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FEBRUARY-MARCH 1966
Between Ourselves

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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
RELIGION AND THE PROBLEMS OF TODAY

In the two decades since the end of World War II we have seen not only European but world standards of morality lowered again and again, and there has been a steady erosion of long and tried principles of decency and good taste.

And, in consequence, we have harvested a whirlwind. As our standards came down our crime levels and social problems have risen and become more complicated.

Today we have in Western Europe alone a higher percentage of young people in gaol, in reform schools or on probation than ever before.

The published statistics on illegitimate births, on broken marriages, on juvenile crimes, on school failures, on sex deviation, on drug addiction, and on crimes of passion and violence, tell a terrible story. The figures are higher than ever and going higher each year. This state of affairs is not confined to Europe. East is following West in this trend with the same enthusiasm as it is trying to draw inspiration from the West in good things.

Young people today are no better and no worse in their nature than young people in past generations. Indeed, they are generally wiser. But they have more temptations and less guidance than young people had in days gone by. They also have more tempting luxuries, more money, more leisure time, as consequently more opportunities for getting into trouble. We, the older generation of today, have opened doors for the young that were shut to us. We encouraged permissiveness. We were indulgent. We granted maximum freedom even to the extent of licence. And we asked for a minimum in respect, and in responsibility. Principles and rules that stood for generations as sane and sensible guides for personal conduct were watered down or abandoned.

By keeping the world constantly under the threat of nuclear weapons and complete annihilation we have robbed young people of their share of a sense of security. They find
our philosophy nothing short of escapism, our politics merely hypercritical claims motivated by petty nationalism, and our so-called organized religions lacking in that moral courage which is a prerequisite for assertive guidance.

It is prophesied that the next world war would end in total annihilation for everybody, and mean the physical end of all. But even before exploding, these bombs are doing a greater damage which few seem to notice. This lack of security is demoralizing the younger generation in a way that is shattering their belief in traditional standards and values. It has created an empty atmosphere of universal disbelief and cynicism, a prevailing mood of purposelessness. We, and they, chase every fugitive satisfaction because of an emptiness in ourselves. We have an itch to have more and more, often with no basis in real need. Small wonder then that our young people seek every avenue of escape from the barren way of life of their elders. Whirling round and round, these poor unguided human missiles fly hither and thither trying desperately to escape the gravitational pull of ultimate destruction; and when at length they finally crash, their eyes are turned on us with justifiable reproach. "What sort of guidance did you ever try to give us," they say with cutting directness.

The material things in life are not everything. The work of the world — planting the potatoes as it were — has, most certainly, to be done; that is the economic function. Society also needs protection within and without — that is the political function. But society also needs men and organizations to remind it that life is more than planting potatoes in order to live, and more than protection from destruction in order to do more work and have more potatoes. There is an end beyond both — that is the cultural and especially the religious element. And this element, history shows clearly, must never be obscured. If it is, and if the insatiable hunger of man is denied its proper meat in religious faith, then it takes the form of just wanting more and more things, and more and more hectic and time-wasting activity to escape the feeling of purposelessness, which is our sad lot today.

The role of religion

These moral and sociological problems are not the responsibility of any one country or religion. They are the problems common to humanity and should be solved by all of us jointly.

The present disbelief and cynicism is not against Judaism, Christianity or Islam — it is against religion as such. Nay, it is against the very existence of God Who is the God of all religions.

It is for a common cause like this that Islam has laid down the principle of co-operation among the various religions. Fourteen centuries ago, in the Qur'an, the Prophet Muhammad was commanded to invite the followers of the religion ("The People of the Book") to come to an equitable understanding with the Muslims on matters of common interest and belief.

Let us see what are those matters of our common interest which need a concerted effort by all of us today. The present practice of some religions to deprecate other religions is responsible for the hostility or apathy of many people towards religion as a whole. Mutual respect and better understanding of each other's beliefs is the foundation of a healthy society. In this respect the Qur'an commands all Muslims to believe in all the Prophets of the world before Muhammad and to believe in the divine origin of all the religions before Islam. The Qur'an says: "Say: We believe in God and in that which has been revealed to us and in that which has been revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and in that which was given to Moses and Jesus and in that given to the prophets from their Lord; we make no distinction between any of them" (2:136).

Islam's message

The injunction of the Qur'an not to use any compulsion in the matter of religion does not only mean the prohibition of physical force. It conveys the message that we should not try to brainwash our young or use undue social pressures on them. The obvious result of such forced cohesion in faith is that when the young grow older they either revolt with a vengeance or adopt an attitude of indifference.

Our young today have found an easy way out of this problem by choosing the latter attitude. They find the socio-religious forces too strong for open revolt. Moreover, modern hectic life does not permit them enough time and energy to find the truth for themselves. The anachronic presentation of religion by some "pundits" is making the situation still worse.

If religion takes a firm stand on matters of fundamental truth and leaves the rest to human intellect, as Islam tries to do, man will find it much more pleasant and easy to seek the fulfillment of the purpose of his existence.

If we want posterity to go on believing in God, and to submit to the tenets of religion, we shall have to follow the example of Islam and present religion as a live force, as much alive today as it was in Biblical times.

Unless we prove our religious doctrines on the principles of science and logic and demonstrate their interpretation into our daily life, the conception of religion would remain confined to a few rituals to be performed on a fixed day of the week. It will cease to work as a guiding force in our mundane daily life — in our civic, political, economic and cultural life. After all, religion is a moral code of human conduct; what is not moral in religion is not moral in any other activity of our life. It is in this sense that religion is inseparable from the social, economic and political spheres of our life.

Islam is rich with guidance in matters of our mundane life. It has laid down fundamental principles in relation to matters ranging from national and international significance to matters of family and individual discipline. But in all this guidance Islam has taken great care to lay down a flexible code of conduct that would not become cumbersome in exceptional circumstances.

Islamic guidance, for example, in matrimonial relationship lays great emphasis on the sanctity of the marriage covenant. But, at the same time, it does not totally prohibit divorce.

In the field of economics Islam, while saying that "man shall have nothing but what he strives for" (The Qur'an, 53:39) also provides that the Muslims must observe that "in their wealth there is a due share for the needy and the destitute" (The Qur'an, 51:19).

In the words of H. A. R. Gibb in his book Whither Islam: "Within the Western world Islam still maintains the balance between exaggerated opposites. Opposed equally to the anarchy of European nationalism and the regimentation of Russian Communism, it has not yet succumbed to that obsession with the economic side of life which is characteristic of present-day Europe and present-day Russia alike."

In this age, when science is leading human civilization into unexplored regions and new experiences, let us not allow the religious elements to be neglected. Without that our mastery of the elements of nature would turn us into intelligent and obedient, but imperfect, machines — into mere robots without a spirit.
VI. SYMBOLISM IN SOME OF THE ANCIENT THEMES

Is this symbolism artistic fancy, or the search for metaphysical inspiration? The reader can judge for himself by studying the following themes.

The motif in Fig. 21 is called *Khaatam* (trans. “seal”). Its formula is *huwa-Allah*, “He is God,” repeated four times. The four *ha’s* form a central theme turning on a cross and in a square. Among the early Muslim mystics the cross had the same significance as it had for the educated Egyptians of the Pharaonic era — it was the symbol of “eternal life”. The square indicates the stability of the cosmic system and the law which governs this ensemble — the “world axis”. The octagon is considered as the symbol of the “divine throne” or the “universal spirit” (*al’Arsh al-Ruhi*).

From the point of view of design, we see the triangle in the word “Allah”, of which the *alif* is detached. It is difficult to fix in historical time the appearance of the triangle in the Kufic square, but this theme is an old one, although the reference-origin is unknown (see Bibliography at end of this article: *Livre de motifs décoratifs*).

E. Faure, author of *l’Art Médiéval*, says on page 131 of his work “... that a formula draws out of the polygon and brings back to the polygon all the geometric motifs of decoration. Arab art,” adds the writer, “becomes an exact science.”

It seems that the Greco-Egyptian “transmission-line” is the origin of a large number of themes of this kind. Who has not heard of “Geometry”, “Number”, “Symmetry” and “Harmony”, essential ingredients of the teaching given by Pythagoras to his disciples (580-500 B.C.)? This famous man studied for many years on the banks of the Nile before he started his teaching. Iamblichus, Plato and many other disciples or adepts of the master of Samos transmitted to the Arab world these elements of knowledge, which we can find in the works of celebrated writers. Some of these attained a high degree of spiritual elevation, among them being Ibn Hilal, Muhuyi al-Din Ibn, al-Arabi, Ibn Razi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), etc. All the sages of antiquity, whether of Egypt, Greece, the Middle East or other parts of the world, were wont to contemplate, often secretly, the universe and its wonders.

There is an inscription on the Temple of Rameses II (Cairo Museum): “This temple is like heaven in all its proportions.”

Fig. 22 is an extract from the work of Lanci, Vol. 21. We see in this ancient theme that the masks can be not only points, but also lines (shaded in the sketch); from the constructional point of view this theme is only mediocre. In

contrast, its central symbolism is perfect. The four names chosen are those of the first Companions of the Prophet, and all of them commence with an ‘Ayn, shaped like a swastika.

These complications are probably necessary, for by suppressing them either the initial ‘Ayn, or its support, would automatically become elongated, and this would destroy the harmony of the central motif at two points. This deduction, if it is exact, would tend to authenticate the traditional training of the original artisan.

We notice in this example that the characters are started but left unfinished. Example: the nun in ‘Uthman. This deformation of the letter is often made necessary by the layout of the ensemble and the unavoidable filling-in of certain empty spaces. Other characters can also confuse the reader. Example: the dal of ‘Abd might be taken for a Kaaf.

Fig. 22: A splendid theme in squared Kufic, based on symbolism (unfortunately spoilt by three “masks”)

Fig. 23: Central motif of a theme.

Relief on the Rosetta Stone (Egypt)

Fig. 23a: The same as above, more legible

These two panels are located at the entrance to and over the door of a tomb. Taken from the book of J. Bourgoin, Pl. 7. Mosque of al-Malik al-Mu’ayyad (1414).

VII. THE SWASTIKA IN ANCIENT SYMBOLISM

We frequently hear the following point of view put forward regarding the swastika, namely, that for its holder (or “votary”) its direction of rotation can be either “lucky” or “unlucky”. Since light can be said to manifest only by reason of the existence of its opposite — darkness — if we attribute a beneficent principle to light, it seems logical to attribute the opposite principle to darkness.

When we consider the cosmic motion of the universe, it would appear that if the swastika rotates towards the right, that is, clockwise, then it is of good omen and beneficial to
its holder. What can we learn about this from the study of ancient themes? Do they give any indications?

Fig. 24: Study of the swastika

The theme represented in Fig. 24 is certainly very old, as far as the central part is concerned, the arrangement of the external decoration being Persian and relatively recent. If we look at the centre of the motif, we see that it certainly turns towards the right; but as it gets farther from its axis, the rotation changes to the opposite direction. The following seems to be the explanation: when a sufficient rate of acceleration has been reached, as, for instance, with the propeller of an aircraft, or the blades of a ventilator fan, the observer seems to see them moving in the opposite direction to the real and original one. This visual phenomenon is in accordance with a specific law of acceleration and expansion.

For everything there is a real time, and an apparent time, and these vary according to our state of consciousness. As an example: a child following the course of a river has difficulty in keeping up with its rate of flow. But the adult, on the contrary, can cover several times the distance, and still arrive at the destination before him. For the child, the water flows too quickly, but for the adult it is the opposite. Here real time is represented by the water.

The original composer of this theme (Fig. 24) has produced a specimen which includes the two stages: (a) the movement of its origin and (b) the same movement in expansion. It is the history of the universe expressed in symbolism.

Coming back to the swastika itself, it is the value of constructive thought, and then its further development and possible applications, which account for a specific influence being attributed to this emblem. In itself the symbol is only a visible manifestation of thought, a means of expression of the human mind.

The splendid motif on the copper tray (Fig. 24(c)) also has a two-directional rotation. This movement is analysed in detail in (d) and (e). On the other hand, the Indian cross from the continent of America (f) and the Basque tombstone motif (g) show rotation in the opposite direction.

The arrangement in Fig. 30 is based on the principle of this ancient swastika (Fig. 24). This old emblem can be seen in the Manuel Rosicrucien (A.M.O.R.C., p. 61, French edition, 1958). This theme shows the "personages" in white on a black background, whereas the Persian illustration already referred to has a blue background. The volume mentioned above deals with, among other topics appertaining to symbolism, the numerous developments of the primitive cross, a brief glance at "Number", and the laws on the atom and its relation to numbers and geometry — laws which are very ancient and curious.

VIII. ABSTRACT KUFIC

As there is "nothing new under the sun" — an old proverb but eternally true — our present-day artists, always looking for sensational discoveries, sometimes imagine they have found a new artistic mode or school, so far unknown to the world at large. Fig. 25 is taken from the book by Lanci, Vol. 32. This figure will perhaps justify one of these artists, the Dutchman Piet Mondrian, pointing out some instructive similarities with some of his conceptions (see the article by M. Tanneguy de Quenettain on "Pictorial Abstract Art" which appeared in No. 147 of the review Réalités, April 1958 (copyright)."

This Fig. 25, a rarity of its kind, so it seems, must have become deteriorated, for one can only read clearly the beginning of the sentence. Translation: "There is no god but God (and) Muhammad is His Prophet" (Fig. 25a).

In the example following (Fig. 26) the form of the characters has been respected, but the letter itself has been,

1 One of the "creations" of this Dutch author is of the type Fig. 25, seen from a distance and "unframed". One wonders what its composer is trying to represent.
so to speak, understood or assumed; only the background of the panel has been printed, being composed of small crosses.

These two examples, from the constructional point of view, are of the square, regular type.

Fig. 25

![Fig. 25](image)

Fig. 25(a)

![Fig. 25(a)](image)

الله عيسى (س)

Fig. 26

الله محمد رسول الله صلى الله عليه

Fig. 27: The spirit of observation among the ancients: A, a snowflake; B, mineral crystal, and C, Temple of Mira

IX. MISCELLANEOUS STUDIES

The above examples, aimed at being expressions of local artistic skill, have been produced at Timbuktoo since 1938. The figures were used to decorate pictures and cushions made from tanned skins. The embroidery was in great part carried out by a local artisan, M. Touré, of Arma origin. 

The themes are drawn on squared paper, and coloured in different tints, in such a way that they can be reproduced in silk thread of the same colour. This paper is placed on a tanned skin, and with a needle the artisan pierces both the paper and the skin, making hundreds of small holes, spaced at about a half-millimetre from each other, all following the lines traced on the paper. He then embroiders the frame and the letters of the motif, leaving the blanks between these two constituent parts. It is work needing patience and skill, for the "solid" spaces must be filled in uniformly. No re-sewing or joints must be visible.

2 The Arma are, according to oral and written tradition, the descendants of Moroccan soldiers who, after Pasha Djouder, invaded the region north of the Sudan in 1590-91, and settled in the centres of Gao, Timbuktoo, Bourem, Goundam, etc. From the physical and intellectual point of view, they are indistinguishable from the other Sudanese of this region, belonging to the ethnic group of the Songai.
It was by careful observation of the ordered phenomena of nature, and thence the deductio of the cosmic laws which govern the universe, that the ancients discovered the elementary principles of geometry, of which one might say that Kufic is a successful application.

Fig. 27 shows the geometrical arrangement of crystals in a snowflake (A). Here the lines of force have been emphasized to give prominence to this arrangement. In (B) we see the same type of arrangement in the mineral world. In (C) we have an example of the applications of geometry and the "sense of balanced proportions" in ancient architecture at Mira, in Asia Minor. (From the book by Moessel, *Die Proportion in Antike und Mittelalter.*)

Fig. 28. Timbuktoo (or Tombouctoo (T m b k t u) with diacritical points. For the sake of symmetry, the name is reversed in the left-hand side of the motif. This is a very simple, beginner's type of theme. It can be reproduced without these distinctive points simply by extending upwards the legs or stems of the letters.

Fig. 29. Bourem (Burm). The name of a locality near Timbuktoo, derived from the modification of the name of a Touareg tribe. A quadruple theme, regular, very simple in conception.

*Fig. 29: The author's decorative theme on the word "Bourem"*
Fig. 30: Translation: “I put my faith in God alone.” (Kalat instead of Kaly is more often used. See Fig. 23.)

The centre of this theme has the same arrangement as Fig. 24. Photographs giving black on a white background are unable to reproduce the value of certain tints, which are here too dark, like the surrounding frame, which appears black but is not so.

Fig. 31: In a mosque in Egypt there is rose-shaped motif which seems to be ancient, judging from the shape of some of the characters used. No reference exists. This motif was found in a rather dilapidated book belonging to a scholar of Timbuktoo (M. Alfa Ismael Cissé).

All round the central motif, and partly utilizing parts of the frame, the artist has written in Kufic: “Allah and Muhammad and Abu Bakr and ‘Umar and ‘Uthman and ‘Ali and Talhah and Zubayr and Sa’d and Sa’id and ‘Abdullah” (names of Companions of the Prophet).

Because of its octagonal arrangement, this theme contains irregularities, triangles and “masks”. However, in its ensemble it is a masterpiece of imagination and skill. The motif of Fig. 31 was conceived in the same spirit, and by using the same rose-device as a basis of construction. Triangles will certainly be found, but there are no

Fig. 30: The author’s composition of a very old symbolic motif surrounded by a religious emblem

Fig. 31: The author’s theme on a rose-device enclosing a religious emblem (ancient Muslim Egypt)

“masks”. This arrangement would be rather difficult to work out, owing to the necessity of utilizing the “surround” and of harmonizing this with the letters.

Translation: “There is no god but God” (4 times); “Praised be God” (4 times).

Fig. 32: Translation: “In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful” (5 times). This arrangement is of equal difficulty in execution as the rose-device noticed in Fig. 31. It is regular, squared Kufic, in a “pentagram” motif, an old Pythagorean emblem much esteemed among the Arabs (or, to be more exact, among “Islamized” peoples).

Fig. 33: Solar and cosmic symbolism. A regular-type motif, the exterior part being inspired by an illustration of Ancient Persia.

Translation: “God be praised” (3 times) and “There is no god but God” (3 times).

Centre: A motif which can be seen in the ancient cathedral of Istanbul (Saint Sophia), an abstract monogram dating from the beginning of the Christian era.
Intermediae: A precessional zodiac, its needle indicating that our present epoch (era of Pisces) is nearing the end of its cycle.

An interesting point — since this remark refers in the present case to cursive Arab writing — is to compare the geometrical arrangement of the “Dolphins” (Fig. 33(a)), which can be framed inside a circle, with the monogram of Muhammad, as it appears in one of the oldest mosques of Cairo (Fig. 34).

Fig. 32: Theme by the author following the Pythagorean tradition

Fig. 33(a): Monogram (ascribed to Jesus Christ)
(From Saint Sophia Cathedral, Istanbul)

Fig. 33: Theme by the author in memory of Daniel (the cycles and time)
Theme arrangement borrowed from Ancient Persia
Fig. 34: Monogram of Muhammad in a Cairo mosque

(a) (b)

Figs. 34 (a) and (b): Constructors’ seals (initiatic tradition)

X. MONOGRAMS

A number of Arab monograms display, in spite of differences in form, the same traditional conceptions as those which were current among the journeymen masons (stone-cutters) of the European Middle Ages.

The principles of construction are geometrical, and may be recognized from the details given by the Austrian architect Franz Rziha, in his book Studien uber Steinmetz-Zeichen (published in Vienna about 1880). The details gathered about this subject are the following, and they refer to the various methods used in the ancient Middle East, including both cursive and Kufic calligraphy.

First category: the composer signed with his name or forename, or simply with one or two interlaced initials (these latter were sometimes deformed). This practice dates from the Byzantine period, when a seal included all the letters of a name, combined in one geometrical ensemble (an example is given separately at the end of this article).

Second category: the composer used a stone seal (Sceau lapidaire) to show the name of the "corporation" to which he belonged ("corporation" in the modern sense). As a matter of fact, his membership of any particular group depended on his having studied under one of the branches of traditional teaching, which was reserved for a small number of pupils.

This seal was of geometrical construction and, in the ensemble, of the same group-types as those mentioned by F. Rziha, but it was sometimes well-disguised. Being an integral part of a decorative theme, it was, so to speak, hidden by it.

Example: Fig. 34(a) (reconstructed), whereas the European stone seal is always legible.

Third category: Finally, a composer who did not belong to one of these traditional organizations sometimes signed with a wasm (Arabic), in Turkish damgha. This was a kind of coat-of-arms or "crest" belonging to a family, or rather tribe, since it seems to have come from Mongolia, where the nomad breeder still marks his animals with a branding-iron to indicate ownership. (Readers interested in this subject should consult the article on "Branding Irons" in No. 4 of the Bulletin de l'I.F.A.N., Vol. 15, 1953).

The third category is particularly seen in houses and buildings in the northern part of the Middle East, while the second was quite well-known in Egypt (also Damascus).

Fig. 35: The author’s arrangement in the traditional spirit of the ancient artisans
In the three categories mentioned above the term "composer" (or "author") means architect, builder, mason, artisan, decorator, etc. F. Rziha, in his book already mentioned, gives all the details about the geometrical construction of the seals which he studied and described with a thousand or so examples, very accurately dealt with. The seal in Fig. 34 (b) is one of the easiest to recognize. It is represented in the sketch by a single line. The three small crosses have been added to show the axes of construction, which is in dotted-line.

The same method has been used for the reconstruction of Fig. 34 (a). Further, a dotted line indicates the two letters M-D of Muhammad, which are used to "mask" this seal. It is a double seal, due to the fact that the monogram itself is double, belonging to the first category because of the arrangement of the ensemble, and also to the second category because of the traditional conception of the seal. (The monogram itself seems to be of the Byzantine tradition.)

Fig. 35: Simple, regular motif, left to the imagination of the reader. The artisan bears in mind that "... the man who is a student at the school of life is still a child, even though his hair be white..." and that "... if science is a light and a guide, ideals and faith are its inspiration."

Fig. 36: A rose-device motif entitled Rose Garden (The Gulistan), the title of a collection of verses written about 1258 C.E. by Sa’di, the Persian poet of Shiraz.

Fig. 37: The author’s symbolic theme: Emblem-monogram

Thought by the author: "Why, when breathing the perfume of the rose, think only of its ephemeral beauty? Treasure up the memory of its scent, and you will forget that it is withered."

Does not Kufic, in spite of its curious forms and figures, also keep alive the memory of a splendid past?

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By a group of learned scholars: Notice sur les caractères anciens, Paris 1927.

3 The author of this article sincerely thanks Professor Th. Monod and M. R. Mauny, without whose assistance this article would never have been possible.

4 The author apologises for some lack of precision regarding certain references. The works mentioned were consulted many years ago, in different towns, often without a translation being possible. However, they can be found in the important libraries, either from their titles or from the names of their authors. An exception is the book by A. Brandani, which, according to a correspondent, exists at Damascus.

Continued on page 18
ISLAM: ITS PROPHET AND HIS MESSAGE

By Dr. A. R. I. Doi

Muhammad the orphan
The subjoined tree shows the family of Quraysh up to Muhammad:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quraysh</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qusayy</td>
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<tr>
<td>'Abd Manaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hashim</td>
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<tr>
<td>'Abd al-Muttalib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-'Abbás</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Abdullâh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abu Talib</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUHAMMAD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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In the year 571 of the Christian era a child was born to Aaminah, a widow who had just lost her husband, 'Abdullah. 'Abdullâh belonged to the famous family of Hashim amongst the Quraysh. This baby-orphan was left in the care of his mother, who also passed away when he was only six. It therefore fell to the lot of his hundred-year-old grandfather to bring him up. The old man saw in the child the lost 'Abdullah come back, and took good care of him. But he did not live long enough to see the boy grow up, and the duty devolved upon his uncle, Abu Talib.

This unfortunate orphan was Muhammad1 (the English rendering of the name is "highly praised"). Ibn Hisham, the oldest biographer of the life of Muhammad, has given some details about Muhammad's boyhood on the authority of Ibn Ishaq,2 and says that as a boy he was selective in making friends, had refined manners and paid respect to his elders. People gave him an honorific title and called him "al-Amin" (the Trustworthy).3

Muhammad, as he grew up, accompanied his uncle on trading journeys. The lot of an orphan in Mecca of that time was not a happy one.4 But perhaps the most significant of all his journeys was one when twelve years old. He accompanied his uncle, Abu Talib, on a caravan journey to Syria and met a Christian monk named Buhaira who wanted to know all about Muhammad. After enquiry from his uncle he said to Abu Talib, "Go back home with your nephew, and keep an eye on him; if the Jews see him and get to know about him, they will certainly do him harm, for he is going to be a great man."5

No school education
"One other circumstance," says Thomas Carlyle, "we must not forget about Muhammad, that he had no school learning; of the thing we call school learning none at all. The art of writing was but just introduced in Arabia; it seems to be the true opinion that Mahomet never could write.6 Life in the desert with its experiences, was all his education. What of this infinite universe he, from his dim place, with his own eyes and thoughts, could take in, so much and no more was he to know."7

This is Muhammad's early life; a gifted but an unfortunate orphan deprived of any facility to learn reading and writing. But, from an early age, he had been remarked on as a thoughtful man. He began to visit a little cave on a hill outside Mecca called Hira8 to engage himself in meditation.

At the age of 25 he married a rich Qurayshite widow named Khadijah, who was fifteen years his senior, and travelled in her business, again to the fairs of Syria. As long as Khadijah lived Muhammad had none other for a wife.

He was forty before he talked of his Messengership (Risalah) from God. The Arabs believed in every bit of black wood pretending to be God.9 The Quraysh were idolaters and worshippers of al-Uzza, al-Lat and al-Manat, whom they considered as the three daughters of God, and they had placed their idols in the Ka'bah. Their women used to dance naked and some of them were poets used to compose poems concerning every part of their body. A poet was considered to be a leader of the community, and the Quraysh employed their poetic talents in singing praises for their clan. They used to bury their daughters alive, and blood feuds were quite common amongst them. When a father died, he used to instruct his son to take the revenge which was due from another tribe. Such was Arabia before Muhammad began his preaching. The Arab historians call it the period of Jahiliyyah (period of darkness or ignorance).10

The first revelation
On the Night of Glory (Laylat al-Qadr),11 which falls towards the end of Ramadan, Muhammad received his first call to his mission in the year 610 C.E. The first revelation came in the Cave of al-Hira in a voice commanding: "Recite thou in the name of thy Lord."12 These revelations, as the Qur'an says, were received through Gabriel, the Ruh al-Quds or the Holy Spirit.

In his call and message Muhammad first made it clear that he was not an incarnation of God but merely a human

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2 Ibn Hisham's Sirat Rasul Allah, translated into English by Professor Guillaume.
3 See Mas'udi, Vol. IV, p. 127.
4 W. Montgomery Watt, Muhammad, Prophet and Statesman, p. 8.
5 Ibn Hisham, Mas'udi, Wafts.
6 The Qur'an as well as the Hadith (Traditions of the Prophet) confirm Muhammad's being ummi (illiterate).
8 Ibid., p. 74.
9 Ibn Hisham, Mas'udi, Ya'qubi, and Shibli, Sirat al-Nabi.
10 Ibid.
11 The Qur'an, 97:1.
12 The Qur'an, 96:1.

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being and a messenger of God. He said, "I am but a man like yourselves, (but) the inspiration has come to me, that your God is the One God: whoever expects to meet his Lord, let him work righteousness, and in the worship of his Lord, admit no one as partner."

The majority of the Qurayshites were sceptical and became Muhammad's enemies. It is pertinent here to examine the reasons which prompted the Quraysh to inexcusable hostility against Muhammad's message. Muhammad's message sought to dismantle the belief which had been handed down to them for long centuries, a belief, indeed, which had given him, like their forefathers, the excuse to rule over the bodies and souls of their countrymen from north to south of the Arabian peninsula. Besides, there was an age-old rivalry amongst the House of the Banu Umayyah, the clan from which the Umayyad Dynasty took its name, and the clan of the Quraysh. Muhammad was a Hashimite, and Abu Sufyan belonged to the House of the Banu Umayyah. This explains the hostility of Abu Sufyan against Muhammad. Perhaps one of the causes appertains to the uneness felt by the Quraysh about having restrictions placed upon their moral turpitude such as wine-drinking, exhibition of the naked women in the fairs, adultery, etc. Whatever might be the other causes, they scattered the new Muslims when they went apart to pray. They drowned the voice of Muhammad by coarse songs and tremendous noise when he tried to preach. Abu Jahil, his distant uncle, threw a sheep's placenta at the back of Muhammad's neck when once he was absorbed in his prayers. He said nothing and asked his daughter to wash him. Another Qurayshite, 'Uqbah, spat in his face; Muhammad without losing his temper, simply wiped his face. At Ta'if, stones were thrown at him, so much so that his shoes were soaked with blood. They passed derogatory remarks against him and called him Majnun (madman).

The Muslims increase despite persecution

But the new recruits, mainly from amongst the poor and slaves, began to swell the ranks of the believers. Abu Bakr was the first amongst the elderly people to embrace Islam: 'Ali was the first youth from the Quraysh, Khadijah was the first amongst the ladies and Zayd was the first amongst slaves to accept the teachings of the Prophet. The Quraysh now resorted to active persecution, and it resulted in the migration to Abyssinia of eleven Meccan families, followed in the year 615 C.E. by 83 others. Chief among them was the famous Companion of the Prophet, 'Uthman Ibn 'Affan. The emigrés found shelter in the Kingdom of the Negus, a Christian king, who bluntly refused to deliver them into the hands of the Quraysh. The Quraysh sent a delegation to the Negus representing their case. The Negus asked Ja'far Ibn Abu Talib, the leader of the emigrants, to reply to the delegation and explain as to why they had accepted Islam. Ibn Hisham has reported Ja'far's vivid reply as follows:

"We were the Jahiliyyah (ignorant) people, worshipping idols, feeding on dead animals, practising immorality, deserting our families, and violating peace, with the strong man among us always devouring the weak. Such was our state until God sent to us a messenger from amongst ourselves whose ancestry is known to us, and whose veracity, fidelity and purity we recognize. It was the Prophet who summoned us to God in order to profess Him as one and worship him alone, discarding whatever stones and idols we and our forefathers worshipped instead of God. He moreover commanded us to be truthful in our talks, to render to others what is due to them, to stand by our families and to refrain from doing wrong and shedding blood. He forbade committing fornication, bearing false witness, depriving the orphan of his legitimate right and speaking ill of chaste women. He enjoined on us the worship of God alone, associating with Him no other. He also ordered us to observe prayer, pay alms (the zakat) and practise fasting."

But Muhammad fearlessly continued preaching, and by persuasion converted many Meccans. The most important among them were 'Umar and Hamzah, who played a significant role in the history of Islam. In the meantime, three years before the Hijrah, Khadijah, his wife, and Abu Talib, his uncle and a great supporter, died. The menacing threats continued to be made to the Muslims. At last, Muhammad migrated from Mecca to Medina in the year 622 C.E.; the year from which the Muslim Hijrah era begins.

The Meccan period came to an end with the Hijrah, and the Medinite period proved a turning-point in Islamic history. Those who migrated from Mecca were called the Muhajirs ('the Emigrants), and those who welcomed them in Medina were named as Ansar or the Helpers.

In Medina the Prophet is also seen as a statesman. The struggle between the Muslims and the Quraysh was now open and often violent. Incidents of molestation of the Prophet's followers were growing in number. But nothing could prevent Muhammad from preaching the message of the Unity of God. It is in this Medinite period that the Prophet broke off with both Judaism and Christianity. Friday was substituted for the Sabbath, the Adhan, or call to the faithful, for the compulsory five-times prayer was decreed, Ramadan became the month of fasting and the Qiblah (the direction to be observed during the prayers) was changed from Jerusalem to Mecca. The Muhajirs ('the Emigrants) and the Ansar ('the Helpers) were now united under one banner — and the leadership of the Prophet. The first encounter between reinforcements of the Quraysh under the leadership of Abu Sufyan and the Medinites, who were Muslims, was at Badr, which is situated 85 miles south-west of Medina, in the month of Ramadan in the year 624 C.E. (2 A.H.). There were only 300 Muslims and over a thousand Meccans, and the Muslims became victorious under the inspiring leadership of the Prophet. This was the first and the decisive victory of the Muslims, and the Muslim historians consider it as a Divine sanction of the faith that the Prophet preached. After this, in 627 C.E. (5 A.H.) the next encounter, known as the Battle of the Ahzab (Confederates) took place, and in 628 C.E. (6 A.H.) the Prophet led a body of 1,400 believers to the city of his birth when the pact of Hudaibiyyah was signed between the Prophet and the Meccans. Two years later, towards the end of January 630 C.E. (8 A.H.), the conquest of Mecca was complete, and the Prophet entered Mecca with these Qur'anic words in his mouth: "Truth has come and falsehood has vanished."

Magnanimity towards non-Muslims

Professor Hitti reports, on the authority of the well-known historian Wajidi, that the people of Mecca, though non-Muslims, were treated with special magnanimity. In

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13 For details see the Sirat Rasul Allah of Ibn Hisham, pp. 216 et seq.
14 Emile Demingham, Muhammad and the Islamic Tradition, p. 23.
15 Ibid.
16 The Qur'an, 2:168.
17 Ibn Hisham, Sirat Rasul Allah, p. 219; translated by Professor Guillaume; Philip Hitti, A History of the Arabs, p. 121.
18 Tabari, Vol. 1, 1256-57; Mas'udi, Vol. 9, p. 53.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
21 Baladhuri, pp. 35-36.
22 The Qur'an, 17:83.
631 C.E. (9 A.H.) a garrison was stationed at Tabuk by the Muslims, and without any bloodshed the Prophet concluded treaties of peace with the Christian headman of the ‘Aqabah tribe and the Jewish tribes on the oases of Magna, Adruh and al-Jarba to the south. The Jewish and Christian communities were taken under the protection of the newly-emergent Islamic community. On that memorable day, the Prophet asked the Meccans, "What do you think I will do to you?" They answered: "You are a generous brother and the son of a generous brother." "Go," the Prophet rejoined, "you are freed."

Lane Poole writes: "The day of Muhammad’s greatest triumph over his enemies was also the day of his grandest victory over himself. He freely forgave the Quraysh all the years of sorrow and cruel scorn with which they had afflicted him, and gave an amnesty to the whole population of Mecca. Four criminals whom justice condemned made up Muhammad’s prescription list, when as a conqueror he entered the city of his bitter enemies. The army followed his example, and entered quietly and peaceably; no house was robbed, no woman insulted."

In the last year of his life, i.e., in the year 632 C.E., the Prophet entered Mecca to offer his "Farewell Pilgrimage" and gave a noble sermon in which he laid emphasis on man’s duties to his fellow beings. The Prophet attached so much importance to this aspect of man’s life that he repeated his sermon five times during that Hajj season.

The Prophet’s Farewell Address

Ya’qubi, the historian, records that the sermon of 7 Dhu ‘l-Hijjah was delivered by the Prophet on the back of a camel after the afternoon prayer and the sermons on 3 Dhu ‘l-Hijjah in the desert of ‘Arafat in the afternoon first before the afternoon prayer and again after finishing the afternoon prayer; on both these latter occasions he spoke on camel-back. The sermon at Mina was delivered after the morning prayer, also on camel-back. His companion, Bilal, was in attendance, holding the camel’s reins. On all these occasions the Prophet had a crier to repeat his words, sentence by sentence, after him. During the Mecca sermon it was his son-in-law, ‘Ali, who acted as the crier, while on other occasions it was a young man of vigorous voice named Rabi’ah Ibn Umayyah Ibn Khalaf. The Prophet Muhammad had him standing very close to him and asked him to repeat after him each sentence.

During that Farewell Pilgrimage (632 C.E.—10 A.H.) there were present at ‘Arafat between 80,000 to 120,000 men and women. The Prophet Muhammad repeated his sermon again and again. As the pilgrim’s presence in the plain of ‘Arafat forms an integral part of the Pilgrimage rites and his stay at ‘Arafat is obligatory, the Prophet, soon after the whole congregation was ready to perform the afternoon prayer, mounted his camel and opened his historic sermon with these words: “O people! I am a man like unto you. It is possible that you may not see me again in this place. (The Prophet passed away about three months later, 8 June 632 C.E.—12 Rabi’ al-Awwal 11 A.H.) Therefore listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and take these words to those who could not be present here today.” Upon this the Prophet said, “May God bless the person who after having heard me guard my words and takes them to others.” The Prophet continued: “It is possible that you do not understand the import of my words here, but there are people in the world who would understand the meaning of my words better than you. Therefore understand that you should take my words to others who are not present here today, for it happens often that the messenger does not know the importance of the message he is carrying.”

When the Prophet Muhammad had finished his sentence and his crier Rabi’ah had repeated it, the Prophet Muhammad stopped and asked the audience if it had heard his words well. When everyone shouted to say that they had heard them, the Prophet turned his face upwards and said, “O God! Thou art my witness. I have conveyed Thy message.”

Human relationship in the Farewell Address

In his Farewell Pilgrimage Address, delivered on 23 February 632 C.E. (7 Dhu ‘l Hijjah 10 A.H.) the Prophet spoke of fifteen social aspects which touch the life of everyone in his human relationships. Before we proceed further, it is worth noting that in his sermon the Prophet never once mentioned the importance of rituals — the prayers, the zakat or the fasting — and that whatever he said and emphasized had a bearing on human relationship tending to establish peace amongst men and security in the world. Ritualism is given no pride of place in his Address. The points the Prophet made are:

(1) The blood, property and honour of Muslims is sacred to one another. In this regard the Prophet Muhammad said: “O men! listen to my words and take them to heart. Know that every Muslim is a brother to every other Muslim, and that you are now one brotherhood. It is not legitimate for any one of you, therefore, to appropriate to himself anything that belongs to his brother unless it is willingly given to him by his brother.”

(2) Equality of rights. In this regard the Prophet said: “All men are from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, also a non-Arab has no superiority over an Arab, except by good actions.”

(3) The abolition of family distinctions. He said that people should not take pride in their genealogy. It is good actions alone that they should take pride in.

(4) Interdiction of bloodshed resulting from old feuds. The Prophet said, “Blood feuds of the pre-Islamic days are under my feet” (i.e., forbidden).

(5) Interdiction of usury. The Prophet said: “All usury money chargeable from the pre-Islamic period is under my feet (i.e., cancelled), and the first usury money which I cancel is the money that belonged to my uncle ‘Abbas Ibn Mutallib.”

(6) The enforcement of the law of “cease-fire” during certain months of the year. The Prophet Muhammad emphasized the importance of observing peace and the cease-fire during the four “sacred” months of the Arab calendar. The meaning underlying this observance of the sanctity of the four “sacred” months was that the elders and leaders of the Arab community would thus be able to consolidate peace.

(7) Safeguarding of the rights of women.

(8) Safeguarding of the rights of the slaves, who, the Prophet emphasized, should be looked after in the same way as one looked after oneself.

(9) The brotherhood of Muslims. The Prophet pointed out that Muslims were brethren to each other and that they should, each one of them, respect the rights and privileges of the other; they should not back-

24 See Baladhuri, p. 59.
26 Stanley Lane-Poole, The Speaches and Table Talks of the Prophet Muhammad, p. 33.
WHAT IS ISLAM?

The following is a very brief account of Islam and some of its teachings.

*Islam*: The Religion of Peace. The word "Islam" literally means (1) peace, (2) submission. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

**Object of the Religion.** Islam provides its followers with a code, whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

*The Prophet of Islam*. Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last of the Prophets. Muslims, i.e., the followers of Islam, accept all such prophets of the world, including Abraham, Moses and Jesus, as revealed by the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

*The Qur’an*. The Gospel of the Muslims is the Qur’an. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book. Inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur’an, the last Book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

**Articles of Faith in Islam**. These are seven in number: Belief in (1) God, (2) the Angels, (3) the Books from God, (4) the Messengers from God, (5) the Hereafter, (6) the Pre-measurement of good and evil, and (7) Resurrection after death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the Hell — a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment — in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in Heaven.

The sixth article of the Faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in fatalism nor predestination; he believes in pre-measurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

**Pillars of Islam**. These are five in number: (1) A declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad. We shall discuss in detail the first pillar of Islam, i.e., the declaration of faith in the Oneness of God. Belief in the unity of God is the foundation stone of Islam; it governs the religious faith, designs the social pattern, and gives life to the moral codes.

The first sentence of the Islamic creed, "There is no god except God," guides a Muslim throughout his life. It is observed in the Qur’an that God has created everything for our benefit, and therefore a Muslim shows that neither animals nor human beings, sun nor moon nor stars are to be worshipped. Believing in a Supreme Being gives an aim to our life and a purpose for our actions — an aimless life is more dangerous than a life with mistaken aims.

Note the words "Except God". This has a negative as well as a positive aspect. When nobody is superior, nobody is inferior. Thus the belief in the unity of God promotes the sense of brotherhood and equality which is a main feature of Islam.

The Muslims believe that God is Omnipotent and Omniscient. He was when there was nothing, and will be

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29. Philip Hitti, *A History of the Arabs*, p. 120.

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when there will be nothing. Nothing except him is eternal. He knows everything. Even our unspoken intentions and desires are not hidden from him.

Muslims believe that He has no partner, no adviser, no helper; no son or daughter, no wife. He is above every need because need presumes deficiency; He has no body because body needs space, He is nowhere because He has no body; He is everywhere because His power and His knowledge are magnificently apparent everywhere. He cannot be defined in terms of time and space, because He is the Creator of, not a prisoner of, time and space. He cannot be incarnated because incarnation needs body and space. He cannot be seen for the same reason.

When Muslims say that God is Omnipotent and Merciful, they do not mean that His power and mercy are something different from his person. But God is Power Himself; Mercy Himself; Knowledge Himself; Justice Himself; Virtue Himself; Truth Himself, and so on.

The proper name which Muslims use for God, Allah, also needs some explanation. Allah means “One who deserves to be loved,” and “In whom everyone seeks refuge.” This word, grammatically speaking, is unique. It has no plural and no feminine; so this name itself reflects light upon the fact that Allah is one and only one. This name cannot be translated by the word “God” because “God” can be transformed into “gods” and “goddesses.”

The other pillars of Islam are:
(2) Prayers: five times a day;
(3) Fasting: during the month of Ramadan;
(4) Alms-giving: the Zakat; and
(5) Pilgrimage to Mecca.

Faith and Action. Faith without action is a dead letter. Faith by itself is insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in his life and the Hereafter. Each must bear his own burden and none can expiate for another’s sin.

Ethics of Islam. “Imbue yourself with Divine Attributes,” says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His Attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine Attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

Capabilities of Man is Islam. The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man’s nature, which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels, and leading him to the border of Divinity.

Equality of Mankind and the Brotherhood of Islam. Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches and family hours are accidental things: virtue and the service of humanity are matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

Personal Judgment. Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion which, according to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

Knowledge. The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to angels.

Sanctity of Labour. Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

Charity. All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God for the benefit of his fellow creatures. It is man’s duty to live for others, and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor. Particularly does the doctrine of Islam tend to a state of human benevolence apart from false sentiment. It must be an active principle of life. The Muslim is taught to pardon his enemies and to refrain from strife, to deal with all men justly, to glorify in right-doing, right-thinking, and right-speaking, and to regard all men equal in the sight of God.

The Qur’an and the Traditions confirm this fact. Islam is indeed a path to be trodden, a life to be lived, and however its ancient ideals may have become shadowed or occluded, by unworthy clergy, rulers, ‘ulema and the followers, like those of other religions, by the mists of time and controversy, they still remain a clear and inspired digest and commandment as to the manner in which man should deal with his fellow men.

Respect for one’s parents is especially emphasized in the Qur’an. The Qur’an declares:

"Thy Lord hath decreed, that ye worship none save him, and (that ye show) kindness to parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age with thee, say not ‘Fie’ unto them nor repulse them, but speak unto them a gracious word. And lower unto them the Wing of submission through mercy, and say: My Lord! have mercy on them both as they did care for me when I was little." (17:23-24)

This in short is Islam, a religion as well as a culture, and the message of the Prophet. "Islam," writes Christopher H. Dawson in The Dynamics of World History, “is at once a culture and a religion, and in which the culture can hardly be conceived of as existing apart from religion.” Consequently, if the Muslims lose their religion, they lose with it their culture and undergo a process of social dissolution.


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Simplicity of Early Islam gives way to decorative art in buildings

It is not at all certain that the earliest Muslim buildings erected by the Prophet Muhammad and the "Orthodox" Caliphs contained any decorative elements. There is a suggestion of it in Samhudi's statement that the Prophet admired the appearance of the pebble paving in his restored Medina Mosque built in 629 C.E. Were the pebbles coloured and arranged in a mosaic pattern as was the custom elsewhere? We do not know. Later in Iraq the Governor, Sa'd Ibn Abu Waqqas, had built a lavish palace for himself after the pattern of the Sassanids, but he was reprimanded by the Caliph 'Umar, who ordered it to be destroyed by fire.

Luxury breeds evil, and the high purpose and evangelizing mission of the Arabian reform directed from the Holy City would not permit it to take root. But once the seat of government shifted to other lands, it became necessary to adopt a different attitude. It would not do to have the conquering generals seated on the ground confronting the defeated rulers mounted on the throne, which is what 'Amr is known to have done in Egypt. Mu'awiyyah himself felt the incongruity of it, and reacted at once when the Byzantine ambassador criticized his palace as being totally unworthy of a monarch. He therefore built in its stead the Green Domed Palace, which we know to have been lavishly endowed.

The major population of Syria was Christian, and it was in direct emulation of their splendid churches that the Umayyads began to build on a monumental scale. It has not been noted before, but there is evidence of this in the Traditions themselves. For Ibn 'Abbas is reported to have said: "You will certainly ornament them as the Jews and Christians did" (Mishkat al-Masabih, tr. J. Robson, 1963, I, p. 145).

The earliest existing Muslim structure, the Dome of the Rock of Jerusalem, built by 'Abd al-Malik in 691 C.E., bears this out. It was covered inside and outside with glass mosaics, the lower wall surfaces had slabs of coloured marbles, and the dome was plated with gold. After this, in most of the Umayyad buildings these forms of decoration were usually prevalent. Gilt plating had been inherited from antiquity, while glass mosaic and polychrome marble revetment had been prevalent forms of decoration among the Romans and then the Byzantines. In the Great Mosque of Damascus some of the superb mosaics portraying trees, plants and palaces still survive, and also some of the quartered marble slabs, though the gold-plated doors have long since vanished. Umayyad restorations of the holy shrines at Mecca and Medina had a similar sequence of embellishments. The Masjid al-Haram was restored in this manner in 709 C.E. at a cost of 30,000 dinars, and the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina in 706-710 C.E., when the 20 Greek workmen’s wages alone came to 100,000 dinars. A critical
SPECIMENS OF ISLAMIC ART

THE HIGH PROFICIENCY, IMAGINATION AND EXCELLENCE OF MUSLIM ARTISTS

Plate 10: Painted cupola of the Shahzade Mosque in Istanbul (1543-48 C.E.)

Plate 11: Drum and Mosque in Isfahan

Plate 2: Entrance façade of the İndijie Minare Madrasa, Konia (1251 C.E.)

Plate 3: Window grille, Damascus
ICLAMIC BUILDINGS

THE VERSATILITY OF MUSLIM CRAFTSMEN AND THE BEAUTY OF THEIR CREATIONS

Plate 6: Portal head of the Kuratai Madrasa, Konia (1252 C.E.)

Plate 7: Mukarnas half dome at the Masjid-i-Shah in Isfahan, Iran (1616-30 C.E.)
study of the literary text reveals many details of the work of this period (see the author's article in The Islamic Review for Jan.-Feb. 1962, pp. 19-34).

But if we wish to see the actual style of decoration of this period, we would go to the desert castle of Syria and Jordan. As a result of modern exploration and excavation, we now have a wealth of material available including, to mention only the most conspicuous, the wall paintings of Qusayr Amra, the floor mosaics of Khirbat al-Mafjar, the carved stuccoes of Qasr al-Hair al-Gharbi, and the stone sculptures of Mshatta. The decoration of this period is perhaps the most interesting in all Islamic art, since we are often able to detect its sources. And though much of it is derivative, yet we are left breathless with admiration at the versatility of the craftsmen and the beauty of their creations. Muslim craftsmen had inherited the techniques as well as many of the motifs, but they soon made them their own, and, what is more, frequently excelled their masters.

The Abbasids in Iraq did not have suitable stone for carving so they substituted stucco, and although this is comparatively a more perishable material, a great deal of it was buried in dry sands and preserved. Consequently the old capital of Samarra (369-92 C.E.), when turned up with the spade, was found to be a great storehouse of abstract, geometrical and floral design. In addition to these there were frescoes and carved woodwork. The stucco-work migrated to Egypt, but there stone was available, and so by degrees satellite centers began to rival carving in plaster. In Moorish Spain, on the other hand, this process was reversed. The Umayyads of Cordova were unsurpassed in the carving of marble (particularly in the capitals and bases of columns), but much later the rulers of Granada became equally proficient in the use of polychrome stucco. The dadas of these walls were brilliantly decorated with faience mosaics. Their patterns and colours are immediately appealing to the eye, while at the same time their intricate geometry is a challenge to the intellect. In Islamic Iran, where faience mosaic had originated, the emphasis was on floral designs, and gradually whole wall areas began to be covered with it. It is regrettable that they did so at the expense of the attractive brick mosaics, whose memory alone survived in the patterns which were simulated in plaster. From Persia faience ornament spread to Seljuk Turkey, and four centuries later to Mughal India, where it had an equal vogue with the technique of inlaying in semi-precious stones.

It can be seen then that in each of the media the Muslim decorators worked they did so with proficiency and imagination, and achieved considerable successes. Some of the breadth, the variety and the excellence is to be seen in the illustrations accompanying this brief article.

The Arabic script as a medium of decoration

In any assessment of Muslim decorations there must first come what would literally be "the writing on the wall" — those sacred phrases in the Arabic script that have adorned buildings everywhere, and never tired of proclaiming the Islamic creed. The script evolved at Kufah had a stable and upright character, and a robust appeal. The Qur'anic passages were well suited to this style. But there were also inscriptions with a secular content, and after the 12th century these were usually rendered in a more fluent style. This "Nasihy" style allowed greater latitude to the individuality of the calligrapher, and was also more readily legible. Since the inscriptions contain so much valuable historical information they are the foundation upon which architectural history must be written. In Europe there would have been the ecclesiastical records to draw upon; in the Muslim world, apart from the inscriptions, there are only the cursory notices of contemporary historians, and in these there are many lacunae, for they only refer to the prominent monuments of their reign. The two examples of calligraphy that we illustrate here are both from entrance

Plate 4: Pierced medallion on the minbar of the Mihrimah Sultan Mosque in Istanbul (c. 1540 C.E.)

Plate 5: Akbar's cenotaph at Sikandara, Agra, India (1608-13 C.E.)
portals, which were more often than not the most sumptuous features of Muslim buildings. Plate 1 is an inscription frieze in turquoise blue faience tiles now at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, but which was evidently from the mausoleum of Buyan Quli Khan at Bukhara (1359 C.E.), where it constituted part of the archivolt of the portal. The whole background of the inscription is covered with a vortex of tendrils, and the letters cut athwart these with great aplomb. At the Indje Minare Madrasa at Konia, Turkey (1251 C.E.), the inscription frieze forms a loop above the entrance arch, climbs vertically up from one side and descends from the other, and there are a further pair of inscriptions in curving bands on the flanks of the portal. The monotony of the low relief carving of letters and floral work is broken by enigmatic forms in high relief which cast shadows (Plate 2).

**Arabesque**

Another form of decorative enrichment greatly cherished was the arabesque. Whether geometrical or floral its main feature was that it was repetitive and regenerating. Occasionally both types were harmoniously combined, as in the window grille at the Maristan (Hospital) of Nuraddin at Damascus (1154 C.E.). The geometric lines interlace around star centres, and at the periphery are leaf forms linked together in a kind of merry-go-round (Plate 3). Sometimes, as in the minbar of the Mihirimah Sultan Mosque in Istanbul (c. 1540 C.E.), the floral arabesque serves as a foil to the perforated geometry contained within a great medallion. As the light shines through

**Mukarnas**

In the 11th century C.E. a new type of ornament appeared in Muslim architecture — the **mukarnas**, that is to say, little corbelled cells formed in an overhanging cluster. **Mukarnas** probably developed out of a division and addition of the squinch, which is the niche forming a transition from the substructure to the dome. It was first applied to a squinch in Iran (Yazd), to a whole dome in Iraq (the Imam Durr), to a cornice in Armenia (Baku), and gradually it began to be used everywhere — in wall panels, capitals, half domes, and so on. It achieved some of its most expert renditions in the half domes of portals, and the Karatai Madrasah in Konia (1252 C.E.) is one among these. Attempting to comprehend how the masonry blocks were fitted together is like working out a jigsaw puzzle (Plate 6). The shell-form niches and quarter dome brackets are set out with cunning and precision, and when the sun shines into its midst it is like the sparkle of diamonds. The half dome of the entrance portal at the Masjidi-i-Shah at Isfahan (1616-30 C.E.) is even more complex in its setting out, and takes a great effort of the intellect in understanding it. On its surfaces while blossoms shine against the foil of cobalt tile mosaic, so that the whole seems innocent of any guile (Plate 7). The half-crown left at the summit of the vault reminds us of a similar treatment at the almost contemporary Mosque of Thatta in Sindh, Pakistan (1644-47 C.E.), though here this feature is within the squinch, and the chevrons are formed over the tops of the intersecting ribs. The parasol vault, squinch, net pendente and brick mosaic were all Iranian inventions, but here at the mouth of the Indus they had been combined in a unique way, equal perhaps to the best Iranian work (Plate 8).

It sometimes transpires that a form which started out in its career as a structural member in time degenerates into a piece of pure decoration. This seems to have been the fate of architectural ribs. At the Cordova Mosque (965-68 C.E.) they are stout, and they interlock to form the framework of the vaults, and take the load of the cupola off the intervening wall spaces and transmit it directly to the engaged columns which rest on the cornice. But again these members are covered with a festoon of flowers in glass mosaic, and this serves to disguise the role they are playing (Plate 9). As we have said elsewhere, “the muscles of construction are kept out of sight and made to look innocently decorative”.

**Muslims dome builders par excellence**

Muslims were dome builders *par excellence*. The dome had that air of authority and finality that appealed to their imagination. It was the crown that linked all beings who stood beneath it in a bond of unity. It also afforded an excuse for adornment. On the exterior where it had to weather the elements it was covered with surface designs or veneered with marble, or yet encased in a sheath of glazed tiles. Protected as it was on the inside, it could be ornamented with painted patterns. The great medallion in the dome of the Shahzade Mosque (1543-48 C.E.) in Istanbul is like a cosmic nebula, while every other feature has a design appropriate to it (Plate 10). Pre-eminent among the tile-clad domes of Iran is that of the Lutufullah Mosque of Isfahan (1603-18 C.E.). The curving stems of arabesques seem to repeat the roundness of the dome, just as the staccato inscriptions below define the vertical function of the drum (Plate 11). Here we learn the lesson most graphically that every form has a type of decoration appropriate to it, and every medium its own inherent style.
THE CONCEPTION OF GOD IN THE QUR’AN

Its Influence On Human Behaviour

By the late al-Hajj Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din

The names of God that inspired early Muslims to discover the Laws of Nature

Before I conclude this part of my subject, I will refer to some of the names of God which inspired the early Muslims to discover certain prominent Laws of Nature which became the bases of their scientific researches. Here, again, I begin with the word Rabb.

The attribute means first of all Creator, but it also signifies the fostering of a thing in such a manner as to make it attain one condition after another until it reaches its goal of completion. This signification of the word is not an accidental discovery on my part. The word has been used in this sense in Arabic literature before Islam, as the Imam Raaghib says in his lexicon of Qur’anic words, written many centuries ago. The theory of evolution came to Darwin’s mind in a very hazy way in the middle of the last century, and Spencer put it into its present shape; yet the law was known to the Arabs, as their writings show; and it was this Divine Attribute, al-Rabb, that drew their attention to the law of evolution as working in nature. It is impossible to exaggerate the service that the discovery of this law has done towards the furtherance of science and civilization; but the actual law itself has been explained most eloquently in the first Name of God given in the Qur’an. In the exposition of this attribute, it in many places refers to the various grades in which things in creation have to reach their perfection. The Qur’an also says in most forcible language that the laws of God are unchangeable. I think this disclosure as to the unchangeableness of the law is much more important that any other discovery. All branches of science have been based upon this principle. In fact, law itself signifies a system which remains always unchanged. No one can then belittle the authority of the Qur’an when it reveals the importance of the above-mentioned feature of law. There are two other names, however, which should receive special consideration from those engaged in scientific research: al-Zaahir and al-Baatin. These names are among those Divine Attributes which help us chiefly in our investigations of the matter around us. Al-Baatin means One Who knows the hidden properties of things in nature. Al-Zaahir is He Who reveals them. These two actions are unceasingly at work in the universe; and they teach us that everything in nature is a repository of latent faculties that should be brought to light. It is for us to make researches for the discovery of these hidden things; and for us to find out laws that may help us to subdue such latent qualities to our service. These two things, concealment and manifestation, are responsible for all our scientific investigations. They induced the early Muslims to read the secrets of nature, and thus enrich the world with wealth undreamed of before.

The attributes of God

God has been declared in the Holy Qur’an to be the Originator of everything, and He is the One to Whom everything in Creation returns. This means that everything in Creation tends to return to its origin; and this led the followers of the Qur’an to believe in the law of gravitation, which developed into the law of attraction.

Al-Jaami — the Collector, the Combiner — refers to the law which keeps the various ingredients of a thing in unison; this is commonly known as the law of cohesion. In this connection another attribute, al-Wadud — He Who loves intensely — inspired the early Muslims to believe in the Law of Affinity, and they concluded that this is a sort of love reposed in everything that impels it towards things of the same class.

In contrast to these Attributes another, al-Maani by name, speaks of the Law of Repulsion. The word means He Who keeps things separated from each other. They remain, as it were, at arm’s length. Then come the two great laws — the law of expansion and the law of contraction. Al-Baasit

*Continued from The Islamic Review for November-December, 1965.
is He Who opens things and discloses all that lies in them, while al-Quabidh is He Who contracts things. We also find the law of conservancy spoken of in another two names — al-Baqiyy and al-Haseeb. The former means He Who preserves things, and the latter, He Who looks to the safety of things. We are assured that the material which exists in the universe for our use has been created indestructible. It may change its form, but its essence remains intact.

The Holy Qur'an lays special stress on this fact. It says that everything in nature has preordained measures. Everything that comes from the heavens is again given measured proportion, and it is for us to respect and observe those measures when we use them. Though it is a universal law to be observed on each plane of humanity, yet it plays a most important part in physical science. Science chiefly means the knowledge of measures and proportions which, when observed, work miracles. In this connection we find another Attribute, al-Muhsiy — He Who knows the measures and qualities of things. The name enjoins us to possess knowledge of the measures aforesaid, otherwise we should have to close all chemical laboratories.

Al-Khaaliq — He Who mixes various things so as to create new things. The name is responsible for the laws of combination under which things of contrary qualities combine to produce others with new properties not existing in their ingredients.

I have enumerated here a few of the names that inspired the early workers in science to discover those basic laws, but every attribute of God works in the universe in the form of some law. We have, therefore, to ponder over these names again; they will disclose many other laws working in nature, but not within our ken.

Knowledge of the riches and beauty of nature

I conclude this aspect of the holy names with the mention of two other names, just as extensive in their significance in relation to the various aspects of humanity — al-Rahmaan and al-Raheem. The former refers to the beneficence of God which has already created everything we need in life — things which have come into existence even before life began. The latter refers to Divine Beneficence which makes our labour bring forth fruit a hundredfold. The two attributes assure us that everything material which we need to make life happy has already been created, and if we use it rightly, our actions will never remain unrequited.

The whole creation is full of such material, heaped up and running over, and it only awaits our exertion to bring about the desired result. With this assurance Muslims approached nature and unravelled it. They enriched the world and gave it blessing unknown before. It is impossible to praise Muslims too highly for their great contribution to civilization. I may say that the world before Islam was as though it were living from hand to mouth, with very scanty material. The Qur'an came and informed mankind of the various kinds of riches, beauty and wealth that were stored up in nature, and created for human enjoyment. In the light of this teaching, the Muslims not only widened the scope of knowledge and learning, but introduced new treasures of happiness and comfort. From food to high art the Qur'an inspires man to acquire everything that may supply his need or appetite, but without exceeding the limits. The Qur'an clearly declared that every blessing of God was meant for those who will use it in the service of God, which in the Holy Qur'an stands for the service of humanity. The world was without delicacies of food before Islam, but we find dainty things on Muslim tables in great variety; delicious food, healthy drink, tasty pickles and preserves and various kinds of fruits. Man used to clothe himself in coarse cotton materials and rough woolen fabric to protect himself from the inclemency of the weather. The skins of animals were used for clothing in colder climates, but Islam brought every kind of material — cotton, wool, silk and goat-hide into use — and in the most beautiful designs. In India, clothing was of khadi — coarse cotton cloth — and a rough sort of silk was worn by the gentry, but when the country came under Muslim rule it made wonderful improvements in this respect. The weavers in their reign of four centuries turned out not only one Moghul Emperor, Akbar the Great (d. 1605 C.E.), worked up silk and cotton into thirty designs. I can hardly find anything existing at present in the list of materials worn by well-to-do men in India that does not owe its origin to the Moghul rule.

How the Muslims advanced civilization

I find similar improvements in architecture and the means of conveyance, with all the advances in traffic, gardening, irrigation and navigation, crockery and household furniture. On the other hand, Muslims did not neglect to fortify their towns against attack, or to cultivate a martial spirit. In fact, it would need a most voluminous literature to detail all that was founded by Muslims to advance our civilization and happiness; and it is a religious book like the Qur'an that inspires its reader with these things, in their choicest form. Muslims acted upon two principles — first to use every blessing of God in its best form, and in a way that might embrace beauty, pleasure and comfort; secondly, to use these things in such a manner as not to disturb the happiness of others or lead to indulgence and extravagance. The Qur'an prophesied that man would rise continually by following its precept, and declared, by way of metaphor, that Islam would create a new heaven and a new earth. No one can deny the fulfillment of the prediction. Western culture has inherited the first part of Muslim civilization and is improving wonderfully, but they are lacking on the moral side. And when I say that all this was inspired by the Qur'an it shows that religion from God does not come to supply the human race with a sickly theology and deter us from the enjoyment of life. Rather does it come to enhance our enjoyment, but in a way that may not engender bestial passion in us, at the expense of others.

I have strayed somewhat from my subject, but it was necessary, in a way, to do so when enumerating the various beauties that God has showered on us.

To resume. So far I have dealt with attributes that assist us individually, but we are sociable by nature, and no society can exist without the possession of certain morals. I do not here propose to write a treatise on sociology based upon the Qur'anic teaching, so I will only refer to those holy names by the imitation of which we can build up a strong social fabric. These attributes can be divided into two classes; first, those that induce us to do good to others, and secondly those that refer to the attitude we should adopt when we find others in error.

Under the first heading I give the following: Rabb al-'Aalameen. This has various meanings, but one will suffice us here — nourishing of all. It excludes all considerations of race, colour, country or creed; we should look on all alike, and our gift should go to every creature of God. Whatever has been given us by God should go to the help of others. I have already said something about al-Rahmaan and al-Raheem. They, too, have various shades of meaning. Both words are from the same root, Rmn, that means mercy, but they refer to different forms of mercy. They convey the idea of beneficence, goodness and charity, but not one of these words signifies what is conveyed in the two words. Al-Rahmaan speaks of the beneficence that we should show in looking to others' needs, even though they deserve no such kindness. It
should not come in the form of compensation, but of our own accord; and sometimes even at a time when the needs of others have not yet made themselves felt. It is like the kindness of a mother who makes various preparations for the comfort of a baby still in the womb.

Al-Raheem signifies the beneficence which we show in rewarding the actions of others, but our reward should be many times greater than that which the actions of others deserve.

Al-Kareem — Generous and Bounteous. Al-Wahhaab — He Who showers His blessings on others regardless of their merits. Al-Razaq — Nourisher. Al-Mu'tiy — Giver of Gifts. Al-Naajid — He Who brings profit to all. Al-Ghanty and al-Mughnay — He Who is rich and does not stand in need of others, but makes others rich and free from want. Elsewhere the Qur'an declares that our Lord is neither poor nor needy. Then comes another name of God that is very significant in this respect. It is al-Sama'd. It means He Who looks to the needs of others and on whom all depend for their needs. To equip ourselves with Divine Attributes is equivalent in Islam to the worship of God, and that is the conception of Worshipping God expressed in the Qur'an; and it is therefore our religious duty to become rich and amass wealth, not, of course, by the exploitation of others or by robbing them of their wealth.

Islam, therefore, is not a religion that favours poverty. It preaches charity without doubt, but not to an extent that may reduce us to poverty. Though not a sin, it is still not desirable in Islam to be without wealth.


Heaven on earth

All these attributes are too clear to demand any further explanation. I wish one in ten thousand of us could equip himself with them, or some of them, and then the world would find itself a heaven. Poverty and misery would be no more, neither would there be any complaint of non-employment or destitution. If those in power could act as does the Nourisher of All in the universe, such action would extinguish all racial bias and colour prejudice. It would redeem foreign rule from all that is undesirable in the eyes of the subject races; in fact, there would remain no question of foreign and native, those two words most hateful and fatal to all hope of universal peace.

Now I come to such names as will assist us when we have to deal with those who are in the wrong and commit offences. Al-Aadil — All Just — is one of the names of God, but is explained by another Attribute, Malik Yaum al-Din — Master of the Day of Requital. Al-Malik also means Owner. It refers to another beautiful quality exhibited by God in dealing with our offences. He is the Owner, and we are among His chattels. He chastises us for our errors in a way that may not damage His property in us. He often forgives us, but if He finds that His forgiveness increases inordinacy in us and makes us stubborn, He punishes us for our good. A judge is bound to meet the demands of the law in every case, but the ways of God are different from those of the average judge. If the offence of a person affects others, He punishes that person unless he is forgiven by the offended one. But if a person commits a wrong that affects his own self, God gives punishment or forgiveness as the case may be with the object of reform. There is no vengeance in the ways of the Lord. Punishment with Him is a disciplinary measure and not a satisfaction of anger or revenge. We find sometimes, in the case of people guilty of political offences, that the punishment awarded them is so excessive as practically to wipe out the offender and his family. Unfortunately, political prestige among the ruling class has now entered into the realm of justice, though it is the last thing that should affect the mind of a judge.

In Short, Malik Yaum al-Din — Master of the Day of Requital — is the only Attribute in the Holy Qur'an that speaks of God's punishment but, on the contrary, we find several other Attributes that speak of mercy and grace in connection with sinners; for example, al-Ghafir — The Great Forgiver, al-A'juww — The Pardoner, al-Tawwab — The Acceptor of Repentance, Who returns to His Mercy when He finds an inordinate person repentant. I say again, if we could follow the ways of the Lord in our dealings with those who do wrong to us, we should find more correction and repentance among wicked people than would come from any penal measures.

There are various other Divine Attributes mentioned in the Qur'an, some of them such as will, if we possess them, increase our personality. Others should be ours to enable us to keep order and discipline among those under us.

These Attributes are vast in their meaning and possess diverse aspects applicable to every department of business life. In these pages I can only give the meanings which appear to me necessary for the building up of character. I enumerate now the rest of the Attributes, and begin with the qualities essential for the beautifying of our personality.

Al-Haleem — He Who shows forbearance or clemency when wronged by others; He Who conceals offences; moderate, gentle, leisurely in His dealings, not of hasty temper, grave and calm.

Al-Shakur — He Who approves or rewards others largely for small deeds. He in Whose estimation the work of others has prospered but meagrely. He multiplies His reward to them. Generally the words mean thankful, or one who does his utmost in showing his gratitude with his heart and tongue.

Al-Hameed — He Who is praised in every way, He Who is commended and mentioned with approbation.

Al-Haqq — He Who is Right, Correct. He Whose work is suitable to the requirements of justice, wisdom and righteousness. The word includes the ideas of fitness, propriety, competency or adaptability.

Al-Hasab — He Who is sufficient as a reckoner or as a giver of what suffices. The word refers to the prompt rendering of the account, as well as to the asking of others to give account.

Al-Sabur — He Whose patience is greater than others. He Who is calm in suffering the pangs of affliction. He Who withholds Himself from impatience and His tongue from complaint. He Who faces hard trials with endurance; it may mean the long-sufferer, and Who does not hastily take revenge upon the disobedient.

Al-Muqadd — He Who acts equably or justly.

Al-Majeed — One Who possesses glory, honour and dignity. Who is righteous in His actions as well as munificent and liberal and good in disposition.

Al-Wasayy — He Who is relied upon in the management of affairs, He in Whom one may confide in the disposal of things or rely on for the management of affairs.

Al-Shahid — He Who is present and bears witness to things rightly.

Continued on page 29
THE HISTORY OF THE IDEA OF THE MIRACLE (I'JAZ) OF THE QUR'AN

The development of the idea of the Qur'an being a miracle during the 8th-11th centuries C.E.

By NA'IM AL-HUMSI

(VII)

The writer, Mr. Na'îm al-Humsi

Abu al-Nasr Hibat Allah al-Shirazi

Abu al-Nasr Hibat Allah al-Shirazi (also called Da'i al-Du'a) was a contemporary of Abu al-'Ala al-Ma'arri. He answered the views on the i'jaz of the Qur'an put forward by al-Raawandi, who does not consider that the inabiity of the Arabs to match the Qur'an when the Prophet Muhammad posed a challenge to them on this was adequate proof of the i'jaz of the Qur'an, and that if these were proof of the i'jaz against the Arabs it would not have any significance against other people. Professor Kraus reports al-Shirazi as saying in reply to al-Raawandi: 2 "Words signify meaning, and words are like a body with the meaning as the soul. It is known that bodies in their physical characteristics do not differ very much, and that any differences between them are in essence not very great. But this is not true of the soul, which is the meaning. One soul might weigh in the balance as much as the whole of mankind because of the need for it and the example it sets. The Qur'an's words are the body, and the meaning of the words is the soul, and it is a meaning which God always associated with wisdom in every context in the Book. You, my adversary, admit that the Qur'an is a mu'jizah in its words as regards the Arabs, but that this proves nothing against the foreigners whose mother-tongue is not Arabic. To this we say that the meaning of the words, the wisdom in them, provides proof against everyone irrespective of language and mode of expression. The proof here lies in the fact that even in the case of what is apparent — namely that which is likened unto the body in which differences are not normally great — the difference between the Qur'an and others is so miraculous. How much different then is the Qur'an in regard to its meaning, which is likened unto an honourable soul which other souls need? How great a mu'jizah is that?"

This shows that in al-Shirazi's view i'jaz is based on the meaning of the words rather than on the words themselves. The meaning of the words is considered by him to be the very soul of the Qur'an, and to be wisdom. If the Qur'an be a mu'jizah for the Arabs as regards its words, it is also a mu'jizah for the non-Arabs as regards its meaning which is the soul of the words. This is the argument with which he answers al-Raawandi's criticism of the i'jaz of the Qur'an.

Al-Baqillani

Al-Qadi al-Baqillani (403 A.H.—1012 C.E.) wrote an authoritative and well-known book on the i'jaz of the Qur'an to counter the movement which started in his time in opposi-

1 Continued from The Islamic Review for January 1966.
2 Al-Adib, Beirut, for 1943-44 C.E., p. 32.
as regards the reports they contained of the past, but the Qur’an added to this the quality of beautiful style. Muhammad perceived that the Qur’an was the word of God, and the average man reading or hearing the Qur’an feels the same about it.

7. If it be proved that the Qur’an was a mu’jizah and that mankind is not capable of matching it, it follows that the Qur’an would not be the work of a human being, and that it is the work of a superhuman source (this argument is linked with the argument on the first point above — see pages 9 and 10 of al-Baqillani’s treatise).

8. Had the Arabs matched the Qur’an in any way this would have become widely known. There is no evidence whatever to show that the Arabs did not know about the challenge made to them by the Prophet Muhammad to match the Qur’an. There is no evidence at all to support the allegation that the Prophet Muhammad had suppressed the verses in which the challenge was made, and al-Baqillani shows that in fact there is proof that these verses were publicized, and that the Qur’an shows that in fact the Arabs had attempted to meet this challenge by claiming that the Qur’an was fabricated.

9. Al-Baqillani quotes verses from the Qur’an summing up the allegations and criticism made by those who doubted the Qur’an or criticized it (page 11 of al-Baqillani’s treatise).

10. Al-Baqillani maintains that had the Arabs been able to match the Qur’an they would certainly have done so, and they would have sought to match the Qur’an by their excellent poetry and prose. But they did not do this, because they knew that the Qur’an could not in fact be matched.

11. Al-Baqillani says that the i’jaz of the Qur’an can be appreciated by those who have a taste for rhetoric and good literary style. He mentions the story about ‘Atabah Ibn Rab’i’ when he heard the Prophet Muhammad recite the verse of the Chapter al-Sajdah, and the story of Abu Sufyan when he came to the Prophet Muhammad to declare his acceptance of Islam.

12. Al-Baqillani replies to allegations about surfah. He says that if surfah were the cause of the i’jaz of the Qur’an then there would have been works in the early Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic era) or subsequently, which could have been compared to the Qur’an, for surfah applied only to a determinate period (page 5 of al-Baqillani’s treatise).

13. Al-Baqillani gives details of the criticism levelled against the Qur’an as quoted in al-I‘jan, and maintains that the word of God in the Qur’an could not be compared with the word of human beings (page 17 of al-Baqillani’s treatise).

14. Al-Baqillani says that the i’jaz of the Qur’an from the linguistic angle appears in the diverse use made of the words of the Arabic language which added even further to its versatility.

15. Al-Baqillani notes that some people had alleged that Ibn al-Muqaffa’ had opposed the Qur’an. He says that al-Durrah al-Yatimah was not the original work of Ibn al-Muqaffa’, and that the parables he quoted were borrowed from others. Al-Baqillani says that Ibn al-Muqaffa’ subsequently admitted this (page 17 of al-Baqillani’s treatise).

16. Al-Baqillani discusses the i’jaz of the Qur’an from the angle of kalam, and considers the arguments as to whether the Qur’an was created of old or merely dealt with matters of the past.

17. Al-Baqillani says that some people had claimed that the Qur’an was poetry, or that some parts of it were in fact poetry. Some had maintained that it was merely sa‘r (rhyming prose), but more eloquent and beautiful than ordinary sa‘r. But al-Baqillani says that it would be wrong to compare the Qur’an with familiar styles of writing.

18. Al-Baqillani says that among those who claimed that the Qur’an was not a mu’jizah were al-Nazzam, ‘Abbad Ibn Sulayman and Hisham al-Qirz (page 16 of al-Baqillani’s treatise). The fact is, however, that these merely upheld the theory of surfah, but did not dispute the i’jaz of the Qur’an altogether.

19. It would not be right to claim i’jaz merely because of the beauty of style, because there was a great deal of contemporary poetry and prose which was beautiful.

20. The non-Arab can perceive the i’jaz of the Qur’an from the fact that the Arabs could not match it. Al-Baqillani urges an examination of the contents of the Qur’an and its comparison with other writings in the Arabic language. The difference would be very obvious. But it must be noted that persons who do not know the Arabic language, or do not have a good enough command of it to appreciate the finer aspects of such comparison, have to rely on the opinion of others in this matter. Al-Baqillani compares the Qur’an with the messages of the Prophet Muhammad and points out the difference between them from the rhetorical and literary aspects, and shows that the Prophet was incapable of matching the Qur’an. This, to al-Baqillani, proves that the Qur’an was the work of God. Al-Baqillani also compares the utterances of the Companions of the Prophet and other contemporaries with the words of the Qur’an, and shows that these Companions and contemporaries were incapable of matching the Qur’an. He also shows the stupidity of the utterances of Musaylamah (in his false Qur’an), and examines various poetry masterpieces and compares them with the Qur’an. He emerges from all this with the conclusion that the style of poetry is altogether different from prose, and that there would be no reason because of this for comparing poetry with the Qur’an, which is prose, and there would be no justification for drawing any conclusions on this. The present writer disagrees with al-Baqillani’s proposition that no useful purpose can be served by comparing the Qur’an with poetry. Al-Baqillani says that he did nevertheless compare the Qur’an with poetry because some ignorant people had resorted to this device in the past.

He mentions the very famous mu’allaqah of ‘Imra’ al-Qays and compares it with the Qur’an, pointing out the beautiful qualities of both. He then points out defects in the mu’allaqah, and claims that anyone with good literary or linguistic taste could see the difference between the mu’allaqah and the Qur’an. He also seeks to evaluate the works of other famous Arab poets. This subject takes almost half al-Baqillani’s treatise.

Al-Baqillani also deals with the following questions: Is the i’jaz of the Qur’an fully evident? What was the cause of the i’jaz of the Qur’an? On what ground is the i’jaz of the Qur’an based? What is the truth about the challenge the Qur’an made to the Muslims? What is the real meaning of the word mu’jizah (miracle)? Why can it not be said that the Qur’an was the work of the Prophet Muhammad? He also discusses other aspects of the i’jaz of the Qur’an, and in a special chapter devotes attention to quotations from various sources and compares them with the Qur’an, and maintains finally that it would be impossible to list all the examples of the i’jaz of the Qur’an.

21. Al-Baqillani measures the degree of the i’jaz of the Qur’an, and quotes the statement by Abu al-Hasan al-Ash’ari and Companions of the Prophet to the effect that the shortest surahs (chapters) of the Qur’an represents the least form of the i’jaz of the Qur’an.

22. According to al-Baqillani the i’jaz of the Qur’an is evident in three respects. In this he rejects the theory about surfah. The three facts which demonstrate the i’jaz of the
Qur’ān are the following:

(a) the fact that the Qur’ān contained prophecies of the future — a thing which is beyond the capacity of mankind;

(b) the fact that the Prophet Muhammad was illiterate is beyond doubt. He also did not have any access to the books and stories of old. Nevertheless there was mention in the Qur’ān of past events beginning with the creation of Adam. There is no escaping the conclusion that Muhammad must have received this knowledge from God by way of revelation; and

(c) the Qur’ān is beyond the capacity of mankind in the matter of style, composition and rhetoric.

These arguments had been mentioned by scholars before al-Baqillani’s time, but al-Baqillani must be given credit for systematically analyzing these arguments and classifying them. He also strengthened these arguments by emphasizing new points, of which the following are worthy of mention:

1. The style of the Qur’ān, though varied, is different from the normal style, and is characteristic.

2. The Arabs have never had any literary work comparable to the Qur’ān, and nothing like the Qur’ān has survived.

3. The various subjects dealt with in the Qur’ān — such as commandments, advice, promises and stories — make it unique, and it cannot be compared in this to any known poetry or any form of speech which may excel in one aspect but never in as many aspects as the Qur’ān.

4. Ordinary writers cannot maintain one standard in all respects — but the Qur’ān has maintained its excellence in every part and on every subject.

5. The style of the Qur’ān is not only superior to that of human beings but also to that of the Jinns. Al-Baqillani says, however, that some people may not be convinced by this claim because it is not possible to know the standards of the Jinns. But he, he answers, the style of the Qur’ān is superior to what the Arabs have attributed to the Jinn — whether in fact that was written by the Jinn or not.

6. The various forms of speech and writing used by the Arabs are present in the Qur’ān, but in better and more effective form.

7. The expression of new ideas in a new form is more difficult than the expression of old ideas. The Qur’ān expresses new ideas, in a new form, and in a manner superior to that of mankind.

8. The excellence and superiority of the Qur’ān can be perceived, if any of the isolated words of the Qur’ān were used in other contexts (poetry or prose), in which case they would distinctly shine.

9. An examination of the letters of the Arabic alphabet used in the surahs of the Qur’ān reveals that this has occurred in accordance with a fixed proportion of a classification of these letters that was independently evolved subsequent to the Qur’ān. This would appear to be no mere coincidence, and reveals knowledge of the future — a knowledge that can be attributed only to God.

10. The language of the Qur’ān is simple to understand, but it is nevertheless inimitable.

Al-Baqillani’s examination of the various topics he mentions is orderly and lucid, and his treatise is rightly considered one of the most authoritative in the matter of the i’jaz of the Qur’ān. He made use of all information on the subject available at his time, and quoted from the writings of previous scholars. Some of his arguments, such as the one about the writings of the Jinn (see item 5, ante), or the method of the use of the letters of the alphabet (see item 9, ante), are superficial and not convincing because they lack any scientific basis. But the treatise of al-Baqillani nevertheless is accepted as an important landmark in the history of the idea of the i’jaz of the Qur’ān, which became established on well-defined lines by the end of the 4th century A.H. (10th century C.E.) and the beginning of the 5th century A.H. (11th century C.E.).

(The Conception of God in the Qur'ān — Continued from page 26)

Al-Ahad — The One, The Unique in his ways.
Al-Mutālī — Superior to others in excellent qualities.
Dhu al-Jalāl wa al-Ikraam — He Who possesses greatness, majesty and bounty.
Al-Barr — The Compassionate, The Very Benign to His Servants; The Boundless in goodness and beneficence.
Al-Baqi — He Who serves others and keeps things intact or in the state in which they are.
Al-Rafi — He Who raises others’ status and condition.
Al-Mutā‘azz — He Who increases another’s honour, and al-Muzil is He Who lowers others’ status.
Al-Haqq — He Who is ever-living and makes others so.
Al-Mumīm — He Who puts another to death, He Who annihilates.
Al-Muqaddim — He Who gives others a preference or puts them at the head of affairs.
Al-Mu‘akkhir — He Who reduces others to the lowest standard.
Al-Awwal — The First, and al-Akhīr — The Last.
Al-Waqqīd — He Who knows the whereabouts of all things.
Al-Munnaqīm — He Who for the establishing for good avenges Himself upon wrongdoers.
Al-Walīby — The Owner, The Protector.
Al-Nūr — The Light.
Al-Rasheed — He Who puts others on the “Right Path”.

Let us ponder over these names and stretch our imagination to what extent we will — we shall fail to improve on the list. Every excellent quality that a civilized man should possess will be found in it. It must not be forgotten that these attributes are used in a good sense when spoken of God. For this reason the Qur’ān calls them the excellent Names of God. For example, al-Mateen means hard and strong, but in the case of God, the hardness referred to is to serve some good purpose, and the same is true of every attribute. Therefore we have to clothe ourselves with these attributes for the purpose of doing good, and not to cause harm to others. In fact, the Holy Book was sent to us to show us the ways of the Lord, in which He acts in the universe; so that we may create in ourselves such qualities as may meet the requirements of the example set us and lead us to success. The rest of the book either explains them or shows us the method by which we may equip ourselves with them. It also mentions the evils that nullify or neutralize them. Had there been no code of civilization in the world, these hundred names would have been sufficient to act as beacon-lights in the troubled waters of life. Let us follow them and adorn our characters with them, and I see no reason why a person with a single grain of wisdom in his head should take exception to such a course. We have to live on the earth where everything follows a certain course prescribed for it. Our happiness lies mainly in our adaptability thereto; and so the Qur’ān has conferred on us the greatest boon we can imagine by guiding us on the surer way.
ARAB PAGANISM AND ISLAM*

Two equally one-sided views of pre-Islamic Arabic

By Professor A. H. I. Vora

II

An examination of how much substance there is in the claim of writers who maintain that the Prophet interfered little with the social and religious systems of the pre-Islamic Arabia

As we said in the previous instalment of this article, though the Arabs believed God to be the supreme God, they mainly worshipped smaller deities. On the other hand, Islam keeps none other, higher or lower, besides God. The unity of God is best expressed in the Qur’ān in the verses of Chapter 112, which read:

“In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1. Say: He, God, is One.
2. God is He on Whom all depend.
3. He begets not, nor is He begotten;
4. And none is like Him.”

Moreover, its concept of God is far more on a higher plane than the revenging and rewarding deity of the Arabs. Philosophers and theologians of Islam, like Avicenna, Averroes, al-Farabi, al-Kindi, al-Ghazzali and, to talk of the latest, Dr. Muhammad Iqbal and the Maulana Abu ‘l-A‘laa Maududi, tried to understand this very abstruse concept, which has been said in the Qur’ān to be beyond the understanding and reasoning of men. Some of them interpreted Him to be immanent Absolute, some transcendent Absolute, some called Him Time, while some the Force of Natural Laws.

The Ka‘bah remains no more an idol to be worshipped, but it becomes a symbol of direction; not a symbol for God or Allah as it has been understood to be. It is to bring in uniformity in prayer (and there is always a kind of uniformity in all the religious and social functions of the Muslims of the Ma‘addi, a binding force so to say) that they are called upon to face the Ka‘bah while performing prayers.

Prayer in Islam is also not of the give and take type. Islam does not regard rituals and ceremonies essential to religion. In fact, mere dogmatic doctrines have no significance for a true Muslim. In Muslim prayers they are either praising God or hoping from Him that they should be righteous. The first chapter of the Qur’ān, “al-Fatiha,” is the typical symbol of Islamic prayers and is spoken at least seventeen times a day by every Muslim. It reads:

“In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1. Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds,
2. The Beneficent, the Merciful,
3. Master of the day of Requital.
4. Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help.
5. Guide us on the right path,
6. The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours,
7. Not those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor those who go astray.”

IV

Thus it is wrong to say that Islam grew out of the pre-Islamic society. Of course, it does not mean that Muhammad started de novo each and every aspect of human relationship. Many things in the pre-Islamic Arabia helped him in his endeavour to give the world a better religious practice. Muir has rightly stated, “Islam cannot be said to have grown out of the Arabian society of the time of Muhammad.”

Views of Pringle Kennedy and Snoeck Hurgronje examined

Another similar comment upon Islam is that Muhammad proclaimed the religion to improve his society and, therefore, outside that society it is ineffective. In the function of the Hajj, they try to see a means for the annual market; mosques, they say, are meant as a meeting place for the people of the town. Thus betterment of his Arabic society is construed as an end and the religious injunctions as a means to it. Of course, there are such commandments like that for the Zakah, for which we can say, though not very safely, that there the social aspect predominates over the religious, but for this social aspect it can be definitely said that it was not meant for a particular social stratum of Mecca. Even today, after about fourteen centuries, sincere devotees of this commandment, can improve any society under the sun. But at the same time there are certain other commandments which are predominantly religious. No doubt any change in the religious belief or practice of a man makes a corresponding change in his social life, because our life is a co-ordinated whole and not a combination of all. Yet from this it cannot be inferred that the aim of religious duties is sociological and that, too, pertaining to a particular society. The very fact that Islam has been practised and with success by many societies other than that of the Arabs of Muhammad’s time, disproves this contention. Moreover, had it been so that Muhammad by his religion wanted to improve his own tribesmen, all his religious preachers must have been reasoned out beforehand, which is not the case, as we shall see.

“The wearing out of old beliefs,” as observed by Pringle Kennedy, the author of Arabian Society, “was not true for Mecca, the birth-place of Muhammad and Islam, and for other towns as well it is doubtful.” Even though Medina had some Jewish influence, the 360 Gods of the Ka‘bah had yet, “held the Arab mind in thralldom rigorous and undisputed.” People flocked to Mecca every year at the fixed period to pay their reverence to their gods and goddesses. Of course, there were men here and there, called Hanifs, who spoke of the unity of God. One of them composed poems and sang

*Continued from The Islamic Review for January, 1966.
them. Besides him, there were three other well-known Hanifs also. Ibn Ishaq mentions four men of the generation before Muhammad, who agreed together to abandon pagan practices and to seek Hanifiyah, the religion of Abraham. Of the four, two belong to the clan of Asad of the Quraysh: Waraqa Ibn Nawfal (the cousin of Khadijah) and 'Uthman Ibn Huwaryrith; the third, 'Ubaydallah Ibn Jahl was a confederate of the clan of Abd Shams. The fourth, Zayd Ibn 'Amr was of the clan of 'Adiy.

These men, however, did not trouble themselves to enlighten others and, as they did not indulge in missionary activities, the masses at large ignored them. Muhammad, on the other hand, besides his own enlightenment, wanted that everyone else also should be emancipated. In the Qur'ān he is called by the Lord as Rahmah il'al-Aalamin. In such circumstances it is psychologically impossible that, if the Arabs were yet believing in their old beliefs, they would tolerate the person who threatened them with the terror of Judgement Day and damned their ancestors to eternal punishment. Even Pringle Kennedy himself agrees that, “The fear of a blood feud prevented an open attempt on his life.” That, too, they attempted twice. For many months before the flight to Medina the Muslims had to live in a condition of severe blockade and most of them had to run away to Abyssinia. Even this the Meccans tried to foil. Thus they were not indifferent to the ways of Muhammad, as Pringle Kennedy tries to establish. This is again strengthened by the fact that, when persecution failed, they tried material allurement. The tribal chiefs sent one of them, 'Utba Ibn Rabi'ah to Muhammad. The following are his words recorded by the traditions, “If your ambition is to amass wealth by this affair, we undertake to collect for you a larger fortune than is possessed by any one of us; if you seek honour and dignity, we are prepared to make you our Chief and to render obedience to you; if you want dominion, be our king; if you want women, you may claim the fairest of our daughters. The only thing that we ask of you is to discontinue speaking ill of our gods and the religion of our ancestors.” This makes it clear beyond anything that, for the Arabs, their old religion ruled supreme over all the affairs of life. This also makes it clear that the view of C. S. Hurgonje that Muhammad wanted to be greater than the greatest and that he sought power is also wrong, because he declined this offer in plain words. As M. N. Roy puts it, “Today the educated world has rejected the vulgar theory that the rise of Islam was the triumph of fanaticism over sober and tolerant people.”

V

The Qur'ān not the words of Muhammad

Views of Dr. Montgomery Watt, Richard Bell and Thomas Arnold

It is argued by many people that the words of the Qur'ān are not the words of God, as dogmatic, orthodox and uneducated Muslims believe; on the other hand, they are the words of Muhammad. To put it in better terminology, they are not revelations but are simply the words of a thinker who has perceived and conceived the nature of events. The words of the Qur'ān are themselves the crucial tests for the controversy. In the Qur'ān, repetitions are frequent, continuity of matter and style very rare, and logical representations of matter almost none; poetic similies and metaphors colour every page of it. Sometimes God talks in the singular, sometimes in the plural and so on. This very clearly indicates that they are not rationally thought-out words. The nature of the similies and metaphors and logical inconsistencies and repetitions are accepted by authorities as characteristics of revelations. Here, there is no need to mention the usual answer of the believers that the Prophet was illiterate, which he was. This proves that he had not reasoned out the contents of the Qur'ān.

In fact, one can deny that it was Muhammad who spoke the words of the Qur'ān, but, as Muhammad eating and thinking though the same are not the same, at one time his one faculty works, at the other the other. Similarly, while uttering the Qur'ān Muhammad was not talking in the capacity of an ordinary man, nor even in that of a profound thinker. There are many levels at which the mind of a man can work. For instance, conscious and unconscious and in both sensual as well as intellectual and also at the level of the coming of the unconscious to the conscious. Regarding the last, even profound psychologists have not conclusively proved how and why it happens. Thus, when Muhammad received the words of the Qur'ān, neither his senses nor his understanding worked. So his knowledge of the Qur'ān can neither be called a posteriori nor a priori. The description of his physical state at the time of wahy (revelation), the name given for the state of reception of the Qur'ān, also prove that the words of the Qur'ān are revelations and, therefore, are not due to the influence of a particular society or particular man or his abilities. It is said in the Sahih of Bukhari: “Ayshah continued, I have actually seen him at the coming down of the revelation upon him, on an extremely cold day with his forehead running with perspiration.” Of late some Western authors have also begun to recognize this fact, as G. Demontymes says, “Muhammad was a Prophet, not a theologian, a fact so evident that none is lost to state it.” Again, “The revelation usually came to him through the agency of the angel Gabriel, but sometimes the Prophet heard only an impersonal voice, or else he received the divine word by means of a kind of inward perception which appears to have made him believe that it came directly from God.”

W. M. Watt, in his book Muhammad at Mecca, gives a detailed account about the revelatory character of the Qur'ān. The following is a summary of what he said on pages 52 to 54 of that book.

Muhammad’s readiness to undergo persecution for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked upon him as leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement, all argue his fundamental integrity. To doubt Muhammad’s sincerity or to suppose him an impostor raises more problems than it solves. There are no good grounds for doubting that Muhammad’s prophetic experience began with true vision, which is quite distinct from dreams.

If we resolve to cling as far as possible to the belief in his sincerity, we must distinguish the Qur'ān from the normal consciousness of Muhammad, since the distinction was fundamental for him. From the first, he must have distinguished carefully between what came to him from a supernatural source and the products of his own mind. Just how he made the distinction is not quite clear, but the fact that he made it is as certain as anything in history regarding revelations. The Qur’ān bears testimony in the following words: “It belonged not to any human being that God should speak to him except by suggestion or from behind a veil or by sending a messenger to suggest by His permission what He pleases. Thus We have suggested to the spirit belonging to Our affair.” (40:50-52).
Richard Bell has studied these usages and concludes that, “at any rate in the early portions of the Qur’ān, wāhy does not mean the verbal communication of the text of a revelation, but is a ‘suggestion’ ‘prompting’ or ‘inspiration’, coming into a person’s mind apparently from outside himself.”28

Because the Qur’ān is a revelation and a “suggestion” that the fundamental laws of it are considered to be beyond the changes of space and time and therefore for the entire mankind. To this testimony of the Qur’ān is, “We have sent thee to men in general.” Professor T. W. Arnold, in the second edition of his Preachings of Islam warmly endeavours to prove that Muhammad, from the beginning, considered his mission as universal.

VI

An impartial study of pre-Islamic Arabia

From the above discussion, it seems that the viewpoint of Muslim authors about pre-Islamic Arabia as a state of Nature is unfounded and the contentions of Western authors that the Prophet Muhammad made very few changes and that, too, for improving only his society, are also wrong. Without taking any such extreme point of view, namely that of Muslim authors or of Western authors, we shall impartially study the society of the Pre-Islamic Arabs.

The tribes of that time are distinguished into two classes. The kingdoms mentioned earlier were found on the coastal regions, which were fertile. Inner Arabia is a vast desert. Corresponding to the double nature of the country, its inhabitants fell into two groups: the settled and the nomadic. Many authors try to contrast them as acutely as possible. But Joseph Hell contradicts this: “The contrast between the two is not acute. In many things the towns folks betray their nomadic origin. The nomads are no more gypsies. The lands they occupy are always selected.”29 In spite of the absence of political organization, there were in central Arabia large towns and villages.

The account given by Pringle Kennedy also shows that in some respects the Arabs of the sixth century C.E. were somewhat in advance of their age. “The inhabitants of the town were more advanced in civilization than the wandering Bedouins, but even they had no settled law . . . of positive law regarding their relations with each other, they had very little. Some they must have had, being largely merchants . . . In other respects at least the townsfolk stood the test of comparison . . . The first of all virtues, the Latin virtus, he has had abundantly. He was a keen trader and was possibly a keen agriculturalist.”30 For the absence of any settled law and the reasons for it, much light is thrown by the account given in the Historians’ History of the World: “All political and military duties are looked upon as obligations of blood, the relations of the individual to larger associations and the community as a whole are precisely the same in character. In principle, all men have the same rights and duties. Everything is based on reciprocity, on loyalty and Fellowship. There are neither officers nor jailers, no magisterial authority nor any sovereign power separable from the association and the individual. The functions of the community are exercised by all its members equally. The obligations of the society, the individual is bound to observe, not under compulsion from without but from the corporate feeling of neighbourhood and brotherhood. In other words, amongst the Arabs political relations are moral.”31 But here also all the duties are confined only to the members of the tribe. “The idea of a common duty of man to man does not exist among them.”32 There is an old saying by the Bedouin, “When my people were tormented with hunger, God sent to me a man who was travelling alone with his wife and his herd of camels. I slew him and took his wife and camels for my men.” There are two verses written about this time which read, “Our business is to make raids on the enemy, our own neighbour, and on our own brother, in case we find none to raid but a brother.”33

But there are means whereby an alien can obtain the security of a member of a tribe. “If he seizes the hem of his enemy’s garments from behind or ties a knot in the end of his turban, he has nothing to fear . . . The tent and those within it are sacred and even to touch the tent’s walls from outside renders a stranger safe from attack.”34

The head or chief of the tribe is called Sayyid. He is a mediator and peacemaker but he can only negotiate and apply moral pressure. They also have judges who administer justice. Anyone may undertake this office but his business is merely to discover and interpret the law and he has no power to enforce it. The punishment of an offence is, of course, left to the sufferer. Their legal ideas were simple. First and foremost was the right to personal freedom. Side by side with it is the right to blood revenge, which was even extended to the members of the offenders’ tribe and lasted for generations.

“The tent and its humble household contents are individual property but water pasturage and cultivable land are the common property of the tribe.”35

‘Asabiyah is the spirit of the clan. It implies boundless and unconditional loyalty to the fellow clansman and correspondence in general to a patriotism of the passionate and Chauvinistic type. “Be loyal to thy tribe,” sand a bard, “Its claims upon its members are strong enough to make a husband give up his wife.”36

“The Arab in general and the Bedouin in particular is a born democrat. He meets his Shaykh on an equal footing . . . The Bedouin women, whether Islamic or pre-Islamic, enjoyed, and still enjoy a measure of freedom denied to their sedentary sisters . . . She was at liberty to choose her husband and leave him if ill-treated.”37

For the nature of man it said, “In a land of trackless waste surrounded by beasts of prey and hostile tribes, each man was dependent for safety on his own watchfulness and keenness of vision, on his own courage and resolution, on his horse and lance, soberly and frugally nourished. The body became lean and spare but capable of great endurance and within this hardened frame dwelt a spirit of indomitable resolution. Thus the Arabs are characterized by a freer bearing, a more steadfast good faith, a more unambiguous pride, a greater love of independence and a bolder daring than any other tribe of their race. The nature of their country has saved them from the excesses of greed, of luxury and sensuality.”38 It has rightly been said by Hitti that “ability to assimilate other culture when the opportunity presents itself is well marked among the children of the desert . . .” The phenomenal and almost unparalleled efflorescence of early Islam was due in no small measure to the

29 Arab Civilization, p. 11.
30 Arabian Society, pp. 4-5.
31 Volume VIII, pp. 256-7.
35 Ibid, p. 27.
36 Ibid, p. 28.
37 Ibid, p. 28.
latent powers of the Bedouins, who, in the words of the Caliph 'Umar, "furnished Islam its raw material." All the facts about the Arab's hospitality, zealousoness and vengeance reveal that the Arabs are self-respecting persons. The term self-respecting should not be confused with self-centred or selfish, as many authors have tried to show they are.

The moral ideals of the desert Arabs may be called, in accordance with Goldziher's usage, as muruwwah or manliness. It has been well described by R. A. Nicholson as "Bravery in battle, patience in misfortune, perseverance in revenge, protection of the weak, defiance of the strong. Generosity was admired, even when it went to prodigality. Loyalty and fidelity were also important virtues . . . The place of law and of abstract ideas of right and wrong is to some extent taken by the conception of 'honour', the honour, first of the tribe and then of the individual."

The Meccans were somewhat different regarding their attitude to life. "The Meccans were coming to take too high an opinion of human powers and to forget man's creaturiness. Only four things were considered to be beyond man's control, his sustenance, the hour of his death, his happiness or miseries and the sex of a child. The limitations recognized by the nomadic outlook were not so obvious in Mecca. Financial power could do much to alleviate any adverse effects of the jekkle rainfall of Arabia; famines could be averted by import. Again, for a generation or two, it would be easy to identify the possession of a large fortune with happiness and the fortune might even seem to be able to prolong the term of man's life. Thus an over-estimation of human power and capacity would become the predominant intellectual assumption in Mecca."

The Qur'an envisages the trouble of the time as due primarily to religious causes, despite these economic, social and moral under-currents, which are capable of being remedied only by means that are primarily religious. Thus we can answer the question whether Islam grew out of social need of the time or not, by showing that, because the previous religion was such that, according to it, the meaning of life ended with honouring and maintaining one's tribe. Because of changes in that social set-up, due to mercantile needs, that religion was found unfit for the new kind of life. We can, however, distinguish between the religious and strictly moral aspect of muruwwah. The religious aspect is humanity in man and his achievements and the belief that the significance of life is to be found in human excellence. This the Qur'an clearly and undoubtedly attacks.

The purely ethical aspect is the moral ideal, which includes bravery, patience, generosity, fidelity and the like. This the Qur'an does not attack, rather it criticises the Meccans because they do not live up to it. The Encyclopaedia of Islam gives the following account about the religion of the pre-Islamic Arabs! "That the Arab before the time of Muhammad accepted and worshipped a supreme God, called Allah, seems absolutely certain. But they also recognized and tended to worship more frequently and directly other strictly subordinate gods."

"But they did not regard the supreme deity at all centering into their personal interests, which were concerned only with the minor trivial deities who were expected to attend diligently to trivial affairs . . . The Prophet found it one of his most difficult tasks to introduce the observance of prayer amongst the Arabs."

"The religion of the South Arabians is a strongly marked star worship, in which the cult of a moon god, conceived as masculine, takes complete precedence over that of the sun, which is conceived as feminine in the North West. In Arabia, from Mecca onward to the Syrian desert, the same ideas prevail under the names Lat, Manat and 'Uzza."

"The religion of the Arab Pagans is called Sabian. It was a star worship, seven temples were dedicated to seven planets. Different stars were worshipped by different tribes. George Sale describes in detail the idols of Lat, Manat, Uzza, Wadil, Saway, Yaguth, Yaug and Nasr on pages 39 to 41 in his preliminary discourse to the Koran. He further says that they believed in Metapsychosism."

"In the period of ignorance gods of imprecise nature ruled feebly, each over a clan of greater or less importance. The worship that was accorded to them was hardly distinguishable from that given to the sacred stones, to water springs and trees . . . The oracles of the Gods were spoken by the mouth of a soothsayer (Kahins) who interpreted them."

"The impressions given by the earliest passages of the Qur'an is that these were addressed to the people who already believed in God, although with much vagueness and confusion . . . while some Meccans acknowledged God, they did not see that their old polytheistic beliefs were incompatible with belief in God." Again, there was no mention of God's powers to create, sustain and provide for them. Their worship of gods was a kind of translation of give and take. It was a distinctive feature of Muhammad's community that they recognized an altogether different concept of worship, even different from the idea of worship frequently found in the West, which regards the essence of it as a subjective feeling perhaps described as a sense of the presence of God. The Muslim is much more concerned with the objective aspect of worship and especially its significance."

The pagan Arab developed no mythology, no involved theology and no cosmology comparable to that of Babylonians. Hubil, the chief deity of the Kabah, was represented in human form. Nasr andAwf are animal names. Last was near Ta'il, 'Uzzah at the East of Mecca, Manaat on the road between Mecca and Medina. The verses 31: 24-31, 6: 137-109, 10: 23 in the Qur'an describe the religion of the pagan Arabs. For many purposes people from all the corners of Arabia came to the Hijaz, the Province of Mecca, for the religious ceremonials to be performed at the Ka'bah. 'Umr, the encircling of the Ka'bah and Hajj, the running from one place to another, were the chief religious functions. As a natural accomplishment, the most delightful feature of the 'Umra and the Hajj was a great annual market. "As is usual with places were people gather from different parts of the country for worship and commerce, Mecca also became a place for adoration and enjoyment. Women devoted to dancing and singing settled in it. Some even came from Abyssinia, Rome and Persia during the pilgrimage season. Play games, gambling, drinking and other vices became prevalent."

Besides this, Mecca was on the trade route which ran from Aden and Yemen to Syria, Egypt and the Western

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39 History of Arabs, pp. 28 and 29.
40 W. M. Watt, Muhammad at Mecca, pp. 20 and 21.
41 Ibid, pp. 26 and 77.
42 Ibid, p. 82.
43 Volume I, p. 302.
44 O'Leary, Arabic Thought and its place in History, p. 57.
46 S. Amer Ali, Spirit of Islam, p. 64.
47 Muslim Institutions by M. G. Domembynes, P.B., pp. 13 and 14.
48 W. M. Watt, Muhammad at Mecca, pp. 26 and 27.
49 Suskerly, Islamic Culture, vol. I.
countries. "Amongst the men who could read and write before Islam a proportionately larger number were Meccans. Muhammad's first wife trained in pre-Islamic ways carried on an extensive commerce of her own throughout the whole of Arabia."

"It is difficult to imagine anything further removed from the traditional picture of Arab life than their wealthy merchant city whose citizens had lost all taste for fighting and were content to employ a hired militia and who had made their city a clearing house and banking centre for the trade of West Asia ... Distinct from the Dallî (Guide) was the Khâfir or the escort, usually a 'Sayyid' or princeling of note, who undertook to convey the caravan with a body of his tribesmen. It acted as a kind of insurance because the Khâfir undertook to make good any losses due to the attack of desert tribes."

"The leading men of Mecca in Muhammad's time were above all financiers. Skilful in manipulations of credit, shrewd in their speculation and interested in any potentialities of lucrative investment from Aden to Gaza or Damascus ... The Qur'an appeared not in the atmosphere of the desert but in that of a high finance. There were also small local industries in Hijaz. Commerce was the principal means of the Arabs' livelihood. The rivalries in it led them to rob and plunder. The Roman historian Pliny, six hundred years before the appearance of Muhammad, found the Arabs occupied with two lucrative professions, robbery and trade, in addition to their native call of sheep-raising and horse-breeding.

"The amassing of large fortunes, which the Qur'an shows to have been the preoccupation of many Meccans, is a sign of individualism. While it seems unlikely that there had been any increase in absolute poverty in Mecca, it is probable that the gap between the rich and the poor had widened in the last half-century. The Qur'an implies an increasing awareness of the difference between rich and poor. Apparently, the rich were showing less concern for the poor and unprofitable, even among their own kin. The reference to orphans presumably implies that they were ill-treated by their own relatives, who acted as guardians."

Poetry flourished in the time just preceding Muhammad. And, with this poetical efflorescence, there came the development and cultivation of the Arabic script. "As early as the year 500 C.E. the whole of North Arabia possessed a common poetical language ... poetry was not, however, the only intellectual possession of the pre-Islamic Arabs. Prose had also begun to be a medium of artistic expression," especially in proverbs.

Poets were honoured, poetic contests were held at the fair of 'Okaaz and the poems of winners were being hung up on the walls of the Ka'bah, being written on silk with letters of gold. (This tradition is followed even now, with the only difference that, instead of the best poems, stanzas from the Qur'an are hung upon the walls of the Ka'bah.) About the themes of the poems, Hitti writes: "Pre-Islamic poets, the journalists of their day, never tired of singing the praises of hospitality, which, with fortitude and enthusiasm and manliness, is considered one of the supreme virtues of the race." The same author, referring to the language used by the pre-Islamic Arabs, says: "Hardly any language seems capable of exercising over the minds of its users such an irresistible influence as Arabic ... the rhythm, the rhyme, the music produced on them the effect of what they call lawful magic ... the beauty of man, declares an Arabic adage, lies in the eloquence of his tongue. Wisdom, in a late saying, has alighted on three things — the brain of the Franks, the hands of the Chinese and the tongue of the Arabs." Among the ancient poems the so-called "Seven Muallaqat" (suspended) hold the first place. Legend has it that these poems were awarded the annual prize at the fair of 'Okaaz.

Recently A. J. Arberry has published a book on these poems. Regarding the function of the poet in pre-Islamic Arabia, Hitti says: "In battle his tongue was as effective as his people's bravery, in peace, he might prove a menace to public order by his fiery harangues, his poems might arouse a tribe to action in the same manner as the tirade of a demagogue in a modern political campaign."

50 Hell, Arab Civilization, p. 13.
51 O'Leary, Arabia Before Muhammad, pp. 184 and 185.
52 W. M. Watt, Muhammad at Mecca, p. 324.
53 Ibid., p. 72.
55 Sale (George), p. 52.
56 Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 25.
57 Ibid., p. 90.
58 Ibid., p. 94.
Economic Development of Turkey*

By Ahmad Na’im Malik

Part II

New economic and social structure

Mustapha Kemal was perhaps the first leader in the Muslim world in modern times who grasped the simple fact that the first requisite of economic development of a country is that its people should look towards the future instead of to the past. Material development in our day means application of science to all spheres of economic life. Science has been defined as knowledge of things to come. This futuristic aspect of science implies change. A people looking towards the past becomes very reluctant to accept anything new. If at all it does, it is not spontaneous. This lack of spontaneity creates tensions between people whose eyes are set on the horizon — and who are by definition a minority — and those who regard satiety as their heaven. The past is not only alluring but is also very comforting; people know how things are. Change implies uncertainty — the fear of the unknown. It is obviously not an easy task to transform the past-inflated people into a future-directed society.

Yet this was precisely the job which Kemal undertook. For him the establishment of the Republic was not more than a base from which more important campaigns would be launched. He knew his people and also what had kept them behind other nations. A change in their mode of living, he believed, would usher them into a new era. When man begins to transform simple materials into complex shapes and colours, he cannot remain in the state of mind which is called resignation. During the 15 years he held supreme office his efforts were entirely devoted to creating a new economic and social structure. An achievement for which the Turkish people would remember him as Attaturk. The legal reforms which took the Republican leaders almost 10 years were the first step in this direction. They believed that these would set the stage for economic growth. The adoption of Swiss and Italian codes improved land tenure, streamlined commercial activities and encouraged industrial enterprise. But the response of the Turkish people to these measures was hardly what Attaturk had expected. He had dreamed of vast industrial complexes rising all over Turkey.

Attaturk and his colleagues had sincerely hoped that with the removal of foreign interest domestic private enterprise would come forward and usher Turkey into the Industrial Era. The Republican leaders’ expectations were too high. Local capitalist enterprise was lacking in both capital and enterprise. The people with wealth — and their number was not very large — were very reluctant to stake their fortunes in undertakings about which they knew nothing. With memories of war, occupation and revolution, they thought hoarding rather than investment was best for their money.

Kemal Ataturk (d. 1936 C.E.)

“The true greatness of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk does not lie in achieving military victories, extraordinary as they were, but in laying the foundation of a modern State which was overwhelmingly to concern itself with the problem of an improvement in the material condition of the Turkish people”

Obstacles in the way

Building up an industrial structure in an under-developed country is not less than accomplishing a miracle. A fast-growing population, very low purchasing power derived mostly from agriculture, a poor system of communications, payment and servicing of a large foreign debt, an export trade at the mercy of fluctuations on which national leaders have no control, very little capital which would rather be hoarded than invested, lack of proper financial institutions to mobilize savings and investments, absence of a managerial class to start and operate new enterprises, these are some of the huge obstacles which lie awaiting those who seek their path to an industrial society. The removal of these obstacles obviously takes time — one might say a long time. But Attaturk and his colleagues refused to be overwhelmed by them.

Nowadays in an under-developed country when domestic capital fails to respond to its urgent needs, its government, generally speaking, turns to foreign capital for the country’s development or adopts the principle of State participation in economic activities. But the Republican leaders in Turkey, with memories so fresh of the role of foreign investors, could hardly seek their assistance. And even if they did, the foreign investors did not have any keen desire to put their money in Turkey. In the 1920’s the principle of State participation in economic activities had not yet become acceptable. The economic system of the Soviet Union was being regarded as an aberration rather than an alternative. But when both domestic and foreign capital could not be accommodated in their scheme of things the Turkish leaders began to think that State participation (later to be called étatism) was the

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only course at their disposal. And if they had any doubts in adopting this method, they were dispelled by the great depression.

The great depression which started in October 1929 was to bring a fundamental change in economic thought. The depression brought in its wake, throughout the capitalist world, trade stagnation, falling prices, unemployment and consequentially ruin. Turkey was also badly hit. Her export trade consisted mainly of agricultural produce and small quantities of minerals. A fall in the prices meant a substantial decrease in the value of her export. And as she had to continue buying many vital supplies from Western countries, Turkey headed fast to a balance of trade dangerously unfavourable to her. The conclusions which the Republican leaders drew from the great depression were neither surprising nor inaccurate.

The capitalist system of production was inefficient and incompetent. An economic system based on the principle of free-for-all and which objected to must State interference meant a colossal waste of material resources and untold misery for human beings. If allowed to function, as it was in the pre-depression period, it would certainly fail to solve the economic problems. The State must not only interfere but also actively participate in the economic sphere. And the governments of Western countries in their efforts to resolve the crisis was already resorting to increasing State intervention in economic matters.

First Five-Year Plan

In late 1933 the first five-year plan was prepared, and after its approval by the National Assembly in January 1934 it came into force. Its aim was a massive advance in the industrial sector — the development of consumer industries (textiles, paper, glass, ceramics, etc.) and of basic industrial materials (iron, steel, chemicals, etc.); the increased production of building materials (cement, bricks, tiles, etc.) and the increased extraction of minerals (coal, lignite, iron ore, chrome ore, etc.). The method of materializing the plan's targets was rather ingenious. Two banks, the Sumerbank with an initial capital of TL.20 million and the Etilbank with paid-in capital of TL.45 million, were set up to start and operate new industrial and mining enterprises respectively. The initial capital to both the banks was provided by the Treasury without any interest charge. Between 1934-39 allocation amounting to more than TL.21 million from the capital budget were made available to both the banks. A major portion of the Soviet loan (TL.63 million) — the only loan raised by the Turkish Government for implementing the plan — was also handed over to the Sumerbank. Both the banks were allowed to retain profits, made by their various production units, as additions to capital. They were also authorized to discount Treasury guaranteed bills at the Central Bank. For technical know-how the Turkish Government arranged the assistance of Soviet advisors in the textile industry and of the British in the iron and steel industry. By 1939 various industrial and mining enterprises were in operation throughout the country, the textile mills at Kayseri, iron and steel works at Karbuk and anthracite works at Zonguldak being the greatest achievements.

Criticism of étatism

Economists have on the whole been severe in their judgment of the étatist achievements. The Thornburgh Report (Turkey: an Economic Appraisal), which appeared in 1949, accused the étatist planners of being misdirected, confused and inept in their effort. It said: "What we see in Turkey looks not like a planned economy but like a poorly managed capitalist economy in which most of the capital happens to be supplied by the government. The result is a hybrid which does not embody the best potentialities of either of its parents" (capitalist and socialist economic systems). It is true that there was waste of scarce resources, that production units were not working at a desired level of efficiency, and that by Western standards the managers of the State enterprises were incompetent. It is also true that because of their monoplastic position some industrial units were able to sell their shoddy products at high prices.

There was, however, something creditable on the side of étatism which the economists failed to take into consideration. With all its defects étatism did bring about substantial increase in Turkey's industrial output which between 1927 and 1939 rose from 0.14 per cent to 0.23 per cent of the world total. Only the Soviet Union and Japan reported more rapid industrial developments, capital accumulation, and investment during the same period. This achievement was in their view when the Mission of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development were discussing the role of étatism. They recorded in their report: "Under étatism Turkey had made substantial progress. It is doubtful if comparable accomplishment would have taken place in this period under domestic private enterprise with the handicap of the Ottoman heritage."

Second Five-Year Plan

The second five-year plan was launched in 1939. The opening of hostilities in Europe in the same year made it extremely difficult to achieve the targets set out by the plan. The high rate of military expenditure, extreme difficulties in obtaining capital goods from abroad, shortage of raw materials as the agricultural production was being affected by the maintenance of partial mobilization — these and other factors made it impossible to execute the plan in the specified time. But after the war both the Sumerbank and the Etilbank accelerated their efforts in setting up new production units and in extending the existing ones. As a result the industrial and mining output attained new heights, as can be seen in Table 1.

But in this drive for rapid industrialization Attaturk and his colleagues forgot that the other most important sector of the economy, agriculture, also required some, if not more, attention. It is vital that development of agriculture should go hand in hand with development of manufacturing industries and services. New industrial units need a labour force which can only be obtained from the agricultural sector. This is only possible if higher efficiency has been achieved in that sector, i.e., if fewer people than hitherto engaged obtain higher production. Higher agricultural production is also necessary for feeding the annual additions to population and people engaged in the non-agricultural sectors of the economy. It is also essential that the burden on land should be decreased and not increased, that is by not leaving the yearly increase in the total labour force to find its living in the agricultural sector. Increase in agricultural production means more food to consume and more money to spend on manufactured goods and more people free to work in fields other than agriculture. These factors bring stability to prices and help to avoid the harmful effects of inflation and make the process of economic growth orderly.

But this kind of economic thinking is rather of recent date. It is, therefore, not surprising that such ideas were not taken into consideration in the formulation of development programmes in the early years of the Turkish Republic. Consequently, the greatest natural asset of the country remained unexploited, agricultural production did not increase and only a limited labour force was released for urban
industries,” notes the economist Z. Y. Hershlag (Achievements and Failures in the Policy of Economic Development during the Inter-War Period 1919-39). This, however, does not mean that the Turkish Government ignored agriculture altogether. They did not give it the priorities it deserved, but they certainly tried to bring about improvements.

A series of legislative measures were undertaken to help the peasantry and to put agriculture on a sound footing. In 1925 the system of tithes — payment of one-twelfth of gross produce to the State exchequer — was abolished. It was believed that a better land tenure system than that inherited from the Ottoman Empire would not only improve the peasant’s material position but also his efficiency. It was hoped that the introduction of the Swiss code in 1926 would unify and modernize the system of land tenure. Between 1927 and 1929 laws were passed to distribute land among landless peasants and immigrants. The most important distributions were in the eastern provinces, where the feudal and tribal chiefs were very powerful. At the same time efforts were made to create a new class of farmers with medium size estates, especially in the Agaean provinces and Karaman.

Distribution of land

In 1945 the People’s Republican Party took the most radical step in this direction. It sought to transform the rural population into independent peasant small-holders. The Land Reform Bill intended to distribute State and municipal lands, lands attached to shrines and lands of private individuals who owned more than 500 donum (123.5 acres). Although the Bill became law, it was severely criticized. As a result the expropriation limit had to be increased to 5,00 donum (1,235 acres). Even then it was made very difficult for the Government to apply it effectively.

As the data regarding land tenure and size of holding are very scanty, it is not possible to make an accurate assessment of these measures. In 1948 there were 2.5 million holdings totalling 35 million acres, ranging in size from less than two acres to 250 acres — an average of 13.5 acres per family. There were 5,764 holdings ranging between 250 to 1,350 acres; and 418 estates of more than 1,350 acres. These figures, however, show that the Land Reform Bill had little effect in increasing significantly the number of peasant owners or the average size of their holdings. Apart from political factors there were other reasons which hampered the effective application of these laws — the heavy cost of expropriations and of resettlements, absence of a land ownershiop survey, lack of technical personnel, etc.

Similarly, the other measures undertaken by the Turkish Government did not prove very rewarding. The work of the Agricultural Bank did not help to increase substantially the agricultural production, although the Bank and its credit co-operatives’ advances rose from TL.31 million in 1937 to TL.336 million in 1950. The loans were for short terms and were small in amount, not sufficient to provide subsistence for the peasant and the capital needs of his farm. They were usually spent on consumption.

The Turkish Government established the seed selection centres to improve the quality of seed, and the research stations to improve the farming techniques. The Ministry of Agriculture carried out work on plan and crop protection;

the Soil Research Institute made a great many analyses of soil and water samples from various parts of the country, to name just a few among many of the projects. But these services did not embrace the whole country and were poorly staffed. The Soil Research Institute did not collect samples in a systematic manner and “the resulting information, though very useful, is in no sense comparable to the reconnaissance (soil) survey”. The inadequacy of services was inevitable because of lack of resources both human and material.

The improvement of agricultural techniques

But what really made the work carried out in various agencies of little consequence was the absence of the “extension services”. A service which could carry the results to village level and see that they are effectively applied. In 1950 there were only 250 employees in the Ministry of Agriculture who could qualify as “extension workers”. They were concentrated in 6 out of 63 provinces. Most of them suffered from drawbacks — urban background, little knowledge of peasant psychology, unfamiliarity with advanced technological methods — which made their work ineffective.

The peasantry was also frustrating many of the Government’s activities. The Economic Mission of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development reported to the Turkish Government in 1951: “The techniques used by the average Turkish farmer are, in general, very primitive. He still uses a wooden plough and unselected seed; his farm animals are of poor stock, ill-fed, ill-kept and weak. Except on the State-owned farms, and a few large farms in south and south-west Turkey, machinery is little known to the peasant. The animal breeding and seed selection stations which the government has developed in the past two decades have had little influence on farmers generally. The irrigation schemes carried out in that time have been of local significance. The result is that crop yields per acre are low and have shown no substantial improvement in recent years.”

One tends to blame the farmer and the peasant for his adherence to antiquated methods, and for his stubborn resistance to change. But one cannot say with honesty that the fault lies with him alone. Good marketing conditions which include, among other things, village to market transportation, storage facilities, standardization and price information, help to induce the farmer to increase his productivity. “The lack of an accessible market for the peasant’s products means that he has little incentive to produce a marketable surplus to sell for cash. The inaccessibility of stores offering industrial goods for sale means that he has little opportunity to spend any cash he might have.”

At the same time, in fairness, one must not expect the government of a developing country to build in a short period a rail and road network connecting all the villages with the market towns. One must remember that Turkey has 35,000 villages.

Improved communications

The Turkish Government set itself with great zeal to developing an extensive transport network. As this was one sphere in which the Republican leaders did not expect much participation from private enterprise, the work on the extension of railways started as early as 1924. In the next 15 years
3,238 km. of railway track was constructed, thus increasing its total length to 7,324 km. During the same period the foreign ownership in railways — an Ottoman legacy — was liquidated. "On the eve of World War II the railway lines crossing Central Anatolia bound it to several vital points on the country's frontiers and coastlines." The railways provided better connection with the market for agricultural produce and facilities for the transport of minerals and coal to ports and industrial centres. But the Turkish Government had to spend TL.350 million on the railway construction and to pay 80 million dollars for the nationalisation of foreign concessions. Consequently the road development programme suffered. Both the local and central governments could not invest more than TL.70 million on the construction of roads between 1924 and 1939. As a result only 5,000 miles of first and second-class highways were built during the same period. Similarly the shipping facilities did not substantially improve, although as a result of the Maritime Bank's activities the net tonnage increased from 15,000 tons in 1923 to 110,000 tons in 1939. The important achievement in this sector was an improved harbour at Zangulda.

In 1950 Attaturk's party lost power. Turkey had not become an industrialized modern State. But nobody could have expected such a thing to happen in a mere 27 years. Economic development is not a miracle. But Attaturk and his colleagues could have been justifiably satisfied with their work. The foundations of a new Turkey had been laid down.

## TABLE 1

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<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Unit</th>
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<td><strong>Consumer Goods</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton Yarn</td>
<td>1,000 tons</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wool Yarn</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton Cloth</td>
<td>million yards</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>101.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wool Cloth</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>1,000 tons</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>137.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leather</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoes</td>
<td>million pairs</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper and Cardboard</td>
<td>1,000 tons</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building Materials</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cement</td>
<td>1,000 tons</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bricks</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiles</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industrial Materials</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coke</td>
<td>1,000 tons</td>
<td>183.0</td>
<td>292.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pig Iron</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>112.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron Pipe</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel Ingots</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>101.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finished Steel</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>84.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minerals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal (unwashed)</td>
<td>million tons</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-bituminous Coal and Lignite</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron Ore</td>
<td>1,000 tons</td>
<td>231.0</td>
<td>211.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrome Ore</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>240.0</td>
<td>433.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bitter Copper</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manganese</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>million KWH</td>
<td>312.0</td>
<td>739.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data relating to private enterprise industrial production in the nineteen-thirties and forties is scanty.
THE OUTGOING

By Norman Lewis

And Abram dwelt in Haran
After the death of his father, Terah,
And God spoke and told him to go
Afar to a land that He would show him.
And Abram was reluctant to leave,
For he knew not whither he was sent,
And he thought of the safety of his people.

And Abram dwelt alone and in the silence,
And he considered this thought:
Is it for this that I have built my business
And become prosperous in this city,
That now we will be scattered abroad
Into a land of which we know nothing?

And he sank into the depths of his being
And cried out to God for an answer,
And into his heart came Faith
And the assurance that God would provide
And would lead them at last to a goodly place.

So they purchased animals and packed their goods
And went forth from the city of Haran,
Moving onward in the path of the sun.
And the city fell behind them to the eastward,
And the white gleam of its buildings
Faded into the pale blue of distance,
And Abram knew it no more.

And Abram tarried in Shechem and in Bethel
And in Hebron and in Gerar and in Beersheba,
Knowing no certain truth but the Promise.
And he said to Sarah, his wife:
Though all else would go from me,
Yet my faith would not leave me,
For I believe Him who hath sent me forth,
And I would not have left my former home
If God had not a better place for me and mine,
And toward that Better Land I set my face
And know His hand is over me to guide.

To go on is what He told me then,
Nor have I been told to what I go,
But only that I go.

Doth it matter that I do not know the Goal?
He knoweth it, and that sufficeth me.
Are we to question when He points the way
And tarry when His vision leads us forth?

What though the years roll by, all fruitless and austere,
And Sarah, too, is fruitless, and the snows of years
Pile deep upon my head as on the crown of Ararat?
And wealth hath passed me by, and youth hath fled from me,
And in this stranger land the people mock,
And I am childless and devoid of hope
Except the hope I have in God.

For His is the hand that rules the sun
And holds the moon to its appointed course
And sends the clouds to fill the river beds
And bring the grass upon the lasting hills.

If I must wait, then I will wait in peace,
Believing He will justify the faith,
The calm assurance that is in my soul,
The knowledge of a not-too-distant goal.
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