su‘udi Arabia” was adopted for the country later — in 1932.

At the death of Ibn Su‘ud in 1953, the Su‘udi kingdom was on the verge of sub-division into the Hejaz, Nejd and Hesa. Nejd has a predominantly Wahhabi majority; the Hejaz, a coastal strip on the Red Sea, contains in it the holy cities of Mecca and Medina; and Hesa is on the Persian Gulf with its oil-fields.

Relations with neighbours

Before the discovery of oil in the peninsula, no one ever cared much about the boundaries of the various States. But, as soon as the hidden treasures of the sands became known, every square yard of the barren desert became a bone of contention amongst the neighbouring rulers.

Su‘udi Arabia’s relations with the other Persian Gulf Trucial States — Buraimi, Abu Dhabi, Oman and Kuwait — have passed through various phases, depending on the claims and counter-claims to oil-fields. For instance, in 1955 Su‘udi Arabia, who had a rightful claim to the Buraimi area, was deprived of her possession by Muscat and Oman, with the help of the British. Abu Dhabi was also involved in a dispute and some of the area is now controlled by her. Su‘udi Arabia does not seem to have forgotten this discomfort. As late as 1960 she was helping the revolutionaries in Muscat. Apart from the considerations of oil, with her fresh reports of new finds, Su‘udi Arabia is anxious to acquire a corridor to the sea.

In 1962, Su‘udi Arabia and Jordan signed an agreement of co-ordination with “complete military union.” But soon afterwards King Husain’s dependence on President Jamal ‘Abd al-Nasir’s support against Israel made him change his policy. The result was that King Husain shifted his recognition from the Royalists of the Yemen to the Republicans.

Su‘udi Arabia’s relations with the United Arab Republic is common knowledge. Even before the Nasir régime, the Ikhwan al-Muslimun were a great source of trouble to Ibn Su‘ud, who had to seek British help against them. In 1956 King Su‘ud, as a mark of protest against the tripartite attack on Suez, severed all diplomatic relations with Britain. But this friendly gesture was soon nullified by their clash of interests in the Yemeni civil war. But today the Arab Summit Conferences have given King Faisal and Nasir two opportunities to sit under the same roof, and the two seem to be coming closer together.
Foreign policy

Disputes with her neighbours and the resultant sense of insecurity have made the Su'udi government dependent on foreign aid and protection. During the late Ibn Su'ud's time the Italians were keen to help him. He did accept their help for some time. But, owing to Italian designs in the Yemen, he had to refuse their help. Germany at that time appeared to be an uninterested party. They had at least one thing in common — both were anti-Zionists. Ibn Su'ud approached her for help and she did promise to give it. But soon the Second World War broke out, upsetting all arrangements. One thing that loomed large in favour of Ibn Su'ud was that, throughout the war, King Ibn Su'ud remained a staunch believer in the Allies' victory and faithful to them.

British relations, too, with Su'udi Arabia have had their setbacks. In 1955 Britain supported Muscat and Oman against her. In 1956 diplomatic relations were stopped between the two on the Suez crisis, to be re-established only in January 1963. Britain is involved up to her neck in the Middle Eastern politics and has much at stake there. Apart from numerous other considerations, her interest in Aden and the Persian Gulf territories makes it difficult for her to relinquish her control of that area.

In addition to political considerations, British business interests in Su'udi Arabia are by no means negligible. British exports to Su'udi Arabia in 1962-63 were about £10m. It is claimed that the Su'udis are much inclined to buy British. British business men are, therefore, making a great effort to study their way of life, their likes and dislikes and their customs. A special "Council for Middle East Trade" has been formed with the Rt. Hon. The Earl of Inchcape as its Chairman.

The vested interests of the United States of America surpass even those of the British. The U.S.A. leads all the other countries in export to Su'udi Arabia — £25m. in 1962-63. The major interest of America in that country is oil. The U.S.A.'s policy in respect of the Yemen had an adverse effect on the relations between the two countries, but there was nothing which the Su'udis could do about it.

Su'udi Arabia has never had diplomatic relations with any Communist country. It could be owing to her complete dependence on America and Britain or it could be owing to religious considerations. Possibly it is because of both.

Su'udi Arabia's commercial relations with Japan have recently been increasing. It is rumoured that Japan has been given a share in the General Petroleum and Mineral Organization.

Oil

Unfortunately space does not permit it, otherwise the story of oil in Su'udi Arabia, and for that matter in the whole of the Middle East, would make very fascinating reading. This black gold has made it possible for Su'udi Arabia to work miracles in the modernization of the country.

The first discovery of oil in Su'udi Arabia was made in 1930. Although the first oil concession to the Californian Arabian Oil Company was granted in 1933, the real strike of oil was made in 1938. Since then there seems to be no end to new strikes. Today Su'udi Arabia is the fifth largest oil-producing country in the world, producing 6 per cent of the total world production.

There are three foreign companies operating in the country. Between them they paid royalties to the tune of £147 m. in 1962. The Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco), established in 1933, is the largest of the three. It holds the world's largest oil-field of Ghawar and Safaniyah. It is very significant to note that, with the exception of the local distribution, the total distribution of oil is in the hands of overseas companies.

In a message to his people on the occasion of his accession to the Throne of Su'udi Arabia, H.M. King Faisal pledged himself to continued effort on their behalf.

"There is no need for us to repeat what we have said before about Our internal reform policy, which is being carried out smoothly within the limits of Our potentialities and abilities. But We assure you that We shall redouble Our efforts towards achieving Our goals of reform in all political, administrative, social and economic fields."

On his foreign policy, King Faisal said that this would continue to be based on the twin foundations of promoting international peace and co-operating to the utmost with other Arab States.

"We spare no effort and We are doing everything in Our power to ensure that just peace, freedom and constant security may prevail all over the world."

The King spoke movingly of his feelings on assuming the burdens of the Crown — burdens which, as he stressed, he had not sought but rather had sought to avoid.

"Now that it has been decreed by God's will and that We should perform this sacred duty, We beseech Him to give help and guidance so that all your hopes can be fulfilled and that Our Beloved country can reach the standard looked forward to, and the target in sight."

It is still to be seen how far the Arabian Oil Company, established by the Su'udis and in which the Japanese are said to have been given a share, produces any formidable results. Since 1950, Aramco and the Su'udi government have been

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working on an equal profit-sharing basis. Before that the arrangement was very inequitable — the Su‘udi government used to get only 4 gold shillings per ton of oil produced.

The General Petroleum and Mineral Organization (Petromin) was established by Royal Charter in 1962. It is a public government-owned organization with semi-autonomous powers and a budget of £160 m. since last year. It is building a rolling mill and a refinery with an annual capacity of 500,000 tons, both in Jiddah. It is expected that it would be completed by 1966. The most encouraging thing about this organization is that it would sell its products itself.

Modern reforms

For a country to depend solely on one source of revenue is always risky. Out of a total annual budget of £210 m. of Su‘udi Arabia, oil revenue alone accounts for £190 m. The rest is from pilgrims, while other resources are almost negligible. Similarly, out of the total exports for the year 1962-63 to the value of £350 m., the export of oil was worth £348 m.

The Su‘udi government is, therefore, very anxious to explore avenues other than oil. For example, in order to encourage foreign investment, foreign capital has been made exempt from income and company taxation for five years from the date of production. This concession is, however, not applicable to petroleum and mineral projects. But at present she is facing a similar problem as most of the newly-developing countries are doing — namely, lack of skilled manpower and an efficient civil service. After all, for all practical purposes, Su‘udi Arabia is only a child of 16 years of age.

Until the discovery of oil, it was not possible financially to modernize the country. Means even to exploit the hidden wealth were scarce. From 1914 until 1924 Su‘udi Arabia was totally dependent on Britain, receiving a meagre annual subsidy from her. During World War II her revenues had stopped altogether — mainly owing to the stoppage of the pilgrims. She experienced a great financial crisis in 1957-58 which was mainly because of the mismanagement of the country’s finances. It was only due to the relentless efforts of Prince (now King) Faisal that the country was saved from utter disaster and, by 1959, the budget was successfully balanced. Today, as has been said before, it has soared to £260 m. It is estimated that this figure is increasing by 5 to 10 per cent every year. Her gold reserves, by November 1963, stood at £180.6 m.

Recent years have witnessed tremendous changes taking place in Su‘udi Arabia. In spite of the fact that the country is shackled with tribal economy, King Faisal’s new administration has done miracles in bringing about radical reforms. Until recently, a horde of princes and princesses had been living as parasites on public money. King Faisal’s limitations on the Royal Privy Purse of his elder brother was a sign of change for the better.

Su‘udi Arabia’s peculiar difficulty, in addition to a tribal economy, is its tribal outlook on life. The frustration of the onlookers at the comparatively slow pace of development is understandable in many respects. But it needs more than a study of statistical facts to appreciate the problem. Even the World Bank mission which visited Su‘udi Arabia in 1960 recommended “a modest development programme”. In the public sector the recommendations lay great emphasis on “central economic planning”. As a result, a Supreme Planning Board was established in 1961. At the moment this Board is being assisted by the Ford Foundation specialists, the United Nations’ Agencies, the United States Geological Survey (for which it is paid £20,000 per year), Aramco, and by various independent technicians.

The country is passing through so many radical changes that it has almost become unrecognizable in its façade. Modern skyscrapers have sprung up from the former cities of mud.

An Agriculture Bank, established in 1963 with an authorized capital of £21 m., is doing its best to improve the lot of the peasants. The government schemes involve an expenditure of £7 m. — a rise of nearly 200 per cent. But it is not all that easy; 80 per cent of the total population is basically nomadic. Even the bribes of tube wells do not seem to be enough inducement to the freedom-loving nomads to take root.

The only railway, which covers at present 565 kilometers, is between Riyadh and Damman. The railway from Medina to Jordan was stopped in 1920, but is now being reopened. The total stretch of permanent roads in the country is only 400 miles.

Education

Over 10 per cent of Su‘udi Arabia’s budget is spent on education, while ten years ago it was only 1 per cent. New schools are being opened at the rate of ten every month. The King Su‘ud University and the Engineering College, opened last year in Riyadh, have become symbols of modernization. A new college, the Petroleum College, is another achievement of this year. The first five-year education plan, due to expire this year, will be followed up by another and more vigorous five-year plan.

Although the education budget has jumped up within the last ten years from £1 m. to about £16 m., the student population has also increased threefold during the same period, totalling 138,000. Great stress is being laid on female education with very encouraging results. Over 30,000 girls are receiving education in the controlled schools alone. The following figures will give an idea of the trends of modernization:

*Government outlay on Education, Health and Social Welfare*  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Budget</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>£23,300,000</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>£35,250,000</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>£42,500,000</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But there is a lot which needs to be done yet. The House of Su‘ud, which was brought into the fold of the puritanical movement of Muhammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1787 C.E.), brought about great radical reforms throughout Arabia in the closing years of the 19th century. By acquiring the control of the holy cities of Arabia, Mecca and Medina, they have taken on their shoulders a very great responsibility. They owe a great deal not only to the subjects of their kingdom but also to the whole Muslim world.

Biggest Budget in country’s history

The Su‘udi Arabian Budget for the year 1964/65, just published, is the biggest in the country’s history. Its total of approximately £260 million shows an increase of £35,500,000 over the previous year.

Major increases are in the spheres of defence, education, health, agriculture, social affairs and information, and the main aim behind the increases is to speed the implementation of the many development projects now in hand.

This Budget is in line with the edict issued recently by King Faisal (then Crown Prince), when he said: “Not a single kersh (i.e. penny) will be saved. The whole Budget will be spent on reforms and construction works and projects with a view to promoting prosperity and welfare, and raising the standard of this country.”
The Creed of Islam and the World of Today

Ancient Indian Philosophers, Modern European Thinkers and Islam

By Abul Hashim

"Islam is a science which deals with man — his individual as well as social and collective organism. In order that Islam may reassert its grandeur and its progressive role, human contents and values of Islam must be rediscovered and set in modern setting by the talents of the world — philosophers, scientists, sociologists and historians, Islam means peace. Peace presupposes conflict and struggle. Life, as the Indian Swami Vivekananda (d. 1902 C.E.) says, is development and non-development of a being under circumstances tending to press it down. As such life is an eternal struggle and conflict of contradictions within and without. External struggles and conflicts of life are not realities in themselves but are reflexes and replicas of internal contradictions. Economic class struggle is one of the many external manifestations of the inner conflicts between egoism and altruism of man. Egoism wants to exploit everything for the satisfaction of the ego or the flesh and is concerned mainly with the satisfaction of the immediate material craving of the body and the mind and is indifferent to the ultimate welfare of the individual as well as of the universal man. Altruism tends to suppress the ego. Islam does not suppress or oppress human nature but fully recognizes the natural demand of the body, mind and intellect and induces harmonious development of all the faculties of man so that the ego might get full satisfaction of the natural needs of man without infringing similar rights of others."

Why religion is in disfavour with people

Islam is, therefore, not a religion as religion is understood today, a mere theology or a set of dogmas and rituals, but is the science which governs man in his individual as well as his collective existence. The Mullahs and the Pundits of the East have distorted Deen¹ and Dharma² in the same manner in which the priests and the Divines of the West destroyed religion. Hence the universal condemnation of religion. Religion taken in its real sense is neither irrational nor hostile to rational and free pursuit of knowledge. Religion is the nature of God in which the composite Law of Nature has been created. Its knowledge is a blessing and never a curse to humanity. That religion has been utilized as a means of exploitation is true, but that is no reason why it should be put out of court and negated, for there is no invention of science which has not been used as a means of exploitation; the destructive use of atomic energy is the latest example of the anti-humanitarian use of science. As there is no sense or wisdom in declaring a pogrom against science because science is being utilized for anti-social ends, so there is no sense and wisdom in discarding religion because it has been or is being exploited for advancing reactionary causes. The right and sensible attitude would be to dismiss unceremoniously and with contempt the Mullahs, the Pundits and the priests, the self-appointed guardians of religion, and to entrust the responsibility of interpreting religion to the talents of the world. Then and then alone religion will once again be a real blessing to humanity and a true guide to human thought and action.

The secrets of human life unfolded through revelation

Philosophers, scientists and free-thinkers, while negating religion in words, practically do nothing more than investigating and systematically formulating the fundamentals of religion or the law of nature. The scriptures or knowledge and wisdom conveyed to man through revelation contain the basic principles of that part of universal nature which

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¹ Continued from The Islamic Review for December 1964.
² 3 Deen, an Arabic word, and Dharma, a Sanskrit word. Both have been defined by the author in his previous article as composite law of nature which holds and moulds the destiny of the universe.
specifically governs man, or in other words, they lay down and interpret the first principles of science or nature of man which man independently with his intellect could never find. This was the mission of all the prophets and rishis who appeared amongst men through the ages since the birth of man. Since man and his nature developed by a process of gradual evolution, the secrets of human life were gradually unfolded to man through revelation till man and his nature were made complete, or in other words, attained adolescence. Previous revelations have lost their pristine purity and have been mutilated by human interpolation. All scriptures and revelations emanate from the same source and do not contradict one another. Contradictions arise out of human interpolations and distortions. Earlier revelations are, however, incomplete in relation to the maturity of man and his nature as they interpret human nature as it grew and developed. In historical order the Holy Qur’an is the latest and the final of all revealed books, and as such it interprets not the growing and incomplete man but the mature and complete man. The Holy Qur’an was revealed in an historical age and its purity has been well preserved. The last verse of the Holy Qur’an, “This day have I perfected your Deen and have completed My favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your Deen” (5: 4), was revealed when man and his nature were made complete, that is, when humanity attained maturity. Henceforward man would require no further prophets or books for his guidance but would guide himself admirably well in the right path with the aid of his highly developed intuition and intellect and with the Holy Qur’an and what remains of other previous books as a guide to his thought and action.

This has led some to think that Islam has in effect liquidated religion. The fact, however, is otherwise: Islam has liquidated prejudice and superstition and has restored and preserved the pristine beauty of religion. But the fact remains that the despots of the so-called Muslim nations, with the connivance of the Mullahs, have successfully pushed back the purity of Islam out of sight and have clouded it with the darkness of prejudice and superstition, not by interpolation, since interpolation is not possible, but by dishonest and subjective interpretations. Let the talents of the world liberate Islam and religion from mullahs, priests and pundits whose only stock-in-trade is ignorance and habitual irrational thinking. Let the talents of the world co-ordinate intellect with intuition, reason with wisdom, and faith with action, and once again make religion a blessing to humanity.

Qudrat (the Supreme Power) and Fitrat (Nature). Hindu philosophers

Fitrat, an Arabic word used in the Qur’an, is nature, and Qudrat is the Supreme Power or an attribute name of God in relation to His creation and execution of the laws of nature. Fitrat or nature is blind, but Qudrat is conscious and has discretion and will. Brahma Sutras. or the Vedanta philosophy of the venerable Badrayana, is accepted by the Hindus of India as the highest authority on the conception of Divinity. Amongst the Vedantists there is, however, no uniformity of opinion on this question. The two famous commentators of Badrayana, Shri Shankaracharya (d. 820 C.E.) and Acharva Ramanuja (5th century B.C.), here fundamentally differ from each other.

According to Shankar, Brahma or the Supreme Deity is “Nirguna” or without quality. He so jealously guards his conviction that he does not even attribute such qualities as intelligence to Him. According to him, intelligence is not an attribute of Brahma but Brahma himself is intelligence. But Ramanuja, on the contrary, believes that Brahma is “Shaguna” or with quality, and he attributes such qualities as intelligence, power and mercy to Him.

Saints of Nihilistic materialism take into cognizance Fitrat, but negate with indifference and indignation Qudrat. Knowledge makes one conscious of one’s ignorance rather than vainglorious. The greatest tragedy of our age is that its discoveries of the secrets of Fitrat has led man astray to think that the creation is an automatic mechanism and that he can, with his intellect, establish his own sovereignty over Fitrat. Qudrat has created Fitrat, and He presides over His own creation. Human nature is an integral part of the universal nature, and so human nature must be studied in relation to the universal nature. Little knowledge of the little that life can survey is both incomplete and imperfect, and is, therefore, not sufficient to interpret human nature. A telescope and a microscope revealed to man the vastness and the infinite nature of the universe and makes him conscious of his own nothingness when he is cut off from Qudrat. Man’s potentiality as the best in creation is unlimited.

Man emanates from Qudrat and returns to Him. A drop of water that falls from the clouds has the elements and potentiality of the ocean; it emanates from the ocean and returns to the ocean. A drop of water can reach its goal in a process of gradual development provided it keeps in constant touch with the ocean; if it is cut off from the perennial undercurrent of water that flows beneath the surface of the earth then its return to the ocean will be delayed, though ultimately its fitrat will force it back into the ocean. So it is with man. Man’s potentiality can have easy and natural development only if he is in communion with Qudrat. A mere surface view of blind Fitrat can never acquaint man with the first principles of the laws of nature. Any order of human existence created out of incomplete and imperfect knowledge of human nature is bound to be ungenial to the real nature of man and it indefinitely delays the fulfillment of the purpose of his creation. Man’s nature, however, will ultimately force him back to the right path of evolution, but only through a hard and strenuous process of chastening.

Man in the vanity of his little knowledge of his immediate surroundings and material environment puts himself always in opposition to his own nature. All the miseries and unhappiness of man is due to his conceit and consequent revolt against nature. Belief in Qudrat is neither a metaphysical speculation nor is it born out of fear, but is a reality, ignoring which man can never know himself as he should. In Indian philosophy Fitrat is known as Prakriti, and Qudrat as Parampurusha or Paramatma. The venerable Kapila, with the aid of his methods of “Pramana” or proof of facts, namely, Pratyaksha or direct perception, Atmanara or inference and Aptaavachana or authority of inspired words, fails to substantiate existence of what the Vedants call “Isvara”. But he believes in the existence of “Purusha”; a conscious Mind, Who moves Prakriti or Fitrat to action.

Western philosophers and the belief in God

Western philosophers, with the only notable exception of Hume, were believers in Qudrat. They, however, have no faith in religious orders and systems of their age. Plato believes that a nation can never be strong if it does not believe in God. A mere cosmic force, or first cause or clan vital, does not inspire hope, confidence, courage and comfort in him. He thinks that belief in a Living God can only effectively control greed and the ego of man and teach him moderation and
self-sacrifice. According to him belief in personal immortality comes from belief in a Living God. Plato is not a mere visionary or a closeted metaphysician. By philosophy he means an active culture of wisdom which can guide a man in his everyday business of life. Aristotle believes that God moves the world, and He moves it not as a mechanical force but as the total motive of all operations in the world. Even Chancellor Bacon (d. 1579 C.E.), whose genius carries relentless war against all prevailing religions and scriptures, believes in Qudrat when he exclaims, "I had rather believed all the fables in the Legend and the Talmud and Alkoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind." His wrath against scriptures and religions is but natural as he studies them in the behaviour of the priests, pundits and mu’llahs. Darwin’s and Spencer's contributions to the science of biology shook the traditional thinking of man to its foundations. They added immense treasure to the knowledge of man but at the same time led many astray. Robert Spencer could not definitely ascertain the nature of Qudrat, but he felt His existence. According to him both mind and matter are equally relative phenomenon, the double effect of an ultimate cause whose nature must remain unknown.

The great philosopher of France, Voltaire, was, according to the Church of France and Europe, the greatest heretic of the age, so much so that his funeral had to be performed in obscurity in a country churchyard on the outskirts of Paris, though he died in Paris. He was a victim of the Church not because he was an agnostic, atheist or a nihilist, but because he was unable to follow all the foolish and irrational doctrines of the Church. His faith in God and His relation with nature or fitrat was as real and steady as the pole-star. He believed that true prayer lies not in asking for a violation of the laws of nature but in the acceptance of them as the unchangeable Will of God. His view is, therefore, the same as the Qur’anic view of the problem. Spinoza does not accept divinity of the Christ but he believes that God and Nature are one Being, acting by necessity and according to invariable law. Spinoza does obey and revere this Majestic Law. Kant, the greatest philosopher of Europe and the pride of Germany, whose criticism of "pure reason" and doctrine of "transcendental dialectics" thrashed out in minute detail, like Kapila and Patanjali (both flourished in the first century B.C.) of India, the actual functions of the faculties of sensation, perception and conception, believing in the immortality of man and that it must postulate the existence of God.

Germany produced a galaxy of epoch-making thinkers and philosophers like Spinoza, Kant, Schopenhauer, Hegel, Nietzsche and Karl Marx. Karl Marx made a most valuable original contribution to the science of economics. His doctrine of surplus-value is, doubtless, an epoch-making discovery, but in the realm of philosophy he and his friend Friedrich Engels (d. 1895) are by no means original thinkers. Their genius in this sphere lies mainly in preparing a compound of Hegel's dialectics and Hume's materialism. Karl Marx, during his twenty years in the British Museum, made a fairly thorough study of the various aspects of man's material existence, but there is nothing on record to show that he ever seriously studied the scriptures or the philosophy of the East from their real sources. He had a desire to learn Arabic and in fact he attempted to study it, but unfortunately he did not live to learn it. His nihilism is the direct reaction or anti-theesis of his contemporary church religion. His subsequent followers like Lenin and Stalin exhibit fanaticism the kind of which the world has never seen before.

**Man, nature and God**

Man thinks he can conquer fitrat, and he calls his discoveries of the secrets of fitrat his conquest of nature. Nature is knowable but is no conquerable. Man does not control nature but nature controls man and Qudrat controls nature. An infinite chain of cause and effect leads earnest seekers of truth to Qudrat, the cause of all causes, Qudrat manifests and reveals Himself in nature as well as in the affairs of man. For finding evidence of the existence of Qudrat the Holy Qur’an directs man to study nature and the causes of rise and fall of peoples and nations of the world. We find in the Holy Qur’an, "Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of the night and the day; in the sailing of the ships through the ocean for the profit of mankind; in the rain which God sends down from the skies; and the life which He gives therewith to an earth that is dead; in the beasts of all kinds that He scattered through the earth; in the change of the winds, and the clouds which they trail like their slaves between the sky and the earth; (here) indeed are signs for a people that are wise" (2: 164).

Over and over again man is advised to travel in the earth and to study the cause of the rise and fall of the nations of the past. The Holy Qur’an puts it like this: “Do they not travel through the earth and see what was the end of those before them — though they were superior to them in strength? Nor is God to be frustrated by anything whatever in the heavens or on earth: for He is All-Knowing, All-Powerful” (36: 44).

A blind study of blind nature will lead humanity into a blind lane and leave him there all alone groping in chaos and confusion. The Holy Qur’an categorically lays down: "O ye men! It is ye that have need of God; but God is the One free of all wants, worthy of all praise" (35: 15). A living faith in Qudrat is, therefore, a scientific necessity for advancement of human knowledge and learning. Man with Qudrat is great and without Him is a miserable creature.

**Islam is a science which deals with man — the individual as well as social collective organism**

Unfortunately the task of representing Islam these days has fallen on persons who know nothing about it. The modern guardians of Islam call themselves Ulema or the Learned; they learn something of philosophy, jurisprudence and theology in medieval Arabic schools. After the death of ‘Ali (d. 661 C.E.), the last of the four great Caliphs of Islam, the ideals and concepts of Islam have been passing through a process of progressive degeneration until recently there is a tendency amongst the Muslims to degenerate themselves into a nation in the Jewish or racial sense of the term. During the Abbaside Sultanates of Baghdad, Islam, a guide to humanity irrespective of caste, colour or territory, was reduced to a mere theology, a faith of individuals with the tragic consequence that the human aspect of Islam was deliberately ignored and ultimately forgotten. Islam was narrowed down to a form of worship and customs and ceremonies having little or no connection with or influence upon other spheres of human existence. The modern guardians of Islam are pundits of these dogmas, rituals, customs and ceremonies which misrepresent Islam and give Islam such a useless and ugly appearance as it makes it difficult for sensible men to accept it.

Islam is a science which deals with man — his individual as well as social and collective organism. In order that Islam may reassert its grandeur and its progressive role, human
contents and values of Islam must be rediscovered and set in a modern setting by the talents of the world — philosophers, scientists, sociologists and historians. Islam means peace. Peace presupposes conflict and struggle. Life, as the Indian Swami Vivekananda (d. 1902 C.E.) says, is development and non-development of a being under circumstances tending to press it down. As such life is an eternal struggle and conflict of contradictions within and without. External struggles and conflicts of life are not realities in themselves but are reflexes and replicas of internal contradictions. Economic class struggle is one of the many external manifestations of the inner conflicts between egoism and altruism of man. Egoism wants to exploit everything for the satisfaction of the ego or the flesh and is concerned mainly with the satisfaction of the immediate material craving of the body and the mind and is indifferent to the ultimate welfare of the individual as well as of the universal man. Altruism tends to suppress the ego. Islam does not suppress or oppress human nature but fully recognizes the natural demand of the body, mind and intellect and induces harmonious development of all the faculties of man so that the ego might get full satisfaction of the natural needs of man without infringing similar rights of others.

**Egoism**

Egoism creates its own selfish ethics and endeavours to overpower intellect in order to secure both moral and intellectual sanction for its desires and will. Altruism, on the other hand, to curb egoism, invents its own ethics and tries to overpower intellect with a view to securing intellectual support for itself. Thus both egoism and altruism left to themselves create an unreal atmosphere in the world within and without the breast. Consequently contradictory philosophy, jurisprudence, politics, economics, in fact, contradictory social orders and views of existence, grow and develop. Now egoism and now altruism wins the inner battles and establishes in the outer world their own thesis according as the one or the other is dominant. When egoism is powerful it establishes its own thesis and altruism, then arms itself with an anti-thesis to combat egoism. Likewise, when altruism is supreme it has its own thesis and egoism comes into the boxing ring with an anti-thesis. Thus the reflex of this inner battle manifests itself in the outer world of matter in the form of perpetual conflict between a thesis and its anti-thesis. Nature always tends to strike a balance and to evolve a synthesis out of the conflict. As in the individual organism, there is the social organism too, this inner conflict between social egoism and altruism which in a colossal form and magnitude produces the same external struggle. In this manner the poor man in an unreal and unnatural atmosphere of existence both individually and collectively tosses from one extreme to the other and is always at war with his own nature.

Nihilistic materialism sees external manifestations of conflicts and misses its inner reality and accordingly endeavours to solve the visible problems of man's immediate material environment. In its ultimate analysis these external struggles reduce themselves into class struggles. One class struggle is liquidated but another arises, and matters become more and more complicated and life becomes more and more miserable, with the net consequence than man finds no pleasure but excruciating pain in his struggle for existence. Islam does not mean cessation of struggle. It interprets the true nature of man and establishes peace between the man and his nature and his egoism and altruism. Subjectively Islam creates a peaceful mental attitude and objectively a peaceful social order perfectly congenial to nature, and thus eliminates pain from struggle, gives intense pleasure in man's natural struggle for existence and ultimately liberates the intellect from the bondage of the will of egoism and altruism by establishing communion with Qudrat. The free intellect of man guides him in the right path. Peace, according to Islam, is not as Schopenhauer thinks, mere elimination of pain, but it means elimination of pain and giving pleasure in struggle.

**The four sources of Islam**

*The will of God made manifest in His creation is the first source of Islam*

The Holy Qur'an is often erroneously taken as the fountainhead of Islam. This error obviously arises out of misconception of denotations and connotations of the terms Deen and Islam. Since Deen or religion is defined in the Holy Qur'an as the fitrat or nature of God, and since Islam is not a metaphysical speculation but is a concrete science dealing with man and his affairs, it does not require much intuition to see that the Will of God made manifest in His creation is the primary source of Deen and Islam. The Holy Qur'an is the second, the Prophet Muhammad the third, and the life and work of the faithful companions of the Prophet is the fourth original source of Islam.

**The Qur'an is the second source of Islam**

The Holy Qur'an contains the fundamentals of the law of nature which governs man — secrets of nature revealed to man which human intellect and effort cannot independently discover. Starting with the Holy Qur'an as the basis, human intellect developed through the ages will find the secrets of nature, which is the primary source of Islam. Nature and the Holy Qur'an are not inconsistent with each other but are in perfect harmony. The Holy Qur'an is to nature what a part is to a whole. If any conflict between the Holy Qur'an and nature appears, it is because the conflict is real but because human study of nature and of the Holy Qur'an is not perfect. In some quarters there is a tendency to interpret the Holy Qur'an deliberately to adjust it with the human interpretation of nature. They assume that the knowledge of man is infallible and final. This attitude definitely betrays weakness of faith in the Book of God. Since in the Holy Qur'an fundamentals of nature are so far as they affect man are codified and since the Holy Qur'an is directly revealed from Qudrat, the Creator of Fitrat, an intelligent study of the Holy Qur'an would lead to discoveries of the secrets of Nature, and reciprocally careful study of nature will help the proper interpretation and understanding of the Holy Qur'an. Whenever any contradiction between human knowledge and the Holy Qur'an arises, not the Holy Qur'an but the human interpretation of nature must, as a rule, be rejected as erroneous. As human knowledge increases the Holy Qur'an unfolds itself gradually like the petals of a flower. No individual but the accumulated knowledge of man and the voice of the age expressed through some select individuals correctly interprets the Holy Qur'an, just as the spirit of the age expresses itself through some epoch-making philosophers or scientists.

**The Prophet of Islam is the third source**

The third source of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad, is the typical model of the ideal humanity. He was the recipient of the Holy Qur'an and in him are found the precepts of Islam in their concrete and applied form. In his life and work, therefore, we get Islam in flesh and blood. His precepts and examples are most reliable guides to the theoretical as well as practical knowledge of Islam. The record of the Prophet's precepts and examples is technically called "Hadith".
Although the incidents of the Prophet Muhammad's life were very carefully and faithfully recorded and preserved by his faithful followers, yet unfortunately through the wickedness of human genius, interpolation and distortion of facts have found their way into the "Hadith", with the net result that a considerable quantity of false "Hadis" has been manufactured deliberately to misrepresent Islam by the hypocrites and enemies of Islam. Perhaps anticipating this mischief, the Prophet Muhammad himself laid down a golden rule of interpretation of "Hadith". According to rules of interpretation of "Hadith", as laid down by the Prophet, if there is any contradiction between a "Hadith" and the Holy Qur'an, the "Hadith" must be rejected as false and erroneous.

The Companions of the Prophet is the fourth of Islam

Those who had the benefit of the Prophet's companionship are also accepted as the authorities on Islam. They tried to the best of their ability to emulate in their everyday life the precepts and examples of their master, and their life and character were moulded under the magnetic influence and direct supervision of the Prophet. Of these companions, the four Caliphs, Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman and 'Ali are taken collectively as a model. Their precepts and examples immensely help the right interpretation of Islam. The post-Caliphat interpretation of Islam is generally unreliable and is not an original source of Islamic study.

The Qur'an was revealed when humanity had reached adolescence

The Holy Qur'an was revealed, revelation and prophethood were made final and the foundation of Islam was laid when humanity reached adolescence — when human intellect with the original sources of Islam, maintained and preserved in their original purity, was in a position to interpret life correctly and to mould its destiny thereby, but humanity did not reach that height of its evolution when it could universally accept Islam as the natural guide to human thought and action. Hence the manifestation of the truth and potentialities of Islam in the then Arab social organism was demonstrative and this was the reason why, with the death of 'Ali, the last of the four great Caliphs of Islam, the Islamic view of life gradually lost its grip over human thought and action. The Holy Qur'an, referring to the early Muslims, says: "Thus have We made of you a nation justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations" (2: 143).

Like individuals, society is an organism, and like individual organisms social organisms have their birth, growth, decay and death. The Arab social organism, which was the fortunate cradle of Islam, had its birth at Mecca, its growth in Medina, its decay in Damascus and its death at Baghdad, the magnificent capital of the Abbaside Empire. Now humanity has attained the age of evolution when Islam can be universally accepted as the code of life. Scientific experiments and demonstrations of preparing synthetic diamonds have been made, and the methods and results of such experiments are maintained and are well preserved. But the cost of preparing synthetic diamonds is so high and uneconomic that at the present moment synthetic diamonds cannot be made on an economical scale. When world circumstances so develop as to make preparation of synthetic diamonds economically useful and practical, synthetic diamonds will be manufactured on a mass scale for the benefit of man. So it is with Islam. The truth and possibilities of Islam were demonstrated in the Arab social organism of Medina. The methods and results of such a demonstration have been preserved in the original sources of Islam for the guidance of man. Subsequent decay of the then Arab social organism should not be construed as the decay of Islam; universal acceptance of Islam presupposes a certain standard of human progress which humanity has now reached.

Editorial — Continued from page 3

"We have wasted too much money trying to be the equal of the millionaires of America. You like the sport and play, but then you suffer the pain of hunger because of those millions of dollars lost paying notes for luxuries you could do without — such as fine automobiles, fine clothes, whiskey, beer, wine, cigarettes, tobacco and drugs. Let the entire nation sacrifice for three years; confine ourselves to not more than three dress-suits of clothing a year, never exceeding $65.00 in cost. Buy the minimum amount of shoes — never paying over $16,000 a pair, as long as the current prices of the above-mentioned merchandise remain the same. Of course, inflation can run prices up until money has no value at all. We should cut down on too much waste in high-priced food. Eat pure and wholesome food, but do not be extravagant. Let us cut out extravagances.

"As soon as we have enough finance in our bank to purchase farmlands sufficient enough to feed the 22 million black people, we will build storage warehouses to store our produce for the necessities of life of our people.

"I believe that if we make a sacrifice throughout the nation for three years, like all other nations are doing or have done, we will soon rid our people of poverty and want. Russia did it on a five-year plan. Pakistan and other nations did it, and are today on top. We must sacrifice for three years. I will not ask you to try a five-year plan; I am afraid that you, with your short patience, will not agree. But try three years on an 'Economical Savings Programme' to fight against poverty among our people here in America. I know you will become a happier and more recognized people and have the spirit of self-independence, which is the glory of any nation.

"Please respond and help yourself. Each and every one of you will be sent a receipt which will be recorded in our books for the Muslims' Three-Year Economical Programme for the Black Nation of America. You will be receipted for every penny which you send to this office, which you will keep as your record. You can mail the money to us directly at the Muslims' Three-Year Economical Programme Department, Muhammad's Mosque No. 2, 5335 South Greenwood Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. You can send 25 cents each week or $1.00 per month. Send postal or personal money orders. No personal cheques will be accepted unless your financial savings are verified by the bank.

"We, the Muslims, will support this programme and hope that every member of the working class of our people throughout the country will join us. We will show the world that we can build an independent nation out of those who have been a dependent people for 400 years.

"We are asking you to help us enlarge our educational system so that our people can be educated. This we refer to as re-education into the knowledge of self, our history, and the knowledge of the good things of life of which we have been deprived. You can also aid us by subscribing to the Muhammad Speaks newspaper. And be sure to read Muhammad's Programme on the last page of our paper.

"May Allah bless our poor dependent people in America with better homes, more money, and better friendship among the nations of the earth. I await your response."
The Libraries of the Great Mughals

By K. M. Yusuf

The rulers of the House of Timur in India were great patrons of education, and their benevolent policy created such a congenial atmosphere that art and literature thrived and flourished remarkably. The Mughal emperors equalled with the caliphs of Baghdad and Cordova in the intellectual advancement, and their literary attainments were magnanimous. Their courts became the cradles of scholars, litterateurs, poets and artists who received regular encouragement from their sovereign-patrons. The splendour of Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri and Lahore beamed far and wide.

Almost all the Mughal emperors had magnificent royal libraries of their own, apart from the numerous libraries, containing innumerable manuscripts in fine calligraphy, which were established in different parts of the empire and richly endowed. "They furnish an eloquent testimony to the culture of days gone by when in the absence of modern facilities for the propagation of literature and the multiplication of books, human patience endured great hardships to preserve for posterity the best thoughts of the learned men of antiquity," writes a modern researcher.

Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur (1526-1530 C.E.), the illustrious founder of the Mughal empire in India, was a literary genius. His scholarship in Arabic, Persian and Turki ranked supreme. His Memoirs (the Tuzki-i-Baburi) earned for him the title of the "Prince of Autobiographers". He may well be described as the founder of the Mughal Imperial Library in India. He used to visit the library whenever he found time to relax, and often composed poems there. He took delight in the society of learned men, and in holding discussions with them he found the best intellectual satisfaction. His library consisted of two sets of books: those brought by him from Farghana and the others procured through conquests. The manuscripts of Sa'di's Gulistan, Ferdauisi's Shahnama, Nizami's Khamsa, Khusrav's Masnavi and Yazdi's Zafarnama formed part of the library.

Nasiruddin Muhammad Humayun (1530-1556 C.E.) was a studious scholar. He had a great love for books and was interested in geogaphy and astronomy. He had a large library and Lala Beg, alias Baz Bahadur, was the royal librarian. The monarch was so fond of books that even during military expeditions he carried a "select library" with him. He had a precious copy of the Tarikh-i-Taimuriya, which was illustrated by the master-painter Behzad, apart from the important volumes of the Qumun-i-Humayuni, the Riyaz-ul-Adwiyyah and the Jawahir-ul-Ulum-i-Humayuni.

The Emperor's library and his librarian formed his inseparable companions even on his pathetic flight to Iran in 1550 C.E. (vide Gulbadan Begum's Humayun-nama, Beveridge, pp. 124-125; Count Noer's Akbar, p. 136). After he succeeded in recovering his lost dominions he turned Sher Mandal, the pleasure-house of Sher Shah at Purana Qila, Delhi, into a library. It was from the staircase of this library that the Emperor Humayun fell and died when "the ferrule of his staff slipped" and he "rolled downstairs on the ground".

The patronage extended to art and literature by Jalalud-din Muhammad Akbar (1556-1605 C.E.) needs no introduction. He was a potentate who may justly be regarded as one of the greatest and mightiest sovereigns known to history. "The Emperor took much delight in the collection of books in his library," writes Dr. N. N. Law, the celebrated author of the Promotion of Learning under Muslim Rule in India. Abu 'I-Fazl says: "His Majesty's library is divided into several parts; some of the books are kept within, and some outside the harem. Each part of the library is sub-divided, according to the value of books and the estimation in which the sciences are held. Prose-books, poetical works, Hindi, Persian, Greek, Kashmiri, Arabic, all are separately placed. In this order they are also inspected. Experienced people bring them daily and read them before His Majesty, who hears every book from the beginning to the end" (vide the A'in-i-Akbari, Biochmann, I, pp. 109-110).

The Emperor Akbar enriched the royal library with innumerable additions. A large number of books were acquired during his expeditions to Gujarat, Jaunpur, Bengal, Bihar, Kashmir and the Deccans. Vincent Smith remarks that it was the library "to which probably no parallel then existed, or ever existed, in the world." All the books were manuscripts. The scientific arrangement of the library will be evident from the fact that the books were catalogued and numbered in three different sections. The first section contained books on poetry, medicine, astrology and music; the second philology, philosophy, sufism, astronomy and geometry; and the third had commentaries on the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith and books dealing with theology and law.

The royal library was situated in a capacious room on the side of the octagonal tower in the Agra Fort. Faiz, the poet-laureate, was the librarian, and 'Inayatullah Shirazi superintendent. For some time they were assisted by 'Abdul Qadir Badayuni in the management of the library. Some of the important books in the library, which were regularly read out to the Emperor, were the Gulistan, the Bustan, the Akhlaq-i-Nasiri, the Kimya-y-Sa'adat, the Qabus-nama, the Maktub-i-Sharaf Munir, the Hadiga, the Munsavi-i-Ma'navi, the Jam-i-Jan, the Khamsa-i-Nizami, and the works of Khusrav, Jami, Khaqani and Anwari.

Akbar's translation bureau played a vital part in enriching the royal library. In order to achieve the unity of India and to exchange the social and spiritual ideas between the Hindus and the Muslims, a large number of Sanskrit works were rendered into Persian at the initiative of the Emperor himself. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the Atharva
Veda and the Bhagavata Gita, the Sangasii Bittisi and the Rajarangni, the Panchatantra and the Haribansa, and many other Sanskrit works were put into Persian under new names and decorated the shelves of the royal library. Similarly, important works from other languages, such as Mu'jam al-Buldan, the Wagi'at-ii-Badari, the Hayati al-Haywaan, etc., were also translated into Persian for the royal library. A portion of the Bible was translated into Persian under the title of Dastan-i-Masih at the Emperor’s command.

Muhammad Zubsair in his book Islami Kutub Khane mentions that about 15,000 manuscripts of the royal library were re-transcribed by skilled calligraphists at Akbar’s orders. A number of famous works, to mention a few, the Darab-nama, the Changiz-nama, the Zafar-nama, the Akbar-nama, the Romayana, the Nal-wa-Daman, the Kalila-wa-Dimna, the Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Taimuriya and the Mahabharata, were embellished with fine illustrations by a band of master painters who were lavishly patronized. The famous manuscript of Razm-nama (i.e., the Mahabharata) is said to have cost Akbar about £40,000. It is now preserved at Jaipur (vide Martín’s Miniature Paintings and Painters of India, Persia and Turkey, 1, p. 127).

Badayuni says that Faizi had a fine collection of about 4,600 volumes in his personal library, including 101 copies of Nal-wa-Daman, some of which were nicely translated at great expense. They dealt with literature, medicine, astronomy, music, philosophy, mathematics and jurisprudence (vide the Muntakhab al-Tawarikh, III, p. 305). These treasures were transferred to the royal library after Faizi’s death. According to Manrique and de Laet, at the time of Akbar’s death the royal library had 24,000 beautifully bound manuscripts valued at about Rs.65 lakhs (about £500,000) or even more.

Nuruddin Muhammad Jahangir (1605-1627 C.E.), a lover of nature and beauty, was a scholar as well as a poet. He studied Persian poetry, Islamic theology, Hindu philosophy and Christian scriptures. His Memoirs (the Tuzki-i-Jahangiri) is a brilliant proof of his literary attainments. He inherited a love for books from his illustrious father and maintained a wonderful library. Jahangir’s favourite subjects were history, biography and geography. He purchased a large number of manuscripts at exorbitantly high prices. According to Martin, Jahangir paid 3,000 gold rupees, or about £10,000, for one manuscript only. The royal library consisted of such books as the Rauzaat-al-Ahbab, the Tafsir-i-Husaini, the Tafsir-i-Kashshaf, the Iqbalnama-i-Jahangiri, the Maasir-i-Jahangiri and the Zubdah al-Tawarikh.

The Emperor appointed Makub Khan as the librarian of the royal library and the superintendent of the picture gallery (vide the Tuzki-i-Jahangiri, Rogers and Beveridge, p. 12). When he went to Gujarat he took a library with him for his own personal use. It is said that during the concluding period of his reign there were as many as 60,000 precious manuscripts and masterpieces of fine arts in the royal library (vide the Islami Kutub Khane, p. 221).

A treasured gem of Jahangir’s library was the manuscript of the Yusafl wa Zulaykha, which was transcribed by the celebrated Mir ‘Ali, the Prince of Calligraphers, in 1523 C.E., the value of which was estimated at 1,000 gold mohars. It now adorns the Khuda Bukhsh Library, Patna. A copy of Prince Kamran’s Diwan also preserved in the Khuda Bukhsh Library, contains some scripts written by Jahangir himself. Jahangir’s book of fortune-telling, the Diwan-i-Hafiz, which contains marginal notes in the Emperor’s own handwriting, is also kept safe at the Khuda Bukhsh Library.

The reign of Abu Muzaffar Muhammad Shihabuddin Shahjahhan (1627-1658 C.E.) saw the height of the Mughal splendour when the Empire attained the zenith of its prosperity and affluence. Education, literature and fine arts made mighty strides. He, too, was a great patron of libraries and learning, and followed in Akbar’s footsteps (vide Silchand’s Tafrihit-ul-Imarat). We have it on the authority of Sir Jadunath Sarkar that a group of good readers were maintained to read out to the Emperor “books on travel, lives of saints and prophets and histories of former kings — all rich in instructions”. These were preserved in the royal library. The celebrated Padshah-nama, written by Muhammad Amin Qazwini, as well as the Padshah-namas of Tabatabai, Abdul Hamid Lahori and Waris adorned the Library. The collection also included three comprehensive dictionaries, i.e., the Farhang-i-Rashidi, the Muntakhab-al-Lughat-i-Shahjahan and the Chaahar ‘Unsir-i-Danish; an encyclopaedia of sciences, the Shahidi-i-Sadiq; and the Zich-i-Shahjahan, an astral chart by the great astronomer Munajjim, apart from the numerous Divans of the celebrated poets.

Several rare manuscripts bearing Shahjahan’s autographs and the royal seal are preserved in the Asiatic Society, Calcutta. The Majalis-i-Khamsa, with the Emperor’s signature, and the Shahnanshah-nama, which he purchased at a fabulous price for the royal library, are the treasures of the Khuda Bukhsh Library.

Muhuyuddin Muhammad Aurangzeb ‘Alamgir (1658-1707 C.E.), the last of the great Mughals, who was “an eminent educationist”, decorated the royal library with various additions of the theological works on Tafsir, Hadith and Fiqh (vide the Mir’at al-Aalam). He spent his leisure hours in hunting legal precedents in Arabic works of jurisprudence. The famous Fatawa-e-Alamgiri, “the greatest digest of Muslim law made in India,” was compiled by a board of eminent jurists under the Emperor’s personal supervision, and was placed in the royal library. The rich library of Mahmud Gawan, which had some 3,000 manuscripts in stock, was amalgamated with the royal library. Some of the valuable books stored in the library were the Rauzaat-i-Alamgiri, the Tuhfat al-Hind, the Nizam al-Najmi, the Mat-Achra, the Torikhi-i-Dilkusha, the Futtuhat-i-Alamgiri and the Khulasat al-Tawarikh. The authors of the last four works were Lall Bihari, Bhim Singh, Iswar Das and Sujan Rai. Shaikh ‘Abul Wali Oubli Khan and Sved ‘Ali Khan, the Jawahir-Raqaam, were the distinguished librarians of the Emperor.

The royal libraries of the Mughal emperors were storehouses of knowledge and erudition, and their passion for books and libraries bear testimony to their refined culture and magnificence of taste.
U.A.R.-IRAQ Unified Political Command—
Joint communique issued in Cairo

16th October 1964

In accordance with the 26th May 1964 agreement concluded between the Iraqi Republic and the U.A.R., and after joint studies, the two contracting parties have decided to consider constitutional unity between the two countries. It is an imperative matter to be achieved in the shortest possible time. It is not important that constitutional unity should merely be established between the two countries: what is important is that this constitutional unity should be able to confront the various difficulties which will be raised by hostile and imperialist elements.

Practical considerations for the achievement of unity demand that we should establish it on firm bases which call for the co-operation of all sincere forces and the discharge of their duties. A sincere joint effort is the only way to achieve this hope, which is in itself a consolidation of the honour of the sacrifices made for it. It has been confirmed by the experience through which unity has passed that the sound basis for its establishment between two countries is by unifying political action and establishing a unified political leadership working for the establishment of constitutional unity in the shortest possible time. Also to study the various problems that may face it and find practical solutions for them to safeguard the interests of the two peoples, protect the interests of individuals, and seek and promote national unity. The establishment of popular organizations in both countries, including the forces of the working people, on a sound basis, to strengthen and unify them under one leadership, will be among the first things to be done by this (unified political) leadership. The two parties have therefore agreed on the following:

Article (1).—A unified political leadership is to be established for the Iraqi Republic and the U.A.R., which shall be the highest political authority in the two countries.

Article (2).—The duties of the unified political leadership are three: (i) to take all practical steps to realize the constitutional unity between the two countries in a period not exceeding two years; (ii) to take practical steps to realize the constitutional unity between the two countries; (iii) to supervise (a) foreign policy, (b) armed forces and defence affairs, (c) economic planning, (d) culture, national guidance and education, (e) national security; (iv) discussion of the internal affairs of the two countries, finding suitable solutions to them and continuing their implementation.

Article (3).—The unified political leadership shall be composed of the presidents of the two Republics and at least six members from each of the two countries. It has the right to establish the machinery which undertakes to discharge its affairs.

Article (4).—The unified political leadership shall meet once every two months. It may hold an extraordinary meeting if necessary.

Article (5).—Decisions of the unified political leadership are valid as soon as they are issued except those which require approval by the legislative authority in each of the two countries.

Article (6).—This agreement is considered in force as soon as it is approved by the legislative authorities in the two countries.

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NORTHERN NIGERIA

Training for the future

A great deal has already been done, and more will be done, to achieve that expansion in knowledge which is so essential to the future agricultural development of Northern Nigeria.

Agriculture is the economic backbone of Northern Nigeria. It yields an annual revenue of nearly £50 million — or approximately half of Nigeria's total revenue from export. Because of the great importance which the Government of Northern Nigeria attaches to this basic industry, it has set aside £5.2 million in the Region's new Six-Year Development Plan (1962/68) for agricultural development. In addition to this, it has allocated £11.7 million to a new Development Corporation to carry out many agricultural projects which include wheat mechanization, fertilizer and insecticide distribution, fisheries, tree crop plantations and corn storage facilities.

These are large sums by any standards, but they are justified. For, as the First Progress Report, issued recently by the Ministry of Economic Planning in Kaduna, states:

"A primary objective of the 1962/68 Development Plan is the development of natural resources. If agricultural output and productivity can be increased enough, exports of agricultural products would enable the Region to make its contribution to the accumulation of foreign exchange so badly needed for the importation of capital goods; adequate food supplies would provide for the dietary needs of the non-agricultural population; and agricultural incomes should rise quickly and substantially."

This, then, is the bold objective for the future. But meanwhile, much has already been achieved in that most important aspect of agricultural development, education; and here, too, expansion is the keynote.

Samaru School of Agriculture

For example, there are the many courses now being run at the Samaru School of Agriculture, Zaria. This school is the oldest agricultural institution in the Region and between its foundation in 1932 and 1963 it had trained a total of 851 students for posts with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Native Authorities.

Originally the school was planned to take only 108 students, but as a result of expansion under the Development Plan there are already 223 students this year (compared with 163 in 1963), and in due course there will be accommodation for 250 students.

The number of courses, too, as mentioned above, has been increased over recent years. Thus the courses now include a two-year course for Agricultural Assistants and a one-year advanced course, started in 1956, for practising Agricultural Assistants to enable them to qualify as Assistant Agricultural Superintendents.

In 1961 a tractor driving school was also started and runs special courses in the operation, care and use of farm machinery. The courses are open to all Government, Native Authority and privately-sponsored drivers.

In February of the following year a mechanical course was started for students of the Assistant Agricultural Superintendent grade, and now, for the first time in the history of the school, a course designed mainly for women has been instituted. This is a two-year course in Home Economics and
AREA: 282,000 square miles

Nearly 3 million Northern Nigerians have enrolled in voluntary literary classes since the campaign to obliterate illiteracy began. More than 600,000 of them have already qualified for Certificates of Literacy. About half a million Nigeria became independent

Left: Alhaji Ahmad Galadima, Minister of Agriculture (centre), is shown to a student at a recent SP School of Agriculture. The Prime J. G. O. Craig (right)

Right: Girls taking the Home Eco School of Agriculture are shown

Left: Here the girls of Samaru are preparing a heap for a vegetable

Right: Sewing is also taught at Samaru
POPULATION: 20,000,000

have learned to read. Nearly four million more adults — between the ages of 15 and 35 — will have attended voluntary literacy classes by 1965. More than 16,000 literacy instructors have already been trained in Northern Nigeria.

Malam Zaid Attah, Principal of the school, Mr. Idumaga (right), looks on as a teacher shows how to operate a tractor.

The girl students at Samaru preparing a compost vegetable garden.

Something is also taught at Samaru.

JANUARY 1965
its object is to enable women to be trained as agricultural home agents.

The subjects offered for the course include clothing, sewing, food and nutrition, cookery, health and sanitation, physical education, child care, home crafts, animal husbandry, biology, agricultural chemistry, vegetable production, farm management, economics, extension methods, agricultural farm shops, farm machinery, poultry and horticulture.

At present, 19 girls from secondary schools in Northern Nigeria are undergoing the course, which is open to girls of Northern origin with secondary school qualifications, and is residential. While in training, the girls are the employees of the Ministry of Agriculture, and they live, under the eye of a chaperon, in their own hostel.

Practical work

As might be expected, in all the courses the theoretical work is related as far as possible to agricultural practice. Students carry out practical work on the school farms, which include two mixed farms of nearly 40 acres each. Here the crops grown include cotton, guinea corn and groundnuts. Sheep, work-bulls, milk-cows, calves, poultry and goats are raised. There is also a main farm where the students practise mechanized cultivation. Maize and macuna are also grown for silage and "Kyasawa" and "gamba" grass and "stylosanthes gracilis" mixture for feeding.

In addition, near the school building there are a horticultural nursery, a "living museum" of local and exotic crops, half an acre of mixed citrus and a small area of irrigated crops.

Student life

Living conditions for the students at Samaru are good. Besides the girls' hostel mentioned earlier, there is the male students' hostel with modern amenities. There is also accommodation for 48 married students. Many of the students are allocated fully-furnished single rooms. The school provides meals, with the students contributing to the cost of food and service. Married students, however, need not board at the hostel.

Facilities are available for games, and leisure activities generally are encouraged. In cases of illness, prompt medical attention is provided by the Station Dispensary or by the Zaria General Hospital for more serious cases.

Academic year

The academic year at the school is divided into three terms, beginning in February. Examinations are held at the end of each term and Speech Day is held in December, when prizes and certificates are awarded.

On graduating, the students are posted to the provinces, where they assist in extension work and other activities.

Kabba School

Despite its expansion, the Samaru School cannot be expected to satisfy the Region’s needs for agricultural education as required under the Development Plan and further steps have been, or are being, taken to relieve the pressure.

Thus, in April 1963, the foundation stone of a second school of agriculture was laid at Kabba. The new school will cost some £220,000. Part of the cost is being borne by the United States Agency for International Development.

The syllabus at Kabba follows the same pattern as that of the Samaru school and all the other facilities of study at Samaru are available there. During the period of the Six-Year Development Plan, however, the school will train only agricultural assistants.

The eventual capacity of the school will be 90 students.

But already, in May this year, the first courses were started with 31 agricultural assistants, who will finish their training by December 1965.

Farm training centres

Meanwhile the Northern Ministry of Agriculture is also forging ahead with its plans to build Farm Training Centres in each Province with extensions for double streaming at Kano and Sokoto.

Centres for the training of Agricultural Instructors have already been built at Kafinsoli (Katsina), Yandev (Benue), Bauchi, Danbatta (Kano), Talata-Mafara (Sokoto), Maiduguri (Borno), Bida (Niger), Ilorin, Zonkwa (Zaria) and Yola. Moreover, during the development years the Ministry hopes to finish building three other centres for Plateau, Kabba and Sardauna Provinces. Each centre is expected to train 16 Agricultural Instructors.

Farm institutes

Finally, in addition to the Farm Training Centres, the Ministry has plans to build 54 Farm Institutes, one in each division in Northern Nigeria, during the period of the Six-Year Development Plan. The farming system at these institutes will be designed to comply with the Ministry’s recommendations for successful farming in the area at which the institute is situated.

Ahihaju Ibrahim Biu, M.H.A., Northern Nigeria Minister of Information

"One of the principal tasks of my Ministry is to inform and enlighten the people of Northern Nigeria so that they may enjoy the fruits of their birthright, play an intelligent part in the government of their Region and learn to co-operate with the Government in its plans for their social and economic advancement."

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
MODERN ISLAMIC THOUGHT IN INDONESIA

The Muhammadiyyah — the Sharikat Islam

The influence of the writings of the late Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din and Muhammad ‘Ali

By A. MUKTI ‘ALI

Islam came to Indonesia from Gujarat, India, in the 15th century C.E.

The origin of the process and development of modern Islamic thinking in Indonesia cannot be appreciated without a knowledge of the social and religious life of the Indonesian people during the last part of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth centuries.

Indonesia has always been receptive of influences from foreign civilizations. Lying astride the sea route from India, Arabia, Africa and Europe to China and Japan, the archipelago, since time immemorial, has been the recipient of successive waves of immigration. All possible influences have been digested in one way or another.

History records that Islam was brought to Indonesia from Gujarat in Western India, where Islam had not been able to keep itself from the Hinduistic influences. (The early history of the spread of Islam in Indonesia, on which many books have been written, will not be discussed here.) This mixture of Islam with Hinduistic elements facilitated the rapid spread of the new religion among the Indonesians, especially the Javanese, familiar as they were with Hinduism from olden times. Also the lack of critical insight among the Indonesians into the real differences between Hinduism and Islam facilitated the spread of the new religion. The spread of Islam in Indonesia was the work of sufis (Islamic mystics), and the sufis were in many cases tolerant of traditional usages and habits of thought which run contrary to the strict practice of Islamic unitarianism (tauhid). The Indonesians laid more stress on mysticism (tasawwuf) and mystical practices (tariqah) than on scholastic theology (’ilm al-kalimi) and jurisprudence (fiqh). Among the Indonesians it was not the theologians (mutakallimin) or the jurists (fiqhata) who were most highly honoured and respected, but rather the leaders of mystic orders (shuyukh al-turag). The most famous Muslim scholars in the last decade of the sixteenth century in North Sumatra, Hamzah Pansuri, Shamsuddin of Pase, Nuruddin al-Bani, ‘Abd al-Rauf of Singkel, were mystics.

In Java, too, the nine walis (the wali songo) were mystics. In Indonesian Muslim society the balance was, in general, tilted against the orthodox doctrine. The theologians and jurists were dragged in the wake of the sufis; and by and by, large theology and jurisprudence came down to make a compromise with sufis doctrine.

The success of Islam in the early centuries was indeed due, partly, to the simplicity and intelligibility of its teach-


ings, but also largely to its concession to the existing and indigenous customs.

**The syncretism of the Indonesians**

The place which Islam has taken in the cultural history of Indonesia and the influence which it has exerted on the course of events there are strikingly different from what one finds in India. In that country, Hinduism and Islam, despite the influences which each has exerted on the other in the fields of both religion and thought, stand face to face in sharply separated camps as a result of social and political differences, which resulted in the creation of two independent States, India and Pakistan. In Indonesia, however, the contrast faded away: the process of syncretism of growing into one out of the two essentially different religious and philosophical systems, advanced uninterrupted after the inception of Islam.

This does not mean that the Islam which was first introduced into Indonesia was wholly unorthodox or that orthodoxy only appeared in Indonesian Islam after the influx of the Hadramaut Arabs in the 18th and 19th centuries. On the contrary, even before the relationship between Indonesia and Arabia began to develop, there were orthodoxy mystics and scholars, especially in Sumatra, like Nurudin al-Raniri and ‘Abd al-Ra‘uf of Singkel. The syncretic tendency is an evidence of the tolerance but not necessarily of the unorthodoxy of the first Muslims who brought Islam to the archipelago.³

We see Arabic names appearing in the *titulaire* of Indonesian monarchs side by side with Sanskrit names: Djohan Shah, the traditional first ruler of the Muslim state Atjeh in the early 13th century, adorned his name with the title *Sri Paduka Sultan*, and the Mataram sultans magnified their names with the title *Nalipatullah* and *Panata Gama* (he who regulates religion). We see the Sanskrit words *piwasa* (from *piwassai upavasa*) being used for the Islamic fast, *gurti*, for teacher, *santri* (a deformation of the Sanskrit *castrī* : he who knows the Hindu Holy Books) for religious student, and many other Sanskrit words being used as names for Islamic religious practices. We see the *wajang* (shadow play), which is in separably connected with the literature, dancing and music and many other elements of the ancient culture and has a Hindu epic as its theme, still popular among the Indonesian Muslims. The *prinhont* books which contain the mystic teachings of the Javanese Muslims, the books by Ranggarawisita, the Javanese court poet and scholar of the second half of the 19th century, in which he explains the wisdom and science of the Javanese and designates them by the word *ngelmju* (from Arabic *ilm* : knowledge), show how traditional mysticism stands side by side with outspoken monism, and how, in the latter Islam and Hinduism, they go together peacefully and cordially. The reason for this illogical coexistence was that the real characteristic of each remained vague in the minds of most of the Javanese Muslims. At the same time we see how the Atjehnese believed not only in the possibility but in the necessity of having *shari‘at* (which the Atjehnese call *Hukm* and pronounce *Hukom*) and ‘*aadat* side by side in their country, without critical examination of the question whether or not the *aadat* practices are in accordance, or in conflict, with the *shari‘at*. “Hukom and ‘aadat are inseparable, even as God’s essence and his attributes,” says the Atjehnese proverb: “Hukom and ‘aadat are like the pupil and the white of the eye; the hukom is God’s *hukom* and the ‘*aadat* is God’s ‘*aadat*,” says another one.⁴ Likewise in Minangkabau, which has the nickname *srambi Makkah* (the veranda of Makkah), the ‘*aadat* law of inheritance, in which children inherit not from their fathers but from their mothers, is in open conflict with the Islamic law. These and various unorthodox religious practices in Indonesia dated from before the arrival of Islam in the archipelago, and some of them are still prevalent at the present day.

Furthermore, there is a belief in *djinats*, or amulets, having a power to do harm or good to men, and an expectation of intercession from graves and tombs.⁵

This state of affairs did not, however, remain unchanged; time has incontestably worked for Islam. In those regions which were more or less outside the sphere of Hindu influence the thin stream of Hinduism were off quickly, while in the other regions where Hindu influence were strong, orthodoxy gradually gained a foothold, and after penetrating deeper into it, began to combat the local complex of habits.

**The Egyptian reformer Muhammad ‘Abduh’s influence on Indonesian Islam**

Meanwhile, at the beginning of the 16th century, Europeans appeared in the Indonesian waters. Perhaps it is not too bold a statement to make that the Western penetration of the archipelago had produced certain consequences in the sphere of religion far earlier than it had in the spheres of economics and the social structure. Regular shipping traffic between Europe and the Orient established direct contact between Indonesia and Arabia; steam-navigation and the opening of the Suez Canal facilitated intercourse between the peoples of both countries and greatly accelerated the process of cultural reorientation among Indonesians. Many Indonesians went for the Hajj. Besides the pilgrims who contented themselves with merely visiting the sacred places and performing the due ceremonies, there were those who made a longer stay in order to complete their theological studies. There was a large colony of the Javanese in Mecca, who had taken up residence, some of them permanently, in

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⁵ Hamka mentions this in his *Sedjatoh Asigma Islam di Sumatera, op. cit.*; see also G. H. Bouquet, *La Politique Musulmane et Coloniale des Pays-Bas*, Paul Hartmann, Paris, p. 18.


⁷ A first-hand study of the importance of Mecca and the Hajj for Indonesian Muslims and the life of the Indonesians in the sacred city was made by Snouck Hurgronje in his *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century*, tr. by J. H. Manshan, E. J. Brill, Leyden, 1931; see also his numerous articles in “*FG*, op. cit.*, VI, ‘Hadjii Politiek’, pp. 335-348; *VII-VIII* "De Hadjii Politiek der Indische Regeering", pp. 221-310, *‘Politique musulmane de la Hollande’. This last article was rendered into Dutch and published in a separate book, *Nederland en de Islam*, E. J. Brill, Leyden, 1915. See also Bouquet, *La Politique*... *op. cit.*, pp. 34-41.
the sacred city. These were in constant communication with their fellow-countrymen in their native land, and their efforts had been to a great extent effective in purging Islam in the archipelago from the contamination of heathenish customs and modes of thought that had survived from an earlier period. A large number of religious books were printed in Mecca and also in Cairo in the various languages spoken in the archipelago, especially in Malay, and carried to all parts of Indonesia. A new kind of Malay literature arose, the so-called kitab literature. All sorts of Arabic dogmatic, juridical and orthodox mystic essays were translated into Malay and spread among the people. From another quarter, orthodox Arabs from Hadramaut migrated to Indonesia, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries, and some of them, besides being merchants, preached orthodox Islamic teachings among the Indonesians. Thus the pesantren (religious seminaries) through the influx of kitab literature gradually became more orthodox, and so too did many of the common people who were influenced by Hadramaut Arabs, while needless to say the Hadijij returned from Mecca much more orthodox than before. Perhaps it was no exaggeration when Snouck Hurgronje wrote: “Makkah has been well said to have more influence on the religious life of the Indonesian people than on Turkey, India or Bukhara.”

Thus at this stage Arabia began to take the place once occupied by India, and orthodoxy began to eliminate, on a large scale, the heterodox religious practices.

Meanwhile, in the second half of the 19th century, Muhammad ‘Abduh launched a modern Islamic reformatory movement in Egypt. He and his followers, whose group later became known as the Salafiyah, had an unnoticed but tremendous influence upon Islamic thinking in Indonesia. It was the Egyptian periodical al-Manaar in the first place which brought the light of this new thought to a large public, not only to Egyptians, but also to Arabs in other countries, including Arab emigrants abroad, and to Indonesian Muslims who studied at al-Azhar or in Mecca; and quite a few copies slipped through the Dutch customs into the hands of young Indonesians in their own country.

The Dutch policy towards Islam

The Dutch policy towards Islam in Indonesia, as summarized by its able adviser, Professor C. Snouck Hurgronje, was as follows:

(a) in matters relating to pure religious worship, the government with all sincerity must give the fullest freedom;

(b) in social questions, the government must respect the existing national institutions while leaving open to them the opportunity of a “desirable” evolution in “our” direction, and must make efforts to promote this evolution;

(c) in matters relating to politics, the government must suppress all kinds of Pan-Islamic ideas, which aim at inviting foreign powers to influence the relations between the Dutch government and its eastern subjects.

The Dutch government was very much afraid of what it called “Pan-Islamic” ideas, and accordingly kept a careful watch on Arabic books imported from the Arab countries. Books which were suspected of being tainted with the “dangerous” Pan-Islamic ideas were banned from entering into the Indonesian territory. Notwithstanding the severe censorship, however, smugglers contrived to bring Arabic magazines and newspapers into Indonesia. Oemer Amin Hoesin writes that among the magazines and daily newspapers smuggled into Indonesia, in the form of kitabs, mostly through the small fishing harbours of Tuban in East Java (not through the ordinary ports of Djakarta, Semarang or Surabaja), were al-Urwat al-Wuthqa, al-Mu’ayyad, al-Siyaasah, al-Lawi, al-Ad, all from Cairo, and Thamrat al-Funn and al-Qistaas al-Mustaqim, both from Beirut. Though complete series of these magazines and newspapers were not accessible to the young Indonesians, the available copies were sufficient to stir up modernism in Indonesia during the first decade of the 20th century.

Though the Indian influence upon the development of modern ideas amongst the Muslims of Indonesia gradually gave way to the Arab influence, it certainly has been of considerable importance. The present writer prefers not to discuss this subject here, because the connections between modern Islam in Indonesia and Indonesian modernism have not yet been sufficiently investigated. A reading of some of ‘Umar Sa’id Tjokroaminoto’s available works, however, suggests that Tjokroaminoto, the founder of the Sharikat Islam, was profoundly influenced by Indian modernists: the method of writing used in his Islam dan Socialisme follows that of Qidwa’s and his book Tarish Agama Islam is based primarily on Ameer ‘Ali’s The Spirit of Islam, the Maulavi Muhammad ‘Ali’s Muhammad the Prophet and Khwaja Kamaluddin’s The Ideal Prophet.

The pesantren schools

Though the Western impact had its consequences which helped to strengthen Islamic orthodoxy, in other respects it

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9 Quoted by Arnold, op. cit., p. 407.

11 See article “Het Mohammedansing in ‘V’G,” VI-11, pp. 219-220. This Islamic policy has been criticized by Professor G. H. Bouquet in La Politique Musulmane Coloniale des Pays-Bas, op. cit. For a comment on Bouquet’s criticism and the Dutch Islamic policy, see article “Oleh-oleh dari Alger” (written in 1939) in M. Natsir, Capita Selecta, W. van Hoeve, Bandung, s-Gravenhage, 1954; see also the analyses of Harry J. Benda in “Part I, the Colonial Heritage,” in The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesia under the Japanese Occupation of Java, 1942-45 (doctoral dissertaion), Cornell University, 1955.
13 Every book written on the Indonesian nationalist movement describes the Sharikat Islam as the first political party which played a really important role in the development of the political relations between Indonesia and Holland. On the life and struggle of its founder and the political, economic and social ideas of the Sharikat Islam see Amelz (pseud.), H. O. S. Tjokroaminoto, hidup dan perjuangannya, 2 vols. (Vol. I., 1952), Bulan Bintang, Djakarta; see also articles “Sarekat Islam” in Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indie (cited hereafter as EOI).
was detrimental to the progress of Islam in Indonesia.\(^{16}\)

Up to the end of the 19th century, spiritual contact between the Europeans and the Indonesians was very limited. It was confined to a few scholars and other interested men on the Dutch side and a few high dignitaries on the Indonesian side. The Indonesians to whom the Dutch gave education were only a very small group of future officials; the rest of the Indonesian youth were educated by their parents or in the Muslim environment of the pesantren. In the aristocratic milieu, the education of the Indonesian boy was mainly intended to develop character and the graces of an honoured community such as delicacy, courtesy, modesty, self-confidence and the like, which embodied the Indonesian (and especially Javanese) ideal of chivalry. In addition, they were expected to be acquainted with ancestral manners and customs and with family traditions, as these were the pillars on which Indonesian society rests. A girl, on the other hand, did not need to learn more than how to be a good wife as understood by the Indonesians at that time.\(^{17}\) The pesantren must be briefly described here, because Islamic education in general and the pesantren in particular were among the first targets of the Indonesian modern Islamic thought’s campaign for reform.

The pesantren was the religious educational institution in which higher education was given. Primary or elementary religious education was given in the langgar or surau. The beginning for every Indonesian Muslim was the recitation of the Qur’an. In this less emphasis was laid on understanding the contents of the book than on correctly intoning the Arabic sounds. The method of instruction was that the teacher would read the Qur’an word by word and the pupil would repeat the teacher’s readings. The following day, the pupil would read the same portion of the Qur’an which had been read by his teacher the day before. There were no classes in the langgar. The amount of the readings would depend on the intelligence of each pupil; some beginners would be allowed to read only one line of the Qur’an, some more senior pupils would be allowed to read half a page, and the more advanced a pupil became, the more pages would he be allowed to read. What the pupil attained in this curriculum was a capacity to recite correctly the portions of the Holy Qur’an required for his daily prayers. He became acquainted with a strange and difficult system of Arabic sounds and, thus incidentally, with a little phonetic science. The art of writing was also taught. When the pupil had practised the Arabic script, he started with the recitation of the last of the 30 parts (Juz’) of the Qur’an. Next he proceeded to learn, from a small catechism, the essentials of the religious doctrine, usually ninety-nine attributes of God, besides which he was also trained in the performance of the five daily prayers. Such was the elementary religious education of the Indonesian Muslims, usually given in the langgar or surau of which one found about a dozen in every desa (commune).

If the pupil wanted to pursue the study of religious sciences, he could go to the pesantren (in some parts of Indonesia called pondok). The pesantren was a religious seminary, in which students (called sastris) and teachers (called kiyai) lived in one compound (Kampong). At the centre of the compound stood a mosque, and the houses in which the students lodged were divided into kombongan, each accommodating a group of students from one Regency or Residency. Thus there would be a kombongan Surabaya, for example, in which students from Surabaya Regency resided. The kiyai taught voluntarily and depended on his own income from a rice field or small plantation, but received gifts from the parents of his pupils. Usually the mosque and the lodgings were built with funds or charitable foundations (waqf).

The curriculum of the pesantren

The student was free to choose his own subjects or teachers. Besides the head kiyai (the person responsible for the pesantren) and other kiyais if there were any, a number of senior students also assisted in teaching. There was no question of examinations or of checking the progress of the students, and there was no limit to the number of years before graduation. Several branches of religious sciences were

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taught in the pesantren: The Qur'ān with tafsīr (exegesis) and the tajwīd (correct reading), ḥadīth (traditions) with the sciences auxiliary to it, fiqh (religious law) including the farā'ah (duties and obligations), the roots (ʿusūl) and the principles (qawā'id) of fiqh, linguistic sciences including inflexions (ṣaf), syntax (nahw) and rhetoric (balāghah), theology (ʿilm al-kalāam), logic (mantiq), ethics (akhlaq) and mysticism (tasawwuf) and sometimes also astronomy (ṭahāk). Some pesantren used to specialize in certain subjects, and a keen student would travel from one pesantren to another in order to benefit from this. In such institutions, some students might become learned scholars of the Islamic sciences, but many others might attend for years without acquiring any knowledge whatever.

The pesantren education had this merit, that even if the student did not acquire any accurate knowledge or understanding of the religious sciences, he became much more attached to Islam, under the influence of the teacher's behaviour and the daily religious atmosphere.

With the passage of time, the pesantren underwent a certain degree of modernization, and the madrasah institution came into being. The difference between the pesantren and the madrasah lay in the fact that in the madrasah there was discipline as regard the years needed for graduation, the method of instruction, attendance, fees and the like. There are many thousands of pesantren and madrasah in Indonesia, and many of the Ulama and leaders of Indonesia are graduates from these two kinds of institution.\footnote{On pesantren see article “Pesantren” in (ed.) G. F. E. Gonggryp and others, Geëlleisterde Encyclopaedie van Nederlandse-Indië (cited hereafter as GENI), Leidsche Uitgevermaatschappij, Leiden, n.d.; art. “Pesantren” in Encyclopaedia Indonesia (cited hereafter as EI, III, p. 1108. article “Pesantren” in ENI, op. cit., III, pp. 388-389).}

Numerous articles have been written on the present condition of the pesantren or surau in Indonesia. Among others see Muhdi, “Pesantren Terasa,” in Hikmah, VII, No. 44-45, 1954; Z. Abidin P. T. “Atjeh: Pendidikan merosot” in Hikmah, VIII, No. 24, 1955, Edmas. “Hendak Kemana Pendidikan Agama Sumatra Tengah” in Hikmah, VIII, No. 24, 1955; A. Sigit. “Pendidikan Agama dewasa ini di Indonesia” in Minbar Agama, VI, No. 1, 1953. About the role of pesantren in building up the Islamic character of the Indonesian Muslim and the need of Indonesia for an Islamic University in which religious and non-religious sciences can go together in University standard, see the important speech of Muhammad Hatta, “Agama dan Perguruan Tinggi,” in Minbar Agama, I, No. 3, 1953. This speech was given by Hatta at the opening of the Sekolah Tinggi Islam (Islamic College) (of which Hatta was Committee Chairman), in July 1955 at Djakarta. This college later became the Islamic University at Djakarta. (To be continued)
ELECTIONS IN PAKISTAN

A Prospect of the contest between President Ayub Khan and Miss Fatimah Jinnah

By Yehia Syed

The electorate

On 9 November 1964 some 20,942,036 West Pakistani adult voters (21 years of age and over) finished electing 40,000 "Basic Democrats". They took ten days to complete the job. The same process was repeated by 24,163,656 voters of East Pakistan, when they too elected 40,000 "Basic Democrats" in ten days, starting from 10 November. These 80,000 "Basic Democrats" are to form electoral colleges for the election of the President, the National Assembly and the Provincial Legislative Assemblies.

Under the universal adult franchise some 100,468,496 people or 40 per cent of the total population of Pakistan have the right to vote. These are_line_1_January 1964 figures.

The elections in West Pakistan, which began on 31 October, were marred by violence, large-scale rigged voting, and unseemly attempts at character assassination. At least according to the Karachi correspondent of British daily The Guardian, 12 people were killed in gun battles and 500 injured in election fracas all over West Pakistan.

As this article is being written, elections in East Pakistan are in progress, and reports of violence are coming through. Total figures of injured or killed will not be known till the end of the polling on 20 November 1964.

At the end of the West Pakistan elections both the ruling Muslim League and the combined opposition claimed to have captured 80 per cent of the seats, and both expressed confidence in obtaining 70 to 80 per cent of the seats in East Pakistan. Both claims are evidently wishful thinking, as long as the election of the President, scheduled for the first week in March 1965, will show the actual party positions.

The Combined Opposition Party

According to The Guardian report the Opposition has not done as badly as the Government thought it would. The Opposition appears to have won 45 per cent of the seats in West Pakistan. Political observers in Karachi feel that even if President Ayub Khan's opponents can only capture 35 per cent of the votes in the presidential and parliamentary elections in West Pakistan the Government would have a good reason to be seriously worried. East Pakistan, the Opposition claims, is not favourably disposed towards the ruling party and would therefore give the Opposition 70 to 75 per cent of the votes.

The Combined Opposition Party (COP) consists of five parties: (1) The Councillors' Muslim League (which claims to be the true inheritor of the old All-India Muslim League, which fought for and won Pakistan (the President's Muslim League also claim that their League is the real party that got Pakistan for the Muslims of India); (2) The Awami (People's) League, founded by the late Mr. S. H. Suhrawardy and essentially an East Pakistan Party; (3) The National Awami Party, a splinter of the Awami League, which adds support in the former North-West Frontier Province to its roots in East Pakistan; (4) The Nizam-i-Islam Party, a politically based party with modernizing intentions; and (5) the Jama'at-i-Islami, the party of out-and-out orthodoxy. This is probably the best organized of all the Opposition parties in West Pakistan. It was banned by the Government and its leaders mostly imprisoned until the Supreme Court ruled the ban unconstitutional and, in October last, ordered the release of its leaders.

Being extremely orthodox in its views, the Jama'at-i-Islami decided that as the Shari'ah did not absolutely and eternally forbid a woman to head a State, it agreed to support Miss Fatima Jinnah, sister of the late Qa'id-i-A'zam Muhammad 'Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, on the complete understanding that its decision "would in no way create a precedent that a woman can be the Head of State".

The Constitution and the Elections

On 11 June 1964 the National Assembly of Pakistan adopted the Constitution (Second Amendment) Bill. The final voting on the overall Bill was 106 against 26. The passage of the Bill paved the way for the next general elections. The President's election, which was advanced by five months, will now be held in the first week of March 1965, and he would be inducted in the office on 23 March — Pakistan Day. The President's election will be followed by polling for the National and Provincial Legislatures by the following May. The new legislature would have to be sworn in in the first week of June, when the terms of the existing assemblies would expire.

The Constitution (Second Amendment) Bill, besides advancing the President's election by five months to enable the incoming Head of State to reflect his thinking and the people's mandate in the next year's Budget, fixed the term of the electoral college ("Basic Democrats") at five years. The Bill also provides that in the case of a mid-term election, either to the office of the President or to the legislature, it would be only for the unexpired term. The President, according to the Bill, would continue in office until his successor had taken over. Another significant feature of the Bill is that in future six women members of the National Assembly would be elected by the newly-elected members of the same House. Previously women members of the National Assembly were elected by the provincial legislatures. The Bill also ensures that the members of the electoral college were not given the powers of a local self-government unless they had performed their primary duty of electing various representative institutions.

The three tiers of "Basic Democracies"

The structure of basic democracies, briefly, represents a system which starts at the beginning and after building a strong base of popular representation goes on to construct the superstructure of "people-administration co-operation". In this it is different from the system which the abrogated constitution had envisaged, under which a neatly trimmed structure was to be suspended from above without a base upon which to rest.

The present system, says the Government, will provide
the base for 8,216 institutions known as union councils in rural areas, town committees in smaller towns and union committees in municipal areas. Each represents, on an average, a population of 10,000, of whom about 1,000 elect one representative on the basis of adult franchise. In addition to elected representatives, the Basic Democracies Order also provides for appointed members whose number may not be more than one half of the former. The purpose of this provision, it is stated, is to ensure the participation of important special interests such as agricultural labour, women and minorities. The councils/committees elect their own chairman.

The structure of “people-administration co-operation” is provided by the next three tiers of Basic Democracies — tehsil/thana, district and divisional councils — with a provincial development advisory council at the apex. The tehsil councils in West and thana council in East Pakistan are composed of chairmen of union councils and town committees within the tehsil/thana plus an equal number of appointed official and non-official members. The official members are drawn from nation-building departments such as education, health, agriculture, co-operatives and public works. The tehsil officer in West and sub-divisional officer in East Pakistan chairs the tehsil/thana council. There are 599 such councils throughout the country, 411 in East Pakistan, 187 in West Pakistan and one in Karachi.

Next comes the district council. It consists of an equal number of official and non-official members and is presided over by the deputy commissioner who is the chief executive of the district. The former include chairmen of the tehsil/thana councils in the district and the representatives of nation-building departments. Of the non-official members, at least one half must be drawn from amongst the elected chairmen of union councils and town committees in the district. Of the total of 76 such councils throughout Pakistan 58 are located in West Pakistan, 17 in East Pakistan and one in Karachi.

The last tier is the divisional council. Like the district council, it is composed of equal number of official and non-official members, the former category including chairmen of all the district councils in the division and representatives of nation-building departments at the divisional level. The commissioner of the division is the chairman.

Of the non-official element, at least one half must be chosen from amongst the union officials or town committees chairmen in the division. There are 11 such councils in West Pakistan, three in East Pakistan and one in Karachi.

For the larger towns, where conditions are vastly different from the rural areas because of a tradition of local self-government under the British rule, the scheme of Basic Democracies provides for a double tier structure only. Municipal committees which have been constituted under the Municipal Administration Ordinance form the second tier and are composed of a balanced association of elected chairmen of union committees and official and non-official appointed members.

The functions of the tehsil/thana council is mainly co-ordinative. It may be entrusted by its district council to perform within its jurisdiction some of the higher council’s functions.

The third tier — the district council — is functionally the most important one after the union council. It has been assigned both operational and co-ordinative functions, maintenance of primary schools, libraries and reading rooms; holding of fairs and shows; celebration of public festivals; organization of public games and sports; promotion of national reconstruction programmes, etc.

The provincial development advisory council is not really a tier of Basic Democracies, but is intended to be an advisory council of the governor in all matters relating to the new system. It is intended to function as the brains at the apex of the structure and its duties include advising the government on inter-council co-ordination, grants-in-aid, development plans, training of members and servants of councils, promotion of research in local government and allied subjects and the organization of conferences, seminars and refresher courses. It will thus be a focal point for the stimulation and guidance of Basic Democracies without actual involvement in the management of the local councils.

The candidature of Miss Fatimah Jinnah

There are two views about the candidature of Miss Jinnah, both equally rash and sentimental. One is — and this is shared by most of the sober London papers and their correspondents now in Pakistan — that Miss Jinnah, because of
her age (she is 72), her inexperience in the art of science of running a country of Pakistan's dimensions and because among the Combined Opposition Parties which she is leading against President Ayub Khan there is not one man who has not proved a failure as a politician, if elected would destroy Pakistan. Rawle Knox, special correspondent of the London Daily Telegraph, went so far as to say that Miss Jinnah's brother, Qa'id-i-A'zam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, got Pakistan by saying 'No'. Her sister too would destroy Pakistan by saying the same 'No'."

No to what? No to President Ayub Khan's régime, his system of democracy, his system of presidential government and all that he and his government stand for. The COP and Miss Jinnah are fighting the election against President Ayub and his policies. They say that he has denied the people of Pakistan democracy, adult franchise, and has implanted a system of government which is alien and strange to the genius of the people of the country.

President Ayub Khan on the concept of his system of "Basic Democracies"

Strangely enough, President Ayub Khan and his ministers and supporters say exactly the same thing in support of their régime and programme — that Ayub Khan's brand of democracy and system of government is the only kind which is suited to Pakistan: it is a democracy and system which the people of Pakistan understands and it is the only system which can work in a country like Pakistan.

By rejecting the Westminster pattern of democracy, which is very much on the run, at least in the continents of Asia and Africa, President Ayub Khan has courted the displeasure of the British people in general and the Western world in particular. And he is aware of it.

When President Ayub Khan was in London last July he made a special effort to explain his system of, for want of a better name, "Basic Democracy," in the following words:

"When this system was introduced, people here in Britain and elsewhere said that 'Basic Democracy' was not democracy. It is easy to criticize, but I think it is wrong to criticize like this without knowing the full facts."

Then he explained his system of "Basic Democracy" at great length and added:

"The reason why I explained this at length is that at times we are criticized for not entirely conforming to your pattern of democracy and for not conforming to the American pattern of democracy. But the thing I would like to say is: You have evolved a democratic system but you cannot export it. We, too, cannot really export our system. We would like to export other things, more useful things. We therefore have to adapt your system. Your system is a wonderful system. But it has been evolved over hundreds of years of trial and error, so to expect us to run it and go alongside you is to be short-sighted. All that happens is that people lose faith in their political institutions. I think that as long as there is a system of elections, as long as there is a rule of law and as long as people have the right of hiring and firing their masters, the spirit of democracy is fulfilled. It is the process, shall we say, that actually matters, but it differs from one country to another. Take the United States, for example. The bulk of the population there made their constitution in 1700 and something, but they refused to take the system which you are now practising. They built another system, which is just as democratic as yours, and is working.

"Now intellectuals, by and large, become agnostics. But men cannot live without religion. With them the outward manifestation of the democratic spirit is part ritual, part dogma and part religion, so that anyone who departs from that is a heretic. All I can say to you is that people who talk loosely about people like us and others who are trying desperately hard to make democracy work are not helping democracy. For they should realize that we can only work democracy in our parts if we can adapt democracy to our own environment. I would like people to remember that they will be serving the cause of democracy if they understand that as long as the spirit of democracy is there the methods have to change from one place to another just as the methods of fighting change from one place to another and the methods of peace."

Miss Jinnah's popularity results from people's resentment of President Ayub Khan's régime

Miss Jinnah has been very well received both in East Pakistan and in the West, in spite of her unfitness for the high office by reason of age and inexperience. What made so many people in both the wings, much to the dismay of the Ayub régime, to rally round the COP and Miss Jinnah's candidature is the expression of latent resentment towards President Ayub Khan, his government and the political system he has imposed.

The three years since martial law was lifted in favour of the constitution evolved by President Ayub Khan have been marked by the inability of the several opposition parties in Pakistan to make common use of anything but the level of rhetoric. The late Mr. S. H. Suhrwardy's attempts to create a united front did not get far and were nullified by his death last year. Leaderless, desperate and impotent, the opposition parties seem to have no chance of making a meaningful stand in the presidential election next year and it long drawn-out preliminaries. But all that changed when Miss Jinnah agreed to stand for the presidency as the candidate of a united opposition.

So the COP has no common ground where they can meet. In fact, apart from Miss Jinnah, the opposition parties have in common a nine-point platform, but actually this is more a statement of the lowest common denominator of unity than a programme. Their real unity is negative — disapproval of President Ayub and rejection of the policy he has established — one of whose main purpose is precisely to keep them out of power and to keep the executive free from their obstruction.

The essence of a negative opposition platform is a prompt return to the parliamentary forms of government from which President Ayub roughly tore the country away.

It is all very well for Miss Jinnah to ask, in sheer desperation: "Is Pakistan ever to have a constitutional change of government in accordance with the wishes of the people?"

It is quite a different thing to realize that the same politicians, who were given a chance to prove their worth and metal, made the country a laughing stock before the world.

The Glasgow Herald, which feels that the choice before Pakistan is between democracy and slavery, said the other day editorially that "the front runners of previously discredited professional politicians", by asking Miss Jinnah to become President of Pakistan, only hope "to reach power on the skirts of her sari."

The Glasgow Herald observations are worth quoting: "It would be a major setback for Pakistan if somehow Miss Jinnah produced a bandwagon which crushed the barriers of indirect voting. That she is very old might not matter so much if she had had a lifetime of political experience, but she has not, and indeed she emerged from a decade of seclusion to whistle-stop and speechify all over the country."
Nothing she has said indicates that she has much idea of what problems a President of Pakistan would face."

Miss Jinnah’s candidature has done one thing which is very helpful and healthy for Pakistan. It has taken the fear from the hearts and minds of the people that no one could dare challenge President Ayub Khan. This has reassured the people that after all President Ayub Khan is not a real dictator as they believed him to be. Miss Jinnah’s decision to contest the election has cleared the air, as the Eastern World of London pointed out the other day, politically in Pakistan, which was getting stuffy and stifling.

Outsiders and impartial observers like the correspondent of the London Times feel that if President Ayub Khan had submitted himself and his government to popular approval in 1959, within a year or so after he had taken power in the army coup, there is little doubt that he would have won handsomely. Now, with a good record of stability and economic progress in Pakistan behind him, and running against Miss Jinnah, an opponent with little to offer except her name, the Times said recently, there is reason to believe that if the contest were by direct election he would be closely pressed and perhaps beaten.

What has gone wrong and where? The answer is provided by the same Times correspondent. One characteristic of President Ayub Khan’s leadership, he writes, has probably done more than anything else to deny him the national support which he would need in a direct election against Miss Jinnah. He has not been able to identify himself with the people — to replace the popular attitude of “them” and “us” with the common “we”. Putting it another way, he is not a heaven-sent leader; he has not been able to make himself a Nasser of Pakistan. Part of this failure, the Times said, is personal. Sandhurst and the Army did not leave him with much of the common touch.

But more, perhaps, comes from the heart of his attitude to politics. If persuasion is the biggest part of successful political leadership, President Ayub Khan’s style smacks more of the parade ground, where the most that can be expected is a pronouncement of the solid good sense behind orders that must be obeyed. But no drill-master has to submit his orders for later approval by vote of the drilled.

The same report brings out yet another reason for the unpopularity of the Ayub régime. For the Constitution of Pakistan, by providing for indirect election of the President by an electoral college, says the Times, of 80,000 “basic democrats”, has set up a strong sea-wall against any tide of popular feeling.

Nevertheless, the conclusion of the Times’ correspondent is that “strong as the swells of opposition may be, it is likely that they will not rock the President very much.”

If that does happen, for there are yet quite a few months to the election of the President, Miss Jinnah even in her failure will have made a solid contribution to the cause of democracy in Pakistan. For President Ayub Khan and his aides cannot now ignore the popular feelings found in Pakistan and the resentment against his régime. Miss Jinnah’s campaign had made it possible for a man to get up and speak frankly against the present régime. And that is no mean contribution of Miss Jinnah and all that she stands for.
Specimens of Charity and Propaganda Money of Early Islam

At the time of the Caliphates, coins with the engravings of the Caliph or Amir al-Mu'minin (Prince of Believers) were struck for purposes of charity and propaganda. We now have few specimens of these pieces because their great value caused them to be cut in pieces and sold as part money.

Charity and propaganda money was issued to mark special occasions and given to relatives, friends and the poor.

Ja'far al-Barmaki's Dinar
Ja'far al-Barmaki (d. 803 C.E.) issued a 101 carat Dinar which according to our standards today weighed about 5 grammes. That was in the reign of the Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid. After Ja'far's death 4,000 pieces, none of which is extant today, were discovered buried in a pond. On one of the two sides of the coin was inscribed a tribute to Ja'far.

The Dinar of Musa al-Naatiq b'il-Haqq (Moses the Truthful)
When al-Amin (the son of Harun al-Rashid) deposed his brother al-Ma'mun from the Regency and appointed his son Musa al-Naatiq b'il-Haqq Prince-Regent, he ordered a 10-carat dinar to be struck to mark the occasion.

The Dirham of al-Mutawakkil 'ala 'Allah
Al-Mutawakkil 'ala 'Allah issued silver dirhams (50 fils), painted red, yellow and black, to be tossed to the crowds who visited his palace. No specimen of these is extant today.

The Dinar of Amir al-Umara' (Prince of Princes) Bejechum
In the reign of the Caliph al-Radhi bi 'llaah, the Prince of Princes Bejechum ordered a several-carat dinar to be issued for well-wishers of the Prince of Princes on al-Nawrooz 'Id (The Spring Feast). On one side there was an engraving of the Prince fully armed, while on the other he appeared as a savant.

The Dinar of Abi 'Abdullah Ibn Abi Thuhal al-Dhabbi
Under the reign of Caliph al-Taa'iyy li'llaah (The One Obedient to God), Abi 'Abdullah Ibn Abi Thuhal al-Dhabbi al-Harawi struck dinars each of 1½ carats for charity. He said that his dinars gave the poor three joys: the joy of receiving, the joy of discovering it to be a dinar instead of a dirham, and the joy of finding it equivalent to 1½ dinars of that day. None of these dinars has come down to us.

Although according to Muslim theology the delineating of the human figure

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is forbidden, some of the charity and propaganda coins have the engravings of caliphs and princes.

These pieces were made of gold and silver, and thus differed from the ordinary currency.

3. Samples of Charity and Propaganda Money

1. The dinar of ‘Abd al-Malik Ibn Marwan

This gold dinar was issued in 76 A.H. (695 C.E.) and again in 77 A.H. (696 C.E.). Both pieces are in the Paris Museum. The dinar was used also as currency.

Face 1: An engraving of the Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik holding his sword.

Face 2: A staff erected on a base above four successively larger steps.

The weight of the dinar is 4.410 grammes and the diameter is 20 mm.

2. The dirham of ‘Abd al-Malik Ibn Marwan

Only one specimen of this coin is extant, at the Russian Museum in Moscow. The date of issue is 75 A.H. (694 C.E.). The weight of the dirham is 3.550 gm., the diameter 35 mm.

3. Al-Dhahhak Ibn Qays al-Shaybani al-Khariji

Al-Dhahhak issued this dinar after conquering Kufa in 128 A.H. (745 C.E.). The dirham is 2.910 gm. in weight and 26 mm. in diameter. It is in the possession of the Directorate General of Antiquities of Iraq, Baghdad.

4. Abu Muslim al-Khuraasani’s Dinar

It was issued at Taymara in 128 A.H. (745 C.E.) at the time Abu Muslim was campaigning for the Abbasides, who, he said, were the relatives of the Prophet Muhammad.

The dirham is 2.810 gm. in weight and 25 mm. in diameter. It is in the possession of the Directorate General of Antiquities of Iraq, Baghdad.

5. Al-Mutawakkil ‘ala Allah’s Dirham

This dirham was issued in 241 A.H. (855 C.E.). A specimen of it can be seen only at the Vienna Museum.

6. A sketch of the engraving on the dirham of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil ‘ala Allah.


This rare dirham can be seen at the Museum of Iraq. There are only four other pieces of this coin in the world, which are at Damascus. This silver coin was found accidentally by a group of small boys digging in an empty lot in the Kadhimiyyah district of Baghdad. There they found a jar full of money with the engraving of Harun al-Rashid, al-‘Abd al-Malik, his son, and al-Muqtadir bi ‘llah. The pieces were reclaimed by the State of Iraq.

8. The dirham of al-Muqtadir bi ‘llah II.

This dirham had a negative purpose. On one side there is the engraving of the Caliph at a drinking party, holding a glass in one hand and a dagger in the other.


This coin was issued in Dar al-Salaam in 365 A.H. (975 C.E.). Its fate is not known today, but it might be either at Instabul Museum or London Museum. This dinar was issued for negative purposes against the Caliph and his Vizier. It depicted the Caliph at a drinking feast.

The dinar was 50 mm in diameter.
THE HISTORY OF THE IDEA OF THE MIRACLE (F'JAZ) OF THE QUR'AN

By NA'IM AL-HUMSI

(III)

The beautiful qualities of the Qur'an

It is quite obvious that the Qur'an surprised the Arabs with its beautiful qualities, and they found themselves unable to match it. One of the distinctive qualities of the Qur'an for the Arabs was the style of writing, which was in contrast with the spoken and written word at that time. Other distinctive features of quality also impressed the Arabs, but these really could not be adequately or precisely defined in words. One of these features was the fact that chapters of the Qur'an began in a manner with which the Arabs were not familiar — with disjointed letters which served as musical keys to the rest of the chapters. There was also the choice of vowels and consonants in the ending of verses which produced an enchanting musical effect upon the listener. There was likewise the music in the construction of the sentences as a whole and their relationship one with the other in the chapters. Yet another feature was the natural pauses in the verses which enhanced the meaning and augmented appreciation of the purport of the verses for the reader and listener. The endings of the verses were also in what could be described as rhyme, and which produced a very pleasant effect. The sentences were of harmonious construction, and were smooth and well-connected one with the other and sharing a unified structure.

There was also a quality in the Qur'an which appealed more to refined taste, and possessed the features of the most classic and durable of literature. This was a fact which the Arabs of later days, and also non-Arabs who learned Arabic, fully appreciated and made them believe in the miracle (f'jaz) of the Qur'an. There was a quality of freshness which allowed the Qur'an to be repeated without producing boredom to the reader or the listener — unless, of course, the reader or the listener were originally hostile and unsympathetic. All these distinctive features of the Qur'an, which rightly put it in the rank of eternal literature, are also evident in the general idea at which the Qur'an aims, an idea aimed at a single purpose, namely the attainment of sublime objectives, the promotion of the welfare of mankind, and the promotion of the solidarity of the human race. This idea is clearly conveyed to the reader or listener throughout the chapters and verses of the Qur'an. It is also effectively impressed upon the reader or listener, and induces a sense of elation which takes one to higher levels of thought and opens one's eyes to noble and sublime objectives which are made accessible and attainable. These distinctive features are also evident in the moral values which the Qur'an decrees, and by which the world is sought to be organized. These values appear simple enough, and it is this simplicity which is one of the secrets of their beauty. In the Qur'an also there is to be found fertile imagination portraying such ideas as repentance, the agony of conscience, the pains and joys of the soul, and the solidarity of mankind. Ideals like paradise, and hell, and stories of old, are also depicted in the Qur'an. The message intended to be conveyed is rendered in beautiful style — in something like music, beautifully ordered. The meaning reaches the heart smoothly with the words, and it is as if the words are received by the heart direct rather than the ears, and as if the soul is reached without intermediaries. These, in fact, are some of the spiritual qualities of the Qur'an which prompted modern scholars to conclude that the Qur'an portrayed f'jaz in the spiritual sphere.

Why did the Arabs not make a bid to undermine and contradict the Qur'an?

All these qualities of the Qur'an fascinated the Arabs at the dawn of Islam. They did not know how to explain these attributes of the Qur'an. Was it poetry, was it enchantment, was it magic? Was it the work of a human being, or was it superhuman? Examining these features, some Muslim scholars have concluded that the Qur'an was a mu'jizah (miracle) because God knows all words and meanings and finds the right words for the right meanings, producing thereby what would completely enchant and captivate the heart. This was one of the qualities which distinguished the Qur'an from ordinary literary masterpieces. And that is why some scholars answered the query about why was not the Qur'an revealed in poetry, an art in which the Arabs excelled, so that it could be compared with other poetry?" by saying that if it had been revealed in poetry it would not have been unique or out of the ordinary, and there would have been nothing new about it. As it is — in prose — it expressed ideas in a more beautiful and eloquent manner.

1 See The Islamic Review for November and December 1964 for previous installments.
The question is still asked: Why did the Arabs not make a determined attempt to contradict and undermine the Qur'an? Many for a long time doubted the truthfulness of the Prophet Muhammad. Many vehemently rejected some of the ideas of the Qur'an, particularly the ideas of revelation and the relationship between heaven and earth. For example, Abu Sufyan Ibn Harb al-Amawiy is reported to have called on the Prophet Muhammad in a mood of compromise just before the conquest of Mecca. The Prophet told him: “Is it not time you believed that I am the Prophet of God?”, to which Abu Sufyan replied: “This, my nephew, is something about which I still entertain doubts.” If Abu Sufyan and people like him still were opposed to the idea of the prophet-hood of Muhammad, why did they not oppose him if they were physically able to do this? Why did not Abu Sufyan do something about his belief that the Prophet Muhammad was not truthful? It would not be a satisfactory explanation merely to say that some of the Prophet Muhammad’s enemies felt unable to oppose him, and that some of them had tried this opposition but failed. It is certain that had Muhammad’s enemies wanted to oppose him they would not have lacked the skill to do so in words, particularly in view of the fact that the terminology used by the Qur’an was familiar to the Arabs at the time. The truth is, however, that while the words could be matched, the ideas could not, and the Arabs felt incapable of producing anything as coherent and unified as the system embodied in the Qur’an. The charm which impressed them in the Qur’an was not based merely on words, style and music, for this was not the main quality of the Qur’an. What impressed them most was the objective which the Qur’an had for the reform of things, an objective fostered by deep and comprehensive ideas supported by zealous emotions, fertile imagination, and noble ambition designed to promote the noblest ideals of human life. What the Arabs had to do, therefore, was to produce something similar to the Qur’an—something that could match the Qur’an in its characteristics, so that they could show that it was not unique or exceptional. This the Arabs did not succeed in doing, and, indeed, could not possibly achieve, for as a Muslim would appreciate, the Qur’an was the work of God and no human being could produce anything like it.

The idea of i'jaz after the death of the Prophet

During the life of the Prophet Muhammad, and also during the régime of the Caliphs, particularly in the days of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, the Muslims did not engage in any speculation about deep or complicated ideas such as free will and predestination, the attributes of God and similar concepts. They were not sufficiently mature or learned for this. They had lived in the desert for too long, isolated from many other nations and outside influences. They looked upon the Qur’an with reverence and satisfaction as their own religious book which could not be controverted or impugned. They saw in it the solution of all their problems, spiritual and mundane, and they considered it the supreme example to follow. The Qur’an was the driving force behind them, and it guided them on to the stages of perfection in mundane and spiritual matters. They had faith in the Qur’an and did not engage in any controversy on the ideas which it propounded. And when in the days of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar the Muslims conquered other lands and began to mix with other peoples, most of whom were more sophisticated than the Arabs, no religious or philosophical arguments ensued between the Muslims and these peoples. Perhaps the reason was that the Muslims, as victors, were suspicious of these peoples and did not freely mix with them, while these peoples, as the vanquished, also did not fraternise with the Muslims and were careful not to engage in any conflict with the Muslims for fear of reprisals.

But in the days of ‘Uthman and ‘Ali, political activity became intense, and conflict and intrigue were rife. The Muslims then resorted to the Qur’an to find solutions to their problems. They thus had to interpret its verses thoroughly. The political disputes which led to this soon led to theological disputes. The Shi’ah school of thought made its appearance in the form of support for ‘Ali against his Omayyad opponents. Also the Khawarij section began after the dispute between ‘Ali and Mu’awiyah. The majority of the Muslims
adopted an impartial attitude towards these conflicting groupings. And all the Muslims began to contemplate more seriously over the meaning of the provisions of the Qur’an, and this started a strong and widespread spiritual activity.

The impact of other faiths on the Muslims

Contacts between the Muslims and the more advanced people they conquered then became closer. These peoples professed different religions which conflicted with the faith of the Arabs, and they all denied very emphatically the truth of the religion of Islam. In many of these countries strong argument had raged for a long time before on various philosophical and theological matters, particularly on the humanity of Jesus Christ and on free will and predestination. In Iraq and Persia the Muslims came into contact with the followers of the Zoroastrian and Manichean faiths. They could not avoid arguing with the followers of these faiths about their beliefs, and they defended Islam against them. Among the main points in arguments between the Muslims and the members of other faiths were the prophethood of Muhammad, the i'jaz of the Qur’an and the challenge presented to the Arabs and the claim that it was revealed by God and not the work of the Prophet Muhammad. The Muslims endeavoured to find convincing arguments against their opponents. They could not find better proof of the truthfulness of Muhammad and of his prophethood than the Qur’an itself, and they maintained that the Qur’an was a miracle and was on the same basis as the miracles produced by other prophets as a mark of prophethood. The scientific and cultural renaissance started in Basra and Kufa, and the disputes it caused amongst the learned there in linguistic and grammatical matters, and the disputes between the various Muslim religious sects, enlivened the minds of the Muslims to a very large extent, and encouraged interest in various matters connected with the public, religious, political and social affairs of the Muslims, and to a large extent in the question of the i'jaz of the Qur’an.

Freedom of expression was severely restricted during the days of the early Caliphs or the Umayyad regime. Those who doubted the truth of religious doctrine or criticized Islam stood in peril of their lives. There was no real freedom of discussion of religious matters until the reign of Ibn Marwan. But it must be remembered that the first criticism of the Qur’an had in fact been made during the life of the Prophet Muhammad, and continued in the early days of the first Caliphs. A Jew by the name of Lubaid Ibn al-A’sam was reported to have said that in the same way as the Bible was the creation of man so was the Qur’an. He said that his nephew, Talut, publicised this view amongst the Muslims and that Bana Ibn Sam’an (who is said to have formed the Banani sect) believed this. It is also said that al-Ja’d Ibn Dirham, teacher of Marwan Ibn Muhammad, the last Umayyad Caliph, supported a similar view. He had been accused of dualism and atheism, and he is said to have been the first to have initiated a strong campaign against the Qur’an and to have denied the truth of its contents, and also to have claimed that there was nothing miraculous about it, that it could be matched by men and even bettered, and that it was of the making of man. This criticism of the Qur’an was made in Damascus, the capital of the Umayyad dynasty, and it would appear that the Caliph Marwan Ibn Muhammad did not take exception to these views, presumably because he shared them (and the Caliph was for this reason justifiably referred to sometimes as Marwan al-Ja’di — to show his subservience to al-Ja’d). All this shows that freedom in the expression of ideas, however radical, was practised in the days of the Omayyad dynasty. This freedom was allowed not only in disputes between Muslims and non-Muslims but also in disputes between the various schools of thought amongst the Muslims themselves, and in all these controversies the Muslims of various groups relied upon interpretations of the provisions of the Qur’an to support their views.

The Abbasid era

When the caliphate was assumed by the Abbasids from the Omayyads, the Muslim Arabs came into closer and more frequent contact with other nations. Most Abbasid caliphs were tolerant in religious matters and many other matters except those directly relating to politics and the affairs of government. The Caliph al-Mansur, the second Abbasid caliph, encouraged the movement for translation and writing, thereby giving the Arabs an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the learning of Greece, Persia and India. This developed the thought of the Arabs and promoted amongst them intellectual freedom. In this atmosphere during the Abbasid era there was almost absolute freedom of religious thought, and a group of free thinkers on religious matters developed at an early stage. The most famous among these in the second Hejira century were Ibn al-Muqaffa’ (d. 760 C.E.), Bashshar Ibn Burd, Salihh Ibn ‘Abd al-Quddus (d. 783 C.E.) and ‘Abd al-Hamid al-Kahtib. It is said that these persons, who were either writers or poets, used to meet together and criticize the Qur’an, and that they tried to produce something like it in style and content. This, it is also said, was seriously attempted by Ibn al-Muqaffa’ (later in this study I shall deal with this point in more detail).

Many writers and poets at various times up to the fifth Hejira century are said to have attempted to oppose the Qur’an and to seek to match it. This was reported to have been attempted in particular by the most capable of these writers and poets by their enemies with the intent of maligning them or creating popular hostility towards them. Those who have been accused of having attempted to imitate the Qur’an, in addition to Ibn al-Muqaffa’, were Abu al-Tayyib al-Mutanabbi (d. 965 C.E.), Abu al-Alaa al-Ma’arri (d. 1057 C.E.) and Avicenna. It is also said that these persons finally abandoned this attempt when they became convinced that they were incapable of matching the Qur’an. But it may also be possible that the opposition to the Qur’an by these people, particularly by the poets and the writers, was exaggerated in an endeavour to show that if persons of their calibre could not match the Qur’an then the task would certainly be impossible for persons of lesser qualifications. It is also possible that the reports about this opposition were exaggerated in view of the fact that they were made at a time when serious arguments raged about religious matters and the question of the i’jaz of the Qur’an, and accusations against persons of free thought that they were casting doubts on the Qur’an would have been credible. These persons may not in fact have doubts cast upon the Qur’an to the extent reported, and the stories about their attempts to match the Qur’an may have been fabricated — although there may have been some slight foundation for these reports in cases where a person may not have been very pious or may have doubted some aspect of the faith, which would have encouraged some people to attribute to him denial of the truth of Islam altogether and opposition to the Qur’an, and the attempt to match it.

(To be continued)
AN ANCIENT CHINESE MOSQUE

By TEH KAO

A hexagonal tower with yellow, glazed tiles gleaming in the sun catches the eye as one strolls along busy Niuchieh, or Ox Street, in south-western Peking. A side gate leads to a huge courtyard in which stands an 800 year-old mosque — the earliest in the Chinese capital.

Built in the Sung dynasty (960-1279 C.E.), the Niuchieh Mosque — one of the four biggest in Peking — has an architectural style that is typically Chinese. Like most ancient buildings in China, it is a predominantly wooden structure topped by a pavilion-like tower and roofed in tiles. The columns and ceilings in the interior are elaborately adorned with relief carvings done by artists of the Sung and later dynasties. Over the Mihrab, or prayer niche, hangs a domed ceiling covered with exquisite flower designs and Arabic lettering done in gold by Sung artists.

A beautiful structure with upturned eaves stands in the square before the mosque. This is the minaret built in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644 C.E.).

Erected at a time when the Muslim faith first spread to Peking, the Niuchieh Mosque was a small structure in the beginning. It was extended stage by stage as the number of believers grew in the centuries that followed.

The roof of the mosque and the courtyard fell into disrepair before the establishment of the Chinese People's Republic in 1949. They were repaired and restored to their original beauty a few years ago, with a grant of 30,000 Chinese dollars from the Government.

Of interest are the tombs of two foreign Muslim Imams, who were among the first to come to North China to spread the teachings of Islam. One, a Persian, died in 1280 C.E. The other, from Bukhara, died three years later. Their tombs lie under century-old cypress trees near the mosque.

With accommodation for 800 worshippers, the Niuchieh Mosque during the 'Id and other festivals draws hundreds more from the other parts of Peking and the villages in the outskirts. Guests and diplomats from Muslim countries sometimes come to services on Fridays or at festival times.

There are many Imams in the mosque. One is a graduate of the Chinese Islamic Theological Institute founded in Peking in 1958.

There are thousands of mosques in China. The oldest is Canton's Kwangta Mosque, built in the seventh century.

In the 31st year of the Hejira (651 C.E.), the first Caliphate envoy was received by the Chinese emperor in Changan, then the capital of China. Generally speaking, the spread of Islam in this country may be considered to have started from that time. In the 1,300 years that have elapsed, the Muslim religion has spread until it embraces ten nationalities with a total population of ten million in China.

Tombs of two Imams who came to preach in China from Persia and Bukhara in the 13th century

The front of the Niuchieh Mosque at Peking
The Fleeting Now

Nay, but ye do love the fleeting Now
And neglect the Hereafter.

The Qur'an, 25:20, 11.

The Now will vanish as the days of yore;
Its roses and its stars will be no more.
The mighty Hand that holds the Lamp of Day
Will close forever the great brazen door.

There are un-numbered slaves who bow
Before the idol of the fleeting Now.
But when the uncompleted tale is told,
No one remembers when they lived—or how.

The lure of gaming and the lure of wine
Had seemed to lead them to the life divine.
Yet as the Gardener brings home the blooms,
No more these vassals either drink or dine.

Why seek the meaning of a life of toil,
The slow up-growing from the thirsty soil.
In wearisome and empty round of play
That draw you closer in an endless coil?

Ye souls that make a very god of drink,
Your thoughts areare not profound as ye do think,
For when you see, before, the yawning pit,
You find your feet are trembling on the brink.
But stay the foot that is about to slip,
The hand that reaches for the barrel’s drip,
And turn the eyes just once to gaze above,
Where sails through aether’s seas a glowing ship.

That ship, the Sun, Who put it there
And sent it flaming through the seas of air?
Could you with drink-beclouded brain
Create its likenesses—or would you dare?

Who gave you the gift of golden noon,
The hurrying day that we have lost so soon?
Could you create another ruling star
Or flood the night with glory of the moon?

Too long the wise fools chatter of an end
And Death that like a panther soon will rend.
Do you not know that life is like a road
And this thing, “death,” is just the highway’s bend?

The Power that placed you on this spheric place
That like a gleaming sapphire hangs in space
Can take you from this Earthly habitat
Until at last you look upon His face.

For what we thought eternal, all will go,
As weeds that vanish by the peasant’s hoe,
And this we counted on for our old age
Will melt as in the springtime melts the snow.

But Allah—He is not to pass
As all things go, as slowly fades the grass.
His life, eternal, fills the Heavens’ realm,
And all the talk of man is sounding brass.

With God all things endure and never fade;
He rules the tawny sand and seas of jade.
Would you abide forever with the Good?
Then find the Truth that never is betrayed.

The light that glows in Allah’s kindly Face
Will light your path and lead you to the place
Where sorrows end and hurt shall be no more,
Where of the fleeting Now we find no trace.

O God, Who guides the spheres above,
Who guided Noah and Who guides the dove,
Help us to learn while we are here below
That what endures will be Thy law—and love.

NORMAN LEWIS.

THE SOUTH SHIELDS NEW MOSQUE ISLAMIC TRUST
22 Brunswick Street,
South Shields, England.
23 September 1964.

Dear Sir,
Assalamu aleykum!

Please permit me to bring the following lines, which relate the story of the New Mosque building at South Shields, England, and our appeal for help to complete our programme to the notice of the readers of The Islamic Review.

Yours sincerely,
S. G. SHAH, Chairman.

South Shields is a busy shipping port on the River Tyne, on the north-east coast of England.

Seafaring Arab Muslims began to settle here more than fifty years ago, and gradually the numbers built up with the arrival of Muslims from Pakistan, Somaliland, India, Egypt and Malaya. Many married British women and the ensuing children, now in the third and fourth generation, have made the community up to 700 strong, a number which is sometimes made up to a thousand by the influx of visiting seamen.

Colourful and international in character, the community is firmly rooted in the Islamic faith, although poor by the standards of the West. Being almost entirely seafaring, its earning capacity is low and sporadic. Nevertheless, the community is firmly and permanently settled and continues to grow. From its inception the community has always produced its religious leaders. Facilities for prayers were always provided for, whether in rooms in local boarding houses, as it was until 1943, or in a disused public house, as it was until 1961, or as now, in a disused municipal reading room.

It has long been obvious to the community’s leaders that a well-appointed permanent centre for worship and religious instruction was essential if the community was to retain its true Muslim character. It is clear that the instruction of the young by qualified Muslim religious teachers is very necessary. With this in view, the ‘Id al-Fitr 1961 saw the creation of the New Mosque Islamic Trust, and the opening of the Fund for the purpose of a new Mosque School building.
Official letters of appeal were sent out to Muslims. Collections for the Mosque Fund were organized. A cheque for £1,000 was received from H.H. The Amir of Kuwait. Land, centrally situated, was purchased and an architect appointed. On this date, exactly one year after the Trust was set up, the foundation stone of the new Mosque and School was laid by representatives of the Ambassadors of Kuwait and Somalia.

Further gifts of £1,000 from the Sultan of Muscat and Oman, £500 from the Government of Somalia, and approximately £4,500 collected from the Muslim communities in the United Kingdom, have made it possible to build the school portion of the scheme at an approximate cost of £7,400. This is in line with the policy of the committee, which is to give priority to educating and instructing the children in the faith of their fathers, and especially the Arabic language.

With the school building actually in being, it will shortly be opened and begin to function. Now we are in the process of starting to build the Mosque, of which, so far, the base only has been laid down. For this a further £14,000 is needed. The local Muslim community is able, willing and anxious to bear the cost of maintaining the buildings, when completed, but it is quite beyond its resources to meet the building costs. For this they rely on the generosity and support of Muslim States, Muslim organizations and Muslim communities throughout the world, to whom we are addressing ourselves for aid.

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

Book Review


A little-known Arabic text dating from the 12th century has been published in English as one of the Unesco Collection of Great Works (Arabic Series). The translation, by George F. Hourani, is from one of the principal works of the medieval Islamic scholar Ibn Rushid (known by the Latin name of Averroes), a treatise on the harmony of religion and philosophy entitled Kitab Fasl al-Maqal (The Book of Decision).

In attempting to reconcile Aristotle and other Greek philosophers with Islamic law and scripture, Ibn Rushid faced problems which scholars in the Western world came up against two or three centuries later when they began interpreting Aristotle in relation to such concepts as creation, resurrection and free will in Christian theology.

Islamic theologians were adamant in their rejection of Greek philosophy, which was to their minds pagan and profane, with nothing to offer true believers. Most representative of this school of thought was al-Ghazali, who published in Baghdad in 1905 his severe attack on philosophy, Tahafut al-Falasifa. No Arabic scholar replied until 80 years later in Seville, when Ibn Rushd wrote his treatise. By so doing, he risked only the wrath of the orthodox Muslims, for the country at that time was ruled by an enlightened prince, the Almohad, Abu Ya’qub Yusuf (d. 1163-84).

In his treatise, Ibn Rushd maintained that the truths of the Qur’an could not be fully apparent except to those of higher intellect, capable of “scientific reasoning”. The common people must accept a rudimentary and fabled interpretation. When philosophy seems to contradict the Qur’an, Ibn Rushd believed that it was up to the enlightened, and them only, to interpret the scripture according to the rules of philosophy.

His defence of philosophy is not always convincing, and some of his arguments are weak, but, as Mr. Hurani, the translator, says in his excellent introduction: “Ibn Rushd was facing the dilemma of all religious modernists, who accept as truth both a scripture and the science of their day. The best he could do was to face the problem, and find interpretations of his scripture which satisfied the requirements of harmony with philosophy without doing too much violence to the linguistic properties of the text.”

In any case, Ibn Rushd did not convince his adversaries. The enlightened prince died, and his son, Abu Yusuf, reverted to the traditional purist point of view. Ibn Rushd was condemned as a heretic in 1195.

His work was lost for centuries and did not come to light until about a hundred years ago when a manuscript of the treatise was discovered at the Escorial library in Spain by M. J. Muller. Translations were subsequently made in German, Spanish, French and Turkish. The English translation by George Hourani is a valuable edition for English students of medieval Arabic writings.
Books on Islam and Allied Subjects

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