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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW & ARAB AFFAIRS
Editorial

Judaization of the City of Jerusalem

Right from the very first day of their occupation of the Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem) in June 1967, the Zionists started to take active measures to turn it into a Jewish city and obliterate its Arab and religious features. This operation is still actively proceeding until this very day through the following measures:

1. The demolition of houses, schools and mosques,
2. The isolation of the City from the rest of the Palestinian cities,
3. The appropriation of land and buildings,
4. The erection of new Jewish residential buildings on the site of Arab houses,
5. The dispersion and expulsion of the Arab citizens,
6. The Judaization of the Arabs, and
7. The Judaization of the Arab economy.

We summarize below the methods that are used in the implementation of this Judaization policy:

1. Land and air shelling of the City, resulting in the martyrdom of 300 civilians, and the demolishing of hundreds of residential and commercial premises, the burning of scores of commercial stores and serious damage to a number of mosques, churches and hospitals.

2. The confiscation of most of the large buildings of the City, such as schools and hotels, and the looting of the contents thereof after the declaration of cease-fire and during the curfew hours. This is in addition to the torturing of civilians which compelled five thousand people to leave the City as a result of Jewish terrorism.

3. Blowing up of a great number of residential and historic buildings under the pretext of clearing a wider view of the Wall, known as the Buráq Wall, which led to turning into refugees another 1,000 citizens of Jerusalem.

4. The announcement of three decisions aiming at Judaizing Arab municipal autonomy and administration in Jerusalem, and leading to the annexation of the Arab part of Jerusalem to “Israel”. This, as is known, led the United Nations to adopt two resolutions on 4 July, 1967 and 14 July, 1967, whereby all the Jewish measures were considered illegal, and Israel was required to abrogate those measures and desist immediately from any action which is liable to change the status quo in Jerusalem.

5. Isolation of the City from the remaining neighbouring Palestine cities and villages, declaring that
Jerusalem is a zone separate from the rest of the Palestine regions and that the entry to and exit from the city requires a military permit.

6. Liquidation of the Arab economy and its absorption into the Jewish economy by closing down Arab banks, substituting Israeli currency for the Jordanian currency and prohibiting entry of agricultural and industrial products to Jerusalem from the other Palestinian towns and villages while entry of Jewish goods and products is permitted.

7. Compelling the Arab citizens to acquire Israeli identity cards, and, by a city population census, the absent citizens were considered as having forfeited.

8. Jewish sequestration of all movable and immovable property of all the Palestine absentee as from 1 September, 1948, and the property of all other Arab citizens who had left subsequent to 29 November, 1947.

9. Application of the Arab school curricula of the territories occupied in 1948 to the syllabus in all the Arab schools, thus substituting the new curricula for the Jordanian curricula and textbooks.

10. Appropriation of vast areas of land and a great number of Arab real estate, mostly belonging to the Muslim Waqf (religious community trust) and the incorporation thereof into the State domain. Moreover, the Jews are determined to proceed with the usurpation of Arab property and with the encirclement of the Aqṣā Mosque within the City as well as the City itself with massive buildings, which are actually bastions and fortresses inhabited by Jews in preparation for the liquidation of its Arab residents and the conversion of Jerusalem into a purely Jewish city.

11. The Judaization of such Arab citizens as the professionals, artisans and men of the liberal arts, by compelling the physicians, engineers, lawyers, owners of copyrights and registered trade marks, cooperatives and companies to register with the Zionist authorities with the purpose of finally incorporating the Arabs in the Jewish economic life.

12. The Judaization of the museum and tampering with the Muslim and Christian shrines and antiquities, including the carrying out of excavations around the holy Haram (the site of the area of the Dome of the Rock) of Jerusalem and the sacred Aqṣā Mosque itself.

13. Incorporation of the Muslim legal system into the Jewish courts. The Jewish authorities refuse to execute the decisions of the Shari‘ah Muslim courts and ignore the recognition of the certificated of marriage, divorce, inheritance, trusteeship and Waqf, in order to create complications and obstacles for the judges of the Shari‘ah courts, for the Muslims Waqfs and Muslim citizens with the intention of compelling the Shari‘ah courts to incorporate gradually in the Jewish courts.

14. Planning for the construction of Greater Jerusalem, aiming at extending the City boundaries until they reach Ramallah in the north and Bethlehem in the south, on the assumption that the number of the citizens will increase in the future until it reaches 900,000 people, the majority of whom will be Jews.

15. Setting fire to the Aqṣā Mosque on 8 August, 1969, aimed at its destruction and to paving the way to the demolition of the distinguished Aqṣā Mosque, and building a massive Jewish temple on the site and then facing the world with the fact accompli.

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The Birth of Islam Heralded a Revolution in Religious and Social Ideas of Man

The three principal revolutionary ideas unknown to man before Islam
Relationship between the individual and the society
by Dr. Sa’id Ramadan

By preaching pure monotheism Islam emancipates man from superstition and fancy

The birth of Islam was in reality a strong declaration of the birth of a higher humanity. For Islam, in essence, a great liberation movement encompassing the manifold aspects of human life emanating from the conscience of the individual and oriented towards the life of the society. It was a revolution which destroyed in its march all the spiritual, intellectual and social fetters which had encumbered human life and declared—over thirteen centuries ago—full human rights.

The advent of Islam heralded a revolution in the realm of belief. It emancipated the human conscience from superstition and fancy; it established the absolute transcendence of God and showed the fallacy of anthropomorphic and polytheistic deviations; it postulated a direct relationship between man and God, without any intermediary.

The absolute transcendence of God and the direct communion between man and God are the crossroads between order and chaos in the realm of belief, as well as between freedom and slavery in the realm of social life. This is a very considerable achievement when viewed in the light of what we know of the sufferings of mankind elsewhere in consequence of the power gained in the name of religion, the persecution of scientists and freethinkers in the European Middle Ages, and the political revolutions which, in Europe, were necessary in order to destroy the hegemony of those who claimed to be the vicegerents of God on earth. In contrast, direct communion with God is a fundamental attribute of the Islamic creed: for Islam does not recognize any priestly hierarchy or clergy.

By accepting freedom of belief Islam teaches religious tolerance

The birth of Islam constituted a revolution in another aspect of belief, a revolution against religious intolerance. The Qur’an solemnly declared freedom of belief and of worship in all their manifestations:

There is no compulsion in religion (2:256).

Again, the Qur’an says:

If thy Lord had willed, all who dwell on earth would have become Believers. Wouldst thou (O Muhammad!) force men to become Believers? (10:99)

Thus religious fanaticism and intolerance gave way to absolute liberality and tolerance; nay, the protection of freedom of belief and worship for the followers of other religions became a sacred duty of all Muslims. When the duty of Jihād was first ordained, the Qur’an expressed its wisdom in the following manner:

Sanction is given unto those who fight because they have been wronged, and God is indeed able to give victory to those who have been driven unjustly from their homes only because they said, “Our Lord is God”. And if God had not repulsed some people by others, cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, in which God’s name is extolled, would have been pulled down (22:39-40).

The above verse gives precedence to the savānī (monasteries), the biyāt (churches) and the salawāt (synagogues) over the mosques in order to underline their inviolability and the duty of the Muslims to safeguard them against any desecration or abuse.

Indeed, Islamic tolerance goes so far as to accord protection even to people who do not believe in any revealed religion at all, provided they refrain from molesting the Believers. The Qur’an declares:

And if any of the idolators seeks thy protection (O Muhammad!), grant him protection so that he may hear the Word of God, and afterwards convey him to a place of safety; for they are people who do not know the truth (9:6).

This is the height of tolerance and one to which mankind still aspires in vain in many countries of the world, in the
Communist domains where no tolerance whatever is extended to those who do not subscribe to the materialistic interpretation of history as laid down in the teachings of Marx and Lenin.

**By accepting the ethnological oneness and equality of mankind Islam sets its face against racial intolerance**

Furthermore, Islam set in motion a revolt against racial intolerance; it emphasized the ethnological oneness and equality of all races, thus striking at the very root of monstrosity of racial discrimination. It ordained one standard of virtue and excellence for all men, without consideration of colour, birthplace or descent. The sole criterion was based upon man’s reverence of God and upon his deeds in this world. For God says:

> O Mankind! Indeed We have created you male and female and have formed you into nations and tribes so that ye may know and be good to one another. Behold, the noblest of you in the sight of God is he who is best in conduct. Behold, God is the Knowing, the Aware (The Qur’ān, 49:13).

Heterogeneous races, nations and linguistic entities have mingled peacefully in the Islamic homeland for many centuries, whereas other societies to this day are suffering from ugly racial intolerance. The problem of the “coloured” communities in South Africa and to some extent also in the United States, is still a gaging affront to human conscience; not so many years ago, the Nazi philosophy was based on the supposed racial superiority of the Aryans. Israel has been built upon the myth that its citizens are God’s chosen people!

**THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ISLAMIC WAY OF LIFE**

Islamic legislation is a balanced combination of spiritual and material elements

Islam prescribes a complete and equitable system for mankind. For, while it exalts the human spirit and enjoins ideal ethical principles for man, it does not deny the importance of the material aspect of his life. Islamic legislation is a balanced combination of spiritual and material elements. It provides spiritual directives along with legal safeguards. Thus, Islam is not merely a “religion” in the sense in which this term is understood in the West. It is rather a comprehensive spiritual and material way of life, which expresses itself in the conscience of the individual as well as in the behaviour of the society. It provides principles for social rights and obligations in all dealings, whether they pertain to economics, politics or international relations.

Such polarities as “religion and state” or “faith and politics”, as formulated in the West, have no equivalent in Islamic thought. The term “Islamic Religion” embraces all these concepts in their totality, in complete harmony and integrity. A Muslim performs his prayers in the mosque, sells his goods in the market, decides between litigants in a court of law, manages the affairs of state, concludes treaties and covenants with other states, fights in the name of justice and right in war, motivated in all these activities by one code alone: that of the Shari’a (Law) of Islam, which embraces both a religious creed and a practical system of life.

Islam builds this imposing edifice on the foundation of belief in God. It places the God-fearing conscience as guardian over legislation and the implementation of laws; it makes the communion between human conscience and God the pillar of its system: for it is always possible to evade and cheat the law, but the eternally vigilant eye of God is ever-watchful for any violation of His moral code.

The Islamic system rests upon certain social, economic and political “guarantees”. Here, however, we are dealing only with the social framework.

**Two relevant points**

Before we go into detailed discussion of any of these “guarantees”, we would like to lay before the reader the following two points which are most relevant in this context:

*First*, the propagation of Islam is not a monopoly of any particular person or group within the Muslim community. Thus, the workers for Islam cannot claim any superiority over their fellow Muslims, or special authority which would exalt them over the rest of the community, for the only spiritual authority over Muslims is vested in the Book of God (the Qur’an) and the life example (the Sunnah) of God’s Prophet; and before this supreme authority all Muslims are equal.

*Second*, the Qur’an and the Sunnah are the decisive arbiters of right and wrong in all spheres of life, and at all times. Their interpretation and application to the changing requirements of various epochs are not reserved to any one group or organization, but are open to the entire community. Thus, the rise of an Islamic polity would mean the recognition of the supreme authority of the Qur’an and the Sunnah, and its practical application by the community as a whole. It follows, therefore, that no individual person or group can claim the right to decide any controversial question on their own authority. If any individual or group should find it necessary to express an opinion on any controversial issue, it must be clearly understood that such an opinion is no more than a suggestion, subject to approval or rejection by the community at the time when it decides to establish an Islamic polity.

**THE CONSTITUENTS OF THE ISLAMIC SOCIAL ORDER**

The kind of individuals Islam conceives its society to be composed of:

1. The Righteous Individual is the basis of every sound society. This is the reason why Islam lays particular stress on
the upbringing of the individual man and woman, instilling in him or her a feeling of personal responsibility before God:

*Every person is held in pledge for what he does* (The Qur’án, 74:38).

He is responsible for freeing himself from superstition and vice, and for striking a just balance between the requirements of his soul and those of his body:

*Strive after that which God has ordained to you for the sake of the Hereafter, but do not neglect your share in this world* (The Qur’án, 28:77).

To this end, Islam has enjoined three obligations:

(a) *Education.* The Prophet said, “Striving after knowledge is the sacred duty of every Muslim”. Consequently, education is both a duty and a right of every Muslim man and woman. Thus, every Muslim is *individually* obliged to know what the Qur’án and the *Sunnah* demand of him in respect of the basic tenets of Islam, individual duties and moral requirements; while the community is *collectively* responsible for education in all other spheres of knowledge, the omission of this duty being a collective sin. In other words, the Islamic government is responsible for the direction of general education in such a way as to satisfy the needs of the nation in every domain of Science and Art. The educational programme must be so framed as to preserve the spiritual and cultural identity of the nation and to guarantee for its youth the development of personality and a unity of purpose.

(b) *Enjoining the Right and Forbidding the Wrong.*—The Qur’án says,

*Let there be among you people who propagate the Good and enjoin the Right and forbid the Wrong* (3:103).

Thus, the Muslim is reminded of his responsibility towards God and called upon to develop that self-discipline without which the rule of the Law can never become effective. In an Islamic state, this principle must underlie the activities of all the organs of public information—such as radio, press, cinema, publications, etc., which ideally should assist the individual in leading a decent life, as demanded by all religions.

(c) *Punishment and Penalties.*—Islam legislates penalties for crimes against society resulting from a lapse of individual self-discipline. Because such crimes are exceptional rather than the rule, the injunctions in the Qur’án relating to penalties are very few and limited in scope while, on the other hand, there is hardly a page which is devoid of moral exhortation. These few penalties are severe indeed, because the entire Qur’ánic Law envisages so fair a social structure that crime itself should have no justification whatever.

Take, for instance, the cutting off of the right hand for theft. This is, no doubt, an extremely harsh punishment, but when we look at the occurrence of theft (or, to be more precise, of burglary) within a society in which the economic needs of every individual are assured *a priori*—so that a theft can never be motivated by hunger or need—it assumes the aspect of an attack against the very foundations of the society which has nourished and sustained the culprit. Moreover, it is to be borne in mind that a burglary, to be thus penalized, must involve objects above a certain limit in value, must be proved beyond any possibility of doubt, and must be devoid of any mitigating circumstances. Also the culprit should be in complete possession of his senses. It was by such means that in the years of the early Caliphate this crime was rendered practically non-existent, so that the early history of Islam records no more than six cases of hand-cutting.

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**The Conception of Family in Islamic way of life**

2. *The Family* is the corner-stone of the social structure, with the man and the woman as its two components. The general relationship between them has been described by the Prophet in the words: “Women are but the sisters of men”. The marital bond is the only permissible basis of procreation. Every non-marital sexual relationship is considered in Islam as a threat to the very fabric of family and society. Having thus described the mutual relationship between man and woman as one of equality, Islam goes on to define their relationship within the realm of family:

*The rights and obligations of women towards men are equal, and men are a degree above them* (The Qur’án, 2:228).

This “degree” does not relate to the human qualities of man and woman, but rather to the function of the male partner who is responsible for the happiness and the well-being of the family as a whole. It is a degree that implies only man’s administrative leadership of the family.

In order to strengthen the bonds of the family and to ensure the stability of the home, Islam has laid down several principles. The first of these, is the man’s right to choose his wife and the woman’s right to choose her husband. The Prophet enjoined al-Mughirah Ibn Shurahb, one of his Companions, to become acquainted with his intended bride, for “it is important that permanent affection should grow up between you”. When a newly-married girl complained to him that her father had chosen her husband without consulting her, the Prophet allowed her to annul her marriage.

Another principle of family life, is the duty of consultation between husband and wife in all domestic affairs. As a matter of fact, the Qur’án even prescribes consultation and mutual consent between divorced parents regarding the weaning of their child.

The much repeated slogan of equality between man and woman should not be allowed to eclipse the fact that being equal does not imply a uniformity of all qualities. This slogan was once a reaction to certain injustices, but soon became an oblique motto distorting many basic features of human relationship. Man and woman are different, but interdependent. Their missions in life are diverse, but complementary.

The fallacy of “modern equality” is manifest in what it has brought in today’s human society, in the unbecoming hardness in many women and in the unpleasant softness in many men. What is alarming indeed is the fact that the great qualities of tenderness, delicacy, devotion and pure love are fading away in our social outlook and build-up. Whether at large in social contacts or even in the orbit of the family, this modern equality—paradoxically enough—has so often desecrated the very relationship between man and woman, so that the later’s basic frame of mind has become one of insecurity and of self-defence. Man liberated her from the condemned veil, gave her precedence in and out, kissed her hand in public and so on . . . yet what an anguishing price she has been paying of her innermost beauty, security and peace. When the Qur’án says,

*He created mates for you, from yourselves, so that you might find refuge in them, and He put between you love and compassion, surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect* (30:21),

it indicates not only the closeness of the union in marital relationship, but also the counterpart of man’s administrative leadership: woman’s all-embracing role. To be a refuge for
man, is to make home the foundation of human activity and peace. This "home" is no prison, but rather headquarters and base. Having taken that into full account, woman is by no means limited to the walls of her home. Well-known is the story of the Muslim lady who, in the courtyard of the mosque, stood to discuss a certain issue with the Prophet by saying: "I have been deputed to you on behalf of women". Umm-'Atiyah al-Ansáriyyah, another Muslim lady, stated that she accompanied the Prophet in seven battles where she cooked for the soldiers, looked after rations and supplied and attended the wounded. In all her outdoor activities and contacts Islam demands of the wife to seek her husband's consent, so as to safeguard the stability of the home, which should be her main concern.

Further, Islam has laid down certain standards of decency in dress and behaviour between men and women, and established rules intended to ensure the sanctity of the home and the inviolability of marital intimacy. With a view to safeguarding motherhood and maintaining a healthy home atmosphere in which the young may receive adequate care, Islam has imposed on the male, the financial duties of maintenance and has exempted women therefrom. At the same time, Islam does not prohibit women from gainful employment if they so desire. The rights to individual inheritance are also safeguarded and their rights to financial dealings are unrestricted.

The Society and the individual in Islam

3. Social Cohesion.—The principle of cohesion is the chief characteristic of Islamic life. In discussing social co-operation and its connection with religious belief, we usually hear such terms as "charity", "philanthropy" and, more frequently, the institution of zakáh. But these terms by no means circumscribe the entire role of Islam in the domain of social co-operation.

Islam has evolved a full-fledged social system relating not merely to mutual financial aid in its various forms, as implied in such concepts as "social security" or "social insurance". Financial assistance is but one aspect of the mutual aid ordained by the principle of co-operation and cohesion in Islam. This co-operation and cohesion can be described thus:

(a) As we have seen, Islam starts with the relationship between the individual and his conscience. The individual is duty-bound to cleanse his heart of evil, to avail himself of the good things of life, to give himself a fair share of work and rest so that he may not fall into idleness nor succumb to exhaustion from overwork. The self-training of the individual in this manner is but a preparation for the role which he is called up to play within the society.

(b) Thereupon we move from the realm of the individual to that of the family. As already mentioned, the family structure is based upon the interdependence of advantages and liabilities, rights and obligations. Such cohesion is not confined to economic affairs alone; it is all-embracing in its scope and includes the financial maintenance of the family, the protection of marital relations and of motherhood, the obligation of caring for the children physically, mentally and spiritually, and the duty of children towards their parents in their old age. To the extent that the individual members of the family care for, and protect, one another, the social obligations of the state are reduced and lightened.

(c) Proceeding from the family to the wider social structure, we find the principle of cohesion an indispensable element in all social relationships, not merely in the sphere of economics, but also in that of ethics. Every individual is duty-bound to perform his own job to the best of his ability, because the fruits of his toil necessarily affect the society as a whole. He is also obliged to refrain from evil and to endeavour to persuade others to do likewise.

The Qur'an extols the virtue of positive labour:

And say to them (O Muhammad!): Work! And God will see your work, and so will His Messenger and all believers (9:105).

To illustrate this principle, the Prophet on many occasions stressed the value of work as a means of elevating society to its most perfect form. He once said, "I swear by Him in Whose hand lies my soul that it is better for a man to take a rope and go into the mountains to cut wood and then return with his load on his back in order to earn his bread, than to ask other for help". He fostered the spirit of social co-operation among the community by saying like this: "The best of the people is he who is most useful to the people".

Every individual has a claim on society and on the government that represents it to be assisted, both in theory and in practice, in acquiring the proficiency to do productive work and to be given the opportunity to perform such work. In other words, the Messenger of God not only counselled the able-bodied to work for their livelihood, but also made provision for giving them the tools with which to work. In addition, he insisted on the right of the worker to be suitably rewarded for his work, saying, "On the Day of Resurrection I shall be the enemy of him, who, having hired a worker, did not recompense him after he had fulfilled his obligation". The "enmity" of the Prophet implies a corresponding attitude, which has to be adopted in such cases, by the Muslim community.

(d) Every citizen is entitled to adequate housing to protect him from heat, cold, rain and to ensure the privacy of his home. He is also entitled to adequate clothing, food, health facilities and other necessities of life commensurate with the needs of the time. If he wishes to marry and does not possess the financial means to do so, the state is obliged to help him satisfy his natural need for marriage and thus safeguard him from the temptation of indulging in illicit sexual relations. These rights of the individual have been succinctly stated by the Prophet when he said, "He who is performing work for us, and has no home, shall have a home; and he who has no wife shall be enabled to marry, and he who needs a servant and has none shall have a servant, and he who has no animal to use for his transportation shall be given one". On another occasion, the Prophet said, "Your servants are your brethren, and if anyone has his brother working for him, he shall give him to eat of what he himself eats, and clothe him as he clothes himself, and shall not burden him with work beyond his capacity; and if you entrust your servants with hard work, help them therein".

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1 The Zakáh is a compulsory tax prescribed by Islam. Its rate as practised by the Prophet was at two and one-half per cent of the surplus property in money, and at a variety of rates in other categories. The income of zakáh goes to a special treasury and is to be spent only on the objects explicitly mentioned in the Qur'anic injunction: "The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and for those employed in its collection, and for those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free the captives and the debtors, and for the cause of God, and for the wayfarer; they are a duty imposed by God" (9:60).
Was the Prophet Muhammad harsh to the Jews?

By Dr. Sheikh Muhammad Iqbal

A Jewish writer, Nessim Reywan, in an article, “Judeo-Arabic Civilisation” in Work, Tel Aviv, for November 1966, has made an unwarrantable statement in an otherwise lucid, eloquent and well-informed piece of writing. Nessim Reywan says:

“For when he discovered that the Jews refused to accept him, Mohammad turned his fury against them and proceeded to persecute and expel them from Arabia.”

However, one must agree with the learned author that the period from the commencement of Islam’s popularity in Medina to the expulsion of the Jews from Khaybar during the Caliphate of ‘Umar, was a “brief period of rift and hostility”, but to find out the bases thereof, one should have taken the trouble of reading the Islamic history and the invaluable stock of research piled up by the scholars of the past. The writer proposes to deal with the subject regarding the Prophet’s treatment of the Hebrew community in two parts, historical and observational. The historical aspect of the Judeo-Islamic (not Judeo-Arabic) relations during the Prophet’s time has been dealt with first. The observational section is based on some general remarks, supported by the Holy Qur’an, the Bible and the Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad himself.

1 HISTORICAL

An Introduction to the Jews

The real known history of the Jews begins with their servitude under the tyrannical Pharaohs. God raised Moses from among themselves and they were brought “out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage”. Soon after they entered a Covenant with the Lord through Moses, and it was as a result of honouring its terms that they witnessed eras of peace and plenty. They got a land to live in and they carved it into two small states of Judah and Samaria.

After Moses, the Jews did not stick to what he had taught. Hence they were suppressed twice, once by the Babylonians in 587 B.C., and for the second time by Vespasian’s son in 70 C.E. Their temple and towns were destroyed, their men and women butchered and taken into captivity. Their beautiful females were taken by the Roman victors.

The desolation of the states of the Children of Israel had already been predicted by their apostles, namely, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Jesus. All of them detested and despised the Jewish way of life prevalent then. Conveying to them the displeasure of God, these apostles warned the people but to no avail. At the time of Muhammad’s preaching the message, the Jews were scattered, living a rebellious life.

Long before the advent of Islam into Medina, the Jews had established themselves at the fertile places of Khaybar and in the suburbs of Yathrib (later called Medina). There they formed a potent element and a considerable power. Trade coupled with usury had made them rich. They owned land and controlled local markets. Enjoying at the time social and cultural superiority, they managed their own institutions of education and religious endowments. By various means they even won converts from the Arabs. The “purity” of their race could not be, therefore, maintained in Arabian conditions. The Jews in Arabia bore Arab names and lived like the Arabs.

With the passage of time, the Jews had developed innumerable social defects and become quite endemic. Increasingly prosperous, they had succumbed to various social evils. Their relations with others, they had become naughtly. They subjected their debtors to unjust treatment, keeping their belongings, children and even wives as pawns, and imposed exorbitant rates of interest. Shakespeare only reveals the truth about an average Jew of that period, when he puts these words in the mouth of the Duke in the Merchant of Venice:

“I am sorry for thee (Antonio); thou art come to answer a stony adversary (Shylock), an inhuman wretch incapable of pity, void and empty from any dram of mercy.”

This was true of the ancient Jews, with exceptions, of course. And this was true, more or less, of the later Jews in Europe and West Asia. Hence their proscription in the medieval age. Thus in Christendom they were hated “for foul usury, and lure of vilanie”.

THE COVENANT WITH THE JEWS AND ITS PROMINENT FEATURES

Arrival of the Prophet and Agreements with the Jews

Before the Prophet of Islam reached Medina, the polytheists and the Jews had proposed to install ‘Abdullah Ibn
Ubayy as the ruler in the hope of forming a good government. This proposal was, however, withdrawn on Muhammad's arrival, for the local people considered him to be the most appropriate person to take on the responsibility of administering the affairs of the town and the surrounding territory.

The Prophet perceived that both the internal situation of the town and the antagonism of the Quraysh towards Islam necessitated the establishment of a concord between the Jews and the tribes of 'Aws and Khazzraj, most of whom had become Muslims. The practice of making agreements was not quite new to these people. The Jews “used to enter into alliance with the tribes and to take part in their internecine warfare”. Notwithstanding this, it was an achievement of the Prophet to have found a common basis for an accord, called a Charter or Covenant in history. The Holy Qur'an (2:84) refers to it thus:

“And when We made a covenant with you (to this effect): Shed no blood amongst you, nor turn out your own people from your homes: and this ye solemnly ratified, and to this ye can bear witness.”

The Covenant is divisible into three parts. The first defines the position of the Muslims themselves and organizes them into a religious and socio-civic unity; the second provides a political arrangement to which the Jews too became a part and to whom it was acceptable; the third binds the parties to work together for the defence of Medina and also extends security to all the peoples living in an area of a hundred square miles.

The Allies of the Covenant were thus transformed into a political union of which there was no example in past history. Medina was recognized as being vital to the Muslim brotherhood and its territory was regarded as the “forbidden one”. The Jews, who after the victory of Badr became conscious of their isolation and weakness and who joined the alliance soon after, were to enjoy equal rights with others. Politically more significant sounds the fact that all the parties had recognized the Prophet of Islam as the last court of appeal in the event of murder or a difference arising amongst them.

A remarkable feature of the Covenant was that the parties undertook to be loyal to the “Central Authority”. It imposed joint and separate duty on the signatories for the protection of Medina. In the case of external aggression and making of peace and war, they were to stand as one. No one was to fight (if the cause was common) without the prior permission of the Prophet. The expenses of war were to be borne by the party at war. In practising their religion, the Jews were completely free.

The fact that the Covenant was binding on all meant that no party or clan could dissent or dissociate itself when it liked: no one among the signatories or their members could break the terms agreed upon.

A city-state had thus been given birth to by a solemn contract, which was consciously made and of which the terms were inviolable. A wilful attempt to bring about the dissolution of the new political party was, therefore, to be deemed an act of treason.

**Judeo-Islamic differences increase**

Meanwhile, the Prophet continued to preach social reform. Also, he peacefully propagated the tenets of Islam. As a result, the number of admissions to the faith multiplied. The popularity of Islam awakened the Jews to the loss of their influence which they had founded on materialism and not the true Mosaic Law. Above all, they seem to have been deprived of the future converts; for the Prophet had brought with him superior moral values and a just and generous treatment of the non-believing sections. Thus further Judaization of the Arabs had come to a standstill.

Nothing could deter or divert the Prophet of Islam from preaching the eradication of immorality and corruption. In doing so, he was not acting detrimentally to the terms of the Covenant. The Jews had acquired full liberty to exercise the religion that the Prophet Moses and his successors had preached. The revelations received by the Prophet Muhammad pointing to the evils of the Jewish society must have displeased the Banu Israel. These are referred to in the Qur'an:

“‘That they took usury, though they were forbidden; and that they devoured men's property wrongfully . . .’” (4:169).

“‘Many of them dost thou see, racing each other in sin and rancour, and their eating of things forbidden . . .’” (5:62).

“In (they are fond of) listening to falsehood, of devouling anything forbidden” (7:63).

From these verses it would appear that the Jews suffered from certain moral ailments such as greed that made them stick to usury and devour property or things of others which they were forbidden to do; their sinful life and their virulence, which suppressed their very soul; and their listening to falsehood against the true facts about Islam and the Last Messenger.

Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that the Jews tried to interrupt the peaceful development of the Islamic movement. They resorted to inexcusable methods in order to injure Muhammad's work and the Muslim brotherhood. Some of these were asking him to cause a book to be descended from God, while they had asked Moses for a greater miracle, e.g., “Show us God in public”; embracing the Muslim faith with the set purpose of creating trouble from within; encouraging desertions from the ranks of Islam; teasing the Prophet Muhammad in a provocative manner; inviting him to converse with the Jewish doctors of law with the apparent aim of accepting Islam; making attempts to assassinate him; remaining in touch with the enemies of Islam such as Ibn Ubayy; and lastly, bringing to the Prophet their knotty problems and disputes dishonestly, so that in the event of misjudgment, they might inform the world that Muhammad's faith and system lacked the Divine basis.

In spite of the renunciative and rebellious attitude of the Jews, the Prophet adhered to a persevering and peaceful policy and wished that the Judaic prestige be maintained. This he did because of his awareness of the fact that he had spiritual links with the Prophet Moses. Not only did he emphasize similarities between him and Moses, but in many points followed what God had approved of through the latter. In particular, where the Qur'an was silent or where a revelation from God had not been received, Muhammad would take assistance from the Mosaic practice. It was for these reasons that he would appeal to the Jews to agree and collaborate with the Muslims. For this purpose God enjoined him to approach the Hebrews (and Christians) and say:
"O People of the Book! come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but God; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, lords and patrons other than God . . ." (The Qur'an, 4:63).

Thus Muhammad was simply inviting the Jews to the propositions that were common between them and the Muslims, leaving the two peopler free in other matters. Also, this should bring home the truth that the Prophet of Islam was not basically saying anything that ran counter to what the Prophet Moses had taught. The Qur'anic evidence further strengthens the Prophet's position in that many well-meaning Jews approved of his teachings. As for the fact that he preached the eradication of social evils and the discarding of questionable means of livelihood, no sensible man among the Jews could controvert him and his Companions.

HOSTILITIES AND THE JEWISH EXPULSION

Cast in the mould of antagonism, the Jews as a community had decided upon assuming an overbearing attitude towards Muhammad and his followers. The first to confront Islam were the Qaynuqa' and the Nadir—the two Jewish tribes. They were permitted to leave and settle beyond the "forbidden territory" of Medina. As for the third tribe, the Banu Quraydah, it was convicted of the treason committed during the Battle of Ahzab. About 300 men of this tribe were executed. A brief description of the mutual dealings of the Jews and the Muslims seems essential to the understanding of the subject under review.

1. The tribe of Qaynuqa'

After Islam had emerged victorious from the battlefield of Badr, the first among the Jews to have apprehensions as to what their future would be were the Qaynuqa'. Lacking coolness of temperament, they acted in a manner as to lead to the estrangement of the Muslim feelings. Their jealousy grew into enmity. "Insinuations against Muslim ladies in obscene verses were also freely indulged in. They stooped so low as to molest them in the streets." Meanwhile, a Jewish shopkeeper added fuel to the fire when he offended a Muslim woman, resulting in the death of a Jew and a Muslim. The Prophet admonished the Jews but they responded by rude behaviour and warned the Muslims that they would teach them a good lesson. Discarding the terms of the Covenant, they betook themselves to fortified places. The Muslims besieged them for two weeks and obliged them to surrender. The Qaynuqa' were then allowed to leave and settle elsewhere.

2. The tribe of Nadir

The tribesmen of the Nadir looked at the rise of Islam with extreme disfavour. They adopted different devices to harm the interests of both the Islamic movement and its leader. Once Muhammad went to demand from them the blood-money, the remission of which they had undertaken. While he waited on them, the Nadir sent up a man to drop a stone on him from a house-top. Similarly, they pretended twice to accept Islam and invited the Prophet to hold a conversation with the scholars of Judaism. On both occasions the aim was to kill him, but he was saved because of being informed beforehand.

The Nadir joined a conspiracy and went down to Mecca, telling the Quraysh, "If you lend us support against Islam, we shall unroot it altogether." Besides rousing the Meccans, they roamed about the desert, visiting the haunts of the Bedouins and stirring them against Islam. The Nadir also remained in close touch with Ibn Ubayy, who encouraged them in their hostile designs.

When approached by the Muslims for renewing the old agreement, the Nadir refused to do so. This showed that they harboured evil intentions against Islam. Accordingly, when they fortified themselves within their strongholds, the Muslims laid siege to their abodes for a number of days. The Jews surrendered on the condition that they would be permitted to leave the territory of Medina. Taking with them their full camel loads, the Nadir put on arms and dressed themselves in finer garments and left in procession as if celebrating a festival.

Dr. Prideaux opines that the Prophet ordered a party of his men to pursue the emigrants and that they were all put to death. This is an allegation that has no foundation whatsoever. On the other hand, the translator of the Qur'an, George Sale, holds that the "incident from which Dr. Prideaux draws this strange conclusion relates really to the murder in cold blood of seventy Muslims, who, being invited to speak Islam, were treacherously put to death by an Arab tribe", i.e., their invaders. This charge is further disproved by the Prophet's disallowing the Ansar to withhold their Judaized sons from proceeding with the Jews. Justifying his disapproval, he expressed what God had revealed to him on the point:

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in God hath grasped the most trustworthy handhold that never breaks . . ." (The Qur'an, 2:256).

The expulsion of the Nadir, therefore, was not without strong reasons, "Islam, it must be borne in mind, was at this time passing through a very critical stage. It was the period of the Battle of Uhud, when the enemies were on all sides up in arms to strike a deathblow at the faith". Hence the treatment meted out to these turbulent Jews.

3. The Banu Qurayzah

It was during the Battle of Ahzab that the Qurayzah, the last tribe of the Jews that had an alliance with the Muslims, turned out to be pernicious. When the "Confederates" (the Quraysh, the Nadir, the Ghatafan and the Bedouins) were knocking at the doors of Medina, Huwayy Ibn Akhtab of the banished Nadir approached Ka'b Ibn Asad, the chief of the Qurayzah, and won him and his men by his eloquence and assurance that Islam was on its last legs. At first, Ka'b had rejected the invitation on the ground that he had "always found Muhammad true to his word; to be pernicious to him will be against manliness". But later, the Qurayzah informed the Muslims: "We do not know who Muhammad is, and what the agreement was like". This attitude pointed to their decision to join the Confederates in their effort to undermine Islam.

The view that the Qurayzah had a secret agreement with the enemies of Islam and that they were actively hostile at the Battle of Ahzab is confirmed by the Holy Qur'an (33:26).
"And He drove down those of the People of the Book who backed them from their fortresses and He cast awe into their hearts: some you killed and you took some captive."

Sir William Muir admits that "it was agreed that the Qurayzah would assist the Quraysh", but he doubts as to the fact of their participation in the war. However, the agreement between them did not remain a dead letter. According to another writer, "it was agreed that as soon as the Confederates were able to force a passage across the Trench, the Jews would rise to attack the Muslim quarters, so that the Muslims would be caught between the Confederates in front and the Jews in the rear".

In pursuance of their plan, the Qurayzah sent a man to find out whether there were any soldiers inside the fortress that accommodated the Muslim families. It was, however, the chivalry of the old Safiyah, the aunt of the Prophet, which saved the situation by killing the Jewish intruder and throwing his head off the gate. The Jews took a lesson from it and they abandoned the idea of attacking the stronghold. Nevertheless, the movements of the Jews caused a diversion in the Muslim effort against the Confederates, because they were required to depute 500 troops to protect the Muslim women. The treachery of the Qurayzah had, therefore, added enormously to the difficulties of the Muslims in the battlefield. They were, moreover, disappointed to see an ally entering into treaty relations with their enemy instead of repelling their attack as the agreement with the Muslims had provided.

When the coalition of the invaders disappeared from the battle arena, the Muslims were relieved of a great anxiety. The Confederates having failed in their attempt to crush Islam, the Prophet sent 'Ali to seek an explanation from the defaulters. The Qurayzah refused to do so and to surrender, and even used obscene language against the Prophet and his family. 'Ali reported the matter back to the Prophet, who ordered an advance to be made on the fastnesses of the Jews. According to him "to leave such an internal enemy unpunished would have been a source of ever-present danger to the safety of the Muslim community". The Qurayzah surrendered on the condition that Sa'd Ibn Mu'az became an arbitrator. Sa'd's finding was that the treachery in the hour of peril was a grave offence. He believed that it called for an exemplary punishment, in the absence of which solemn agreements could in future command little respect, and would be treated as worthless scraps of paper by any of the parties concerned. Hence he came to the conclusion that the punishment in no way milder than that prescribed for a vanquished foe in their own Scripture, the Old Testament, was their own desserts. This is what the Law of Moses lays down on the point:

"When you draw near to a city to fight against it, offer terms of peace to it. And if its answer to you is peace and it opens to you, then all the people who are found in it shall do forced labour for you and shall serve you. But if it makes no peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it; and when the Lord your God gives it into your hands you shall put all its males to the sword, but the women and the little ones, the cattle, and everything else in the city, all its spoil, you shall take as booty for yourselves; and you shall enjoy the spoil of your enemies, which the Lord your God has given you ..." (Deuteronomy, 20:10-14).

According to some scholars, this "severe" sentence the Jews had brought upon themselves, "first by their treachery, next by their resistance to the Muslims after they had been caught in their treachery, and finally by preferring the judgment of Sa'd, who had been their ally, rather than throwing themselves upon the well-known and oft-experienced mercy of the Prophet. The sentence was carried out but the Prophet invited intercession on behalf of the condemned, and in response to every plea of intercession, he remitted the sentence".

About 300 of the Qurayzah, chiefly the fighters, were beheaded under the arbitration award. This treatment seemed justifiable for the reason that the Qurayzah had originally recognized themselves and the Muslims as one people in the Covenant and had even renewed the agreement. But contrary to it, later they deserted their partners in the common cause in the hour of peril and thereby exposed them to jeopardy. The Qurayzah had, besides this, done many aggressive things which forced the Prophet to take drastic action against them.

4. Reduction of Khaybar

The Jews of Khaybar would have continued to live peacefully had the Huqaq families of the Nadir not resettled there. The riches and the resourcefulness of the Khaybarites stood in good stead to the banished Nadir when they expanded their area of intrigue and destructive activities. The malice of the Jews kept on growing in bitterness after the Battle of Azhab. The apparently humiliating Peace of Hudaybiyyah deepened their impression as to the powerlessness of the Muslims. The Huqaq chiefs and their hosts, moreover, "found that their incitement of Arab tribes against the Prophet had, in view of the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, little chance of success; therefore, they turned their attention to the Christian and pagan tribes in the north, who were under the Byzantine Emperor, and they also engaged in intrigues with the Jews settled in Ira and with the Iranian Emperor. Thus, though the Prophet and the Muslims might have peace in South and Central Arabia, they were to be exposed to fresh and even greater dangers from the north and the north-east. To prevent the whole of that region from flaring up at once against the Muslims, the least that was necessary was to remove the Jews from Khaybar, because the place served as a dangerous post as well as a centre of disaffection and incitement close to Medina.

Being convinced that the Jews were determined to create trouble, the Prophet decided to nip the evil in the bud by obliging them to accept the status of citizen-subjects of the Islamic state. He took with him 1,600 men, including 200 cavalrymen, with the primary idea of increasing the community of Khaybar, with full autonomy allowed to it. When the Muslim army covered the distance and the Jewish abodes were visible, the Prophet prayed to God, as he usually did on seeing a new locality for the first time:

"O God! we seek from You the betterment of this village, its residents and its belongings and of our own betterment and Your shelter against its evils."

The Prophet abhorred the use of force, but on finding the Jews ready to fight, he ordered a march against the six fortresses of Khaybar. Excepting the fortress of the Qumás hill, all the Jewish strongholds were captured. The Qumás
being impregnable and properly manned, neither Abú Bakr nor 'Umar succeeded in having it invested. The responsibility of accomplishing the deed fell on 'Ali, whose eyes at the time were aching. While proceeding on his errand, he asked the Prophet if conversion of the Jews by force was desired. The Prophet did not approve of the idea. 'Ali at once came to grips with the commander of the fortress, Marhab by name, and cut him into two, and emerged from the terrible combat as the victor of the occasion. The Jews lost 93, while the Muslim casualties numbered only 15, the first being Mahmūd Ibn Maslamah, whom Kináiná killed by dropping a stone on him.

As the Jews gave in, the Prophet permitted them to possess and cultivate their lands provided they remitted half the annual produce as tribute to Medina. As agreed by the owners, Ibn Rawáhah would go to Khaybar at the harvest time and make two piles of the crops, asking them to choose either of the two. Impressed by this kind of treatment, the Jews used to say: "The earth and skies stand because of this even-handed justice." Allowing the Jews to hold the title of their own lands was a generous gesture on the part of the Prophet of Islam, although he knew that they would not refrain from sedition. The view that the Muslims ejected the vanquished from their holdings is baseless. Nor is it true that they were exterminated from Khaybar in the Prophet's own time. Later, however, a portion of the Jewish landed property was occupied by the Muslims, owing to the extreme recalcitrance of the Jews. Similarly the Judea community of Khaybar was exiled during the Caliphate of 'Umar, who had found them most inhuman.

After the hostilities were over, the Prophet Muhammad had shown remarkable leniency and liberaliy to the Jews of Khaybar. And this in spite of their attempt to kill him by mixing poison with the food served at a banquet. When asked to explain themselves, the Jews replied, "We mixed poison to find out if you were a true prophet. It would not affect you if you were one; and if you were not, we would thereby rid ourselves of you." Again, once, when a famine was raging at Medina, the Prophet sent two of his Companions to Khaybar to secure relief from the Jewish landowners. But one of them, 'Abdulláh Ibn Suhayl (the other being Mahisah), was treacherously killed and his body thrown into a rivulet. When informed of the tragedy, the Prophet forgave the culprits and paid blood-money from the public treasury. In the first case, only Zaynabd, who had dared to serve the poisonous food, was executed after Bishr Ibn Bara'a died as a result of the poison; for he had hastened to pick up things at the feast. This leniency and the great qualities of Muhammad disprove still another charge that is levelled against him: he is blamed for having branded Kináiná, one of the Jewish chiefs, on his breast, for not disclosing secrets about the hidden treasure of Khaybar. Facts, in the light of history, however, point to the fact that the critics aim at falsifying real history.

2 The Biblical record of the Jewish defiance and downfall

The above warning of the Qur'án points to a yet greater historical fact about the Jewish people: they had repeatedly ignored acting upon the teachings of Moses, rejected their prophets and reformers and even killed and attempted to kill some of them. Suffering as they were from a superiority complex, the Hebrews disregarded the very basis on which they could claim distinction. The common belief that they surpassed all other peoples had led them off the track: they never adhered to the Lord's commands whereby they could really become great. They did not have the foresight to think of the possible outcome of their socio-religious vagaries and weaknesses. However, their prophets alone could discern the downfall of the Banú Israel through the latter's aggressive designs and dishonest methods. Let us go through the pages of the Bible itself which presents a graphic picture of the deplorable state of the Jewish communities, only to show that in not minding the warnings of the prophets they had proved that there was something basically wrong with their very nature. Here are their own prophets who frequently denounced the legates of Moses and forewarned them as to the consequences.

Psalm 106 of David points to the recalcitrance and iniquity of the Banú Israel:

"Many times He delivered them, but they were rebellious in their purposes, and were brought low through their iniquity."

The Prophet Isaiah was dismayed as he found himself among the iniquitous, corrupt, haughty and insubordinate and insurgent Children of Israel. He bemoaned:

"Ah, sinful nation, A people laden with iniquity, Offspring of evildoers, Sons who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the Lord, They have despised the Holy One of Israel, They are utterly estranged" (Isaiah, ch. 1).

The Lord condemned the Banú Israel for their disloyalty and for taking refuge with Pharaoh:

"Woe to the rebellious children," says the Lord, "Who carry out a plan, but not mine; And who make a league, but not of my spirit, That they may add sin to sin;"

JUNE 1970
Who set out to go down to Egypt,
Without asking for my counsel,
To take refuge in the protection of the Pharaoh,
And to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!”
(Isaiah, ch. 30).

Then came the Prophet Jeremiah who echoed the awe-inspiring words of the Lord denouncing the misconduct of the Banū Isra’il:

"Be appalled, O heavens, at this, be shocked, be utterly desolate," says the Lord,
"For my people have committed two evils:
They have forsaken me,
The fountain of living waters,
And hewed out cisterns for themselves,
Broken cisterns, that can hold no water"
(Jeremiah, ch. 2).

Jeremiah found the Jews of the states of Samaria and Judah to have fallen into the abyss of decrepitude, polytheism, injustice and pollution. Yet he found their "faces harder than rocks", refusing to repent. Still did he invoke God's blessings for them. Jeremiah received a curt refusal from the Lord:

"How can I pardon you?
Your children have forsaken me,
And have sworn by those who are not gods"
(Jeremiah, ch. 5).

"For the sons of Judah have done evil in my sight," says the Lord,
"They have set their abominations in the house
Which is called by my name,
To defile it" (Jeremiah, ch. 7).

Having warned the Israelites through Jeremiah, the Lord informed them that they would soon be overpowered and destroyed by an "enduring nation", coming from afar. Then does He say:

"And I will make to cease from the cities of Judah
and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of mirth
and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom
and the voice of the bride; for the land shall become waste" (Jeremiah, ch. 7).

In the Book of Judges, the ceaseless rebels, the innovators and the disloyal among the Banū Isra’il seem to have provoked the Lord to anger. The Lord says:

"They forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.
So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel,
And He gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them;
And He sold them into the power of their enemies round about
So that they could no longer withstand their enemies" (Judges, ch. 2).

The worst example of intrigue, intransigence and inhuman attitude was that set by the Jews in the case of Jesus. As he directed the cissionary campaign against the strongholds of sin and slavery, the Israelites vehemently accused him of untold blasphemies. They brought him to the Roman Pilate to get him executed. Pilate entrusted the job to the half-hearted local ruler Herod, who treated the "Spirit of God" with all contempt though he failed to find anything wrong with the "accused" prophet. On receiving Jesus back, the Roman officer assembled the chief Jewish priests and the influential men and addressed them, saying:

"Behold, nothing deserving death has been done by him (Jesus); I will therefore chastise him and release him."

But they all cried together:

"Away with this man, and release to us Barabbas—
A man who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection started in the city, and for murder.
"Pilate addressed them once more, desiring to release Jesus; but they shouted out, ‘Crucify, crucify him!’" (Luke, ch. 23).

The Holy Qur’ān confirms the divine revelations to the prophets of the Banū Isra’il and the warnings received by them as to their iniquity and inhumanity. As to their rebellious conduct in the past, it explicitly and lucidly puts the charge-sheet against the Jews:

"(They have incurred divine displeasure): in that they broke their Covenant; that they rejected the Signs of God; that they slew the Messengers in defiance of right; that they said, ‘Our hearts are wrappings’ (which preserve God’s Word: we need no more)’ (4:155).

The history of the ancient Jews could, therefore, conveniently be termed only in two simple but awful words: defiance and the consequent destruction. From Moses and down to Jesus, the prophets and apostles of the Banū Isra’il had found them continually falling a prey to either of the two dangerous tendencies.

3 What the Prophet precisely wanted

The allegation that Muhammad was a ‘persecutor’ is untrue and groundless. On the contrary, the Prophet of Islam, wanted the Jews to do two things only: first, to live with the Muslims like trustworthy and peace-loving brothers; and, secondly (as it happened later) to accept the citizenship of the Islamic State though not the faith of Muhammad which they prima facie certainly undertook to fulfil the conditions of. But they did not take their pledges seriously.

4 The invaluable record of the Hadith

Little do the critics know about the essence of the Qur’ānic teachings, the precepts of Islam, and the literary treasures replete with the imperishable sayings of the Prophet with which they could rectify their glaring mistakes. Was it not Muhammad who had repeatedly said:

"Observe scrupulously the protection accorded by me to the Dhimms (i.e. those under protection).
"Whoever oppresses non-Muslims (the Dhimms), shall find me to be their advocate on the Day of Ressurrection" (against the oppressing Muslim):
"Remember! He who is unjust to a Dhimmi, breaks his word with him, overburdens him or dispossesses him, I shall plead against him on the Day of Judgment";
"One who murders a Dhimmi, shall not smell of Paradise, although its fragrance can be smelt from a distance of forty years journey"; and,

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"One who persecutes a Dhimmi without a valid reason, is not from us".

These sayings, which are couched in most humane and generous terms, have the effect and value of law with every true Muslim and Islamic society.

Obviously, therefore, it was Islam that led to the enlightenment and progress of the racially antagonistic peoples by providing them with favourable conditions to attain the same and by offering them the chances of living together as the children of Man. The magnanimity of the Prophet's treatment of other religious communities has drawn appreciation even from the impartial non-Muslim observers. Thus writes W. M. Thompson: "It is hardly too bold an assertion that to Muhammad we owe the fact that Christianity has not joined the ranks of vanished creeds".

5 Inevitability of the punishment

The solitary instance of a justifiable punishment imposed on the Jews by Muhammad seemed inevitable. Time had come when their borrowed customs and conduct, their innovations and abominations in religious life and society, their rebellions, perfidies and disruptionist activities, were to end and they themselves were to be driven away from an area which was destined to become the Land of Bliss, and where the promised COMFORTER (as predicted by Jesus) was required to work for the resettlement of humanity without hindrance. It was there, Muhammad had to lay the foundations of a world-order that was sure to liberate man's intellect, honour and soul from the vortex of his own ambition, selfishness and criminal disposition.

Again, what happened to the Jews was perhaps to serve as a lesson to the Muslims themselves. They were, as it were, prewarned by the events that occurred then that, if they ignored following the "light" and "guidance" brought to them by the last Messenger, they, too, would suffer in the manner of the strayed scripturaries.

6 Perfidy that brought the punishment

Judging from the standard of upright fidelity and the necessity of living together peacefully, and from the behaviour of the Jewish clans, who were allied to the Muslims, expulsion or death was the punishment they deserved. Not only had the Jews rejected the similarities of Islam with their original faith, but they also tried to outmanoeuvre the Muslims both in peace and war. They usually added to their embarrassment when it was the question of their life and death. Thus the Qaynuqa and the Nadhir were banished in the interests of peace, while the Qurayza were condemned for utter disregard of the covenant that declared the Jews and the Muslims as one people. The death sentence passed against their warriors (with some exceptions, of course), was derived from the Law that Moses had brought to the Israelites.

7 Punishment not an innovation

Some writers have sobbed over the "terrible" nature of the sentence given by Sa'd. The Prophet had not yet received any Command from his Lord to handle the cases of general perfidy. Moreover, the arbitrator himself was not unaware of the instructions in the Torah. He, accordingly, consulted the Jewish legal code in giving the award. Had the Jews trusted the Prophet himself, he might have probably sent them into exile. It would be quite appropriate to quote the Maulá Muhammad ‘Ali as to the nature of the sentence and the mercy that Islam preached to regulate human relations. He observes:

"Harsh as the punishment may appear, it was exactly the judgment the Jews used to pass, under the law of their Book, against their fallen foes. Besides the heinous crime of treachery of which the Banú Qurayza were guilty, would in like circumstances be visited with no lighter punishment even in this age of civilisation. The judge was one of their own choice and the sentence was in strict conformity with their own sacred law. Again, they were guilty of treachery of a dangerous nature. Is there any sense in finding fault with the Prophet on this account? The objection against the harshness of this punishment is an objection against the Mosaic Law. It is, in fact, an unconscious censure of that Law as well as an admission that a more humane law must come to supersede it. A contrast with the Islamic law on this point will bring out into clear relief what tender, sympathetic and compassionate law Islam came to inaugurate."

8 The Prophet as a pledge

The Jews did not respect their pledges, but the Prophet of Islam was always very particular in their observance. Minding least what the other party would do with their promises, Muhammad took his undertaking quite seriously. For instance, at the time of the battle of Uhud, he discovered that a certain number of Jews from Medina who had joined his army had asked to go back; for they said they had no obligation in respect of the defence of Medina that involved fighting outside the town.

9 The Jews prevent truth from reaching the needy

Another fault of the Jews in the Prophet's time was that they always engaged themselves in causing disruption in the Muslim society. Besides rejecting the truth themselves, they dissuaded others from accepting it readily. While commenting on this point 'Abdulláh Yúsuf ‘Alí writes:

"There are many ways of preventing the access of people to the truth. One is to tamper with it, or trick it out in colours of falsehood: half-truths are often more dangerous than obvious falsehoods. Another is to conceal it altogether. Those who are jealous of a man of God, whom they actually see before them, do not allow his credentials or virtues to be known, or vilify him, or conceal facts which would attract people to him. When people do this of set purpose against their own light (of which ye are yourselves witnesses), they are descending to the lowest depths of degradation, and they are doing more harm to themselves than to anyone else."

10 An Arab Prophet unacceptable to the Jews

One of the chief causes of the trouble with the Jews was, that while they expected the appearance of a prophet or Messiah, Muhammad was not acceptable to them. The Judaic community did not consider a non-Israelite fit for the divine office. They rejected the very idea that an Arab could be deputed with an exalted mission of the prophet- hood. It was an enigma to them that a backward people or the "Gentiles" should produce a Messenger of God. This
kind of thinking was due to the complex from which the Jews had suffered throughout their history:

11 Comparing kinds of treatment of the vanquished

In comparison with what the conqueror did with the defeated, the Prophet’s attitude toward the Jews was distinctly better and more befitting. It was a practice with him that he would not permit his emotions and the emotions of his followers to come in his way while settling matters with the vanquished parties, be they the Jews, the Bedouins or the Quraysh. As against this, let us see how the victors have from time to time treated their losing foes. The destruction of the Jewish culture and towns and the enslavement of the Jews, first under the Babylonians and then under Vespasian, may be kept in view. In 70 C.E., Vespasian’s son captured Jerusalem, killed 137,000, took 67,000 captive, besides sending thousands of the Jews to the Egyptian mines for forced labour and deporting others to the alien cities to be used for hunts and by the hunters and in the theatres. The tall and beautiful females of the Jews were chosen for company by the Romans.

In modern times, the winners of the trophy of war, never pardoned the defeated nations as did Muhammad in the sixth century. For instance, when World War One terminated, the peace that Germany was asked to sign, was so humiliating that none among the Germans volunteered to put his signatures on the draft treaty. It was considered a slur on their national honour to do so. And those who ultimately went to negotiate the terms were treated as worse than prisoners. As to the contents of the peace itself, they were too unrealistic and heavy to be borne by the German nation. The indemnity imposed on Germany was unimaginable. Her whole mercantile marine was captured by the victors. She was deprived of all her territories outside Europe, besides mineral riches Alsace and Loraine. Her military strength was reduced to nothingness. In a word, the Germans lay prostrate before the retaliating conquerors.

12 Comparing “injustices”, alleged or otherwise

Whatever the nature and magnitude of an act of “persecution” and extermination of a community, it may not diminish the gravity of a crime. While judging an action in the light of compelling factors (as in the case of the Prophet of Islam), it should be estimated along with the real instances of gross injustice done to rightful peoples who offended no one and who were bound by no agreements with any party. In the present-day world, the Muslim communities have become targets of repression and oppression at the hands of those who have come to possess resources and grab power. Their very birthright is being violated. We may cite the example of the Palestinians who were driven out in order to set up a “national home” for the lost sheep of Israel, who were ever accustomed to demanding miracles and the maww dew from their prophets. The bringing together of heterogeneous elements persecuted elsewhere, amounts to a crime that posterity will never forgive; for is it not unimaginable that the Jewish families, spread all over the world, should have been regarded to be within their rights to erect a “home” for themselves on the heads of the original dwellers? These and the Zionists, who could be compared to a mastless vessel, blasted into fragments by the cyclones of the time, were huddled together like the broken parts of that vessel from the vast ocean of history, “rebuilt” through international artifices and then offered anchorage on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean against the will of all the Palestinians — whether they were Muslims, true Jews or sincere Christians, not to speak of the Islamic world at large.

Which of the two “injustices” and “punishments” is greater, ask the sensitive well-wishers of humanity? Is it Muhammad’s or that of the Zionists and their supporters? There is no justification for the latter; for, is it not a fact that the rulers had recognised the Jews as a community having historical links with Jerusalem? Had the Palestinian Jews not been assured of all their political and civil rights? Why were then the Arabs — the owners of land with permanent interests at stake — brutally turned out and hunted down? Why were their hearths extinguished for no fault of theirs? An impartial observer would prefer to bracket the Zionists of this century with the ancient Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Greco-Romans, and emperor Vespasian (or Titus), all of whom had invariably subjugated the Jews, brushed aside their homes, made them captive, suppressed their culture and laid their cities and temples waste. The Prophet Muhammad did not leave a legacy to that effect, but had enjoined tolerance. Is it not, therefore, unwarrantable that the critics should blame him and now ever go so far as to justify the act of dispossessing his followers?

13 Past favours vs. brute force of the present

Finally, some of the points in the article of Nissim Rejwan necessitate elucidation. First, the contributor admits that at times “certain historical truths are in more need of re-examination than others”. The present writer’s endeavour, in the first part of this essay has been to present a “consistent” and “unprejudiced re-statement” of the respective positions of the Jews and the Muslims in Arabia. The writer sincerely hopes that such a re-statement will help reduce the prevailing tension and animosity. But what of the consequences of the Palestine Partition Plan of 1947 C.E., which was imposed from outside and of which the destructive and unholy traces will continue to threaten peace until justice is done to the Arab refugees, about two million of whom are ceaselessly knocking at the doors of the war-mongers and the torch-bearers of peace, both having once combined to have them unsettled within a year?

Secondly, the remark of the Jewish contributor, that as against the Arab States, the Jewish society treats its “Arab members” with “reserve”, is more than surprising. It may be said in answer to this that if it did not maintain reserve, the Zionist society would be implementing completely the sentence of injustice against the wronged Arabs. Moreover, it is for its own preservation and for finding time to digest what Zionism has devoured in the past two decades that the quality of reserve must continue. Also, it would help avoid the general resentment of the Muslims all over the globe.

Thirdly, the article Judeo-Arabic Civilisation, shows that the Jewish littérateurs have come to recognise the fact that Islam carried with it blessing for the Jewish race. Thus “wherever the Crescent bore rule, the lot of the Jews began to improve” — in Palestine, Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Spain. In the last mentioned country, the Muslims brought to the Jews not only relief from their oppressions but, in the words of Dr. Isidore Epstein (a Jew), “Also encouraged among them culture which in richness and depth is comparable to the best produced by any people at any time”. In his book,
Judaism and Islam, Dr. Erwin Rosenthal, of Cambridge, has observed that, “the Talmudic Age apart, there is perhaps no more formative and positive period in our long and chequered history than that under the empire of Islam from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean”. The Arabs, it is said, “turned Spain into by far the most enlightened country in Europe”. The Jews shared this enlightenment unhindered. They acquired progress and prosperity everywhere under Islamic rule, because their Muslim brethren were devoted to the arts of peace.

If this be the historical truth, is it not correct to say, as Professor Arnold J. Toynbee more than once stated, that the worst sin committed against the Arabs was to make them homeless by creating a Zionist “state”? This meant installing an entity which was manufactured from beyond the Arab lands. In the end, the present writer would like to pose a question to the scholars and statesmen who have had a “grand role” to play in squeezing a homeland out of the confused and scattered imagination of the Jews: could there be no other solution to the Jewish problem, born of European tyranny, than tyrannising instead the innocent Arabs and raising a new problem by obliging them to become the unfortunate substitutes for the tyrannised Jews? The writer believes that they owe an answer to the lovers of humanity, to posterity and to the younger generations of the Islamic Community.

The Birth of Islam heralded a Revolution in Religious and Social Ideas of Man

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(e) Those who are unable to work or cannot find work or whose incomes are insufficient for their needs, are specifically mentioned as the recipients of help from zakāh funds. It is to be borne in mind that the payment of zakāh is not merely a personal charitable contribution left to the discretion of the individual, but a tax to be exacted by the State, and, if necessary, the State is entitled to take to task those who refuse to pay it . . . The zakāh is to be spent in ways similar to those which in modern times are comprised in the terms of “social security” and “social insurance”. This tax is to be administered in a decentralized manner. The zakāh funds of each region are to be collected locally and used towards meeting the needs of that particular locality or region. The surplus is then to be remitted to the central treasury and spent on Muslims and non-Muslims alike in all parts of the Islamic state.

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God is free from all defects. And (I begin) with His praise. God Almighty is free from all defects.

Ista‘inu Bi Al-Sabr Wa Al-Salah
(Seek help through patience and prayer—The Qur’an 21:153)

Prayer and its importance to individuals & nations
Its Meaning, Its Reality, Its Power

By the late Mushir Husayn Qidwa’i

An acceptable definition of Prayer

Prayer has been defined as “the act by which man, conscious at once of his weakness and of his immortality, puts himself into real and effective communication with the Almighty, the Eternal, the self-Existent God”.

This is not a definition of prayer which could be universally applied. People have been known to pray who never believed in their own immortality or in an Eternal and self-Existent God. Even to this day masses of people can be seen in India going to their idols with rice and flowers to offer prayers and supplications for the recovery of their beloved child or their pet cow.

It is true that prayer is generally the result of the consciousness of man of his own weakness, and so also of the superiority or strength of the other person or Being to whom prayer is offered, either directly or through a medium.

It is true that the evolved consciousness of men does not stoop to pray except to a living, almighty omniscient, and omnipresent Deity; for an advanced humanity the realm of human power and might has been greatly extended even beyond the imagination of human beings of remote ages. How can a man with knowledge and sense now pray to a tree or stone? How can he even pray to the sun or the moon, when he has become conscious of the fact that he has in him certain capacities which make him master of the tree and stone, the sun and moon? The sun and moon, the tree and stone, have no will of their own. Man has, and so man is superior to them. If we limit prayer to its modern meaning, we can use the definition given above with a little more particularization—perhaps something like this:

Prayer is an act by which humanity, conscious at once of its physical weakness and inner strength, puts itself, either directly or indirectly, into real and effective communication with the Almighty, the Living, the Omniscient, and the Omnipresent God, Who responds to human call.

Prayers to a God who is not almighty and omnipresent, prayers to a “finite person”, cannot carry much conviction, and their efficacy is also marred. If our God has no power, or is not willing to help us in all difficulties, anywhere and any time, then there is not much use calling upon Him.

Prayer brings man into real and effective communication with God, so prayer is the medium through which man imbibes the attributes of his Maker—His all-comprehensive, impartial, inexhaustive beneficence, His mercy, even His majesty and might. Prayer is the key to piety.

The Qur’an on the conception of piety

But piety does not consist in merely going to church on one day—it does not consist in repeating fixed formulas of any particular religion. Prayers, mere lip-prayers, without the co-operation of the heart, without the co-operation of our whole being, are meaningless—they can do no good. By mere lip-prayers we do not imbibe the attributes of God. They do good neither to us nor to the world. It is only real prayers, real piety, which do good to individuals and nations and the world at large.

There is no piety in turning your face towards the East and the West (in your formal prayers), but he is pious (he is prayerful) who believes in God and the Day of Judgment, the angels, the scriptures, and the prophets.
who for the love of God (i.e. not with selfishness) disburses his wealth to his kindred, and to the orphans, and the needy and the wayfarer, and to those who ask for, and for the redemption of a captive who observes prayer and gives alms, and who is of those who are faithful to their engagements when they have covenanted, and who are patient in adversity, and hardship and in times of trouble. These are they who are straight, these are they who are pious (The Qur’ān, 2:177).

These are they who have themselves profited by their prayers, and who have added to the progress of this world by their sympathy with and help for their fellow-men.

Prayer is an outpouring of its love and gratitude by the human soul to its Maker, to its Cherisher. Prayer is an expression of human desire for the help and guidance of the Master, whatever name may be given to Him. Prayer is an expression of the craving of the human soul to be in communion with Him from Whom it came. The reality of prayer consists in its coming out of the human soul to Him Who is the origin and the real essence of the human soul. Its reality consists in its being natural, in its linking the soul to its essence and also in its communicating to man his dependence upon the mercy and love of God, or Allah, Brahma, or Jehovah.

**A thoughtful person should be more prayerful**

When a man comes in this world what does he find? He finds that all arrangements for his existence had already been made before he came in the world. There is pure air to breathe, and there are also other natural necessities for his existence. There is the wonderfully nutritious milk to drink. Besides, in the maternal mind special affection and love have already been placed for him which look not only to his necessities, but also to his luxuries. As a baby he is absolutely helpless. At that time of his life he cannot defend himself. But means have been provided which make him—a helpless baby though he is, a defenceless little mite though he is—flourish and grow up into manhood. He, when he grows up, might prove himself a rogue and a villain, he, when he grows up, might one day be seen on the gallows, but when he is a baby such wonderful arrangements have been made that he finds himself among people—at least two such people—that would sooner give up their own life than see any harm coming to him. What would a mother not do to see her child happy and well!

Who provided all those natural requirements for his existence? Who put such a love and affection in the heart of his mother and of his father that they nourished him and spent money over his bringing up, even at personal sacrifices? Surely, he himself did not do it. Then, should he not be grateful for all that was provided for him, for all that was done for him? Should he not be prayerful to Him who was so merciful and compassionate as to provide everything which he was expected to require for his existence?

The great Sādi of Shīrāz (d. 1292 C.E.), a Persian poet, has said that man should be prayerful and thankful to God twice at every breath. First, because when he breathes out he sends out the air which was obnoxious to his health, and this saves his life: secondly, because when he breathes in he inhales life-giving oxygen.

An advanced man who does some scientific research work should be more conscious of these hidden bounties of God which were waiting to be discovered to help in the advancement of human comfort and civilization. If these hidden forests of coal and oil had not been provided for, ages ago, by a providential Nature in anticipation of the invention of the steam-engine, the internal combustion engine, half the material progress of the world would be impossible today. Should not man then be thankful for all that has been provided for him, even in anticipation of his needs and progress?

There can be no doubt that man owes a great deal, in fact all, to a merciful Providence, and so a prayer to Him cannot but be real—an instinctive expression of human gratefulness. The sense of weakness is common to whole humanity, therefore is the instinct of prayer common.

The more man realizes his dependence on the mercy and will of God as a higher Being, the more his prayers will be real and sincere. Even the cleverest scientist of the age cannot deny that human life can be destroyed in a second by accidents. The fact is that there is nothing strange in death. It is life which is a marvel. Think of all those poisonous germs which co-exist with man in this world. Think of all those accidents which can occur to any man any minute. And then will it be possible to realize human dependence upon Providence, and then will the reality of prayer be impressed upon the human mind. The love a child has for its mother is real, so is the hankering of the human soul for its Author, its parent, its original. The more a man realizes his true position in the scheme of things of the world, the more man becomes conscious of the immortality of his soul, of his inner strength, of his true origin, of the *raison d'être* of his existence, the more real his prayers are.

**THE REALITY OF PRAYER IS ALSO THE POWER OF PRAYER**

**The human soul and its relationship with God, its Creator**

The human soul is not mortal.

"Dust thou art, to dust returnest.

Was not spoken of the Soul."

The Qur’ān, 38:72, says, “Nafakhtu fi-hi min ruḥī” (I, God, breathed My Soul into man).

Jesus said, “Believeth thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me He doeth the works” (John xiv. 10). The sayings of great Hindu saints are full of such sentiments.

A great Muslim saint has also said,

“I became Thou and Thou becamest me. I became the body and Thou the Soul.

“So that nobody should say any more that I am different and Thou art different.”

Not only have the three sister religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—taught man to believe that he possesses something of Divine in him, but so did even the old religions. He is weaker than many animals. At a certain time of his life he is more helpless even than an ant. An ant can find its food, but a human baby at its birth cannot even do that. Physically, man is a weak creature. He has not developed much more than his “ancestor”, the ape, in certain physical respects.

God is Infinite. God is free from all weakness, God has no physicality. When man puts himself in “real and effective communication” with God, he does so only through his spirit. And because God is All-powerful—Almighty—this spiritual communication with Him, which man secures through prayer, gives him power and might. It is not easy to explain exactly spiritual affairs by words spoken by
mouth or written by pen, and it is not easy to explain how prayer gives power. But some idea can be formed if we, for the sake of illustration, and illustration only, take God to be a centre of electricity. When we pray we connect, as it were, a wire to that centre and get a current off that electricity. The stronger the wire—that is, the more sincere, solemn and pure our prayers are—the more strength we shall get. Through the power thus gained men have performed wonderful miracles. When man submits his own will to the will of God, when man gets into communion with his Maker, he can do many more things than “are dreamt of in philosophy”. The maxim “Thy will and not mine”, if fully acted upon, can make man do wonders. It can awaken all that is Divine in man.

The human soul holds the first rank among all created things, because it has something of Divine in it. It is immortal because it has something of Divine in it. Its power is also due to the same reason. It is the human soul which should rule the body if man desires to be above animals. Man’s duty as man, as being higher to all other creation, higher even than the sun and the moon, is to cultivate his soul, to cultivate and develop in him that part which is Divine. If he does so he will become powerful. He will be able not only to rule his own body, but also that of others. His eyesight will become clearer; he will be able to see the departed souls, will be able to talk to them. The future will be as clear to him as the present. He will be able to read the very thoughts of the living persons. He will be able to transfer his thoughts, without any physical or material medium, thousands of miles. By his will he will be able to influence and even dominate the wills of others. He will be able to rule even over the elements. Knowledge is power.

What is knowledge? A development of the latent faculties in man to enquire into and grasp the realities of things. Knowledge depends upon reason and reason is but one of the many functions of the soul. By the development of reason and wisdom alone man has been able to master the air and the sea. How much more power could he get if he would develop the soul fully and perfectly? The perfection of the soul is only possible by linking it with its Original—from whom it came and to whom it returneth. What is that link? Prayer. By a real and effective communication with God we can secure power. Hence, man has been advised to seek assistance from patience and prayer in the time of affliction and trouble. Istdinâ bi al-Sabr wa al-Salâh (seek help with patience and prayer—The Qur’ân 2:153).

Prayer gives power to those who pray

By prayer one can approach the Almighty. By approaching the Almighty one can secure power. Thus, by prayer one can secure power. Prayer is the manifestation of human weakness as compared with the Almighty power that rules over him and the whole universe. But it is also a means of securing such power as to enable man to become the viceroy of that Almighty God Himself, and to rule over all other creatures. Because prayer gives man a knowledge of his own weakness, and because knowledge is power, therefore, even as a manifestation of weakness, prayer is in truth nothing but power. When a man has purified his soul, when he has put himself in effective communication with God through prayer, his power extends over the dead and the living, over the organic and inorganic parts of the world. He can never be God. He can never be all-powerful. Even at his best he can have but an infinitesimal current from that Centre of Electricity. But his spiritual power can, through that electric current, infinitesimal though it be, transcend not only his physical strength, but that of all other creatures. He can rule all other creatures which do not possess that current even to the extent he possesses. He can continue to develop that power more and ever more. Physical death cannot stop him from that development. Prayer can give power not only when man is in his physical body, but also when he leaves for regions higher and heavenly. It is, therefore, that those who are in Paradise are always engaged in prayer—i.e., in more and more purification of the soul, in greater and greater progress and advance. They secure greater and yet greater power.

THE PLACE AND VALUE OF PRAYER TO THE INDIVIDUAL

Prayer is a pillar of faith. It is the diet of the human soul. The human soul cannot rest content unless and until it has held communion with its Origin. Everything delights when it is in its own elements, so does the soul. The soul is in its elements when it is in communion with God. The best way to hold communion with God is prayer.

Prayer has the same effect on our souls as protoplasm has on our physical bodies. Prayer supplies nourishment for the soul, and it is for this reason that certain religions, like Islam, have made even formal prayer obligatory five times a day. Physical body seeks nourishment five times a day, so does the human soul. In fact, the human soul should be more looked after than the human body. Human body is mortal: it decays; even if it is looked after with all possible care it cannot last long. It can never be made immortal. All the pleasure and pain it gives, or gets, can be but transitory. But human soul is immortal. The more nourished it is, the more happiness it will give, and as its happiness shall be everlasting, it deserves to be more valued. Man must look to his spiritual good even more than to his physical good. In any case, he must not neglect his soul. If he does not hold his communion with God, if he does not pray to his God, he is sure to neglect his soul. He must not live by bread alone, but by the words of mouth—by prayer, as Jesus Christ has instructed: his prayers must find a place in his daily life. The prayer of the heart needs no language. The well-known Persian mystic Hâfiz (d. 1388 C.E.), says:

“Relate thou the incidents of love in whatever language thou knowest.”

And Hakim Sinâ’î (d. 1150 C.E.), another Persian poet, says:

“When thou speakest of Faith speak it in any language thou knowest, whether it be Hebraic or Syrian:

“When thou seekest the abode of Truth seek it in any country, whether Jâbalqa or Jâbalâs.”

Prayer may be offered without the use of a single word, but offered it must be. Human nature demands it, cries for it. Very often man becomes prayerful instinctively. In distress and in danger, particularly on board a ship, in mid-ocean, when a storm rages, even such men have been found to have taken recourse to prayer that never did so before. Even such persons that did not believe in God became believers when overtaken by some serious affliction. It is, as it were, instinctive to look to God for help when man finds himself in trouble. And what a solace, what a comfort, a sincere prayer affords to the human mind when every other means to secure comfort and satisfaction is found wanting! Prayer affords a great spiritual and moral satisfaction to a believing mind. It saves man from despondency and despair. It encourages him to face danger
The moral value of prayer to the individual

The moral value of prayer to the individual is also very high. God is perfect. He is all-holy. When a man seeks communion with Him through prayer, he has to see that he does not approach Him with an unholy heart, with an impure mind. It is for this reason that it has been said:

"Rehearse that which has been revealed to you of the Book, and be constant at prayer, for prayer preserves from crimes and from that which is blameworthy; and the remembering of God is surely a most sacred duty" (The Qur’an, 29:45).

With a guilty conscience, nobody can have a heart to go to Him who is all-knowing, all-holy and pure, and who is omnipresent. The good of instituting repeated formal prayers every day is the same. That helps to awaken man’s conscience. When he goes to pray he has to present himself before God. He has to judge himself and his doings every time he goes to pray to be judged by his God, and this quite naturally has a beneficent moral effect upon him.

As regards the spiritual place and value of prayer, prayer has the first and foremost place and the highest value. It is only by repeated communication and communion with God that we can purify our soul, our spirit, and we must make ourselves fit for communion with God.

Prayer is valuable to the individual, to man, because it discovers himself to him—it reveals to man his weakness and also his greatness, what is mortal in him and what is immortal in him. Nosce teipsum1 is a good motto. Shakespeare has truly said that he who is true to himself will consequently be true to others. And still a grander saying is, “He who knows himself knows his Lord”. Through prayer man knows himself; through prayer man knows his Lord.

An iron when it is put in the fire takes in many attributes of fire. In the same way does wood also: but while the wood gets burnt quickly to ashes, the iron does not. A human soul also in communion with God takes in God’s attributes. If, however, the soul is not prepared and purified beforehand, it will not be like iron but rather like wood.

Moral purity, in certain respects even physical purity, is concomitant with spiritual purity. When a man possessing physical, moral and spiritual purity engages in prayer, his soul with God is like iron with fire. Thus, morally and spiritually both, prayer should hold a high place in individual life. Its value is great in moulding the character of the individual, in saving him from despair and in giving him encouragement in his work.

What kind of prayer finds acceptance with God?

A prayer with good motives, with sincere desire, and one which has the good either of the individual or community as its objective, is sure to be heard. But even if it is not heard for the time being it is not in vain. It does one good simply to pray. It is a moral gain to the individual. It is his duty to pray. Hájíz sweetly says:

“Hafiz wazifah’e tâ dirâ guftamast o bas Dar bandân mabash’ kîh nashunid yâ shunid.”

(O Hájíz, it is thy duty to pray and nothing else.
Take no thought whether He hears thee or not). In Isaiah 1, 14-17, is given these conditions which make the prayers acceptable:

“Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me: I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will

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1 Know thyself.
hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

A man has a right to go to his Creator and Cherisher for everything—even for temporal benefits, for his daily bread, for rain, etc. However low the object of the prayer be, the very fact that the man has gone to his God for it is a moral gain. It matters not if different persons pray to the same Deity, at the same time, for contrary things. It is not man's business to anticipate the difficulties in the way of the prayer being heard. Nothing is impossible for God, and He knows best which prayer should be heard and which rejected. He has ordained that all that is humanly possible to achieve an object, however temporal, should be done by man, and for the success of the undertaking sincere prayer should be offered and the help of Him invoked who is the Master of the Universe.

The greatest work which was set to Moses by the all-Wise God was to uplift a down-trodden nation. That nation was morally degraded, therefore, it was politically in bondage. If Moses had united the spiritual regeneration of the nation with its moral and physical regeneration, that would have been too much for its capacities; therefore, for the time being, he contented himself with leading his people out of bondage and with improving their morals through rigid laws and strict discipline. He had to be firm and rigid in his laws, and he was perhaps a little too firm and rigid in making his people work for their liberty. The development of the ideas of after-life and of prayer was left to later prophets and reformers.

Almost all religions recognise the institution of prayer

Almost every religious system worth the name has recognised the institution of prayer. That is, every church has found prayer to be of some value: The early Hindu temples were crowded with men with their offerings and sacrifices. Invocations and Mantras, or prayers, were also repeated. The Bhagwat Gita is a spiritual and energizing book of great value to the Hindu Church up to this day. But among Hindus the existence of a priestly class—the Brahmins—deprived, as it were, the masses of their individual right of worship and prayer. It was only through the Brahmins that any worship, any prayer, could be conducted. Perhaps it strengthened the position of the Hindu Church in a way, but sacrifice and prayer lost nearly all their moral and spiritual value. Modern tendency of Hindus is to curtail the power of priests.

The Zoroastrians were a very prayerful people. So were the Magians. But with these also spiritual life became the monopoly of the ministers of religion. Among the great religious systems, Buddhism has been unique in respect of its ideas of God Himself, and also its ideas about prayers to Him. Buddhism has no church. It has dispensed with prayer, or rather has substituted meditation for prayer, although there is not very much difference between the two.

The credit that is Jesus's

The credit of expounding noble ideas of our future life and of giving the true character to prayer rests with Jesus. It is true that the Jews, shortly after the Great Law-giver Moses, also became prayerful people. The idea of God became less anthropomorphized, and from the primitive use of the name of Jehovah in invocation regular and serious prayer developed; but it was through Jesus Christ that prayer realized its spiritual height. The value of prayer to the Christian Church is immeasurable. There is no religion in the world which has such a highly organized Church system as Christianity. And the Church owes its organization mostly to prayer. Missals, councils, liturgies, and convocations were held to settle articles of faith, and matters of conscience. The Lord's day institution has been of the greatest possible value to the Church. As the Lord's Prayer is a glorious prayer, so from the Church point of view is the Lord's day a glorious day; a day reserved for prayer and worship is a very beneficent institution for the Church. In these days of scepticism, but for Sunday institution as a day of prayer, there would hardly have been any prayer in congregation, and the Church system would have suffered greatly. Congregational prayers which are said under the auspices of the Church are more acceptable to God, even though the congregation be very small.

And again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them (Matthew xix. 20).

Intercession, Holy Communion, mediator's prayer, prayer of consecration, confession, etc., all played important parts in increasing the value of prayer for the Church of Christianity. Congregational prayers under the Church give the Church a hold over the conscience of the nation. In fact, the Church rules the masses through prayer. Of course, for the purpose of the Church some formalism had to be given to the prayers, and prayer lost its voluntary effect. Not only man but everything created by God should know its prayer to its Creator. Every individual should have the smallest scope for the heartiest outpouring of love and gratitude, devotion and humility to his Maker. Cherisher and Sustainer—to the all-merciful and compassionate yet requiting and reckoning God. Islam is the religion which, while establishing formal and congregational prayers as well, has seen to it that most of all other religions that the value of prayers be not lost to the individual. Islam is too democratic in its character to have allowed any Church organization to have been perfected in it. It has no priests, and no church can exist without priests. Besides this, as an English writer, Mr. Hunter, says: "It is one of the glories of Islam that its temples are not made with hands, and that its ceremonies can be performed anywhere upon God's earth or under His heaven."

Still, Islam has established formal congregational prayers. There are prayers said five times a day, which should preferably be said in congregations and in a Mosque. There is also an institution of Friday prayers in congregations said in Mosques. There are other large congregational prayers of 'Id said twice a year. But the value of these prayers is more to the State and nation than to the Church of Islam. Every Muslim has his church in him. Any Muslim can lead the prayers. Any Muslim can say formal prayers for his dead brother. Any Muslim can bind two willing persons in marriage anywhere. It is, therefore, that the church system in Islam is not so well organized as it is in Christianity, and it is, therefore, that there is no church to which prayer is so valuable as it is to the Christian Church. In fact, nearly all formal prayers, except the Lord's Prayer, of Christianity have been the work of the Church. It will not be wrong to say that to the Christian prayers the Church has been as valuable as the prayers to the Church. In Islam all formal prayers are to be the same as those which were said by Muhammad himself. However, generally speaking, prayers are the backbone of the Church—every church.
THE VALUE OF PRAYER TO THE STATE

The value of prayer to the State in Christian and Buddhistic countries is getting less and less, because there religion itself has been divorced from the State. In England that schism is not so great as in other Christian countries. In England there is a State Church, although that Church has given up even the moral and social care of the people to the State. The State can reach the heart of the people through the Church, and as the Church has to use the medium of prayer to reach the masses, the value of prayer becomes great to the State. The greater the value of prayers as a moral agent, the more their value to the State. A man who is true to God cannot but be true to himself and to his fellow-creatures. The State is always in need of such men.

On such emergencies and catastrophes as great wars, the value of congregational prayers to the State becomes very great indeed, because it is through prayer that the State can make an appeal to the public to make a solemn, united and hearty effort to achieve peace and victory. The State secures the moral support of the whole nation through organized prayers. The State secures the will of the whole nation to win the war through prayers.

Since prayers are always more sincere at the time of distress and affliction, and they appeal most to a merciful God, the State gets a spiritual support also through prayers at a time of national crisis.

There is one more gain secured to the State through prayers, and it is that when the life of a number of near and dear relations of the people is at stake they are more in a prayerful mood to secure, as it were, the safety of their relations. But when they go to pray the idea naturally comes to them that they should not expect their prayers to be answered unless they are offered with a chaste mind, and then they try to free themselves of impurities. This gives to the State better citizens to deal with. France found it to its cost during the First Great War that it was not quite the right policy for the State to have ignored the Church. There was a revival of religiousness in France. The churches were not quite neglected and the attendance for prayer in the churches was not small. The State also benefited by the Red Cross organization.

Generally speaking, however, the value of prayers to Muslim Nations is the highest, and so is the value of prayer to the Muslim Nation. Muslim congregational prayers breathe the spirit of democracy, equality and fraternity, and as they are held every day a number of times, they have a wholesome and lasting effect on the mind of the people. Muslim formal prayers are also good for the State and the nation, because they teach every day lessons in early rising, punctuality and cleanliness to the people. They have very high moral value and have great disciplinary effects. They teach humility before God, before whom every Muslim prostrates in his prayers, and have a beneficent influence on the devotee's general character when he finds himself in the presence of the Omniscient and Omnipresent God five times every day. This repeated presence before the Great Judge does great good to the individual, and as it is the individuals who form the nations and States, the value of prayer to the nation and State is not less than to the individual. Prayer teaches man to do his duty. The State demands the same. The State cannot work unless its citizens are taught to do their duty. Thus, prayers are very helpful to the State.

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THE VALUE OF PRAYER IN EVERYDAY AFFAIRS OF LIFE, IN HEALING AND IN SICKNESS

It has been said that the institution of one day as the day of prayer has helped in the organization of the Church. But it must also be acknowledged that it has not been such a beneficial institution to the individual for his everyday life. It has, in a way, given an encouragement to the people to reserve only one day for prayers and the rest of the week for the business of the world. This has, as it were, made the care of the soul less important than that of the body. Human affairs of ordinary life should be conducted with purity of mind. Prayer is the best agent to secure purity of mind. Prayers, formal prayers, congregational prayers, should be said every day to keep the mind in a pure condition. He who fears God has to fear nothing else. If a man finds himself fit to approach the all-Knowing God a number of times every day, he will face any work without fear. And how very valuable a prayer like the following is to lighten our daily work to us:

O Lord! punish us not if we forget, or fall into error. O our Lord! lay not on us a load like that which Thou hast laid on those which were before us. O our Lord! and lay not on us that for which we have not strength (The Qur'ân, 2:286).

All men can say to their God, “Show us the right path”, in every walk of life, in every work they have to undertake.

Our daily work should begin with prayers. Prayers should influence our daily life. The value of prayer increases immensely if we do not separate our daily work from our prayers. It is not right to let rest and worship go altogether—to reserve only one day for prayer as well as rest. Rather, work and prayer should go together. Our prayers should sanctify our work and bless it. We should always be ready to attend to the call to prayer. We should always be willing to sacrifice our daily comfort, even our worldly work, to attend to the needs of our soul. There is no doubt that as long as we live in this world we must not neglect our work. But we must not neglect our soul either. If work is necessary to get bread and bread necessary for sustenance of the body, so is prayer necessary for the sustenance of the soul. Therefore, work and prayer should both take a part in our everyday life. Prayers keep our minds clean, our life clean, and our work clean. They save us from going wrong—in speech, in act, even in thought.

Prayer cannot but have a healing and curing effect if it really puts the devotee in an effective and real communication with the all-Benevolent, Merciful and Powerful God. It has been experienced by many physicians that the will-power of the patient and the innate vitality of the spirits play an important part in bringing the disorganized system of the human body to its normal condition. Prayer, if it is sincere, if it really means an application to the all-Benevolent God, must be a source of strength to the will-power and must have a reviving effect on the spirits. The firmer the faith of a person in God, the greater the influence of prayer on his spirits, and through his spirits also on his physical body. People quite healthy in body have sometimes died by sudden excitement of pain or pleasure. Cheerful news sometimes does more to uplift the spirits of man than a dose of strong tonic. Prayer can take the place of cheerful news. It can arouse the drooping spirits. It can produce health-giving excitement. It was by empirical knowledge that man first found out that such and such herb is useful for such and such an ailment. It was by experience that it was found out that prayers are helpful in reviving the spirits of
persons who are religiously inclined. It is not only healing and curing that man can do through prayers, but many more things, provided that the prayer really becomes a means of communion with God. It is revelation from God Himself which teaches man how his prayers can become a means of communion with God. Hence the necessity for Divine messengers to teach man effective prayers. But in this material world of ours it will not be right to expect that prayers alone will join a broken leg. Man has been given wisdom and reason to find out medicines for his physical ailments, and he must use that wisdom and reason and find out medicine for any disease of his body. God in His mercy has provided medicine for all ailments of the body. But man is weak. His knowledge is also imperfect. Prayer should be used to make up for the human weakness by securing the help of the Almighty God. Prayer should be used to make up for the deficiency of human knowledge, for guidance in the diagnosis of the ailment and the right use of the proper medicine.

THE VALUE OF PRAYER IN TIMES OF DISTRESS AND NATIONAL DANGER AND IN RELATION TO NATIONAL IDEAL AND WORLD PROGRESS

The value of prayer in times of distress and national danger has been discussed before. The greater the danger to the nation, the more necessary it becomes to secure a united effort, not only physical but also moral and spiritual, on the part of the whole nation to meet that danger. Moral and spiritual, and through that physical effort could best be secured by common prayer which will bring home to every heart the danger that the nation has to face, and would impress upon the whole people their community of interest. In an organized State any desire of the nation, if it is expressed unanimously, finds a ready response. To the King of all kings a unanimous petition sent in the form of hearty prayers cannot remain unanswered. The moral and spiritual effect of prayers at the time of distress and national danger is very great. The material effect is also not small, because it unites the whole people on one point, and union is always strength. Prayer also encourages in the individual the spirit of mutual help, sacrifice and self-abnegation, and at a time of national danger the spirit of mutual help and sacrifice in the individuals cannot but be most valuable to the nation and to the State.

Prayer also sets national ideals. For example: what was the national ideal the Muslim nation in its early rise set before it? The same which has found expression in its prayer: "O Lord! Thou art our Maker. Give us success against the idolatrous people." Early Muslims set before them one national ideal and proclaimed it in their prayers:

Our prayers and supplications, our life and death, are all for none but the Cherisher of the Worlds (The Qur'ān, 6:162).

The Muslims of the East and the West, the North and the South, all had one and the same ideal before them, and it was through this unity of ideal as a nation that they overcame the inherent prejudices of race, country and colour and made lightning progress in all walks of life, and established a universal brotherhood among themselves.

Prayer not only sets an ideal, but also takes it to the heart of every member of the nation, and thus secures for that ideal great moral and spiritual as well as material strength. When the whole nation buck an ideal it comes into practice more generally, and as strenuous efforts are made by each individual its realization becomes easier and more assured.

There is a saying: "If two hearts unite they can move a mountain." Young boys, little girls, grown-up men and women all take up an ideal set by prayer. That ideal is sure to be realized as a national ideal. But human ideal should be universal—common to all nations. World-fraternity and good should be the human ideal, and human prayers should help in achieving it.

It is a pity that humanity as a whole has not yet realized the value of prayers as a great asset to the progress of the world. Each nation, each people, seems to have monopolized that One Being who is the Creator, Evolver, Cherisher and Sustainer of all the nations of the world, of every age, country, race, colour and creed. We notice that His natural bounties are for all His creatures. The same elements, the same air, water, fire, etc., are for the use and benefit of all peoples. The stars, the sun, the moon, the sea, the land, the fruits, are at the disposal of all people. God is universal and impartial in all His bounties. If we all seek communion with Him; if we all have been created by Him; if we all try to do His will as represented by His work in Nature, why then do we not all, the whole humanity, pray to Him and Him alone, and thus confirm the community of interest of the whole humanity?

PRAYERS AS A MEANS OF BRINGING THE WHOLE OF HUMANITY BEFORE ONE CREATOR

Prayers can be constituted to be the means of bringing the whole of humanity before One Creator. The ideals of humanity can be made one. Then perhaps we shall have no more of such catastrophes as mankind passes through every now and then in blood and fire, a curse to civilization and culture, a disgrace to humanity itself.

If through prayers to a common Creator and Cherisher the idea is impressed on the minds of the people of all races and countries and creeds that the whole humanity is one brotherhood, that it has come from one and the same Source, that it goes back to the same, these ideas of the world-dominion by one nation, this oppression of the weak by the stronger nations, these colour and racial prejudices, may cease to exist and these terrible wars might come to an end.

God's earth is wide enough for all people. There is sustenance in it for all people. What is wanted is to enervate in human mind the idea of toleration and of goodwill. Prayers can do it.

If there is one God, then we should all pray to Him, and in Him we must all meet. What an amount of progress the world would see, what an amount of happiness would accrue to the whole world, if the whole of humanity would only realize its common brotherhood. and would call on one Cherisher and Creator in its prayers!

It is true that prayer has already played a part in the progress of the world. The nearer we come to our age, the more universal we find the character of the prayers. The horizon of human eye has extended. Tribal and racial deities are not invoked. The idea of universal brotherhood has gained ground. The Christian Lord's Prayer is universal. The Fātihah of the Muslims is more wonderful. It runs thus:

"In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful" "Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds!" "King of the Day of Reckoning!" "Thee only do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help."

"Guide us on the straight path, "The path of those to whom Thou hast been gracious, with whom Thou art not displeased, and who go not astray" (The Qur'ān, 1:1-7).

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PRAYERS AS CONCEIVED BY ISLAM ARE A MEANS OF CREATING A WORLD BROTHERHOOD OF MAN

It is also true that because Muslims have stuck to their prayers in one language (Arabic) and to one Book (the Qur‘ân) all the Muslims of the world, whether they be in India or in China, or in America or in Australia, or anywhere else, understand each other in the Mosque, and thus territorial boundaries have been done away with. In every Mosque of the world the language spoken is the same. This has increased the feelings of fraternity in the Muslim nation spread all over the world. It must also be said to the credit of Islam, that it has tried to harmonize the people of the world with one another, and has thus contributed to the good and progress of the world. Prayers have played a prominent part in this world-harmonization.

Under the religious laws laid down by Islam, rich and poor Muslims of different races and colours meet together every Friday in Mosques and offer prayers without any distinction of place or position, under the leadership of any man elected by the assembly. Twice a year in a larger and more numerous congregation, all the Muslim residents of a town meet together to say their prayers and to embrace each other with fraternal affection. Every Muslim is enjoined to visit Mecca at least once in a lifetime, at a fixed time, in company with thousands of his brother Muslims, to offer his prayers. This great gathering, in which hundreds of thousands of true believers meet together from far and near at one central place, all wearing the same simple unsewn garment bare-headed, princes and peasants, from different countries and places, of various colours and races, standing shoulder to shoulder in their prayer, is an annual demonstration of Islamic Socialism, and sets a grand practical example of brotherhood and equality. In this gathering not the slightest difference can be noticed between a monarch and his subjects, a plebeian and a patrician. The idea bodily forces itself upon every mind that all human beings are one people, and that it is incumbent upon them to treat each other with perfect equality as members of the same brotherhood. This annual gathering demonstrates not only an outward and formal similarity and equality between man and man, but it also declares an identity of purpose and singleness of object on the part of all humanity. These myriads of men and women, old and young, come to that sea of sand bearing innumerable hardships, with only one purpose, one object, to pay homage to God, whom they can find everywhere, who is “Nearer to them than the vein of their neck”, yet whom they love to proclaim at a common gathering as their common Deity—the one Cherisher of them all—the Rabb al-‘Alamin. The idea in assembling this vast mass of humanity is to demonstrate at one and the same time common fraternity and spiritual affinity, the “Fatherhood” of God and brotherhood of man.

But this spirit requires still greater liberality and scope. The prayer to the “Lord of the worlds” should create a bond of fraternity with the people of the world of every creed who believe in Him.

“The Lord of the worlds” does not stand in need of human prayers. All His creation sings praises of Him and offers prayers to Him. Our prayers should do us good. They must help in the happiness and progress of the world.

Now that the world has realized that there is only One Being who deserves human worship and that over all creatures man is supreme; now that stone worship and star worship, and even man worship, are being abolished—even the Hindus proclaim that they are Monotheists; now that the world has been drawn closer together—distance is being shortened by every mode of conveyance; now that religious tolerance is also increasing among people of different places and creeds; it ought to be now not difficult to fix a place where representatives of all races and creeds could meet each other with fraternity, without the distinction of colour or nation, to offer their prayers to the One Cherisher and Lord of the whole universe for the Kingdom of Heaven on this earth—for peace and goodwill everywhere in the world. Political conferences for peace have failed. Wars, most deadly and inhuman wars, have raged in spite of the world peace conventions and conferences. It will be worth while to give prayer and faith a trial. The idea of common brotherhood of man can best be impressed by instituting common prayers to “the Lord of the whole universe”. To send up prayers through Jesus Christ or Krishna is no good if prayers do not help us in becoming good and useful and progressive citizens of this world. Man wants salvation in this very world as well. Our prayers should mould our actions and make them of general beneficence and progress for our fellow-men.

The purpose of prayers

By our prayers we should be able to realize the needs of our fellow-beings. If we have something in our possession and the other person has not and needs it, we should be ready to give it to him. Do we not expect our God to give us what we do not possess and what He possesses? We must not forget:

_Woe to those who pray,_
_But in their prayers are careless_  
_Who make a show of devotion_ 
_But refuse help to the needy_ (The Qur‘ân, 107:4).  

Nor this:

_If thou bring thy gift to the altar and then rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, then come and offer thy gift._

When we say our prayers we must not forget the real purport of those prayers. If we inspire ourselves with the same spirit in which we expect God to answer our prayers, if we also get determined to be beneficent as far as we can to others, what progress the world would make in every respect! Suppose some people labouring under bondage need education and suppose we can give that education, we should be willing to give it. Prayers ought to teach us to be selfless benefactors. If they are real, they must be beneficial not only to us but to the world at large. They must add to the progress and happiness of the world. Colour or social bars are fatal to the progress of the world. All humanity forms one nation.

When we pray we should be imbued with the spirit of the following immortal lines of a great American poet:

_“We owe allegiance to the State, but deeper, truer, more_  
_To the sympathies that God hath set within our spirit’s core:_  
_Our country claims our fealty: we grant it so, but then:_  
_Before man made us citizens, great Nature made us men:_  
_He’s true to God who’s true to man: wherever wrong is done:_  
_To the humblest and weakest ‘neath the all-besetting sun._
That wrong is also done to us; and they are slaves most base
Whose love of right is for themselves and not for all their race.
God works for all, ye cannot have the hope of being free
With parallels of latitude, with mountain range and sea.
Put golden padlocks on Truth’s lips, be callous as ye will.
From soul to soul o’er all the world, leaps one electric thrill.”

The following is a soul-inspiring prayer, for every Muslim, from the Holy Qur’an, 2:206:

Our Lord! do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake. Our Lord! do not lay on us a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us. Our Lord! do not impose upon us that which we have not the strength to bear; and pardon us and grant us protection and have mercy on us. Thou art our Patron, so help us against the unbelieving people.

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MUHAMMAD 'ABDUH

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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW & ARAB AFFAIRS
"God is Great"

A Critique of Early Arab Victories, and the Causes of their Success in their Campaigns*

Conditions in Spain on the eve of the Arab invasion in 711 C.E.

The falsity of the charge that Muslims forced the conquered people to adopt Islam

By Zafar ‘Ali Qureshi

PART III

We now turn to the conditions prevailing in Spain on the eve of the Arab invasion.

S. P. Scott graphically writes in his History of the Moorish Empire in Europe:

"The successor of Recared and Wamba had degenerated into a feeble tyrant, who reigned by a disputed title, and in whose sensual nature neither the rites of hospitality, the obligations of friendship, the dignity of the royal office, nor the infirmities of age, interposed any obstacle to the indulgence of his unbridled passions . . . The evil example of royal profligacy had infected every grade of the priesthood. The episcopal palace became the scene of daily turmoil and midnight orgies, which scandalized the populace, itself far from immaculate; while the excellence of the wines and the beauty of female companions of priest and private were matters of public jest and infamous notoriety . . ."

"The nobility, after having virtually surrendered to their spiritual advisers the complete control of the administration, preserved, to a pharisaical degree, the outward semblance of devotion . . ." 112

Scott goes on to depict the condition of the poor cultivators, serfs, slaves, and other depressed and oppressed people in these words:

"The cultivators were attached to the glebe, which could not be alienated without them and, forming an hereditary caste, were, to all intents and purposes, slaves . . . the lot of the servile under the Visigothic rule was, in general, far more grievous than that of the slave had been under the Romans . . . The restrictions upon marriage, the separation of families, the severity of punishment imposed for even trifling offences, added to the humiliation and hardship of the servile condition." 111

About the conditions of the slaves and labourers employed on the most intensive estates of the clergy. Scott writes:

"Immense number of slaves were employed upon them, not merely in the cultivation of the soil, but in the producing and perfecting of every article, then known which could contribute to the pleasures of their luxurious lords. For these unhappy laborers, whose task every year became more arduous, and whose aspirations of liberty, cherished during many generations were now destroyed. The prospect of relief from their insupportable burdens seemed absolutely helpless." 114

As regards the lot of the Jews, Scott observes:

"A sweeping decree of the Seventeenth Council of Toledo, had confiscated their possessions and sentenced them to servitude. A hundred thousand of these sectaries, in whose breasts rankled a spirit of fierce and sullen hatred, born of hostility handed down for ages, and aggravated by a system of repression scarcely justifiable even by the sternest demands of a political necessity, constituted an element of a far more dangerous character than all of the others whose machinations and discontent had undermined the fabric of the Visigothic empire . . . In the villages and hamlets, the fanaticism and jealousy of the peasantry undoubtedly inflicted every hardship and indignity upon the Jews . . . With the ignorant rabble, the possession of wealth and the exertion of political power by heretics were always unpardonable.

crimes. The clergy, on all occasions, for ends of their own fomented the popular discontent, and lauded this cruel policy as acceptable to God, and by every device sought to perpetuate the ancient antagonism of the Aryan and Semitic races, in which is to be sought one cause of the irrational and widely diffused prejudice against the Jew." 115

Dozy corroborates in these words:  

"On the one hand were to be seen a few possessors of immense estates like the latifundia: on the other, a multitude of impoverished citizens, serfs, and slaves. The wealthy, the privileged, the chief magistrates—all those, in fact, who had held high office in the Empire, or upon whom the sovereign had merely conferred titular rank—were exempt from payment of the taxes which crushed the middle class . . .

"The municipalities, intended as a safeguard against tyranny, had become at once instruments and victims of every kind of oppression. The rest of the population consisted of serfs and slaves . . . They were treated with pitiless severity; a master would condemn a slave to three hundred lashes for having kept him waiting for hot water.

"A society, thus honey-combed with poverty and misery must needs fall at the first shock of invasion . . . The privileged classes and the rich landowners alone had any interest in the maintenance of the existing regime, and most of these utterly corrupt and worn out by debauchery, had lost all energy and initiative." 116

Rom Landau has the same sorry tale to relate:

"Misruled, oppressed and impoverished cities were the result of a feudal system that was one of the worst vices of the Middle Ages. The Jews, a numerous but severely persecuted minority, were further evidence of Visigothic rule marked by intolerance and a low level of culture. The Christian bishops, more often than not, sided with the nobles in maintaining their favoured and corrupt positions." 117

Arab invasion welcomed by the Spaniards

So when the Arab invasion came, the Spaniards, too, welcomed the Arabs as liberators. Gibbon brings out the reaction of the Spaniards to the Arab conquerors in these words:

"Spain, which in a more safe and disorderly state, had resisted, two hundred years, the arms of the Romans, was overrun in a few months by those of the Saracens; and such was the eagerness of submission and treaty, that the governor of Cordova is recorded as the only chief who fell, without conditions into their hands." 118

George Finlay in his History of the Byzantine Empire, has made the following pertinent observations which will bring out the role of Arab conquerors as liberators:

"In almost every case in which the Saracens conquered Christian nations, history unfortunately reveals that they owed their success chiefly to the favour with which their progress was regarded by the mass of the people. To the disgrace of most Christian governments, it will be found that their administration was more oppressive than that of the Arab conquerors . . . The inhabitants of Syria welcomed the first followers of Mahomet; the Copts of Egypt contributed to place their country under the domination of the Arabs; the Christian Berbers aided in the conquest of Africa. All these nations were induced, by the hatred of the government at Constantinople, to place themselves under the sway of the Mohammedans. The treachery of those nobles and the indifference of the people, made Spain and the south of France, an easy prey to the Saracens. The conquest of Crete and Sicily must be traced to the same causes . . ." 119

The authors of the History of Western Civilization corroborate these views when they write:

"Moreover, there were thousands of Roman Byzantine subjects in Egypt, Syria, and Palestine—Jews and heretical Christians especially—who were only too glad to exchange Byzantine masters for Mohammedan. For the latter promised them religious toleration and imposed upon them a smaller tribute than the Byzantine tax. Egyptian Coptic monks, for example, sang chants of rejoicing at the downfall of Byzantine 'heretics'." 120

Henry Masse observes:

"We have seen the Arabs welcomed by the Egyptian Copts and by the Syrians almost as saviours. Similarly, in Persia and in Spain the existing governments had already alienated their subjects by misrule." 121

In view of the foregoing, it will be abundantly clear that, contrary to the misrepresentation and distortion of the facts of history by Christian controversialists, the charge of "raciapousness" of the "Bedouins", of loot and plunder by the early Muslim conquerors has no legs to stand upon, as the Arabs were hailed as liberators by the peoples of both the Empires.

Some Western Writers on the Falsity of the Charge that Muslims Forced the Conquered People to Adopt Islam

A further charge is brought against the Arabs by some writers of using force in conversion to Islam. Even a historian of the calibre of Gibbon has been carried away by "Muslimophobia" when he avers bluntly that:

"Mohammed with the sword in one hand, and the Qur'an in the other, erected his throne on the ruins of Christianity and of Rome." 122

However, Gibbon himself admits at another place:

"To his Christian subjects, Mohammed readily granted the security of their persons, the freedom of their trade, the property of their goods, and the toleration of their worship." 123

He writes elsewhere:

"A pertinacious tenet has been imputed to the Mohammedans, the duty of extirpating all religions by the sword. This charge of ignorance and bigotry is refuted by the Qur'an, by the history of the Mussulman conquerors, and by their public and legal toleration of the Christian worship." 124

Yet Gibbon goes on to state that it cannot be denied that "Oriental Churches are oppressed by their iron yoke." 125

However, he has not elaborated this point any further, and this charge, too, is devoid of any foundation. Gibbon's own words at another place are:

"After the revolution of eleven centuries, the Jews and Christians of the Turkish empire enjoy the liberty of conscience which was granted by the Arab caliphs." 126

Sir T. W. Arnold, who has dealt with the question of the propagation of Islam very exhaustively, refutes the charge of the spread of Islam by the sword. He writes:

"... From its very inception, Islam has been a missionary religion, both in theory and in practice, for the life of Muhammad exemplified the same teaching, and the Prophet himself stands at the head of a long series of Muslim missionaries who have entered for their faith into the heart of unbelievers . . . . Such peaceful methods of preaching and persuasion were not adopted. as some would have us believe, only when political circumstances made force and violence impossible or impolitic, but were most strictly enjoined in numerous passages of the Qur'an . . ." 127

121 Henry Masse, op. cit., p. 78.
122 Ibid., Vol. V, p. 207. See also C. Mills, op. cit., p. 176, and remarks of Sir William Muir, Life of Mahomet, op. cit., p. xxxi Introduction: "Scarcely was the Prophet buried, when his followers issued forth from their barren Peninsula resolved to spread the faith of Islam upon all the nations of the earth".
123 Ibid., Vol. V, pp. 269-70. See also Will Durant, op. cit., p. 171: "In return for a moderate tribute, the Christians of Arabia were taken under Mohammed's protection, and enjoyed full liberty of worship . . .".
124 Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 40.
125 Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 382.
126 (Sir) Thomas W. Arnold, op. cit., pp. 4-5.
Arnold writes at another place:

“These stupendous conquests which laid the foundation of the Arab empire were certainly not the outcome of a holy war, waged for the propagation of Islam, but they were followed by such a vast defection from the Christian faith that this result has often been supposed to have been their aim. Thus, the sword came to be looked upon by Christian historians as the instrument of Muslim propaganda, and in the light of the success attributed to it, the evidences of the genuine missionary activity of Islam were obscured. But the spirit which animated the invading host of Arabs, who poured over the confines of the Byzantine and Persian empires, was no proselytising zeal for the conversion of souls. On the contrary, religious interests appear to have entered but little into the consciousness of the protagonists of the Arab armies.”

Sir Thomas continues:

“That force was not the determining factors in these conversions may be judged from the amicable relations that existed between the Christian and Muslim Arabs. Muhammed himself had entered into treaty with several Christian tribes, promising them his protection and guaranteeing them the free exercise of their religion, and to their clergy undisturbed enjoyment of their old rights and authority.”

He writes elsewhere:

“Of forced conversion or anything like persecution in the early days of the Arab conquest, we hear nothing.”

Steven Runciman and others on the falsity of the charge of conversion to Islam

Steven Runciman, the historian of the Crusades, who is no friend or admirer of Islam, writes in his "History of the Crusades", that:

“To the heretical sects the change of rulers (i.e., from the Byzantines to the Arabs) brought relief and pleasure. Even the Orthodox, finding themselves spared the persecution they had feared and paying lower taxes than those in Byzantine times, showed no inclination to question their rule.”

Steven Runciman writes elsewhere:

“The Christians had, therefore, no cause to regret the triumph of Islam... Good Christians were happy under infidel rule.”

He admits at another place that under the early caliphs the Christians played an honourable part in Arab society.

R. H. C. Davis observes:

“Contrary to the legend that is current in the West, the terms which they (i.e., the Arabs) offered to the Christian peoples, such as the Egyptians, were lenient. They demanded that they should pay tribute and accept an inferior status, but guaranteed them their lives, their property, and their freedom of worship.”

Bernard Lewis has commented upon the treatment of non-Muslims in these words:

“The conquerors did not interfere with the internal civil and religious administration of the conquered peoples, who received the status of Dhimmis that is members of the tolerated religions permitted by the law. The change from Byzantine to Arab rule seems to have been generally welcomed by the subject peoples, who found the new yoke far lighter than the old, in taxation and in other matters. Even the Christian populations of Syria and Egypt preferred the rule of Islam to that of the Orthodox Byzantines.”

A Jewish apocalyptic writing of the early Islamic period makes an angel say to a rabbinic seer:

“Do not fear, Ben Yohay; the Creator, blessed be He, has only brought the Kingdom of Ishmael in order to save you from this wickedness (i.e., Byzantium)... the Holy One, blessed be He, will raise up for them a Prophet according to His will, and conquer the land for them, and they will come and restore it...”

We may compare with this the words of a later Syrian Christian historian:

“Therefore, the God of Vengeance delivered us out of the hand of the Romans by means of the Arabs... It profited us not a little to be saved from the cruelty of the Romans and their bitter hatred towards us.”

The peoples of the conquered provinces did not confine themselves simply to accepting the new regime, but in some cases, actively assisted in its establishment.

Hitti, Scott, Dozy and Ostrogorsky confute the charge of the forcible conversion to Islam

Speaking about the Jews and Christians of the East, Philip K. Hitti admits that in this status the dhimmis enjoyed against the payment of land and capitation taxes a wide measure of toleration.

Writing about the treatment of Christians of Spain by the Arabs, Hitti remarks that Christian communities were left unmolested in the exercise of their faith, and under their own ecclesiastical laws and native judges, whose jurisdiction, of course, did not include cases involving Muslims and offences against the religion of Islam.

S. P. Scott writes glowingly of Arab treatment of the non-Muslims of Spain in these words:

“But the moderation of their new rulers tempered the bitterness of defeat. The payment of tribute, proportioned to the degree of resistance or obedience to the laws, insured protection to the humblest peasant. The orthodox zealot was allowed to perform the ceremonies of his ritual without interference; the heretic could offer his petitions without apprehension from the furious efforts of sectarian hatred. Ecclesiastical dignitaries exercised in peace the functions of their calling and the monastic chronicle penned fierce anathemas against his indulgent masters within hearing of the call to prayer from a hundred minarets. The accounts of Catholic writers, in which the most flagrant outrages are attributed to the Saracens, are manifestly exaggerations or falsehoods. Still, there can be no doubt that the inevitable accidents of warfare were productive of much suffering. By its example of equity, toleration, and mercy, the new government rapidly gained the attachment of its subjects; the Jew prospered, the Christian forgot his bigotry, and the slave eagerly repeated the formula which released him from bondage and placed him on an equality with kings.”

Scott remarks elsewhere:

“When the first shock of conquest had passed, the overpowering terror inspired by the presence of the invaders subsided. They proved to be something very different from the incarnate demons which a distorted imagination had painted them. They were found to be lenient, generous, humane.”

Dozy corroborates these views when he writes:

“The conditions of the Christians under the Moslems, compared with what it had been formerly, was therefore, not one of great hardship. The unbounded tolerance of the Arabs must also be taken into account. In religious matters they put pressure on no man. On the contrary, unless the government was an exceptionally devilish one— which was seldom the case—it had no particular desire to see the Christians converted to Islamism;...”

127 Ibid. p. 45.
129 Ibid. p. 136.
130 Steven Runciman, History of the Crusades, Cambridge University Press, 1973, Vol. 1, pp. 20-11. See also C. Northcote Parkinson, op. cit., p. 143; although the Moslems, although convinced of their own salvation, were tolerant, in practice, of other beliefs. In the lands they conquered, they came to liberate, rather than oppress”.
131 Ibid. Vol. 1, p. 16. See also R. H. C. Davis, op. cit., p. 102: “Attempts to convert the conquered peoples were discouraged, because non-Moslems had to pay a poll-tax, and the Omayyad Caliphs realized that if their number decreased, the proceeds from the tax would be less”.
133 R. H. C. Davis, op. cit., p. 99.
136 Ibid. p. 510. See also B. Spuler, op. cit., p. 102: “... here (i.e. in Spain) the mass of the subject peoples remained loyal to the Christian faith and were able to keep their native culture and language”.
this involved too great a loss to the treasury. The Christians were not ungrateful.  

"In some respects the Arab conquest was even a benefit to Spain: for it brought about an important social revolution, and put an end to many evils under which the country had groaned for centuries. The power of the privileged classes, of the clergy and the nobility, was reduced almost to extinction, and since the confiscated land had been divided among a very large number of persons, what was practically peasant proprietorship had been instituted. This proved highly beneficial, and was one of the causes of the flourishing state of agriculture in Moslem Spain. The conquest, had, moreover, ameliorated the condition of the servile classes. Islamism was much more favourable to the emancipation of slaves than was Christianity— as interpreted by the history of the Visigothic dominion. The lot of these serfs who were attached to the lands of Moslems was also improved..."

George Ostrogorsky, the historian of Byzantine Empire, states:

"Their (i.e. Arabs) aim was not so much the conversion of men to the new faith, as the subjugation of fresh territory and the establishment of their control over the unbeliever."  

The evidence of good authorities, like Davis, Fisher and Hazard against the falsity of the charge of the spread of Islam at the point of the sword

Davis writes, with regret and sorrow, that the Christians left their religion for Islam, but he admits that force was not the determining factor in such conversions.

He observes:

"The fact that Christianity and Islam had many points in common may well have eased the conscience of the proselyte, but it is none the less difficult, if not humiliating, for the Christian to account for the triumph of Islam in the most Christian parts of the Roman Empire. In Egypt and Syria it was only a small minority of the Christians that remained faithful to the church; and in North Africa, the home of St. Augustine, the Christian Church eventually died out completely... The success of Islam was won without the assistance of any institution comparable to the Spanish Inquisition, and it was paralleled only by the victory of the Arabic language."  

The authors of the History of Western Civilization admit that large scale conversions to Islam did not take place in the early era of Islamic rule, but in later times, and that also by willing consent and not force. They write:

"The conversion of large numbers in the conquered areas was not a feature of early Islam. That came later when Islam was more firmly established as a government, when its brilliant material success gave it added prestige, and when the civil rights and privileges enjoyed by all the faithful tempted many unbelievers into conversion to Islam."  

Bertold Spuler observes:

"While the adherents of these faiths (i.e. Judaism and Christianity) thus had the right to keep their religion, Islam for its part was in practice disinclined to convert en masse the inhabitants of Christian countries it had conquered."  

Discussing the charge of propagation of Islam by the sword, H. A. L. Fisher observes:

"An answer which is often given is that the Arabs were propelled into the uttermost parts of the earth by the ferment within their new religion, and that they rove, battled, and conquered to extend the faith. But this explanation does not accord with the fact that, during the early years of the Arab expansion, the conquerors were at no particular pains to make converts. On the contrary, their success in government largely consisted in the wise policy of toleration, which they practised towards the Jews and Christians..."  

Conversions to Islam took place of free will and choice.

Harry W. Hazard writes:

"The Christians of Egypt and Syria, already hostile to Byzantium and Greek Orthodoxy, gradually adopted it of their own free will, while Christian communities like the Maonites and Copts, survived centuries of Muslim rule. Zoroastrian Persia was also treated generously by its Arab conquerors, and acceded to Islam slowly... The Berbers of North Africa, the Christians of Spain, and the Jews of both places were permitted free choice.

and while those who adopted Islam were welcomed, the recalcitrants were rarely persecuted."  

Even during prolonged and bitter warfare between Muslims and Christians, non-Muslim subjects enjoyed magnanimous toleration

Not only this much, that no force was used to convert people to Islam, but even in the days of prolonged, bitter and fierce warfare between the forces of Islam and Christendom, the Muslims did not cause the least harm to their non-Muslim subjects who enjoyed most magnanimous toleration.

Aziz S. Atiya writes:

"Within Islam was equally tolerant in its general outlook. The survival of Spanish and Sicilian Christianity under the rule of the Abbasids was a feature which surprised the Spaniards when they re-entered Toledo, and Normans when they seized Sicily. Christian Churches were found intact, and the clergy, celebrated the Holy Liturgy without interruption."  

H. G. Wells, a hostile critic of Islam and its Prophet, has outlined in the following words the causes of the prevalence of Islam:

"And if the reader entertains any delusions about a fine civilization, either Persian, Roman, Hellenic, or Egyptian, being submerged by this flood, the sooner he dismisses these ideas the better. Islam prevailed because it was the best social and political order times could offer. It prevailed because everywhere it found politically apathetic peoples, robbed, oppressed, bullied, uneducated and unorganized, and it found selfish and unsond governments out of touch with any people at all. It was the broadest, freshest, and cleanest political idea that had yet come into actual activity in the world, and it offered better terms than any other to the mass of mankind."  

Not to speak of forcing Islam upon the conquered lands, the rise of Islam sounded the death-knell of Western domination in the East and resulted in the liberation of the peoples who had been groaning under their iron heels. This has been admitted in so many words by more than one Western writer.

Arnold Toynbee observes:

"In the seventh century of the Christian Era, the Muslim Arabs liberated a Christian Greco-Roman ascendency a string of Oriental countries—from Syria right across North Africa to Spain—which had been under Greek or Roman rule for nearly a thousand years—ever since Alexander the Great had conquered the Persian Empire and the Romans had overthrown Carthage."  

Hitti holds somewhat similar views:

"In fact, the Moslem conquests may be looked upon as the recovery by the ancient East of its early dominion. Under the stimulus of Islam, East now awoke and reasserted itself after a millennium of Western domination."

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139 F. G. Stokes, op. cit., pp. 234-236.  
140 George Ostrogorsky, op. cit., p. 98.  
143 Bertold Spuler, op. cit., p. 23.  
145 Harry W. Hazard, op. cit., p. 5.  
148 Arnold J. Toynbee, The World and the West (B.B.C. Reith Lectures, 1952) (Third Printing, Oxford University Press), London, 1954, p. 19. See also C. Northcote Parkinson, op. cit., p. 163: "To the pressure from the West, the Orient responded in religious terms. First came the so-called Mysteries of astrology from Babylon... Next came Buddhism from India, and Mithraism from Persia, followed by Christianity. Last of all, defence being followed by infiltration and that by the counter-offensive, came Islam from Arabia, a movement which almost submerged Europe in its turn."


Continued on page 34
Mr. Norman Lewis

The Call

Schuyler Heights

Lake George N.Y.

The Hill of Hirá' rises from the plain,
The level of the scrub and drifting sand,
And rears a pinnacle of gleaming rock
To flash an answer to the blinding sun,
A safe retreat above the ways of men.

Muhammad’s urgency to weigh the world
And find an answer in the Ultimate
Demanded such a place where to escape
The chance of interruption and of speech.

He slowly climbed the rocky mountainside,
Avoiding boulders that the slightest weight
Might hurtle to the plain below the hill.
And at the top he found an ample cave
Where he could go to sleep o’nights
And find shelter from the daytime heat.

Now, now at last, his thoughts can clarify.
And this has been the essence of his thoughts:

If there is not a God, then life can have
No meaning but a very sordid one.
And that all squalid meaning I reject.
Life must mean more, and very greatly more,
Than money and the pleasure of the world.
It must mean something longer lasting, far,
Than this frail body made of human flesh.
It must mean something brighter, too,
Something that my soul can recognize.
For, in the middle of the darkest night,
My soul cries out for light.
And is there, then, no light beyond the world,
No light that is eternal, always bright.
A light of Personality beyond the world,
A Being that’s akin to lowly man
And yet is better, wiser, stronger, and a King
To rule above this so-disordered world?

There must be such a God.
He is eternal, while the life of man
Is but a flash of light in darkness —
So it seems to me. He is not here
Where cheating, lying, murder, lust
Distort the life of men and leave to us
No gleam of light beyond the darkened tomb.

But He is there, He must be there
Above the world of avarice and sin,
Eternally to guide the ways of men
Who seek His guidance in the world below,
To give this world the sole significance
That it can ever have. I’ll stake my life
That such a God will someday rule
The now confused and angry world of men.

Muhammad left the hill and wandered back to town,
Securely grasping this one jewel of the mind.
And as he walked among the multitudes
That crowded these intensely active Mecca streets
He wondered if within this populace
There could be one who also searched for God.

The forces that from all eternity had been opposed,
The force of evil and the force of good,
Now seemed more real to him than men or stones
Or wind or mountain height or drifting sand,
More real than money or the pleasures of the flesh.

And in the crowded street he found a man,
‘Abd al-Ka’bah, Servant of the Temple re-built by Abraham.
And there in the busy street he talked with him
And spoke of that thought nearest to his heart.

And ‘Abd al-Ka’bah listened to him well
And then agreed that God alone can give to life
The meaning without which we all would die.

Muhammad went back home, and with his wife,
Khadijah, and his darling little girls
He found a temporary peace. But, later on,
He went back to his eyrie, lifted high,
And once again he sat in deepest thought:
If this great God exists above the Earth,
And if this God should be akin to man,
Then will it not be true that one who seeks this God
And seeks Him long is sure to reach the Goal?

Prayers do I know, sent up by many men,
Prayers for the wealth that has its day and goes,
Prayers for camels and for wives,
Prayers for gold and gems and frankincense,
And prayers for ships to sail upon the Deep.

Now this must be my view of prayer:
Here on this height above the busy world,
Remote from men who scramble all the time
For riches and for honours of a day,
Here on my height, the place I longed to be,
I pray for one thing only — God.

Is there no message from our God on high?
Give me illumination, God, if thus Thou wilt,
But give me only that which I can share
With all mankind. I ask for light,
Not for my darkness but for darkened men
That all may see Thy light and live their lives
As if they walked with Thee, becoming good.

Muhammad sent this earnest prayer
Up to the flashing Blue above the mount,
Up to the Higher Realm where God dwells.

And then a peace from up beyond the world
Descended on him and he rested long.
The days went by; no vision came.
He heard no voice; his life was much the same.
Yet, as he contemplated here, above the Earth,
The Ka'bah, far away, was visible.
He always tried to turn his thoughts away
And disregard this clear view of the shrine
Where idols were revered by foolish men.

And so a conflict started in his eager mind.
He wished to think of God alone
And feel His nearness and His love for men,
But still the Ka'bah caught his roving glance.

So he removed himself and gazed afar
In quite a different way at other views
And tried to think of God and wait for Him
And realize the One God, greater than them all.

But when he schooled his thought to dwell on God,
He seemed transported to the temple's heart
And gazing on the images of stone.
There were the idols: Jesus, Mary, and the rest.
He tried to bring himself back to the mount
But found instead a great distress and hurt.

Yes, I would think of God, he said,
But I cannot control these thoughts of mine.
For when I think of God I see those silly things.
If only God would take those images away!

Once more he left the height and sought the town.
His water-skin was empty, anyway.
And this man never drank the wine
That made such fools of men. And all his food
Had vanished in his vigils on the peak.

And, once again, he spoke with 'Abd al-Ka'bah
In the street: I seek the Only God, he said.
And why I speak to you I do not know
For you are keeper of the images.
The false gods of the multitudes of men,
And I would teach to these same erring men
That there is only One — the God Supreme.

And 'Abd al-Ka'bah quickly answered him:
I did not seek the post, but many came to me
And urged me to the guarding of that place.
Perhaps the great God guides the steps of men
And guides their thoughts. You came to me
You knew not why. But, still, the mighty God
Has reason for your coming here to me.

Muhammad, then, within his deepest self,
Asked God to guide his footsteps and his thoughts.
And, with a deep relief, he turned to 'ard home
And sought Khadijah and his family.

But, like a magnet not to be withstood,
The mount still called him up above the plain.
And he returned, still searching for his God.
For life, he said, cannot mean anything unless
With each day that I live upon the Earth
I draw much nearer to the face of God.

Then came the Night of Power, when the living God
Revealed Himself and gave an answer clear
That he would be God's Messenger to men.

To cry in the streets, to cry to the ears of men,
A cry that, like the ripples on the Sea
When all is calm and no great waves appear,
Will spread and spread to very distant shores —
Thus was this man to cry and cry
And in that crying find his destiny.

And, later still, the messenger was told:
Arise and warn! Give glory to your God!

And to Khadijah and to Waraqah and Zayd
This Vision from their God was introduced.
And they accepted what seemed right and good
And were believers in the Way of Life.

And 'Ali, Abu Talib's son, now just fourteen,
Joined them in worship of the Only God.

And relatives within the Quraysh tribe:
Sa'd, and 'al-Zubayr, and Talhah, and again
That 'Uthman Ibn 'Affan, who later years would rule,
And 'Abd al-Rahman, and 'Ubayyadah, and the rest —
They first accepted Islam as their faith.

And Mecca was the capital of idol-worship and of sin,
The one place on the Earth where he would be
An alien in the midst of seeming friends.
For idols brought the pilgrims to the place
And brought their trade, the wealth of Mecca town.

Four years went by, and only forty men
Now swelled the ranks of Islam in the land.

And, too, the word of God was not obeyed.
For he not been told to rise and warn?

For four years he had dallied, so it seemed.
But now the time had come to seek the crowd
And speak to them most plainly of his God.
And on his invitation many came
Outside the city in the afternoon
To hear him speak to them of God and faith.

The word of God has come to me, he said,
To warn my kinsmen of the wrath to come.
There never will be hope for anyone
Unless he worships only One —
The One True God, the God of all mankind.

A silence fell upon the crowd.
And then once more the Messenger would speak:

The idols are an insult to our God.
That man would bow to images of stone,
To Jesus and to Mary and the rest,
But shows a lack of reverence and sense —

And here an uncle, Abū Lahab, spoke to him,
Called him a liar, a disturber of the peace,
An enemy to progress and the wealth of all,
A man that they could wisely do without.

And stones from Abū Lahab followed words.

And then the Messenger returned his fire
And paid back words with words of hotter flame.
This Abū Lahab, said the Messenger, would burn,
And Umm Jamil, his twice-as-evil wife,
Would but supply the fuel for the flame.

Then Abū Lahab left, and others left.
And so the Messenger remained alone,
Alone but for the faithful few, his friends,
Within the darkness that had come to them
And underneath the gleaming bands of stars
That shine above the deserts of the land,
The wastes of Asia, out of which have come
The only faiths to guide the feet of men.

And, when the Messenger returned, his home
Held one more disappointment for the man.
His daughter, Ruqayyah, was married to the son
Of Abū Lahab and of Umm Jamil.

And she was waiting, weeping, for them all,
Repudiated by the son as now no good
Since she was daughter to a crazy man.

Trying again, he called them to his home
And spoke once more, when they were banqueted,
Of what must be eternal destiny.

No stones were thrown and no invective used,
For Abū Lahab was not in the group.
But when he cried: Who'll share my work,
Be my lieutenant in the cause of God,
Then no response came from indifferent men.
But ‘Ali, like a son within the home
Of this big cousin he admired much,
Stepped forward, telling all the crowd
That he would take the orders of this man
And serve the Messenger of God
As this man served his God.

Muhammad placed his arm across his neck
And then proclaimed his cousin would become
Assistant to God’s Messenger on Earth.

The others laughed to think this boy
Would be a ruler in the world of men.
And so they rose and left the house.

And now before the very Ka’bah shrine
Which housed the images which fools adore,
Muhammad strongly spoke of faith in God
And said that all idolatry must cease.

By this time much had been revealed to him
And this Qur’ān was evidence, he said,
That God was sending messages to men.

God speaks to men! What else would be of worth?
Was not this Being all that mattered, anywhere?

He sent about a hundred who believed in God
To Abyssinia, beyond the sea, a refuge and a home.
And Ruqayyah, his daughter, went with them,
Now wed to ‘Uthmān, strong and wise and brave.

And Hamzah, and then ‘Umar, joined the group.
Thus did the hardy messenger of God
Receive support from other doughty men
And Islam grew in power and repute.

But still the wrath was growing in the town.
And Abū Sufyān then issued a decree
That ostracized the family until
Muhammad was delivered to be killed.
Yet Abū Talib had a little fort
Outside the Mecca boundaries, and there
Muhammad and the others took their stand
With little food and water for their life
But still enduring in the mood of faith
And waiting for God’s power to be shown.

Three years the worshippers of God endured
This siege within the fortress in a gorge.

And then the ban was lifted, and these folk
Could once more walk abroad in peace.

Soon after this, Khadijah died
But promised by the Messenger of God
That her abode would be in Paradise.

For to Muhammad was the promise made
That all believers find eternal youth
And that Khadijah would be always young.

And then his uncle, Abū Talib, died.
And had not God sustained him till the time
When his support no longer saved the cause?

‘Abd al-Ka’bah was now called ‘Abd Allāh.
He had a daughter who was beautiful,
A joyous little sprite, the soul of cheer.
And Muhammad often visited their home.

But ‘A’ishah, this small daughter of his friend,
Was not like other children of her age.
She climbed upon his lap and hugged his neck
And snuggled down to share her life with him.

1 A reference to chapter 111 of the Qur’ān.
Muhammad was her special hero, her delight.
She watched for him to come along the street
And clapped her hands with glee when he appeared
For she was confident of kindness and of love.

For God is always kind, and He is Merciful
To those who grant mercy to a foe.
And ‘A’ishah, like a bright, unerring dart,
Came out of what men think is but a void
And nestled in this home in Mecca town
To cheer the Messenger and bring him joy.

And ‘Abd Allâh and his fine, gracious wife,
Whose name was Umm Rummân, detected here
The call of soul to soul, and thought of her
As growing up within the coming years.

Betrothal was arranged between the two.

"Then I can kiss you all the day and night,"
She said. "And you will never have to go away.
How good God is, if He gives me to you.
I’ll be the best of wives to him I love."

The folk of Yathrib, far into the north.
Heard what the Jews for many centuries
Had taught about the coming of a man
Who would be called Messiah and would lead
A movement of the people back to God.

And when these Arabs, in the pilgrimage,
Had entered Mecca town and heard him speak
And teach the unity of God and brotherhood,
Then they exclaimed that they had found, at last,
The one foretold, the Leader of Mankind.

They sought the Messenger and talked with him
And asked for more of this religious light.
Muhammad, in the desert, told them much.
And when they left for Yathrib, afterward,
They promised to tell others of the faith.

Another year went by. Again they came.
This time a multitude was glad to hear
This doctrine that was clearly from Above.
They told him they believed his words,
But he reminded that the way was hard
And only heroes need apply to found the faith.

And there in darkness, underneath the stars,
These men from Yathrib pledged obedience
And said his doctrine would be theirs.

Muhammad sent a follower, Mus‘âb,
To teach the others in the northern town
The fullest meaning of the truth revealed.

And then he waited in the hostile south
But sent group after group to emigrate
And find in Yathrib peace and safety from the storm.

Another year went by. Again the pilgrimage began.
And Mus‘âb came with many converts from the North.

And now, before Muhammad left the South,
Another meeting in the desert after dark.
Again he gave fair warning that the way of truth
Is not a path of roses but of thorns.

His uncle, al-‘Abbâs, was there
And asked for this, his kinsman and his friend,
A refuge from a life of jeopardy.

And warned, as well they were,
The only fear that came to them
Was that he would desert them, later on.
When he could be assured a safe return.

Muhammad promised loyalty to them
As they had promised loyalty to him.
And all the many men from Yathrib town
Then touched his hand, there in the desert dark.
And pledged themselves to live or die with him
In loyalty to him and to his God.

Norman Lewis.

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A CRITIQUE OF EARLY ARAB VICTORIES, AND THE CAUSES OF THEIR SUCCESS IN THEIR CAMPAIGNS
—continued from page 30

Saunders echoes these sentiments in these words:

"In the wider perspective of universal history, we may discern in Muhammad, the greatest of the sons of Ishmael, the besotted response of the restless and long-submerged East to the challenge of Alexander; the Greek tide which had overspread these lands for a thousand years, was rolled back . . . "

C. W. Previle Orton writes in the Shorter Cambridge History:

"This was the Arab conquest and the rise of Islam, which reinvigorated the Near East and forced back the European civilisation which had spread by Greek and Roman conquest . . . "

To sum up, it will thus be clear that at no time did the Arabs force their religion at the point of the sword upon the conquered peoples. On the other hand, they were acclaimed as liberators by the peoples of the various lands. In fact, the victories of the Arabs were the victory of the down-trodden and oppressed humanity over the thraldom of ruthless potentates and the bondage of a tyrannical priesthood. Their chains and shackles were broken and cut asunder at one stroke by the emergence of Islam as the greatest moral force of the world, which ushered in an era of liberty and freedom, peace and goodwill on earth. Truly, the Holy Qur’an had enunciated and prophesied the role of Prophet Muhammad as "one who relieves them from their burden and the shackles which were upon them".

Is there conflict between the Generations in Turkey today?

A Study in Muslim Youth Psychology

by Sabine Dirks

"It is true that the generation conflict exists in Turkey today, but, far from spreading, it has become swallowed up in the events of a more imperative crisis—the struggle for the political and economic future of the country."

12 June 1968 marks the self-assertiveness of the Turkish youth

The problems of our modern epoch seem to find a totally new and unique form of expression in the movements set on foot by the "teenagers", in their revolt against, or at least in their refusal to submit to traditional authority. This kind of disintegration of a society, within the national frontiers of that society, is, historically speaking, a fairly new departure. What is even more striking is the fact that it is a world-wide movement, a movement which is equally as active in the East, in the demonstrations by "anti-revolutionary" students, as in Western Europe, where we see the students of the Left intent on challenging the institutions of the liberal State. Is the full explanation for this agitation to be found only in political emotions, and in the desire for reforms—reforms which are often only too well-justified, and sometimes Utopian? The question lends itself to a more detailed study.

The young people of Turkey have contributed, and still contribute, in their own particular way, to the self-assertive movement by world youth. The first manifestations in Turkey began on 10 June 1968, with a strike by the students of the Faculty of Letters at Ankara. The following day they were joined by the students of the Faculties of Science, Law and Medicine. On 12 June the Law students at Istanbul occupied the University premises, forcing the Rector to retire. The movement then spread to a number of other Universities and establishments for higher education. At İzmir, Erzurum and Eskisehir the students occupied the Faculties with a view to preventing the examinations from being held.

1 Courtesy, the Editor, Cahiers de l'Orient Contemporain, Vol. 76, June 1969, "La Documentation Française", 31 Quai Voltaire, Paris. 7.
Causes that sparked off the Turkish students’ strike

The Turkish students on strike, more than 50,000, were at pains to point out that, in contrast to the movement set on foot by their fellow-students in France, their claims and demands were limited to strictly University problems, to the organisation of lectures, examinations, lodging arrangements and the question of employment. It must be recognised that in Turkey these problems are particularly acute. As in all countries the situation can be summed up, to a greater or lesser degree, by a glance at the present-day disproportion between the number of students and the material possibilities offered them in the way of reception, lodging, orientation etc.

In Turkey, all young people, when leaving a lycée, usually wish to enter a University and, in fact, they have the right to do so, provided they pass an entrance examination. Now, the procedure adopted by students is to take all the entrance examinations — one set by each Faculty — in the hope that they will at least obtain a pass in one of them, and thus be accepted. One year the authorities arranged for all the examinations to be held on the same day, but the measure had to be abandoned, because of the excessive number of failures, and because of demonstrations and political incidents. Exclusive of young men and women who are engaged in serious study, it is certain that in itself the status of “student” carries with it many advantages and is eagerly sought after. There are financial advantages (50% reduction on transport fares and on admission to cinemas etc.), but in addition, there is the considerable prestige enjoyed by the student in his entourage. At almost all the Universities, when a student fails to pass an examination, he is allowed to re-sit for it each year until he passes. This adds greatly to the overcrowding which takes place in the first-year classes, and to the difficulties in helping a student towards an individual orientation of his studies at the beginning of his University career.

But perhaps we should lay the blame on those actually responsible for this overcrowding at the Universities. It is incontestable that the arrangements made for the reception and guidance of such increased numbers of students are inadequate. There is a dearth of professors and assistants. Every year, at the Faculty of Law of the University of Istanbul, 40 professors have to deal with over 8,000 students. Under such conditions it is evident that personal contact with students is out of the question, and that it is impossible for professors to guide them in their work. The student has to make shift as best he can, listen to lectures which he finds difficult to understand (if indeed he manages to hear what is being said), and obtain books which are always in short supply and in consequence very expensive. Very often the books do not exist in a Turkish edition, and the hapless student turns to foreign books. It is, thus, essential that he know at least one foreign language in order to acquire the knowledge necessary for his studies. Incidentally, one of the reforms most frequently demanded by striking students was an increase in the number of scholarships to foreign countries, particularly to European countries, where studies usually receive more serious attention, and whose diplomas are more highly regarded in Turkey than even Turkish diplomas.

The students, who went on strike in June 1968, pointed out expressly that the sole objective of their movement was the amelioration of their material conditions and an improved organisation of their studies. They explained that their movement was in no way political, and that it had no ideological background. There was no question of a radical “confrontation” with society, as was the case with a number of disputant groups of students in France. Today it is only the very “advanced” peoples who seem to be able to afford the luxury of anarchical ideas and conceptions.

Nevertheless, the movement initiated by the students of Turkey in June 1968, was the manifestation of a totally new and revolutionary feature — it was, for the first time in Turkish history, essentially a movement of youth. The anti-American student demonstrations of 1964, those of the Istanbul students on 28 April 1960, followed by those of the students of Ankara which had preceded the coup d’État of 27 May 1960, had the advantage of the support of a part of the population. They had been, so to speak, the expressions of a general feeling of dissatisfaction on the part of the people as a whole. But the demonstrations of June 1968 were initiated and organised uniquely by students, and solely in their own interests.

A deeper probe into the causes of the self-assertiveness of the modern youth of Turkey

Why did these manifestations take place at this precise moment of time? The Turkish students had made it abundantly clear that they had no intention of following the example of France, though it is probable that without the French precedent they would not have taken the initiative. But one wonders if this demonstration by the Turkish students was not the outcome of a hidden canker, of long-standing dissatisfaction and resentment, the eruption of an unsuspected opposition on the part of youth to the hidebound institutions of adults, to the conventional authority of parents, professors and “venerable elders”. Here it is worthwhile recalling a minor incident of some significance which occurred during the occupation of one of the Faculties at Istanbul by the students. A professor wished to pass through the barrier set up by the students in front of the Faculty. In the customary authoritative and haughty manner used by Turkish professors towards their students, he said to one of them: “Let me pass. I have things to attend to”. To which the student retorted: “When will you people understand that that sort of thing simply means: “Strike”?”

It is only too true that the gulf between the two generations, that of the adults of over 60 and that of young people under 25 is a wide one in modern Turkey, although the problem is perhaps less pressing today than it was some ten years ago, and has taken second place to problems of a more concrete nature (to which we will refer later). The elderly complain bitterly about the lack of respect on the part of the young. The latter feel they are not understood by the elderly. At one time it would have been unthinkable for a Turkish student to defy his professor, or children to question the customs and institutions approved by their parents, or that the institutions themselves be critically discussed or pronounced to be contrary to the aspirations of youth.

The is no doubt that the profound change in Turkey began with the reforms made by Kemal Atatürk. There is no need here to make mention of all the civil and political changes carried out by the “Father of the Turks”, reforms which opened up the way towards the Western type of progress. We will note just two of these reforms — those which have contributed the most to the cleavage between the generations of today: the adoption of the Latin alphabet and compulsory education.

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2 The students’ claims comprised three essential points: the modernisation of the traditional relationship between the teaching staff and the student body, the participation of the students in the running of the University, and the making of due provision for their socio-economic needs.
3 Less than 10% of first-year students succeed in passing to the second year. In the higher classes this percentage is even less.
Until 1928 all educated Turks read and wrote Arabic, and thus, education did not extend beyond the boundaries of traditional society and religion, although during the period of the "Tanzimat" (1839-1876) attempts had been made to secularize education. But the adoption of the Latin alphabet in 1928 put an end to this state of affairs, and the world of the past became sharply separated from the world of the future. The school children, the students, all those who received their education after this date, persons under 40 years of age (unless they happen to be specialists), are today unable to read or understand what was written by their forbears. Books, newspapers and historical documents dating from the Ottoman epoch now belong to a world which is hermetically sealed off. The Arabic script in which aged persons still write is, for the young, a sealed book, something as incomprehensible as a foreign language.

The Turkish language itself has undergone changes. With the advent of Atatürk, the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the evacuation of the occupied territories, there developed a new sentiment, a pan-Turkish nationalism. One noteworthy manifestation of this was the search for a mode of expression which would be authentically Turkish (öz-türkçe), and a more or less artificial "purification" of the language. Words of Arab or Persian origin, which had been in use for centuries, were henceforth prohibited and replaced by terms drawn from the archaic vocabulary. Later on many French and English expressions were adopted. These served to indicate objects or conceptions connected with modern life. In consequence, the young people of the Turkey of today acquire and use a vocabulary which is often different from that used by elderly people, and this naturally tends to increase the feeling of reciprocal misunderstanding between young and old.

Compulsory education had already existed since 1869, at least in theory, following the efforts made by Saffet Pasha, who drew up an elaborate programme of education. In the primary schools (obligatory for both boys and girls), in addition to the fundamentals of religion, instruction was to be given in the outlines of Ottoman history, elementary geography and certain items of practical knowledge. Actually, this project for obligatory schooling remained a dead letter, owing to the lack of means and of school premises. With the advent of the Young Turks, who deposed 'Abdul Hamid in 1909, Government schools were opened, although the troublesome times through which the country was passing were hardly conducive to attendance at school by the children. In 1931, Atatürk brought in compulsory education and made a special point of enforcing the new measure.

In the Demographic Year Book of the United Nations, 1963 (pp. 362-363), the differences in the levels of education of Turkish citizens of various ages is expressed in percentages. Thus, for the ensemble of the Turkish population, 53% of young people in the age-group 10-24 years can read and write, against 34% of adults (25 to 64 years). There are no statistics giving the percentage of literacy per age-group for the two different populations—urban and rural—although we can reckon that the differences in the levels of education according to age groups is less pronounced in the country districts, especially as far as the feminine population is concerned, since the girls are rarely sent to school, and remain in the same state of ignorance as their mothers and grandmothers. Thus, the gap between the education-levels of the two age-groups is even more pronounced in the towns than is expressed by the statistics, since the average percentages are 34% and 53%, and the problem of conflict between the generations is more acute in urban centres than in the country. However, the custom of "elopement" (kız-kaçırmak), which is practised in the villages, shows how deeply-ingrained is the irrepressible tendency of youth to choose its own way in life and throw off the too stringent authority imposed upon it by parents. The young peoples' marriages are "arranged" for them by their families, and thus, they are obliged to flee the paternal roof in order to marry the life-partner they themselves have chosen. On this particular point, agreement between parents and children remains rather rare, even among the evolved city classes. This kind of "escape" constitutes, so to speak, a regular part of social life in the country districts, where parents are accustomed to dispose of their children as though they are simply items of property belonging to the family clan.

The differences in the levels of education between the age-groups are consequently particularly accentuated in the towns. It is quite obvious that these differences do not concern the grandparents. Because they have received a much more facilitate rapprochement between children and parents, or scientific type of education the young people disapprove of or criticize, even openly, the beliefs and superstitions of their elders, who cannot understand why children no longer have the same notions, or standards of honour and dignity, and why, over the past forty years or so, a certain degree of immorality has crept into, immorality formerly unknown in Turkey.

Today the big cities of Turkey imitate their foreign counterparts. In education and instruction the schools, and in particular the Universities, impose upon their pupils the culture of the West, and Western ways of thinking. In Turkish Universities there are no professors who have not studied in Europe or the U.S.A., and a certain proportion of the teaching staffs is composed of foreigners.

Every year there is an increase in the number of Turkish students who go abroad as holders of scholarships, and also in the number who go at their own expense. These young men and women return with new ideas and conceptions, after having been brought up in a very different kind of background. Thus, they have a certain difficulty in re-submitting to a stricter kind of discipline, one to which they had gradually become unaccustomed. Sometimes they criticize the institutions, the customs and the norms to which their parents and grandparents have always adhered.

Today the attitude of Western students is characterized by the liberty with which the individual will live according to his own personal moral code (while avoiding, as far as possible, laying himself open to penal sanctions), by his frank and open speech, and his unwillingness to lose valuable time through irritating delays. In Turkey this attitude comes into conflict with a tradition of bonnes manières, or genteel behaviour, as one might say, which demands that nothing be said that might shock, that a truth which might hurt someone should not be uttered in his presence, that one should not appear to be inquisitive or over-interested, etc. This code of savoir-vivre is bound up with a keen moral sensitiveness, with neighbourliness and camaraderie of the loyalist kind.

In Turkey, the young people, like young Europeans, are demanding a fuller share of independence, and this is especially true of the girls. It is still not considered "nice" for a girl to have a number of boy friends, and, generally speaking, her parents do not like her to go out alone, or accompanied by one or more young men. In fact, they often forbid her to do so. A European girl, who is living with a Turkish family during holidays, for example, is much envied by

by the daughters if she is absent from the house for any length of time without being accompanied by a member of the family. Incidentally, she is immediately considered by the parents to be "flighty", lacking in self-respect, and so on.

But so far, this desire for independence on the part of Turkish youth has not led to an open conflict between parents and children, the latter usually being too carefully looked-after for them even to entertain the idea of rebellion. The girls are simply not ready for open defiance of their parents' wishes. Further, the Turkish character is one which does not easily lend itself to mutiny and emotional upheavals, unless it is so impelled by some outrage, one is profoundly resented by its keen sense of justice, or by its amour-propre.

Can the problem of religious education help to explain the conflict between the generations? From 1924 (the year when the religious schools were abolished) until 1949 (the date when a religious manual was re-introduced into the syllabus of primary schools), an entire generation was, it is true, deprived, officially, of religious instructions. Actually, this change has probably not had any decisive influence on the attitude of one generation towards the other. After the creation, by the Menderes party, of religious schools, which would specialise in the training of imams (Imam Hatip Okulu), and a Faculty of Theology at the University of Ankara (İnönü Üniversitesi), the religious cleavage did not separate the generations horizontally, but it did rather separate, vertically, the various political groups and trends of the country.5

Turkish youth becomes "politicalised"

At the present time, the accepted cause of student unrest has ceased to be the scandal of inefficient University institutions. It now rather stems from a confrontation between the different political movements, in which the entire country is taking part. During the movement of June 1968, the students had made a number of demands, and at the end of the month had, apparently, obtained satisfaction at the University of Ankara. But nothing whatsoever was done at the other Universities, and in consequence, the students' movement gradually became a Left political movement, reinforced by strong anti-American feeling. (Since the Cyprus affair this anti-American feeling had spread to all the different social strata of the Turkish people except, apparently, to Government circles... for economic reasons!)

Out of this antagonism arose an incident, at Istanbul on 17 July, when some students threw into the sea a dozen American sailors who had come to spend a day's leave in the city. At Ankara the next day several windows of the Information Service of the U.S.A. Embassy were smashed, as also were those at Izmir and Trabzon. During these incidents 100 students were arrested, treated as "anarchists" by M. Faruk Sukun, the Minister of the Interior, and handed to justice. On 25 July, there were scuffles between police and students who were protesting against the arrest of their fellow-students.6 On 3 August a counter-demonstration took place at the University Square, Istanbul, organised by students and workmen of the Right to protest against "communist agitators".

The present-day political tendencies of Turkish students can be listed under the following specific headings: the extreme Left (including the Maoists) attend the M.E.T.U. (Middle East Technical University), where the teaching is given in the English language. The extreme Right, the most reactionary group, comprises the religious schools for the training of imams and the Faculty of Theology. Some of the students at these establishments undergo a veritable military form of training, given by a Colonel Turkes. They act in groups, making the rounds of the places of amusement— theatres, cinemas and so on— demonstrating and throwing into disorder all stage-plays, films, etc., which they suspect of expressing Leftist ideas. Between these two extremes, which represent about 6% (extreme Maoist Left) and 14% (extreme reactionary Right) of the "rebels", is to be found that large body of students which remains loyal to the work and the mission initiated by Atatürk. We can group with them a very small "Rightist" group of Pan-Turks, who preach the superiority of the Turkish race and an Anschluss with the people of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, etc.

On 6 June 1969, the Rector of the Middle East Technical University was host to the U.S.A. Ambassador, Mr. Robert W. Komor, well known for his ideas on the pacification of Vietnam. Although his visit had been kept strictly secret, the students learned of his presence, and during the lunch in the University restaurant they burned his splendid American-made car which had been parked at the entrance. As a counter-measure the University was closed. This led to demonstrations and the closure of other establishments.

Another Leftist demonstration took place on 6 February in the Taşsim Square, Istanbul, where about a thousand students had gathered, peacefully, to protest against the arrival at Istanbul of the Sixth American Fleet. They were attacked by a group of students of the Right, armed with stones and sticks. During the confrontation two students were killed and there were numerous injured. There were further incidents involving partisans of both Left and Right at the beginning of May, during the funeral of the Judge Oktém. Religious leaders had refused him a religious interment, because during his lifetime he had given expression to atheistic opinions.

There has thus been an extension of the conflict. Confrontations are no longer confined only to students—they are manifestations of the general political trends in the country. It is no longer, as it was in June 1968, when this movement began, a movement of youth, in revolt because their needs and rights had not been recognised or adequately appreciated by the generation to which their parents belong. It is true that the "generation-conflict" exists in Turkey today, but, far from spreading, it has become swallowed up in the events of a more imperative crisis, the struggle for the political and economic future of the country.

5 The groups and parties of the Left always tend to receive the support of a greater number of young people than the other political groups.

6 At this juncture we find students using the vocabulary of Gauchist (Leftist) students of France.

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Children’s Page

JUDGE NOT TOO QUICKLY

By Olive Toto

Latif was born in Trinidad. Many years before, his ancestors had come from India. His great grandfather had come there with very little in his pocket, but he had his Qur’án in his hand and God in his heart. When he landed on the shores of Trinidad, he knelt down on his knees and prostrated before God, thanking him for giving him strength and health to reach safety.

When his grandfather had lived in Trinidad for a few years, he married a girl from the country which had given him his daily bread. This girl and her father and mother became Muslims through the grandfather telling them about Islam and convincing them that Islam was the only religion for them.

Latif was thinking all about this to himself. He now had plenty of money. At least his parents had, but he thought of his father who at that time was lying in his room in a weak state of health.

"Why, oh, why," he was thinking, "is my daddy lying up in his room in this state of health?" The sun shone lovely and bright, "What a lovely day it is!" thought he. "But what about my dadda? Why should he be suffering up there? Oh! my dadda would be angry if he knew that I was bemoaning his fate. He told me only this morning that God’s ways are mysterious."

Latif ran up to see his daddy. "Dadda!" said he, "How are you this morning?"

"My son," said his father, "I feel much better. You do look a sad little man. What is the matter?"

"Dadda! Why are you ill? Surely with all your money someone can cure you?"

"Money! Money!" said the father, "So you also think it is the thing that can buy everything."

"No, Dadda. I do not think that. Perhaps I do, I honestly do not know if I am thinking nowadays. In this miserable state, thinking about your illness, I feel very sad and wonder where God is."

"Son, I have something to tell you. Last year this time, you had a wonderful character, but of late you have been grumbling at the servants and treating them differently. You seem to forget that when your grandfather came to this country he was as poor as they are now. I pay them a very good wage, knowing that is what the Prophet Muhammad said one must do. How do you expect me to get better when I watch you daily growing into an unhappy sulky little fellow?"

"Dadda! How could you say such a thing when I love you so much?"

"My boy, misguided love is the worst thing. I know that you love me more than your life."

"I do, Dadda. I do."

"Well, my boy. Here is some news for you. The doctor says that I shall soon get better."

Latif was silent. He was overcome with joy. Yes, he had been different lately, and he knew it. He started to cry; he had been worrying for a whole year as to what would happen to his dadda. Yes, he had been an unhappy little boy. "But surely God would forgive him," thought he. He turned to his father and said, "Dadda, I read the other day these words, ‘If wealth is lost, nothing is lost. If health is lost something is lost. But if character is lost, everything is lost.’ I loved these words at once. I tried to find out who had said them, but I have not found out yet. I have asked different people. Some say that our Prophet said them. Do you know for certain who said it?"

"My son," said his father, "I am ashamed to have to tell you that I do not know. But it is the kind of thing that our Prophet would say. How true those words are, and how wonderful! Wealth one can more or less do without as long as one has enough to eat. To lose one’s health is a terrible thing, but generally it is not one’s own fault, and there is always the hope that one might get better, but to lose one’s character is a terrible thing."

"Dadda, did I really lose my character?"

"No, not really. But you were on the way to becoming a different character than what you used to be. Those wise words really mean that when a man loses everything that brings him near to God, then that is the time when he loses all and he will start to be unkind, tell untruths and behave in a way that no man can tolerate. Thus, having forsaken God and lost all his good habits, he loses his character. No, dear boy, you had not lost everything."

Latif ran up to his father and threw his arms around him. He was a big boy of twelve years, and usually he did not show his feelings as he had done then. He had even cried. He was really too grown up to show such emotion. But he did not care whether he seemed to be a baby. He was so happy; he did not know what to do. Suddenly it came to him that he must know what he should do with himself. He went into his room and said his prayers.

After his prayers had been said, he sat for a long time. A feeling of great peacefulness came over him, and in his mind’s eye he saw and heard those wonderful words of the Qur’án which all Muslims believe in. They were as follows: "The Faithful are those who perform their trust, fail not in their word and keep their pledge."

Latif said aloud, "O God! Help me. I am not really a bad sort of a boy. I will not fail in my word or pledge if You help me."

And then came to him those wonderful words of our Prophet: "The greatest Jihad (Holy War) is for the conquest of self."

Latif went back to his father and said, "I am going to give a big present to our servant’s little boy, which I will buy out of my pocket money."
The father turned to his son and said, "A little while ago you asked me if our Prophet quoted those words that you recited. Yes, my son, he did. I have remembered now. But please do not think that I am always correcting you. I will put this correction in the form of a question and also a few words from our Prophet, then you can draw your own conclusion. First of all, have I ever asked you how you spend your pocket money?"

"No, Dadda. You have not. And when I come to think of it, I have not mentioned how and where I have spent my money at least for a year. But why do you ask me this question now, Dadda?"

"Here is a riddle for you, my son. Work it out for yourself and find the answer. Here are the words of our Prophet which I said I would give to you: 'The best of alms is that which the right hand giveth and the left hand knoweth not of.'"

"Oh! How can I be so silly," said Latif. "It is a very easy riddle and I understand. But please forgive me if I appear to be disrespectful in the answer that I am going to give you. But to be on the safe side, I will quote the words of our Prophet, which are: 'Actions should be judged according to motives'. Dadda, my motive was to make you happy, but I see that I went about it in the wrong way. I should have told no one that I was going to do a good deed. I should have remembered our Prophet's words, which are: 'Modesty paves the way to virtue'. I do hope that I have quoted these words properly, because mamma told me the other day to remember that the Prophet said, 'Convey to others no words of mine save those you know to be a certainty'. Oh! Here comes mamma. I will show you that I have not forgotten everything that you have taught me, and I live for the day when you will say that I have learnt the philosophy of our Prophet properly."

"That's a big word for a little boy," said the father.

Latif replied, "I am twelve years old, but I want always to be a little boy when I am near you."

"Philosophy!" said the father. "My son is certainly growing up. It is said that our Prophet once said, 'Philosophy (Arabic: Likmah) is the stray camel of the faithful; take hold of it wherever you find it'. Also he said, 'The pursuit of knowledge is a duty of every Muslim'."

"Mamma!" will you please let me go out to see my friend in the village?"

"Which friend have you in the village?" said his mother.

"I did not know that we had any friends in the village."

"Mother! You are quite right. You have no friends in the village; only some of the gardener's old relatives who live there. I have been there many times during the past year when poor Dadda was so ill, and you thought that I was playing around in the garden. But now that I am going to be a dutiful son, and now that you are not so busy, I must ask your permission before I go out."

"You may go out," said his mother. "But wait a minute. What is the name of this poor relative of the gardener that you have been visiting?"

"His name is Sa'id. Why do you ask this question, Mamma?"

"Because, my son, I heard an Imam talking to the gardener and I heard him say that his uncle, Sa'id, was a lucky man; as for quite a year a young boy had been spending most of his pocket money on him and even washing him when the relatives were out. I also heard the Imam ask if our gardener knew that his uncle was once a rich man. The gardener said, he knew that. But that his uncle had told him that the greatest riches he had ever had or known about was when a little strange boy came to him every day with a sad but kind look on his face and always sat down and talked about the Prophet, asking him all sorts of questions. He also said that he always brought his uncle something special to eat, and that his uncle asked him to come without gifts, but he still brought them. In fact, his uncle said that he was worried about that little boy as to where he got his money from."

"Latif," said his mother, "Are you that little boy?"

"Yes, Mamma. I am that little boy. Have I done something wrong again? Dadda was saying that I should not talk about what good actions I do or am going to do. You told me that I must amuse myself whilst Dadda was ill, as he needed all your help, and so I thought the best way for me was to go out and help others, as Dadda had plenty of help from you and the servants. I know that when I came home sometimes I felt a little bad tempered, but also sad; for in the village was this poor old man lonely and suffering. But, strange to say, he told me today that a doctor, that I had paid to see him, had said that with attention and great medical care he would get better. I know that I have a large allowance for my pocket money, but not enough to pay for all that is needed to get this poor man better. I would have to save for months before I had enough money to pay for this treatment. I then came home and Dadda gave me the good news that he would soon be better. I was overdelighted. In fact, so overdelighted that I told him I was going to buy a present for our servant's child. But he mistook my remarks as talking about my good deeds and gave me a saying from the Prophet. I wanted to tell Dadda that he had misunderstood me, but I thought that he might think that I was being rude. And if he had thought that I was rude, then he would think that he had not come up to the Prophet's words of wisdom, which are: 'Verily for a man to teach his child manners is better for him than to give a bushel of grain in alms'. Also, 'No father has given his son anything better than good manners.' Just then the son looked towards his father who was very quiet.

"Son!" said the father. "I judged you too quickly, but you could have spoken up and told me the facts."

"Now," said the boy. "It is time for prayers."

"I think," said the mother, "you are both to blame. So let's all say our prayers together and thank God for His mercy. Sometimes, you know, a little misunderstanding makes one feel how one should be as the Prophet Muhammad was, always looking for the good points of all around him."

Father and son looked at each other and said, "She is always right, you know."

The mother turned to her son and husband and said, "I will tell you what our Prophet would have done at such a time as this. He would have helped that poor man who is lonely and ill, to get better quickly. You, my son, can have the money needed for this poor man. But we will give half, and every month you can give half of your pocket money until the required amount has been paid. This money will go to the doctor tomorrow."

"How wise your Mamma is," said the Father.

"Yes," said the boy, "How good God has been to me in giving me such a Mamma!"
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