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July 1968



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*Muhammad is the Messenger of God*

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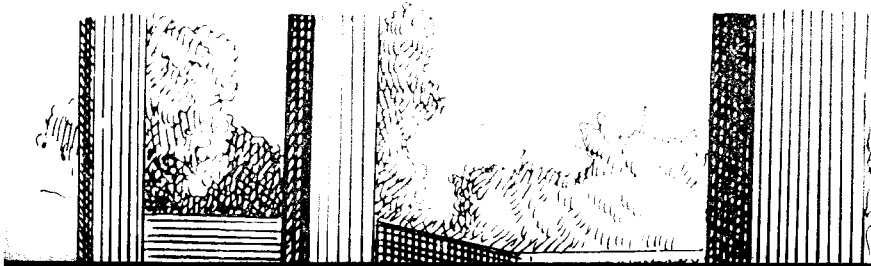
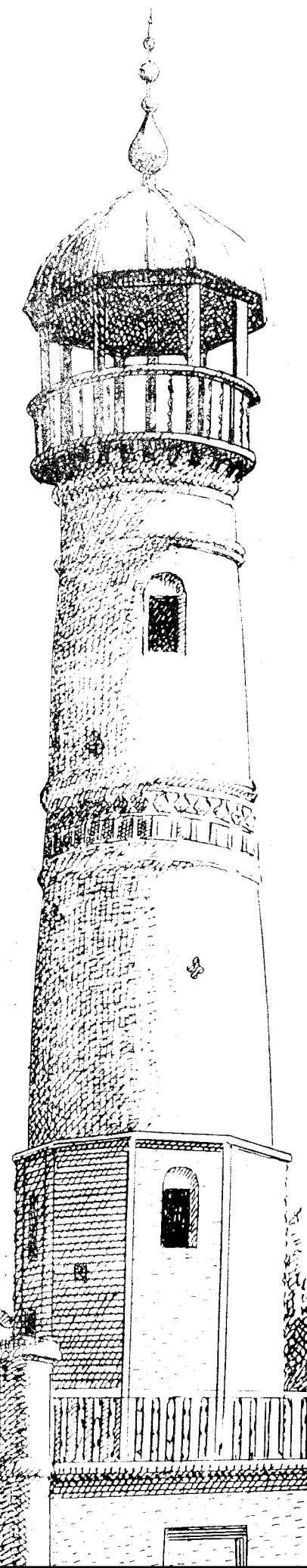
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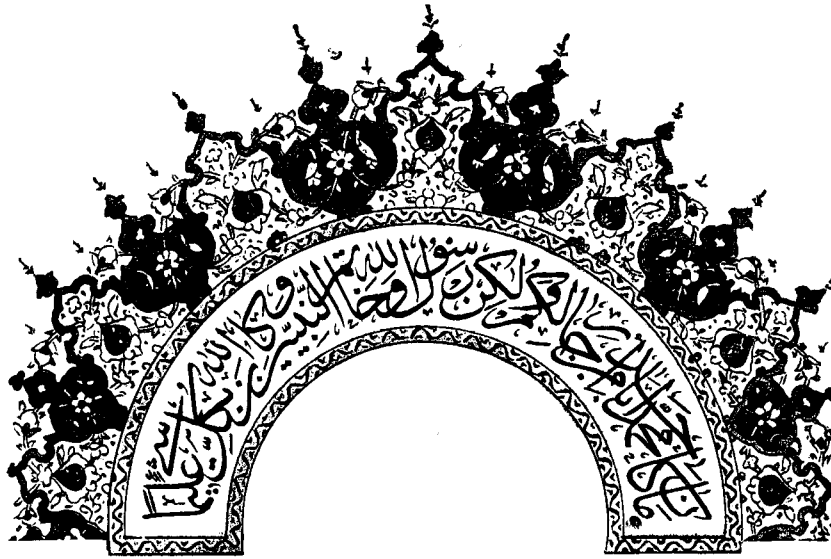
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of God and the last of the Prophets. And God has full knowledge of all things"  
(The Qur'án, 33 : 40)

"There is no prophet after me" (The Prophet Muhammad)

## Birth Control and Islam

"O God! I seek thy protection from much hardship (in the form of poverty and large family)."

(The Prophet Muhammad)

The Imam Ghazálí, on the authority of some Muslim seers, says, "In some cases, if God is displeased with somebody, He plants on him many teeth (children) to gnaw at him."

One of the most important functions of religion is to give moral guidance in our mundane problems. Such guidance becomes a blessing as long as it remains confined to the broad principles, leaving the details to individual judgment, circumstances or wishes based on one's conscience. The interpreters of religious law have often come in conflict with the laity in trying to impose on people their discipline in detail, very often in the light of their own dogmatic interpretation of the scriptures.

In normal circumstances an average person is quite capable of flouting unreasonable or arbitrary authority. But in matters religious, it becomes very difficult to do so. There are millions of honest and sincere people who take their religion seriously and subordinate their initiative to the dictates of their respective religious leaders. Unfortunately, this makes religion a dangerous weapon if the authority happens to fall into the hands of those who do not know their limitations and who in their over-enthusiasm want to lead man by the nose.

The current controversial issue of birth-control is a typical example. All religions, and Islam in particular, have given the basic guidance to the effect that procreation is a sacred duty of mankind and that children are a trust of God. At the same time God has made it self-rewarding by creating in us paternal and maternal emotions. But Islamic law (*Shari'ah*) has left the implementation of its details to the individual's conscience.

### The Holy Qur'án

Islamic law (*Shari'ah*), as all Muslims know, is based on two sources of authority, namely, the Holy Qur'án and the *Hadith*. The text of the Qur'án is the word of God revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. The *Hadith* is the record of the sayings and the deeds of the Prophet Muhammad.

The Islamic law on birth-control is derived solely from the source of the *Hadith*. The Qur'án does not deal with this subject. There are, however, two verses in the Qur'án which are taken by some Muslims as referring to birth-control:

"And kill not your children for fear of poverty. We provide for them and for you. Surely the killing of them is a great wrong" (17 : 31).

The second verse is worded exactly the same except that instead of "for fear of poverty" it says "because of poverty".

The commentators of the Qur'án are agreed on this that these verses refer to the pre-Islamic practice of infanticide. Some have commented that the killing of children, both male and female, referred to in these verses, means depriving them of healthy existence physically as well as intellectually. But there is no justification in applying these verses to birth-control. The Arabic word "*Qatl*" (Killing) can be used only in the case of a living thing. According to

1 The *Sahih* of al-Bukhárí and the *Sahih* of al-Muslim and the *Sunan* of Nasá'í on the authority of 'Abdulláh Ibn 'Umar.

the Islamic law, a child in the womb is recognised as a living being only after four months of conception. (More on this under the sub-head of "Abortion".) It should therefore be understood that these verses of the Qur'an cannot possibly be applied to any kind of pre-conception control. Even if they are to be applied to abortion, it could only cover the period after the first four months of pregnancy.

### The Hadith

Islamic guidance, in the light of the *Hadith*, is very clear. The Muslims in the lifetime of the Prophet used to practise birth-control and, therefore, on various occasions they sought his verdict on it. (The usual method was *coitus interruptus* or 'azl in Arabic. This word is sometimes wrongly translated into English as onanism, which means *coitus reservatus*. *Coitus interruptus* really means "withdrawal before emission".)

Another method which was common in those days was the sealing or closing down of the mouth of the womb: This device, in its more scientific form today, is called a cervical cap.

The following *Ahádith* throw very clear light on the subject:

1. Jábir relates: "We (the companions of the Prophet) used to practise *coitus interruptus* sometimes. When the Prophet came to know of it, he did not forbid us." (The *Sahih* of Bukhárí and the *Sahih* of Muslim.)

2. Jábir relates that a man, who did not want his woman to conceive, asked the Prophet's advice, who replied, "You can take recourse to *coitus interruptus*. But whatever has been destined to be will be." (The *Sahih* of Muslim, the *Musnad* of the Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and the *Sunan* of Abú Dáwúd.)

3. Abú Sa'íd relates that, during the battle of the Banú al-Mustalaq, he and some others of the Prophet's companions consulted the Prophet about *coitus interruptus*, who said, "Whether you practise it or not, *there is no sin on you*. God has preordained all that is to be born until the Day of Judgment" (italics ours). (The *Sahih* of Bukhárí and the *Sahih* of Muslim.)

4. Abú Sa'íd relates: "The Jews used to say that *coitus interruptus* was like infanticide on a small scale. When this was brought to the notice of the Prophet, he repudiated this view, saying that none could stop anything from being born if so preordained by God." (The *Musnad* of the Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and the *Sunan* of Abú Dáwúd.)

5. Usámah Ibn Zayd relates that a man asked the Prophet about practising *coitus interruptus* with his wife and the Prophet asked the reason. To this the man replied, "I do not wish to have a child," and on this the Prophet said, "If this would have been harmful, the people of the Roman and the Persian empires would also have come to harm" (italics ours). (The *Sahih* of Muslim and the *Masnad* of the Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal.)

6. Abú Sa'íd relates that the Prophet, in reply to a question about *coitus interruptus*, said, "Is it you who gives a child creation or is it you who gives it sustenance? Leave it to God Who has settled its destiny." (The *Musnad* of the Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal.)

The acknowledged Muslim jurists, including the four *Imams*<sup>2</sup> are unanimous that Islam has allowed the practice of *coitus interruptus*. The Imam Ibn Taymiyyah endorses this view with the proviso that the man should first seek the permission of the woman. The *Allámah* Ibn 'Abidin quotes Quhistání as supporting the view of the Imam Ibn Taymiyyah. However, the famous *Fa'áwá-e 'Alamgiri*, which is generally accepted by the Muslims, considers the practice of *coitus interruptus* as lawful. Similarly, the most authoritative work on the Hanafí school of jurisprudence, by Shámí, declares birth-control as permissible with the permission of the woman. The *Fatáwá al-Khániyyah* makes it permissible with or without permission. The Imam Kamál Ibn Humám (d. 1457 C.E.) believes that the condition of obtaining permission from the woman has been annulled.

According to other *Fatáwá*, if the social conditions of a society are such that a prospective child cannot be brought up properly, both man and woman may resort to birth-control.

The Imam Ghazálí has been quoted above. But let us quote him again:

**"Thirdly, if someone does not want to have too many issues and his earnings are inadequate, or he is afraid of being compelled to commit evil, he is allowed to resort to coitus interruptus for the purpose of birth-control."**

### The Principle and not the Method

Quite a few things come out clear from these *Ahádith* of the Prophet and the views of the jurists. To begin with, the basic law in

Islam is that birth control is permissible and that "there is no sin in it". The methods or means used to obtain the desired result do not alter the principle. Fourteen hundred years ago they practised *coitus interruptus* and the sealing of the womb. Today there is no reason why one should not take the advantage of more scientific means, just as one does in other spheres of medicine and surgery. Intra-uterine device, for example, which fixes a coil in the cavity of the womb has the advantage that it can be removed whenever desired. Similarly, the Tubal Ligation method is an improvement on the crude methods in vogue 14 centuries ago. Even the modern designs of Cervical Cap are far more sophisticated than those used for sealing the womb in those days. Modern Pills are more reliable and easier to use.

The point at issue is not the method or the means; it is the principle involved on which religion is required to offer guidance. Is birth-control an act of sin against God or does Divine Law give man the freedom of choice? Once this matter has been decided, the question of "artificial" or "physiological" methods does not arise. Those who object to artificial methods but recommend, for example, the object to artificial methods but recommend, for example, the "rhythm" periods fail to realize that the object and the result in both cases are the same. A religious school of thought which favours the "physiological" but forbids the "artificial" means is, in other words, saying: "The purpose of the sex act is procreation and to indulge in it in a way which would defeat this purpose is sinful. But, if you want to take your wives between the sheets only for the sake of pleasure, do so only during the 'safe' periods."

God has imposed natural birth-control on every living creature by fixing mating seasons. Listening to the views of some advocates of religion who consider birth-control as sinful, one wonders what made God extend the mating season for the human species as an unrestricted and continuous spell, throughout one's adult life. Has this privilege been extended to man so that he may go on and on procreating indiscriminately or is it that God wants man to adjust himself according to his circumstances? A visit to the underdeveloped countries of the world would give the right answer.

Any religion which deprives its priests of the rights and the responsibilities of a family life and makes them lead celibate lives has no right to pass judgment on human matters such as birth-control.

### The Philosophy of Freedom in Islam

"The view of Islam regarding birth-control does not exceed the connotation of freedom we explained. Both husband and wife have full freedom in controlling birth as long as they both agree. What came in the *Sunnah* (practice of the Prophet) regarding the encouragement of birth does not mean an obligation that restricts the freedom of the married couple, but can apply only to those who are apt and able of getting children, who are wealthy and healthy enough. Otherwise, the matter is left completely to the couple's choice, and, consequently, this goes back to the connotation of freedom in Islam." (The Shaykh Nadeem al-Jisr, addressing the First Conference of the al-Azhar Academy of Islamic Research held at Cairo in March 1964.)

Islam has given full freedom of choice in the matter of birth-control. It does not concern itself with what methods or means are used. Not only that, it imposes no moral or ethical conditions on the reasons motivating birth-control. In the *Hadith* Number 5, quoted above, the man gives his simple reason to the Prophet, "I do not want a child" and it was accepted. The Prophet's rejoinders to his enquirers that none could stop anything from being born if so preordained by God does not imply that the practice of birth-control was in any way against the wishes of God. Had it been so, he would not have prefixed it categorically by saying that there was no sin in it. This and other such remarks simply mean that man should follow the dictates of his conscience, while God, who is Omnipotent, would find His own way to keep the continuity of the human race.

In *Hadith* Number 6, quoted above, the Prophet has shattered the basic misconception that it is the parents who create a life. It is God Who is the Creator. The male and the female of a species are merely the vehicles of the seed and their responsibility begins only when a life of a child begins by way of a trust from God to give it sustenance. This question leads us to the matter of abortion.

### Abortion

The subject of birth-control cannot be dealt with without making a brief mention of what Islam has to say about abortion. In this

*Continued on page 38*

2 1 Abú Hanífab al-Nu'mán Ibn Thábit Ibn Zútá (b. about 81 A.H. (700 C.E.)); 2 Al-Sháfi'í Abú 'Abd Alláh Muhammad Ibn Idrís (b. 150 A.H. (767 C.E.)); 3 Abú 'Abd Alláh Málík Ibn Anas (b. about 90 or 97 A.H. (709 or 716 C.E.)); and 4 Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Hanbal (b. 164 A.H. (780 C.E.)).



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

## *ISLAM & DEMOCRACY*

# **The democratization process in Islam stopped with the Battle of Siffin (657 C.E.)**

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**Islam's capability of reducing effectively and really the negative sentiments and anti-democratic sentiments  
seen in the slave and the despot**

**by MALEK BENNABI**

### **The two questions : What is Islam ? What is Democracy ?**

Taken separately, these two concepts present no problem at all. Each has its own particular connotation in the events which distinguish our present epoch. But taken together they present a problem — the implicit liaison we have set up between them by putting them together in the actual title of this *exposé*.

We are therefore bound to carry out a separate identification of each one in order to see how far there is, or is not, any liaison between them. Our question is therefore :

1. What is Islam ?
2. What is democracy ?

Here a preliminary declaration is necessary : each of the two terms — according to a general rule in linguistics — must have at one time been a neologism, a "coined" word.

We have fairly accurate knowledge as to the date of the appearance of the term "Islam" in the Arabic language. It certainly dates from the Qur'anic epoch, since the Qur'anic text attributes the formation of the term "Muslim" to the

oracular statement of the ancestor Abraham, who is said to have bestowed this description on the future followers of the religion of his descendant, Muhammad.

*The word Democracy is unknown to the Arabic language before Ibn Khaldún (d. 1406 C.E.)*

On the other hand, less is known about the history of the term "Democracy", considered as a neologism of the Arabic language. However, it is evident that it dates from modern times, since before the time of Ibn Khaldún (d. 1406 C.E.) the term was unknown in classical Arabic. Its very morphology shows that it did not originally belong to this language.

But if we trace back its genealogy in its own language — Greek — we find it first mentioned in a speech made by Pericles to the Athenians, that is, if we can rely on the account given by Thucydides, the historian of Ancient Greece.

This preliminary linguistic "identification" of the two terms enables us in fact to form some estimate of the remoteness which apparently exists between them, and thus between the two concepts for which they stand.



Further, when a term is so replete with history — as is the case with the two terms in question — it is normal that there should be a certain amount of ambiguity, and in consequence such term could come to have a number of different meanings. When this occurs we are obliged, in order to eliminate the ambiguity, to decide on a definite meaning for the term in question.

“Islam” and “Democracy”, each in its own particular way, mean too many things at one and the same time. Our task is to reduce them to their simplest expressions in order to make between them such *rapprochement* as is possible after the simplifying process.

What, in its simplest form, is the meaning of “democracy”? A dictionary of the French language would give us the etymological meaning of the word, which is: “the power (or authority) of the people”, or of the masses, as we say today.

*The meaning of Islam in the words of the Prophet Muhammad*

On the other hand, what does “Islam” mean, in its simplest rendering?

There is doubtless no better way of replying to this question than to refer to the reply made by the Prophet himself when asked the same question. The circumstances are related in a famous Hadith mentioned by the highest authorities on Tradition — Muslim, Tirmidhi, the Imam Ahmad, and also by Bukhári (whose version varies slightly). The following is the text of this Hadith, according to Abú Hurayrah:

“The Prophet one day was with a group of men when he was addressed by one of them, who asked: ‘What is faith?’ The Prophet replied: ‘Faith is that you believe in God, in His angels, in your return to Him, in His messengers, that you believe in the Resurrection.’

“The man then asked: ‘What is Islam?’ The Prophet replied: ‘Islam consists in believing in God while associating no other god with Him, in saying the prayers, in paying the obligatory poor-rate, in carrying out the fast of Ramadan, etc. . . .’” (We will omit that part of the Hadith which has no direct bearing on the subject.)

So that we now have a reply to the question from the highest authority: that Islam is the exclusive belief in the only one True God, in the recital of prayer, the payment of the tax for the benefit of the poor, and the accomplishment of the fast, etc.

These are, to sum up, the two elements of the problem. We must now see whether, after this systematic summing-up, a *rapprochement* can be made between them. In this systematic classification it is clearly evident that the term “Islam” means an *ensemble* of man’s “duties”, whereas the term “democracy” signifies an *ensemble* of his “rights”.

Here we have apparently arrived at an antithesis, where one term seems to constitute the negation of the other, an antithesis which, during the French Revolution, found popular expression in the famous slogan “Neither God nor master!”.

There is thus some difficulty in reconciling the two terms. This does not arise from their respective meanings, but from the way in which they are used and expressed. Actually we have chosen the literal meaning of “democracy”. That is to say, the one most nearly approaching the common sense mean-

ing which can be found in an ordinary dictionary, such dictionary being of necessity based on French democratic tradition. At the same time the term is a neologism which was itself the linguistic product of this tradition expressed in Arabic.

### Democracy considered from a three-fold point of view

In fact we must go still further in our attempt to establish a definition of democracy independently of all linguistic connotations and all *à priori* liaison between it and some concept or other attributable to the term “Islam”. We should endeavour to consider democracy within the framework of an ontological scheme. In such a framework — whose legitimacy will be demonstrated later on in this *exposé* — democracy should be considered from a three-fold point of view:

- (a) as the attitude, or sentiment, of a person towards himself.
- (b) as the attitude of a person towards others.
- (c) as the *ensemble* of the social and political conditions necessary for the formation and development of the same sentiments in the individual person.

It is in fact evident that democracy cannot be attained as a political fact — for example, as a régime constituting the “power of the masses” — unless it has first become part and parcel of the individual who is an essential constituent part of these masses, unless it is firmly imprinted in his “self” or “ego”, in the components of his personality, unless it exists in society as an *ensemble* of conventions, habits, customs and traditions.

It is within this general framework that the problem is, it seems to me, brought forward with the greatest clarity.

The democratic spirit is not necessarily inherent in any given set or ensemble of moral and social conditions. Democracy is not, contrary to the view held by romantic philosophy at the time of J. J. Rousseau, inherent in the natural order. It is rather the completion of a culture, the supreme triumph of humanism, that is to say, of a definite evaluation of man appropriate to his personal level of evolution and that of others.

The democratic spirit is the result arising from this two-fold evaluation.

*The French historian, Guizot, on the processes of democratization and the formation of the democratic spirit in France*

In his *History of Europe*, covering the period from the end of the Roman Empire to the French Revolution, the French statesman and historian Guizot (d. 1874 C.E.) helps us to follow the processes of democratisation and the formation of the democratic spirit in Europe. This historian, who points out how the origins of Western democracy were both nebulous and modest, also demonstrates the slow and gradual formation of the democratic spirit, the urge which was ultimately to find expression in the famous “Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen” — the crowning mystical and political event of the French Revolution.

Further, it was this spirit, still in a confused state, which later found expression in the two great movements — the Reformation and the Renaissance. These were the first two positive assertions to be made by the men of Europe in the domain of mind and the science of reason.

It is true that in this lesson in European history given

us by Guizot the sociological events are marked and pervaded by incontestable factors peculiar to Western society, such as the Reformation and the Renaissance. But the intrinsic reality of the democratic spirit, although somewhat hidden or masked by European factors and situations, which from their very nature could not arise in the history of other races and other peoples, becomes apparent under the disguise when we express the facts, not in terms of history or politics, but in those of psychology and sociology.

The democratic spirit in Europe was the normal culmination of a twofold cultural upsurge, the result of the enfranchisement of the spirit by the Reformation, and of reason and good taste by the Renaissance. That constitutes its historical significance, that is to say, the significance which it is impossible to transpose anywhere else outside of European history.

But in every process of democratisation, in Europe or outside of it, the democratic spirit has come to connote a certain psychological limit or level, below which prevails the slave-mentality, and above it the mentality of the despot.

The status of the free man — the citizen of a democracy — constitutes a positive assertion midway between these two negations. That is the intrinsic reality, the criterion of any process of democratisation.

And it takes its place as an insertion, so to speak, between two other realities which enclose it on each side and which form "negatives" (to use a term in photography), that is to say, the negation of the "I" by the slave, and the negation of "the other man" by the dictator.

The process of democratisation must eliminate all these anti-democratic tendencies, by reducing leanings, in the one case towards servility, and in the other towards tyranny and despotism. Robespierre was the man who overcame the serf-mentality, and Mirabeau triumphed over the prejudices of his caste, within the same historical context arising from the Reformation and Renaissance. But the "negatives" of the democratic spirit did not disappear spontaneously. History and literature are replete with these "negatives". And it is not perhaps out of place in this *exposé* to make some mention of two relevant cases: the psychological portrait of a slave and also that of a despot.

#### *The pen-portrait of the slave by Victor Hugo*

In *L'Homme qui Rit* of Victor Hugo the advice given by Ursus to Gwynplaine is advice for a slave: "There is," he tells him, "one rule for the rich — to do nothing — and one rule for the poor — to say nothing. The poor man has only one friend — silence. He must pronounce only one word, a monosyllable — 'Yes'. To admit and consent is the only right he possesses. 'Yes' to the judge, 'Yes' to the king. The rich and powerful, at their slightest whim, will hit us with a big stick. I've been beaten myself. It's their prerogative, and they lose none of their importance in breaking our bones..."

We notice that for Ursus the best attitude for him to take is to agree and so say "Yes" to everything. But we know how often the "Yes" from our mouths expresses the "negation", the suppression of the self, that is to say, the negation of the very foundation of democracy in the human being.

#### *The pen-portrait of the despot in the Qur'ân*

We can find elsewhere a pen-portrait of the despot, the

dictator, that is to say, another "negative" of the democratic spirit. It occurs in the Qur'ân itself during the famous dialogue between Pharaoh and Moses. Pharaoh asks the question: "O Moses! And who is your Lord?" Moses replies: "Our Lord is He Who gives His creatures all things and gives them guidance (on the right path)."

We note how the question asked is that of a despot, anxious about his prerogatives. And we can well imagine how the Prophet Moses's reply — a negation of such prerogatives — must have irritated him.

The scene which follows brings into prominence this aspect of the despot. He organises a kind of contest or championship in the magical art in order to checkmate his adversary at whom he hurls the defiance of his magicians. On the day fixed they meet together to work their spells.

But the magicians are vanquished by the power of the Prophet. They are thrown down and fall prostrate, exclaiming: "We believe in the God of Aaron and of Moses. Then Pharaoh replied: Do you believe in Him before I have given you permission? Truly Moses is the first to teach you magic. I will cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides. I will have you crucified on the trunks of palm-trees. Verily you shall know which of us is able to inflict a longer and more terrible torment" (The Qur'ân 7: 121-4).

There is no reason for continuing this quotation, but we can see how perfectly Pharaoh expresses the attitude of the despot as his anger increases in a mounting crescendo. Here it is not the negation of the self which finds expression, but the negation of the rights of others. In any case it is a negation — in the wrong direction — of the basis of democracy.

There are cases where we find the two negations together in the same incident. We have an instance of this in the history of Imperial Russia. It was, I think, the Czar Alexander, who was welcoming a visitor from the West. Alexander wanted to prove to his guest that he wielded absolute power over the Russian people. A passing sentry was making his rounds in a fortress at a spot overlooking a deep precipice. Alexander, with one finger, made a sign to him. At this mere gesture the soldier, without any hesitation, jumped into the precipice. In this episode we see both the despot and the slave, in other words, a twofold negation of the democratic spirit.

We could quote many similar examples, for instance, that of the Chief of the Assassins (the Old Man of the Mountain), Hasan al-Sabâh (d. 1124 C.E.), who dealt with his disciples like a despot with his slaves. They would "jump" into a moral abyss without hesitating a moment.

We feel we have thus outlined enough instances of a general nature to enable us to refer the subject under discussion to a general criterion.

To speak of democracy in Islam is, therefore, to make sure that there exist in Islam the rudiments of the three elements of the problem we have been formulating in the preceding paragraphs. In other words we must ask ourselves if Islam is capable of deepening, of intensifying, the attitude one has adopted towards oneself and towards others, compatible with the implantation of democracy within the psychology of the individual, and whether it can create the general social conditions favourable to the maintenance, development and effectiveness of the democratic spirit.

So that before replying to the question : “ Does Islam engender the spirit of democracy ? ” we should ask ourselves if Islam really and effectively reduces the number and the scope of negative sentiments, of anti-democratic tendencies which are seen in both the despot and the slave. We should therefore regard any tentative at democratisation — especially its early beginnings — as an educational undertaking, to be applied to the entire population and to be carried out on a general scale in the psychological, moral, social and political domains.

**Democratization is not a mere handing over of power between two parties, for example, a king and a people, but the formation of sentiments, of emotions, of reflexes, which go to make up the foundation of a democracy in the consciousness of a people**

Thus democracy is not, according to the etymological definition of the word, a mere handing over or transmission of power to the masses, to a people who have been proclaimed “ sovereign ” in virtue of some constitutional text. What is more, such a text could quite well be defective, or almost so, in a country. Or it could be abolished by a tyrant who has seized power, even though in that country democracy itself has not lost its hold, its *raison d'être*, in the sentiments of the people, their customs and their conventions, thus ensuring its continuity in such country.

In Great Britain there is no constitutional text, as such — a text of this kind is relatively non-existent — guaranteeing the rights and liberties of the British people, but there is a long British democratic tradition, that is to say, on analysis, the British spirit itself.

Democratisation is thus not a mere handing-over of power between two parties, for example, a king and a people, but the formation of sentiments, of emotions, of reflexes, of criteria, which all go to make up the foundation of a democracy in the consciousness of a people, in its traditions. A democratic constitution is, generally speaking, the result of an active “ campaign ” or undertaking, for democratisation. And it is the authentic expression of a democracy only in so far as the “ campaign ” or enterprise for democratisation has preceded it.

Here we can appreciate the superficial character of those constitutional methods which are today being adopted from countries with age-old democratic traditions, by younger countries engaged in building up a new order. These “ adoptions ” are perhaps necessary, but they are certainly insufficient unless they are accompanied by measures capable of infusing them into the psychology of the people adopting them. Be that as it may, if there exists a democratic Islamic tradition, it must not be sought in the letter of a constitutional text, as such, but rather, generally speaking, in the spirit of Islam.

**The essential difference between the different democratic types or categories lies in the way by which man is “ assessed ”**

From the particular point of view with which we are concerned, Islam must not be considered as a constitution which proclaims its community to be a sovereign people, nor as a declaration enumerating the rights and liberties of that people, but as the starting-point, for the individual and for the society of which he is a part, towards the attainment of the democratic ideal. And the advance towards this ideal is motivated, orientated and regulated by those sentiments and those impressions whose germs have already been implanted

in the Muslim consciousness in the form of general principles. And it is specially important to examine this forward movement at the moment of its inception, to examine the conditions prevailing at the time when the work of democratisation starts its progress, because these conditions will influence all future results, and because, at its inception, any movement of this kind constitutes, primarily and above all, a new evaluation of Man. From the very beginning the differences and the various characteristics which distinguish the diverse types of democratic systems are already being established. Today we speak of democracy in the West in much the same way as they speak of it in Eastern countries, including China, where it is termed “ the new democracy ”. The French Revolution made a man “ a citizen ” — an evaluation had taken place. The Russian Revolution made him “ a comrade ” — another evaluation.

Here we are more or less definitely confronted with different democratic types or categories. And the essential difference between them lies in the way by which man is “ assessed ”. This assessment has, from the very beginning of the movement towards democratisation, marked and influenced the initial stages and progress of the movement. But it is this assessment — or, more precisely, this initial evaluation of man — which has always influenced the effectiveness of the movement vis-à-vis the anti-democratic tendencies expressed in the form of the slave and the despot. This initial evaluation of man thus constitutes a discriminatory criterion between the various democratic types which have come into being throughout history, from the Athenian type of 3,000 years ago to the type now seen in China.

And when we examine all this diversity, to the exclusion of and in relation to the Islamic type, we realise that it really falls into one single category, because it evaluates man either as a citizen to whom certain political rights are granted, or as an element in a society which gives him certain social guarantees.

But at the very outset Islam gives man a value which transcends all political and social value. There is a verse in the Qur’án (17 : 70) :

“ *We have honoured man.* ”

**The Islamic democratic conception sees in man the presence of God, while the other conceptions see in him the presence of humanity and society**

It is a verse which constitutes a kind of prologue to an unwritten Islamic constitution, a prologue which gives this constitution a character which is absent from all the other types of democracy. The Islamic democratic conception sees in man the presence of God, the other conception sees in him the presence of humanity and society. On the one hand we have the spiritual democratic type, and on the other the laïc type. The difference does not lie in the terms themselves but what they really mean in the domain of the feelings, the attitude, of the human being both towards himself and towards others.

**The two Qur’anic “ safety-railings ” which prevent men from falling into the depths of servitude and of tyranny**

The man who “ carries ” the honour and the nobility of God within himself is conscious of this nobility both in his own being and in that of others. His value, and the value of others, cannot, in his eyes, be weighed or measured, because of this heritage of honour and nobility which neutralises in him all the negative sentiments. Further, his path runs

securely, so to speak, between the two "safety-railings", which prevent him on one side from falling into the depths of servitude and on the other from falling into the depths of tyranny. The two "safety-railings" may be said to be specially referred to, in a figurative way, in two verses of the Qur'án, which make mention of the two abyss-like conditions.

In verse 18 : 83 we read :

*"We reserve the eternal domain for those who do not yield to the temptation to dominate."*

As we see, this is a "safety-railing" protecting the wayfarer on the path against despotism.

But the verses 4 : 96, 97 and 98 clearly refer to the other "safety-railing".

*"To those whom the angels find were unjust to their souls and of whom they will ask : In what state were you (on earth)? They shall say : We were weak in the earth. The angels will reply : Was not God's earth spacious enough, so that you could have migrated therein? So these it is whose abode shall be hell, and what a terrible fate! Except the weak from among the men and the women and the children who have not in their power the means nor can they find a way (to escape). So these, it may be, God will pardon them, for God is Pardoning, Forgiving."*

This is the other "safety-railing", a preventive device against falling into the condition of degradation referred to in the Qur'anic verse.

Thus the Muslim is warned, or, rather, forearmed, against any anti-democratic tendencies which may exist in his make-up by the presence of the Divine grace which God has implanted in his human nature and by the signs He has placed along his path to prevent him from straying — as humans are wont to stray — and from regressing to the status of a slave or the rank of a despot. The appreciation of this nobility, which he enjoys in a general way as a human being, is further augmented by a special kind of honour which he enjoys as a Believer :

*"Glory belongs to God, to the Prophet, and to the Believers" (The Qur'án 63 : 8).*

The word "glory" in this verse refers to moral superiority and spiritual nobility, not to mere temporal splendour. Thus the negative sentiments which are capable of dragging down a Muslim on one side or on the other are dominated in his being by the opposite type of sentiments, whose seeds have become implanted in his nature by reason of his religion — Islam.

#### **A laic democracy does not root out from society the morbid germs which give birth to the slave or the despot**

Democracy is thus first established in his consciousness, with that new evaluation of himself and others which reveals the sublime importance and dignity of man. The expression "new democracy", now so popular in People's China, refers particularly to this new evaluation, and not only to new codes, new factories and new roads. As we have just seen, Islamic democracy is especially characterised by the "immunisation" of man against anti-democratic tendencies. The granting of political rights and social guarantees is a consequence of this. On the other hand, a laic democracy will first grant him these rights and guarantees, but he is given no protection against the possibility of being crushed

under the weight of closely-knit vested interests, cartels and trusts, or even of crushing others under the weight of a class-dictatorship. A laic democracy does not root out from society the morbid germs which give birth to the slave or the despot.

We can now see more clearly the liaison between Islam and democracy. It was not an easy matter to define democracy in the preliminary stages of our study. We were then trying to define the term by having recourse to its etymological meaning, by regarding the process of democratization as the simple handing-over of power to the people in accordance with the clauses of a constitution. More apparent also is the error which could be made by "borrowing" a ready-made constitution. For in such a case the entire psychological infrastructure — as we have already described it — would be missing from the processes of democratization.

So that we may now speak with justification of "democracy in Islam", or of Islam regarded as a process of democratization interspersed with meaningful events.

Abú Dharr al-Ghifá'í, who furnishes the most typical example in the transformation of a primitive community into a democratic society, figures in a rather pathetic episode. One day, at Medina, he quarrelled with a Negro "... possibly Bilál himself ..." He humiliated him with a word referring to the colour of his skin. The Prophet, who was not very far away, had seen the two men quarrelling and heard the insulting expression. He admonished his disciple. Whereupon Abú Dharr al-Ghifá'í threw himself at Bilál's feet, imploring him to trample barefoot on his neck.

Another well-known episode concerns the son of 'Amr Ibn al-'As, the powerful Governor of Egypt and a famous Muslim general. During a pilgrimage an Egyptian of Coptic origin had bumped against the son of this important man, in the vicinity of the Ka'bah. The son of 'Amr Ibn al-'As, with some violence, pushed away the Coptic convert, saying : "Get away, you are jostling the son of noblemen!" This happened during the Caliphate of 'Umar, and the latter came to hear of the incident. He summoned the son of his Governor and, before the crowd assembled at the Ka'bah, he ordered the Copt to strike him, saying, as though pronouncing a sentence : "That's how we treat the sons of noblemen!"

#### **Can democracy ensure to the individual both political and social guarantees ?**

##### *Freedom of conscience*

At this stage in our *exposé* we are faced with the question : "We have defined democracy in so far as it concerns our conscience, our sentiments, our attitudes. How does democracy operate externally, in the domain of events, of individual and public acts, and in the functioning of institutions?" Here we might propose a specially pertinent question as to whether democracy can ensure to individuals both political rights and social guarantees. For democracy is a twofold system — it must be both political and social at the same time. A régime which gives a man an electoral vote and lets him die of hunger is not a democratic régime. That is the other aspect of the question, and no doubt some will insist that the appropriate authority and legality essential to an Islamic democracy should be sought in the present-day world of Islam.

Such an objection, however, is seen to be founded on superficiality, for when we examine Athenian democracy, for

example, we do not seek its legality, its justification, in the present-day conditions of the Greek people. Though this does not mean that contemporary Greek citizens and Muslims are cut-off or dissociated from their respective democratic traditions. There is nothing derogatory in making a review of Islamic democracy, not in relation to the period when Muslim tradition was in a more or less "fossilized" state, as it is today, generally speaking, but in relation to the period when this Muslim tradition was being built up during the lifetime of the Prophet and during the first four Caliphates.

#### **The position of the slave in Islam gives an idea of the evaluation of man**

If we adopt this point of doctrine — the one held by the doctors of Islam — the process of democratization started by Islam would have continued for about forty years. During this period the psychological infrastructure which we have found to be the subjective basis of Islamic democracy was being completed by new premises or arguments which reinforced this basis. One of these premises must be mentioned because it completes the evaluation of man on an important point, that regarding the condition of the slave in Islam. We know that this problem was totally unknown to Athenian democracy, unless it be from the utilitarian standpoint. Since the slave was a part of the economic organisation, no one at Athens ever dreamed of advocating the principle of emancipation.

Now in Islam this principle becomes a highly important one. The premises which complete the evaluation of the man who has been degraded to the status of a slave come either from the Qur'an itself or from the Traditions of the Prophet, and definitely constitute the legislation proclaiming the progressive abolition of slavery.

We can enumerate a certain number of these premises :

Speaking of the man who is free, in order to remind him of his duty towards the slave, the Qur'an says :

*"He would not attempt the uphill road. And what will make you understand what the uphill road is? It is the setting-free of a slave"* (90 : 11, 12, 13).

Another verse defines the object of charity :

*"Alms are for the poor, for the weak, and for the freeing of slaves."*

The same exhortation to effect the freeing of slaves is expressed in the Hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad :

*"He who emancipates a slave, God will liberate from hell one of his limbs for each limb of the slave who is freed."*

Another Tradition reminds Muslims of the lot of the slave :

*"They are your brothers whom God has placed in your care. You must give them to eat of what you eat, and clothe them as you clothe yourselves."*

In another Hadith the Prophet says :

*"My friend, the Angel Gabriel enjoins me to be gentle towards the slave, so much so that it seems to me that no man should ever fall into slavery, or be forced to do work that is repugnant to him."*

The above are examples of premises of authoritative teachings which complete the evaluation of man, by calling attention to the lot of the slave, in such a way as to guarantee

him his emancipation, if not immediately then at some future date.

#### **The Prophet Muhammad's Farewell Sermon in 632 C.E.**

Finally, the Prophet Muhammad solemnly reminds his hearers of this democratic principle at the Farewell Sermon on the occasion of his last Pilgrimage (632 C.E.), in a speech which was to be both his spiritual testament and a precursor of the Declaration of the Rights of Man : "O men ! You have the same God and the same Creator. You are all descended from Adam, and Adam was of the earth. The most honourable among you in the eyes of God is he who fears Him most. An Arab is not more honourable than a non-Arab, nor is a non-Arab more honourable than an Arab, except in the degree in which he fears God." As we see, this sermon confirms the doctrine of man as being the cornerstone of Islamic democracy. But the doctrine must of necessity find expression in visible and tangible results in the temporal order — in the acts of the individual and in the rights and guarantees which he enjoys, in the acts of the governing power, in its prerogatives and limitations, as well as in its method of constitution, that is to say, in brief, in all the visible characteristics of a democracy.

#### **Some incidents in the formative period of the process of democratization before the Battle of Siffin (657 C.E.), showing the relationship between the rulers and the ruled**

These results were certainly more apparent during the early formative stage of the constitutional period preceding the Battle of Siffin (657 C.E.). They appear more clearly defined — understandably so — in the activities of the men who led the way during the process of democratisation.

It is in the temporal domain that the effectiveness of principles appears, concurrently with their limitations, compatible with the needs and demands of the temporal domain. The scope and the limitations of principles are fully apparent during the period of democratic formation. Here is a principle which bases the authority of governing powers on the obedience of those governed :

*"O ! You who believe, obey God, obey the Prophet, and those who are in authority among you. And if you disagree on some point, you must have recourse to God and the Prophet . . ." (The Qur'an 4 : 59).*

As we see, this is a verse which points out the prerogatives of power.

But the very day on which the Caliph 'Umar was invested with this power, he himself, during his official speech, defined the limits of such power. "If any man among you," he said to the assembly of people who had just ratified his authority, "notices any lapse in my conduct, he must oppose it." That is how the idea of power appeared to a leader at the moment when he was taking into his care the destinies of Muslim democracy.

But this incident also helps to show us how the idea of obedience was regarded by one of the Muslims in the crowd who was listening to the Caliph. When the latter had finished the words related above, the man in question, who had heard what was said, replied : "If we should notice any deviation on your part, we should put it right with our swords."

Obedience and authority are thus respectively limited by the same factors in the minds of both the citizen and the statesman.

### Individual liberties as safeguarded by the Qur'án

We have already noticed the effectiveness of the two "safety-railings" placed at each side of the path followed by Muslim democracy in order to prevent man from retrograding into slavery or despotism. In the same way individual liberties are guaranteed by general principles. Liberty of conscience is safeguarded by the following verse from the Qur'án :

*"There is no compulsion in religion — truth is quite distinct from error" (2 : 256).*

### Freedom in the choice of employment

Liberty in the choice of employment and the right to travel in search of employment are guaranteed in other verses of the Qur'án :

*"Travel in the earth" (3 : 137) and  
"Eat of its good things" (2 : 57).*

### The liberty of expression

From the very beginnings of Islam, liberty of expression has been a time-honoured tradition. The Prophet Muhammad continually encouraged his companions to question and discuss the decisions he made. At Badr the Prophet chose as the field of battle the site which seemed to him to offer the best tactical advantages. But one of the Helpers (*Ansàr*) held another opinion and recommended another site which he thought would be more suitable. And the Tradition which relates this episode, with all the relevant details, tells us that the Prophet, after consideration, agreed to the suggestion of his companion. By this act the Prophet left behind an Islamic tradition which has since been perpetuated so many times on notable occasions in history. One well-known episode concerns the fixing of the amount of the woman's marriage dowry. 'Umar considered that as the sum would be a considerable one for the man wishing to marry, it should be fixed at a certain rate more compatible with the means of each marriage-partner. So he made a declaration to this effect in the mosque. But a woman who was present questioned the Caliph 'Umar's right to take such a measure. She based her objection on a Qur'anic verse which expressly leaves to the two partners the right to fix the amount of the dowry to be provided. And the Caliph, recognising the authenticity of her claim, simply said : "A woman has given the right solution, and 'Umar was mistaken."

### Inviolability of the home

Similarly, the inviolability of the home is guaranteed by a text from the Qur'án :

*"O ! You who believe, do not enter the homes of others without first greeting the occupants and asking their permission" (24 : 27).*

But this general principle safeguarding the fundamental liberties of the individual is nevertheless subject to an important and essential restriction, the spirit of which was expressed by the Prophet in the "Parable of the Rowing Boat". "Some men," runs the Hadith, "embarked in a rowing boat, each of them taking his place in a separate corner. One of them, without leaving his place, began chopping with an axe on the hull of the boat. His companions asked him, 'What are you doing ?' He replied, 'It's my place, and I can do what I like in it.' If his companions prevent him from continuing, they will be saved, and the man also, but if they do not intervene all of them will drown . . ."

This restriction, essential to the liberty of the individual in certain cases, is of considerable importance in that it constitutes a basis of public law — when the community becomes the legal purchaser in the event of the acquisition or administration of a material property, the right of the community takes precedence over the right of the individual. But even in a case like this, the procedure attenuates as much as possible, both morally and materially, the restriction imposed on the individual. In this connection history relates the story of 'Umar and the Jewish woman. The latter was the owner of premises at Jerusalem, and these were situated within the area set apart for the construction of the famous Mosque of 'Umar — named after the Caliph. In this case legal expropriation proceedings could not rightly be said to be founded on the principle of public utility — since non-Muslims would not regard the construction of a mosque as being of public utility. So the Jewish woman was allowed to retain her property intact, surrounded by the Muslim religious edifice.

### Muslim justice

Muslim justice is based on the same evaluation of man, by which he is regarded as carrying with him the nobility of God, whatever his religious confession might be. The general principle is enunciated in the Qur'anic verse :

*"If you judge between man and man, judge equitably with everyone" (4 : 57).*

And the visible results of this principle are clearly apparent in all the acts and events during the period of democratization.

An historical document of which Muslim justice is rightly proud was left by 'Umar in the form of an official circular letter addressed to Abú Músá al-Ash'arí, the Chief Cadi (a post roughly equivalent to that of Attorney-General). In this circular 'Umar gave instructions to magistrates on the manner in which justice was to be dispensed. "You must establish strict equality between those appearing before you, both during the hearing and when decisions are given, in such a way that the influential person cannot hope to trick you, and the poor man will not despair of your justice."

This injunction has by no means remained a dead letter. There is ample evidence of its conscientious application in the many shining examples of Islamic equity and justice during the period immediately following the beginning of democratization in Islam. All these features in fact go to make up the general characteristics of what is termed a political democracy, that is to say, a system which gives the individual the guarantees necessary to safeguard him against all abuse of power. Islam is such a system, even in the manner in which power is conferred, since the Head of State receives his investiture from the people, represented by a Council of Elders. This body is a reduced form of Senate which names the Caliph, in accordance with the precept. In more than one verse the Qur'án enjoins the Prophet himself to consult his companions.

*"You must consult them" (3 : 159) he is told.*

And when he enunciated a general principle he was told :

*"All decisions must be taken after consulting them" (42 : 38).*

**Islam possesses all the characteristics of a political democracy giving the individual a certain responsibility and a guarantee against the abuse of authority**

As we have just seen, Muslim authority and power is democratic both in its origin and in its application. Conse-



quently Islam possesses all the characteristics of a political democracy, which gives the individual a certain responsibility in the constitution of authority and every guarantee against the abuse of such authority. But the historical experience of the political democracy which has flourished in the world at large since the French Revolution clearly shows how precarious are the liberties of the individual if, at the same time, he does not enjoy social guarantees which ensure his material independence — we have seen how, in politically-evolved countries, it is actually possible for the “free citizen” to become the obscure, “faceless” slave of powerful vested interests and combines, and how, in consequence, he loses all the advantages which were granted him, in theory, by the Declaration of the Rights of Man and a constitution, neither of which have played any visible and tangible part in his life.

And we have seen, in countries suffering from this disequilibrium between the political and the social, the beginnings of class warfare. And such warfare can result in the coming-to-power of a type of democracy which gives the “citizen” the necessary social guarantees, but to the detriment of his political liberties.

### The constituents of Islamic social democracy

Islam has avoided this stumbling-block by finding solutions to the problems of the material life of the individual, while at the same time granting him his political liberties. *Thus we can regard Islam as a synthesis of political democracy and social democracy.* Islamic legislation supplementing the political characteristics we have spoken of by adding other democratic characteristics which are relevant to the economic domain. The work of democratization in the economic domain is based on certain general principles whose objective is the equitable distribution of wealth, which must not be allowed to accumulate in the hands of the few.

#### 1. The Zakah — the foundation-stone of our present-day social legislation

When the precept regarding the “Zakah” (the “tithe” for charity) was enunciated in the Qur’án, there was laid the very foundation-stone of our present-day social legislation. And this took place long before the social ideas which we know today were current in the world. The Prophet Muhammad explains in a Hadith the need for this measure :

*“God has set aside a portion of the wealth of rich Muslims — it is the portion which must be devoted to the needs of Muslims who are poor. For the poor do not suffer from hunger (when they are hungry) or from nakedness (when they cannot obtain clothing) except through the negligence of those who are well-to-do.”*

And this principle, like all the others formulated in the Qur’án and the Hadiths, finds its expression and fulfilment, not only in the acts of individuals — for every Muslim tries to fulfil this obligation, even today — but also in the acts of the governing power. Its visible results were apparent in the temporal domain during the period of democratization, and the records of this epoch contain some famous examples.

‘Umar heard a baby crying. He knew it was crying because its mother had weaned it prematurely in order to obtain

the allowance granted to infants after weaning. He ordered the town-crier to make a public proclamation throughout the city of Medina — it was addressed to mothers : “Do not be in a hurry to wean your babies — they will receive an allowance as from the day of their birth.” Incidentally, the above precept gives us some idea of this official assistance, which was actually made in the name of the child itself. In Europe today the method is not quite the same, since the allocation is made in the mother’s name, and not in that of the child, in those evolved countries where maternity allowance is granted. No doubt the result is the same. Nevertheless, there is here a *nuance* which is worth noting in the history of the salient events of the period of democratization in Islam.

In the above example we can doubtless admire the sincere conscientiousness of the Muslim Head of State, anxious to fulfil to the letter his duties towards the people. But in another example it is the people themselves who are indeed fully aware of their rights. We can mention the case of the poor woman who reproached ‘Umar with being the cause of her misery. Without knowing whom she was addressing she made the accusation that, though ‘Umar had taken over responsibility for the affairs of State, he was neglecting his duties.

In such examples as these we see the expression, under one form or another, not of the political conscience of a Head of State or of a poor woman, but simply the democratic conscience moulded by Islam. And it is above all being expressed in the actions of the governing power or those of ordinary individual people — and this is the fundamental evaluation of man which Islam has made the foundation for the entire moral, social and political edifice.

#### 2. Prohibition of interest and its consequences in Muslim economic life

The other principle regulating Muslim economic life is the prohibition of interest. This prohibition has moulded all the characteristics of economic organisation in the Muslim world. From the very outset it gave Islam its truly democratic character, first, by preventing the setting-up of banks. Through this measure, money in Islam has never acquired that power and *éclat* which it enjoys in those countries where interest is an essential part of the economic set-up. It is interest which gives rise to commercial monopolies and industrial trusts and combines — on the scale appropriate to each epoch — through the intermediary of banks whose objective is the concentration of capital, that is to say, money-power on a colossal scale.

In consequence, the prohibition of interest in Islam has from the outset prevented that financial stranglehold — through a series of “snowballing” operations linked up one with the other — which is rampant today in the national life of evolved countries, to such an extent that some of them are forced to combat this sinister domination by revolutions.

This legal measure thus limited the “money-power” and prevented its domination of Muslim commercial life in the form of economic tyranny. But its object was not only to limit its power in Muslim society, but also to combat the obsessive urge for financial gain, for “money-grubbing”, to use a popular term. It combated not only large-scale speculation — “cornering” and hoarding certain products in order to increase their prices — but all forms of speculation which might lead to increases in the cost of living, no matter in what way.

Any kind of intermediary ("middleman") between producer and consumer camouflages a form of speculation of which the consumer is the victim. It is purely and simply economic parasitism. And a Hadith related by Abú Hurayrah condemns all forms of parasitism. The Prophet forbade a town-dweller to offer to sell goods for a Bedouin who had brought them to the town to sell himself. It is obvious that the Bedouin would have sold his goods at the day's market price. Whereas the town-dweller, living on the spot, could have waited and then sold the goods at a price which would bring him a higher profit. This would, of course, be to his advantage, though not to that of the consumer, who would be the loser. Parasitism, especially of this kind, is strongly condemned.

### 3. Sale of foodstuffs by means of an option

A similar prohibition applies to the sale of foodstuffs by means of an "option" or similar arrangement (acquiring goods without payment, which is to be made at a later time or date). This is regarded as pure speculation and is condemned in the following Hadith:

*"Whoever has bought foodstuffs must not re-sell them before they are actually in his possession."*

And all these legislative measures, which constitute the social aspect of Muslim democracy, have produced visible results in the temporal domain appropriate to Muslim society. They have contributed to its material development in conformity with the twofold objective already discussed — to prevent men from becoming economic slaves or "money-mad" tyrants. So that in the political, as also in the social domain, the principles on which there has been founded what one can term "democracy in Islam", have been actively applied. They have been effectively applied both to the acts of the governing power and to the behaviour and comportment of individuals, at least during the entire period of democratization, whose chronological limits in Muslim history we have already indicated in this *exposé*.

### Initial evaluation of man in Islam is the quintessence of the democratic spirit engendered by Islam

The initial evaluation of man, which is precisely the essential quintessence of the democratic spirit engendered by Islam, is the subject-matter of the following incident. After the Caliph 'Umar had drawn up and publicly proclaimed the precept regarding the weaning of infants — already mentioned — he thought deeply for a moment, making an examination of conscience. And from this moment of meditation came the sublime cry, recorded in the annals of Islam: "Woe to thee, O 'Umar! How many Muslim children you have allowed to die!"

To grasp the real significance of this episode, we should regard its actions as taking place, not at the time when the act of authority was being actually prepared, but in the conscience of a man. It was a man who was already carrying within his soul the unspoken "cry of 'Umar", before he had translated into an act of authority the visible result of a personal interior morality. This interior moral order he expressed in the temporal domain in the form of a precept. What had happened is that there had been an unfolding, a manifestation, of the democratic attitude towards oneself and others. And the germ of this attitude has been implanted in the Muslim conscience in the form of a new evaluation of man.

The infant who was still being suckled was, in the eyes

of 'Umar, not merely the future man and the future "citizen". The noble-hearted Caliph did not see in this child a mere unit of humanity and of society. He saw in him a being of immeasurable value, the value which God has bestowed on him before his birth, when "... He honoured man".

We should recognize that what we might term — to use the present-day terminology — the democratic spirit of Islam, has an essentially sacred or religious character. History has borne witness to the effectiveness of principles of this nature. It has been pointed out that all the examples and incidents chosen to illustrate this article took place during the period between the Hegira and the Battle of Siffin (26 July 657 C.E.). But beyond these chronological limits, or at least after the Battle of Siffin — what is there? In particular are there any valid conclusions applicable to the present situation of the Muslim world? These two questions are outside the scope of our *exposé*, which is limited to describing the real character of the period of Islamic democratization which terminated at the end of the elective Caliphate, with the "turning-point" of the Battle of Siffin.

### The turning-point which prevented the continuance of democratization of Islamic society begins with the reign of Mu'áwiyah (d. 600 C.E.)

This turning-point, which prevented the continuance of the process of democratization, did not, however, obliterate its consequences in the temporal activities inaugurated by Islam. These consequences have for many years been visibly apparent, in the behaviour of the individual, and sometimes in the acts of the governing authority. We might with justification regard the reign of Mu'áwiyah (d. 600 C.E.) as a regression of the democratic spirit. But if in this regression the despot was already re-appearing in man when he was the incarnation of power, the slave no longer appeared in man when he simply reflected the Islamic spirit.

We have on record the curious dialogue which took place one day between Mu'áwiyah, who was building the palace of al-Khadrá at Damascus, and Abú Dharr al-Ghifári, who was reproaching him in very vehement terms, the following reproof being particularly abusive: "Either you are building this palace with the money of Muslims, and it is a swindle, or you are building it with your own money, in which case you are squandering it." For a long time this "censuring" activity of the Muslim conscience was to exert its influence on the acts of the governing power. Certain important dynasties, such as the al-Murábit dynasty (1090-1147 C.E.) or the al-Muwahhid dynasty founded by Muhammad Ibn Tumart c. 1130 C.E., of North Africa, came into existence as a form of protest against despotism.

This impelling need to protest — the ultimate manifestation of a Muslim democratic spirit — lasted for centuries afterwards. It lasted up to the time of a second "breaking-point", an historical landmark whose date is uncertain. But there is no doubt that it coincided with the end of Muslim civilisation, that is to say, precisely when the visible consequences of the initial evaluation of man, after having disappeared from the temporal order in the acts of the governing power, then disappeared from the moral order in the behaviour of the individual.

The democratic spirit ceased to manifest in the Muslim world when it lost its fundamental place in the psychology of

*Continued on page 40*



*What they think of us . . .*

## What is *Jihad*?<sup>1</sup>

### A non-Muslim Arab scholar's views on the nature of *Jihad* in Islam

#### The Imam Shafi'i's & Ibn Taymiyyah's views on *Jihad*

*Upon his return to Medina from a campaign, the Prophet Muhammad remarked: "We have just fulfilled the lesser jihad; it is now our duty to embark on the greater jihad." "What is the greater jihad?" asked one of the companions. "It is the struggle to save one's own soul," replied the Prophet.*

By Majid Khadduri

#### Misconceptions about *jihād* in the West

To anyone who heard Cario's muezzins calling the faithful to arms during the 1967 war, it will be exceedingly hard to believe that Islam's dreaded "holy war" is not the frightful summons to massacre that the West has historically believed. Yet the truth is that *jihād* — holy war — is largely a religious duty aimed as much at spiritual salvation as the protection of the Muslim state.

It is ironic that the concept of holy war as a means of extending religious influence so alarms the West. It was the nations of the West, after all, that sent Cortez to convert the Aztecs, turned Simon de Montfort loose on the Albigenians and sent army after army storming into the Holy Land and called them Crusades. Yet it is a fact that the West does recoil from the idea of *jihād* and has ever since, as Gibbon colourfully but inaccurately wrote, "Muhammad, with the sword in one hand and the Qur'án in the other, erected his throne on the ruins of Christianity and Rome."

It would be dishonest to say that the fears have been without foundations. There is a violent aspect to *jihād* and recent attempts to discount the use of violence and to assert that the holy war was really no more than intensive "preaching" is hardly a balanced assessment. But the violence in *jihād* is not the whole story either and its role has been grossly exaggerated in western writings.

#### Islam did not introduce warfare in Arabia or anywhere else

To understand the *jihād* it is important to understand that in the early days Islam was not only a system of religion. It was also a political community, one of two territories into which the world was divided: *dār al-Islam* "the territory of peace", where the faithful lived and *dār al-Harb* "the territory of war", where the unbelievers lived. Since Islam imposed on the faithful the duty to work for the ultimate estab-

lishment of *dār al-Islam* throughout the world, there existed — logically — a state of war between the territories. It was similar to the Christian concept of the *bellum justum*, the "just war", which permitted war for such "good" causes as conversion of the pagans. And in Islam the political instrument through which the faithful could discharge this obligation was the *jihād*: the exertion of power, either by peaceful or violent means, to achieve ultimately a religious purpose.

It was this endorsement of violence as a legitimate means of Islamic expansion that gave rise to the belief that "infidels" were compelled to accept Islam by the sword and that Muslims were obliged to wage physical war on non-believers, and that aroused such strong reactions in the West.

Warfare, of course, was not introduced in Arabia — or anywhere else — by Islam. What Islam did was to re-direct the Arab tradition of legitimate warfare — tribal raiding for economic reasons or revenge — from inter-tribal forays to the outside world. By prohibiting all kinds of war except war for religious purposes, Islam unified the military spirit of the various Arab tribes and focussed their attention on the territories of the unbelievers. But it did so in very specific ways. For although the ultimate objectives of Islam were to establish peace and order in accordance with Islamic justice within any territory brought under its jurisdiction — and to expand the area of that validity to include, ultimately, the world — Islam was still pragmatic enough to allow for two hard facts. One was the existence of communities outside Islam with which Islam would have to live either permanently or until they could be brought under Islamic rule. The other was the existence of peoples who had been conquered politically by Islam

<sup>1</sup> Courtesy, the Editor, *Aramco World*, New York, U.S.A., for July-August 1968. The article appears therein under the title of "The Greater War".

but who were not part of the *ummah*, the community of believers endowed with a divine law.

This pragmatism took the form of carefully worked out rules and practices governing Islam's approach to such communities and peoples. No fighting could start, for example, until Islamic forces had first issued an invitation to the community to accept Islam or, if it could not accept Islam as a religion, to agree to accept political domination by agreeing to pay a head tax. Only when such invitation had been rejected or ignored could an attack be ordered :

*"Whenever the Prophet sent forth an army or a detachment, he charged its commander to fear God, and he enjoined the Muslims who were with him to conduct themselves properly . . ."*

And the Prophet said :

*"Fight in the name of God and in the path of God. Fight only those who disbelieve in God. Do not cheat or commit treachery, nor should you mutilate anyone or kill children. Whenever you meet your enemies, invite them first to adopt Islam. If they do so, accept it, and let them alone . . . If they refuse to accept Islam, then call upon them to pay the jizyah (poll-tax); if they do, accept it and leave them alone . . ."*

#### **Islamic "state of war" embodies many aspects now included under the term of "conditions of peace"**

Furthermore, the "state of war" between Islam and the rest of the world was nowhere near as uncompromising as it sounds. Even in its formative period Islam entered into peaceful arrangements with communities beyond its frontiers. And although continuous "warfare" was obligatory, it was not necessarily warfare in the sense of military combat. It was more closely akin to today's non-recognition among states. And even then it did not rule out direct negotiations or treaties. The Islamic "state of war", in fact, embodied many aspects which are now included under the term "conditions of peace".

#### **The Imam Sháfi'í's views on jihád**

As to the West's belief that every Muslim is obligated to wage war against unbelievers, this is also a misinterpretation. In fact the precise definition of a Muslim's duty with regard to the *jihád* has engaged Muslim scholars for centuries — as this long exchange between Sháfi'í, one of the greatest Muslim jurists and the founder of a school of law, and one of his disciples shows :

The disciple asked : "What is the *jihád* duty ?"

Sháfi'í replied : "God has imposed the duty of *jihád* as laid down in His Book and uttered by His Prophet's tongue." He stressed the calling of men to fulfill the *jihád* duty as follows : "God has bought from the believers their selves and their possessions the gift of Paradise. They fight in the way of God; they kill, and are killed; that is a promise binding upon God . . . So rejoice in the bargain you have made with Him" (The Qur'án 9 : 112).

"And God said : 'Go forth, light and heavy ! Struggle in God's way with your possessions and yourselves. That is better for you, did you but know'" (The Qur'án 9 : 41).

The disciple asked : "What does this mean ?"

Sháfi'í replied : "These verses may mean that the

*jihád*, and the rising up in arms in particular, is obligatory for all able-bodied believers like prayer . . . or they may mean that the duty of *jihád* is a collective duty different from that of prayer. Those who perform it . . . will fulfil the duty and receive the supererogatory merit, thereby preventing those who have stayed behind from falling into error."

The disciple asked : "Where is the proof that if some people perform the duty, the others would be relieved of punishment ?"

Sháfi'í continued : "When the Prophet went to battle he to go forth all together" (The Qur'án 9 : 123). God has given precedence to those who fight with their possessions and their selves over those who sit at home. God has promised the best of things to both, and He has preferred those who fight over those who sit at home by granting them a mighty reward" (The Qur'án 4 : 97).

Sháfi'í continued : "When the Prophet went to battle he was accompanied by some of his companions, while others stayed at home ; for 'Alí Ibn Abí Tálib (the future caliph) stayed at home during the battle of Tabúk. Nor did God ordain that all Muslims were under obligations to go to battle, for He said : 'Why should not a party of every section of them go forth ?' So He made it known that going into battle was obligatory on some, not on all, just as knowledge of the law is not obligatory on all men but on some, save the fundamental duties which should be known to all men . . . If all men failed to perform the duty so that no able-bodied man went forth to battle, all, I am afraid, would fall into error (although I am certain that this would never happen) in accordance with God's saying : 'If you do not go forth, He will inflict upon you a painful punishment'" (The Qur'án 9 : 39).

The disciple asked : "What is the meaning of this command ?"

Sháfi'í replied : "It means that it is not permissible that all men should fail to 'go forth' (*jihád*); but that if some go forth so that a sufficient number fulfils the collective duty, the others do not fall into error, because the going forth by some would fulfil the duty of 'going forth' (*jihád*)."

The interpretation of *jihád* as a community duty rather than an individual duty is very important. In the first place, it relieved from the obligation of making war those who could not or should not wage war : the crippled, the blind and the sick ; women and children. In the second place, the imposition of the duty on the community rather than on the individual made it possible for the caliph — the head of state — to employ the *jihád* as a community or a state instrument.

#### **The Prophet Muhammad and the "greater jihád"**

All that, however, has to do with combat and the *jihád* as a religious duty was not to be carried out merely by fighting. In the Qur'án, God specified the salvation of the soul as the ultimate aim of *jihád* : "He who exerts himself (*jahada*), exerts only for his own soul" (The Qur'án 29 : 5). And tradition is even more explicit on the need for the salvation of the soul. Upon his return to Medina from one of the campaigns, the Prophet Muhammad, in the course of conversation with his companions remarked :

"We have just fulfilled the lesser *jihád* ; it is now our duty to embark on the greater *jihád*."

"What is the greater *jihād*?" asked one of the companions.

"It is the struggle to save one's own soul," replied the Prophet.

This was but one of the Prophet's utterances in which he stressed the object of the *jihād* to be as much the salvation of the soul as the achievement of victory in battle. Indeed, the literal meaning of the *jihād* is not violence, but the "exertion" of one's own power to achieve spiritual as well as material ends.

Since the 10th century, furthermore, even the attitude towards combat has changed. As Islamic relations with other nations changed, Muslim scholars began to modify the previous views on *jihād*. Some said, for example, that the mere preparation for the *jihād* would satisfy the duty. Others called for the suspension of the *jihād* and specified the period of suspension. And most seem to have tacitly admitted that the *jihād* as a permanent state of war had become obsolete and no longer compatible with Muslim interests. Since the *jihād* is prescribed by divine law, such changes could not imply the abandonment of the duty. But they did mean that the duty is in a dormant status. Muslims can revive it at any time they deem it necessary, the scholars said, but in practice most Muslims have come to think of the *jihād* — in the original sense — as permanently dormant.

### **Ibn Taymiyyah's views on *jihād***

Perhaps the most constructive interpretation yet offered by a Muslim writer is that of Ibn Taymiyyah in the 14th century. Ibn Taymiyyah made a clear distinction between offensive and defensive wars. He stated that the *jihād* was not prescribed by the sacred laws for the imposition of Islam upon unbelievers solely for their disbelief. For, he argued, "If the unbeliever were to be killed unless he becomes a Muslim, such an action would constitute the greatest compulsion in religion," which would run contrary to the Qur'anic injunction that forbids forceful conversion. "No compulsion is prescribed in religion" (The Qur'an 2:257). But, Ibn Taymiyyah went on, unbelievers who attacked Muslims would be in a different position altogether. A distinction must be made, he said, between a *jihād* in the defence of Islam and a *jihād* waged solely for aggressive purposes. The latter kind, according to Ibn Taymiyyah, is inconsistent with the spirit of Islam, which expressly stresses tolerance toward other religions, especially the "People of the Book": Christians and Jews. Ibn Taymiyyah's concept of the *jihād*, though offered to Muslims in the 14th century, is certainly consistent with the present Islamic attitude that the *jihād* is no longer a doctrine of offensive war, except in the sense that salvation of the soul requires a continuous struggle against the overwhelming forces of evil.

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وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

"We have not seen you (Muhammad) but as a mercy to all the nations"  
(The Qur'an, 21 : 107)



President Habib Bourguiba

**President Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia's  
discourse on the occasion of the Prophet  
Muhammad's Birthday (*the Maulid al-  
Nabi*) \***

"The Muslims have abandoned all efforts at serious reflection and religion, ignoring the world of today, found themselves stripped and unable to keep up the tempo of modern civilization"

with the realities of our national life and the demands of our century.

**Peace through fraternity and love**

Among the most elevated of the teachings of Islam, I will refer to the one which regards Muslims, wherever they may be, as brothers, the one which extols the strengthening of the bonds uniting them, the attachment to that "... indivisible and indefectible community ...", and which exhorts the Faithful to "... seek happiness together under the shadow of God, and never to separate ...", "Love each other as brothers ...". Such is, according to the Prophet Muhammad, a condition for faith. He said, "You will not enter Paradise unless you have faith, and you will only have faith if you love each other ...".

Islam is therefore a religion of fraternity and love. It invites men to harmony and purity of heart, and calls for co-operation and mutual aid. We Muslims of the East and West must heed this call. We must reflect on it, and obey it, especially at this present time when the nations are striving, so far unsuccessfully, to find some ideal way of drawing closer together. We ourselves are specially concerned with an important message about good understanding and friendship, which, because of its deep significance, is intended to unite us, and destined to open up vast possibilities for co-operation between our States and solidarity between our peoples.

The maintenance of peace is one of the great problems of our time. It is perhaps at the origin of all the problems which confront humanity today, and whose solution undoubtedly depends on the establishment of a durable peace. If at the present time we are powerless to make a real and effective contribution to the maintenance of peace on a global scale, we are nevertheless responsible for peace within

**Islam — a religion of Fraternity and Love — and its contribution to the eventual world peace**

Praise be to God, the Merciful and Compassionate. May God bless His faithful and loyal Prophet, whose birth we commemorate on this blessed and luminous night, perpetuating his memory and meditating on his universal teaching, in whose great significance and sublime essence we should steep our minds and souls.

As is the case each year, the night of *Maulid* (birthday of the Prophet Muhammad) is for us a source of inspiration, from which springs forth the deepest truths of Islam, obscured by centuries of neglect and decadence which have obstructed the roads to salvation which Islam has opened to men. Since the birth of our State, we have proclaimed the necessity for a return to the sources of our religion and to its fundamental teachings, so that we can contact its essence, that spirit which will help us in our advance, in true harmony

\*On 29 June 1966, at the Zaytūnah Mosque, Tunis.

the frontiers of our own countries, and capable of promoting peace between us, between brothers.

And that in itself is an important contribution to the eventual establishment of world peace. Peace is a problem in which a number of complicated issues are involved, and any tendency or movement, from whatever source it may come, towards bringing nations closer together and establishing harmony between man and man, can help to solve this problem. If Muslim nations succeed in settling amicably the issues which now keep them apart, they will acquire that moral authority and prestige which will enable them to make their rightful contribution to a solution of the big problems now threatening the peace of the world. They will thus be in a position to deliver to the whole of humanity the message of brotherhood and co-operation which they will have put into practice among themselves — a message founded on moral principles and spiritual values, which constitute the best safeguard for what is now referred to as “peaceful co-existence between nations”.

In our present epoch, peace is menaced by harmful kinds of ideological propaganda, and, in some parts of the world, by petty local dictatorships, whose revolutionary and fallacious slogans bring about discord and cleavages. We, who have accomplished a real revolution, which we are continuing with determination and resolve, exterminating the bad and encouraging the good, we should point out that a “revolution” may sometimes be nothing else than an excitable tendency to violence and disorder. This has a purely negative effect, and does nothing to promote brotherhood between man and man. For pride and vanity give rise to the desire for domination and conquest, destroy at the outset any possibility of an understanding, endanger any kind of *rapprochement*, and you are in direct opposition to the teaching of Islam. It is the manifestations of such puerile maladies which influence those “effervescent” types of revolutionary movements, or those movements which, alarmed by the warning signs of eventual failure, become a prey to fear, and this drives them to the worst kinds of excess.

How securely we Muslims would be sheltered and guarded against such misadventures, if we could go back to the pristine origins of Islam, and there find the strength and the virtue which will purify us and protect us, and keep hatred far from us! For we should then be united in the love of God, and reunited by our communion in the same faith, adhering to the same values and the same ideas, which distinguish the real man in his essence and in his destiny. What a good thing it would be if we could reach a unanimous agreement concerning the convocation of an Islamic Congress, so that we can study together the problems of Islam, and strengthen the bonds between all the members of the Muslim community. Even if this were nothing more than an opportunity for the Muslim countries to meet together and get to know each other better, the result would already be an appreciable one. We are hoping, of course, for other results from this meeting, and these cannot be attained without some preliminary consultation on all the various subjects between the leaders responsible for the future of Muslims, whose ideas and methods may differ.

#### **Islam as a basis for reforms and evolution**

We think that the structural reforms which we have undertaken in our various countries — whatever means and methods may have been used — should be extended to all the spheres of life. Without this, it will be impossible for us

to transform radically these structures, and thus ensure that our work is both effective and permanent.

We think that the methods followed in certain countries to solve the religious problem have not been effective because they were too narrow in their scope, and because their authors were totally ignorant of the interdependence of the various sectors of social life. Some people think that religion is the cause of the decadence and the servitude of a certain number of Muslim countries. So they try to combat religion and stifle its influence. Religion is no longer practised except in the mosques, in the fraternities, and in the hearts of the persecuted. Its hold on individuals becomes stronger, since man will cling obstinately to what is forbidden him, and because religious feeling, when suppressed or discouraged, will be expressed even more strongly in clandestinity. Others are advocates of renaissance and evolution, but do not dare to include religious structures in their national development programmes. This is not out of piety, but for fear of upsetting public opinion, or the opinion of a certain sector of society. And so these structures become an insurmountable obstacle on the road to development.

Since the end of last century there have been various Reformist movements in the Muslim world, which tried to give religion a role of some importance and utility in society. These unsuccessful attempts took place during a period when the Muslim community was not ready to “enter” the modern world, nor even to understand it. All such movements must face the realities. The struggle for advance and development demands that all the aspects of social life, including religion, be embodied in such reformist activity. Such activity is certainly necessary to rouse religious thought from its lethargy. The Muslims had abandoned all efforts at serious reflection, and religion, ignoring the world of today, found itself outstripped and unable to keep up with the tempo of modern civilisation. Islam is faith and action. It is also realism and generosity. It connotes a sense of values and recourse to reason. It teaches us that religious precepts must be adapted to the evolution of social structures. And so certain precepts have been prescribed, and then abrogated. Others have been introduced as being socially necessary, thus showing that respect for principles does not prevent evolution.

#### **The Prophet Muhammad knew how to adapt religion to social conditions**

The Prophet Muhammad knew perfectly well that it is necessary to adapt religion to social conditions. Did he not recommend his ambassadors Abú Músá and Mu‘ádh, on the eve of their departure for the Yemen, to be human and generous? If this is true for neighbours like these, is it not all the more true for those living further away? Religion maintains its authority and is applicable independently of time and space. Religious reform should be undertaken by the *ensemble* of Muslim countries, for all action of this kind, to be successful, should have, if not unanimous support, at least the support of the large majority. Islam has neither an Established Church, nor a system of Holy Orders. Decisions on religion are made democratically by the community, with the co-operation of responsible personalities and those with special knowledge of the issues involved. Political leaders have the imperative duty of seeing that religion evolves with the needs of the modern world, otherwise there is a danger that the modern world will sweep away the religious struc-

*Continued on page 40*

# 'Ali Reza 'Abbasi, the first of Iran's miniaturists

## The Art of Miniature

The art of miniature came to Iran from the Far East, and for many decades and centuries the essentially Far Eastern style predominated. The first of Iran's great miniaturists who developed an individual style was 'Alí Rezá 'Abbásí, better known as Reza 'Abbásí.

'Abbásí was one of the artists of the Safavid period (17th Century), and his work decorates many of the buildings that make Isfahan one of the artistic wonders of the world.

Reza 'Abbásí was born in the last decades of the sixteenth century in Tabriz, but spent most of his life in Isfahan. He soon came to be favoured with the attention of Isfahan's great builder, the Sháh 'Abbás. It is related that the Sháh lavished so much on him, that he even went so far as to sit by his side and hold a lighted candle for 'Abbásí to paint by its light. It is also related that this extreme favouritism resulted in the murder of the only other artist who could compete with 'Abbásí, Mir Emad Qazvini; 'Abbásí's jealous nature could not countenance a competitor, be he only a calligrapher.

Because 'Abbásí painted from life — many of his miniatures are portraits of contemporary courtiers — he could break away from the stylised conventions of his art. This gave his work very sharp individuality. His miniatures are original and breathing with life. They are also distinguished by a scrupulous adherence to details.

This same faithfulness to details is reflected in the care 'Abbásí took to record all circumstances connected with each of his works — the date, the person who ordered it, the reason for painting it. By this he himself contributed no little to the historical classification of his work.

Of his famous miniatures, one is the portrait of a European friend of his who lived at the Court of Sháh 'Abbás — now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Another is also a portrait of a European, housed in a private collection in England. A third is the portrait of Shamseh, the Sháh's private physician, and embodies all the characteristics which make 'Abbásí's an original style.

'Abbásí also drew up the designs of the beautiful carpets of the Sháh 'Abbás period.

In that period the Sháh 'Abbás the Great brought to Isfahan, his capital, a large group of Armenian craftsmen, builders and architects from Julfa, Armenia. As the immigrants felt homesick, the Sháh allowed them to build a small town near Isfahan with numerous churches and cathedrals. The small town, now part of Isfahan, has since been called New Julfa.



*Falcon on a perch. By Ustád Mansúr. School of Jehangir. Early 17th century.*

These Armenians included some fine craftsmen in the art of carpet weaving. But they worked on designs of their own which had a strong tang of their traditional Armenian heritage.

The Sháh desired fine carpets of a distinctive Persian design and pattern, so he set 'Alí Rezá 'Abbásí to work on new carpet designs.

The master's efforts resulted in the excellent specimens of rugs and carpets of the Safavid era which now adorn great museums and art collections in all parts of the world.

The work of 'Alí Rezá 'Abbásí is well known and greatly appreciated in the Western world. His best miniatures and paintings are preserved in Paris, London and New York, with only a few of his better paintings remaining in Iran.

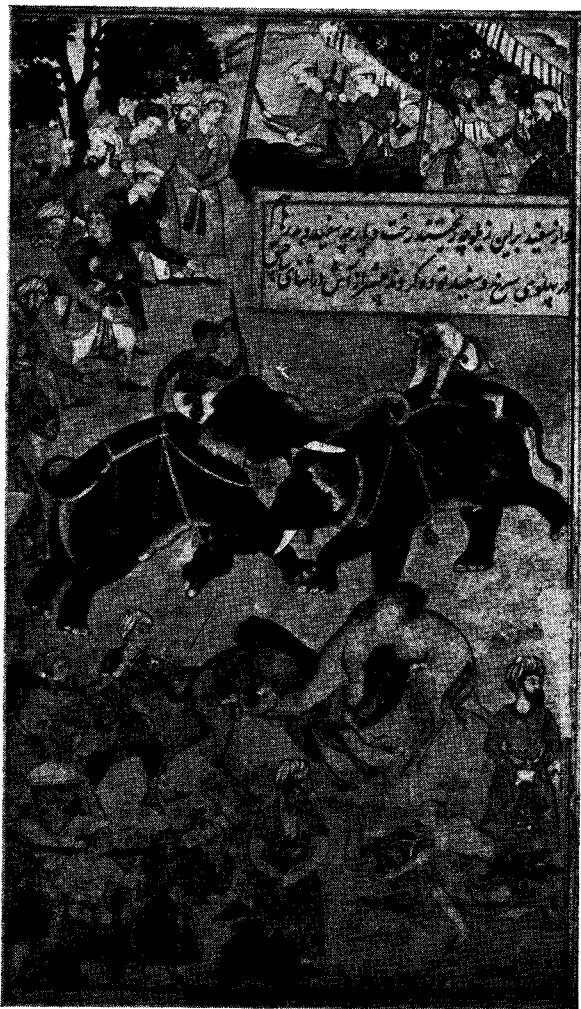
Early in the present century, a German orientalist published an excellent book containing colour reproductions of 'Alí Rezá 'Abbásí's miniatures.

The great German scholar, Professor Eugene Mittwoch, who for years had headed the Oriental Studies Department of Berlin University, fled the Nazis and went to England, where he died in November 1942.

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*on pages 20 & 21 some Illustrations of the Art of Miniature*





1

1 Contests between elephants, camels and wrestlers, which took place in Agra in 1528. Illustration from a manuscript of a Persian translation of the *Wāqī'āt-i Bāburī*. Painted by Māhū Chelā. Height 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ ", width 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Mughal, c. 1590.

2 The three younger sons of Shāh Jehān riding together. Inscribed in Shāh Jehān's handwriting: "Likeness of Shāh Shujā' Bahādur, Aurangzeb Bahādur and Murād Bakhsh. The work of Bālchand." Height 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ ", width 6 $\frac{5}{8}$ ". Mughal, c. 1635.

3 The Emperor Shāh Jehān (1628-1658). Inscribed: "A good portrait of me in my 40th year, the work of Bashtar." Height 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", width 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Mughal, 1630.

4 Amar Ayaz witnessing the death of the demon Qamir. Illustration to the "*Dāstān-i Amīr Hamza*". Mughal (Akbar period) c. 1570.

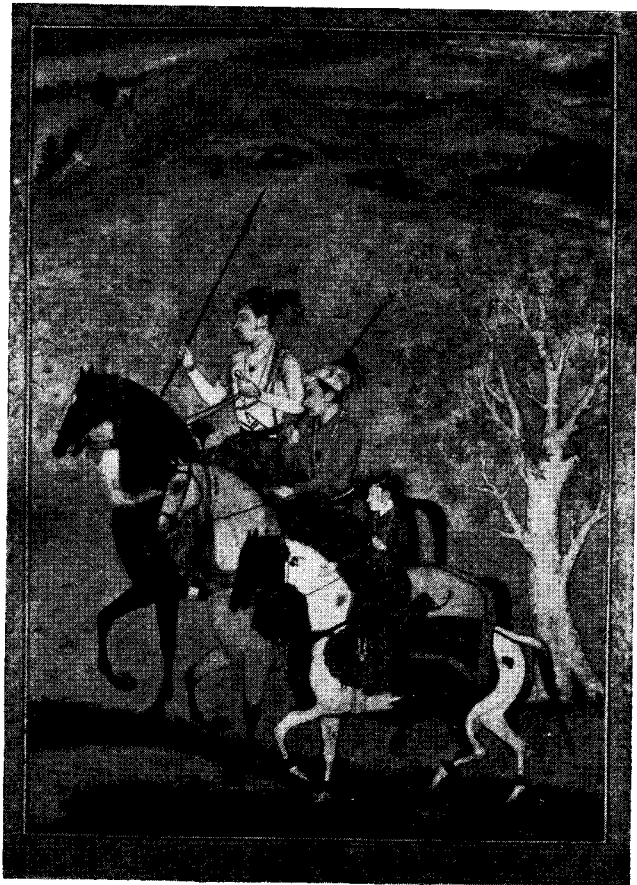
5 The Emperor Akbar receiving 'Abdurrahīm, son of Bayram Khān, at Agra in 1561. Illustration to the *Akbar Nāme*h of Abul Fazl. Outline and painting by Anant. Mughal (Akbar period), late 16th century. Height 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", width 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ ".

6 Himalayan Wild Goat. Inscribed: "By 'Inayat". Height 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", width 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ ". Mughal (Jahāngīr period), 1607.

7 A Party of Carousing Europeans. Tinted drawing adapted from one or more European originals. Height 7 $\frac{1}{8}$ ", width 4 $\frac{7}{8}$ ". Mughal, c. 1605.

Photos: Courtesy, the Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Crown copyright.

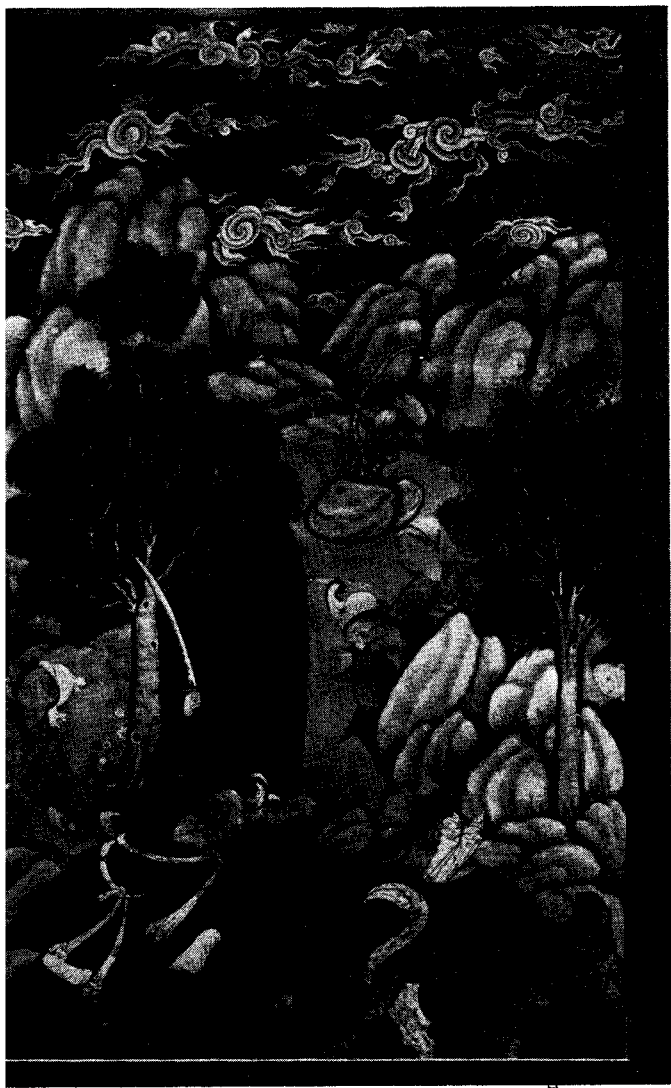
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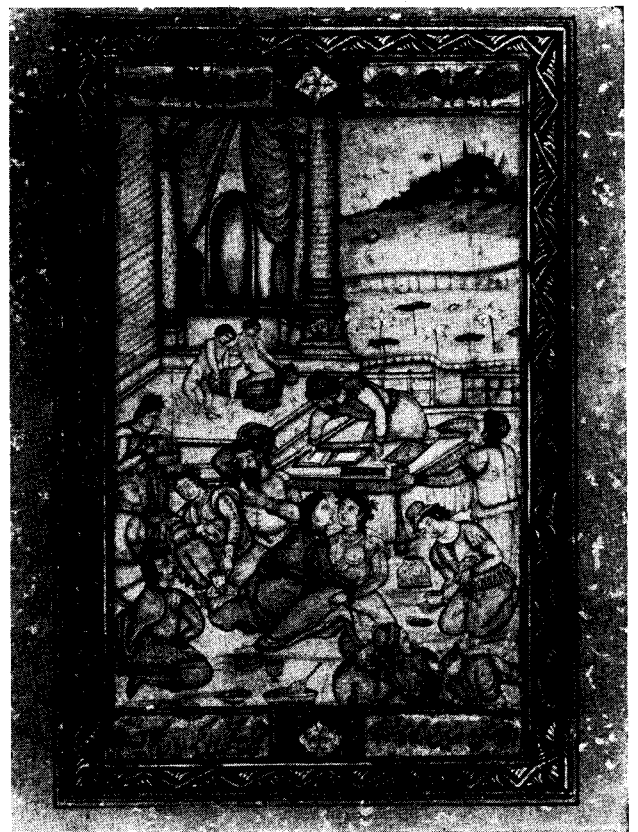
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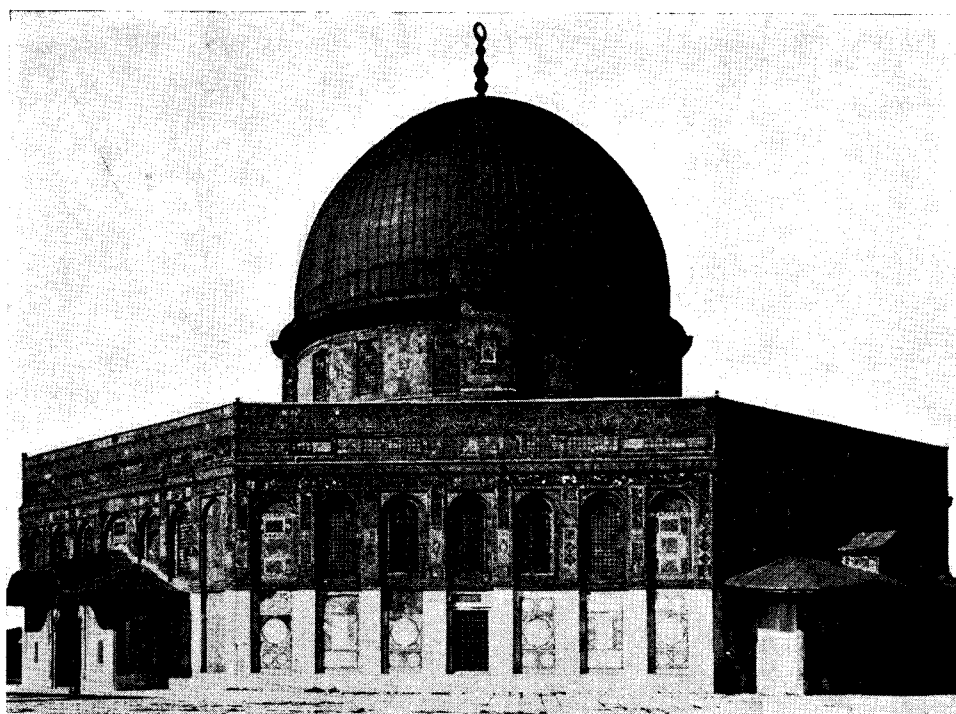


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7





*The Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem.*

## The Tragedy of Palestine from the Balfour Declaration to today

### SOME SUGGESTIONS

by Anthony Nutting

**Balfour Declaration 50 years ago :**

" . . . nothing shall be done to prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine."

**Today, fifty tortured, bitter years afterwards :**

" . . . the civil rights of the Arabs of Palestine lie trampled under the heel of the Israeli army of occupation. . . . The one people, the only people, in the whole so-called civilized world who had never persecuted Jews were the Arabs. . . . Before 1948, the Arab refugees numbered over 300,000 : they had been forced to leave by the Zionists. Thus the refugees were the cause of the first Arab-Israeli war and not the result. . . . Is it too much to hope that such counsels of wisdom and imagination might prevail even at this late hour among Israel's leaders as would enable the State of Palestine to be created not just geographically but politically as a bi-national, multi-racial State? "

*This article was originally delivered at the Leon Lowenstein auditorium of Congregation Emanu-El, New York City, as a public address preceding the twenty-third Annual Conference of the American Council for Judaism in New York City on November 2, 1967. The form of an address has been retained. — Ed.*

Mr. President, Mr. Auchincloss, ladies and gentlemen :

Fifty years ago today His Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Rt. Hon. Arthur James Balfour, issued on behalf of Britain's wartime government the famous Declaration that was to bear his name : " His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done to prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine."

Ladies and gentlemen, today, fifty tortured, bitter years afterwards, the national home for the Jewish people has become the national state of Israel and the civil rights of the Arabs of Palestine lie trampled under the heel of an Israeli army of occupation. Now, how has this happened, how has this seemingly great humanitarian gesture, the Balfour Declaration, turned so sour and left such a trail of bitterness and agony in its wake? And what are we going to do about it ? Mr. President, I hope I may be forgiven if I take a little

time this evening to review briefly the tragic sequence of events in Palestine which followed the Balfour Declaration and the establishment of the British mandate, because if we are to understand — still more to resolve — the current political crisis arising out of the Arab-Israeli war of last June, it is essential that we should recall just how this present impasse was reached.

### **Background of the present impasse**

First, we cannot forget — for if we forget no Arab will forget — that in 1915 Great Britain promised to the Sharif Husayn of Mecca that in return for the help of his Arab armies in the campaign against Turkey, Germany's ally in World War I, all Palestine plus Iraq, Syria and Transjordan and the Arabian Peninsula would be free and independent once their Turkish rulers had been defeated. No sooner had this pledge been given and the Arab armies mobilized in response, in the common allied cause, than Great Britain and France got together and, in the infamous Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916, agreed to parcel out Syria, Iraq and Transjordan between them as the spoils of war. Following upon this, to complete the double-cross, in November 1917, exactly 50 years ago today, Great Britain decided to take over Palestine as a strategic base from which to defend the Suez Canal under the humanitarian umbrella of the Balfour Declaration.

Ladies and gentlemen, small wonder that the Arabs felt betrayed by this cynical breach of the solemn pledges of

independence which had been given to the Sharif Husayn and to the Arab peoples. But still, because of a touching faith in their erstwhile allies, they allowed themselves to be mollified by a further series of pledges and assurances. The national home, they were assured, would not be allowed to become a national state and the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish communities — which, to say the least was a quaint, if not a rather sinister, description of an overwhelming Arab majority — would be safeguarded. Therefore, the Arabs felt that perhaps, after all, the denial of the pledges of independence might only be temporary. When all was said and done the Arabs of Palestine did then number 92% of the population and the Jews only 8%. And so, armed with these assurances, such Arab leaders as the Emir Faysal agreed to co-operate in the creation of a refuge for the Jewish people in Palestine from the persecutions of Europe.

After all, such co-operation was in full and total harmony with the traditional hospitality which the Arabs had extended down the centuries to the persecuted Jews of Europe, from the Spanish Inquisition right through to the pogroms of Czarist Russia. The one people, the only people, in the whole so-called civilized world who had never persecuted Jews were the Arabs. In Palestine, even as late as 1948, so close was the relationship between Jew and Arab that each and every child born in the same week, whether Jewish or Arab, became automatically a foster brother and foster sister of the other. Ladies and gentlemen, I defy anybody to find a closer human relationship between two segments of the same race. Even the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem himself, who led the Arab rebellion from 1936 to 1939 against the Zionist agents in Palestine, even the arch-enemy of Jewish settlement, Hajj Amim al-Husayni, had three Jewish foster brothers.

Thus, provided that the rights of the Arabs were not threatened, in all the circumstances and with all the history of Arab-Jewish co-operation, it seemed both natural and right, as the Emir Faysal had agreed with Dr. Chaim Weizmann in 1919, that "all necessary measures shall be taken to encourage Jewish immigration on a large scale and to settle Jewish immigrants upon the land." Alas, poor Faysal and his fellow Arab leaders, both inside and outside Palestine, did not reckon with the determination of the Zionist Movement to create, not a home, but a state and a state which, in the words of Dr. Weizmann, would be "as Jewish as Britain is British". Nor did Emir Faysal reckon with the weakness of successive British governments in the face of this determined Zionist pressure, a weakness which allowed the Jewish Agency to be established and to become a government within the mandatory government of Palestine, while the Arabs were denied any effective say in the administration of their country whatsoever, a weakness which permitted the Zionist Agency to buy at knock-down prices land owned by Syrian and Lebanese landowners who were cut off from their properties by the international frontiers separating British from French mandated territories. That weakness also permitted the Zionist Agency to evict thousands of Arab tenants and farm workers to make way for Jewish settlers from Europe, compensating these tenants and workers at times with as little as ten dollars per family.

After nearly ten years of this treatment, Britain, in 1930, at long last appeared to recognize the need to protect the rights of the Arabs by a closer control of Jewish immigration and by protection for the Arab peasants and tenant farmers. But it only required the threat of Dr. Weizmann to resign the presidency of the World Zionist Organization to force Mr.

Ramsay MacDonald, the British Prime Minister, to reverse his position and to revert to the policy of giving the Zionists a free hand in Palestine. Soon after this the rise of Hitler in Nazi Germany created a steep rise in Jewish immigration. The Jewish proportion of the population climbed from 8% to 30%. The Arabs protested that they were being squeezed out. And again for a brief moment the British government recognized their claims and offered a legislative assembly, to be elected by proportional representation, which would give the Arabs a majority vote — not long after the other Arab mandated territories under Britain, Iraq, Transjordan and Egypt, had become completely independent. But once again the British government was forced to back down in face of protests from the Zionists, who feared that a legislative assembly with an Arab majority would threaten their plans to create a national Jewish state in Palestine.

The Arabs, now driven to desperation, decided that armed rebellion was the only way to assert their rights. From 1936 to 1939 the rebellion continued, led by the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. The Arabs lost far more heavily in human lives and treasure than either the Jews or the British, but still they carried on the struggle. By 1939 the British government was finally driven to accept the fact that the Arabs had a case and that something must be done to make amends for the shameful way in which they had been betrayed and their rights had been ignored. A conference was called in London of all parties to the Palestine dispute and when, inevitably, no agreement was reached, the British government decided to impose a solution, the famous White Paper solution of 1939. Palestine, it was decided, after an interval of ten years, was to be an independent, bi-national state with Arabs and Jews sharing in the government and insuring the essential interests of both communities. Immigration was to continue for five years at a predetermined rate of 15,000 a year, after which any further immigration was to be by agreement with the Arabs. And the Arabs were to be protected against land purchase and land acquisition by the Zionist Agency.

### World War II and after

This was by far the best, the wisest and the fairest solution yet contrived, and had World War II not broken out a few months later it might have resolved the problem. But with Germany at her throat, Great Britain was no longer in a position to impose any solution on Palestine and by the end of the war Britain was too exhausted to cope any longer. The unspeakable atrocities of the gas chambers of Nazi Germany and of the occupied territories of Europe had turned the flow of Jewish migrants into Palestine into a flood totally beyond the capacity of Great Britain to control. In desperation, the British government handed its Mandate over Palestine back to the League of Nations' successor, the United Nations, to do their worst. Which is precisely what they did, by partitioning Palestine into six areas, three for the Jews and three for the Arabs — and, incidentally, in a manner which gave to the Jewish areas all the best of the land and left the Arabs with the wilderness of Judea and the hills of northern Galilee.

Now from this moment when the United Nations passed this partition resolution, in November, 1947, until the departure of the British forces from Palestine in May, 1948, when the Israeli state was formally established, the Zionists, aided by the Stern gang, went to work; went to work to persuade the Arabs to leave the areas which were to form the Israeli state. To reinforce the argument that such Arabs would have no place in Israel, the Stern gang, as some of you will remember, selected a few villages, such as Deir Yassin, to stage a massacre of the Arab inhabitants to create a general state of

panic and hence an exodus of the Arab population. So that by May, 1948, when Britain formally and finally abandoned her responsibility for Palestine, more than 300,000 Arabs had been evicted from their homes and farms and had become the first instalment of that hapless, hopeless, homeless group of suffering humanity known today as the Palestine refugees.

Ladies and gentlemen, Zionist propaganda would have us believe that the Palestine refugees are the product of the Arab attack on Israel in 1948 and that they were ordered to flee from their homes by their own Arab leaders, who promised that they would be restored when the Arabs had liquidated the state of Israel. The truth is the exact opposite. Before the Arabs attacked in May, 1948, the Arab refugees numbered over 300,000; they had been ordered — nay forced — to leave by the Zionists, who had neither use nor room for them in the areas of Palestine allotted to the Israeli state. Thus it would be truer to say that the refugees were the cause of the first Arab-Israeli war and not the result.

Of course, when the Arabs subsequently lost the war in 1949, the first war, and lost northern Galilee and much of the territory allotted to them under the partition plan, the number of refugees increased considerably; doubled in fact, by the exodus from the areas newly conquered by the Israeli army. But just as, last June, it did not require exhortation from their leaders — indeed last June, if you remember, the Arabs left the west bank of Jordan against the exhortation of their leaders, who told them to stay, and yet 175,000 still left — just like last June, it did not require exhortation from their leaders to make them leave in 1948 and 1949. The Arabs left because they panicked, as civil populations do panic in war, as the army of the conquering hordes spreads across their land, as the French and the Belgians and the Dutch panicked in 1940; or because they were evicted to make way for Israeli settlements of the conquered territories. Suffice it to say that when the dust of battle had cleared, the Arabs were worse off than ever in terms of territory and nearly 700,000 of their fellows from the Israeli occupied areas found themselves thrown on the charity of the Arab states and the United Nations for a bare subsistence and denied the opportunity to return to lands which they and their ancestors had owned and worked for thirteen centuries of human history.

And as the humiliation at their defeat and at the injustice done to the Arabs of Palestine rose in the throats of all the Arab world, they cast about for an explanation: How had this come upon them? Britain, they reckoned, had taken Palestine in the first place, in violation of her pledges to the Arabs, for imperialist and strategic reasons to establish a base from which to exercise a dominant influence in and around the Arab world. There was too much truth in this theory for it to be easily dismissed. World War II, they reckoned, had exhausted Britain's resources and she was no longer able to sustain such a base for herself. So, she and her Western allies had introduced this alien, Western, European state of Israel to do for her and for them what she could no longer do for herself: to take over this garrison role which Britain no longer had the capacity to sustain; to act as a beachhead for British and Western purposes and designs upon the Arab world. These dark suspicions were tragically confirmed at Suez in 1956, when Britain and France, using Israel as their stalking-horse, invaded Egypt in a desperate attempt to seize control of the Suez Canal.

Ladies and gentlemen, so much for the background to this tragic conflict between the Arabs and Israel. The rest is too well known for me to need to repeat it tonight: the

refusal of the Arab states to recognize the state of Israel and the refusal of Israel to repatriate the Palestine refugees; the continuation of the state of war and the denial of passage for Israeli ships through the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba and the long stalemate broken by the Suez episode in 1956, which we might call round two, and punctuated by raids and reprisals across Israel's borders — a long stalemate which lasted until June of this year.

### **The present situation and its dangers**

What we have to do now, and what I ask you to do now with me, is to address ourselves to the present day and to examine what, if anything, can be done to bring about a just and honourable settlement.

Mr. President, to put it bluntly, we have a situation today in which Israel, after the third round in the bitter running conflict with the Arabs, bestrides not just the U.N. partition frontiers nor just the frontiers which she gained by conquest in 1949, but the whole of the former state of Palestine, including the old city of Jerusalem, the third holy city in the Muslim world, together, for good measure, with the Sinai Peninsula. And Israel, it appears, is determined to stay in these areas, even to introduce Jewish settlements into them, while, for her own part, she still refuses to acknowledge any debt to the Palestine refugees who paid the price and are still paying the price for what Europe did to the Jewish people — paying the debt which Europe owes to the persecuted Jews of the world. Israel has made great play with the refusal in the past years of the Arabs to recognize her existence. Likewise, she has claimed that the continued state of belligerency on the part of the Arabs constitutes a permanent threat to her existence. And she has complained bitterly about the refusal of the Arabs to allow her freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba. The last of these, the Gulf of Aqaba, as you remember, was the immediate cause of the outbreak of the war in June of this year.

But now the Arabs are prepared to concede all these demands, as has been evidenced by their endorsement of the Indian and Latin American resolutions before the United Nations Security Council. The Arabs will recognize more than that. They will respect the territorial integrity and political independence of the state of Israel. That is in the resolution. The Arabs will terminate the state of belligerency. That is in the resolution. And they will guarantee freedom of navigation through the international waterways in the area. That, too, is in the resolution if, in return, Israel will withdraw from the Arab territory which she seized last June and will contribute to a just settlement of the Arab refugees.

Mr. President, surely no impartial observer could find fault with such terms. Yet it seems that this is not enough for the state of Israel. From the latest utterances of Premier Eshkol it seems that, having pocketed these far-reaching and fundamental concessions from the Arabs which could give Israel all the security and peace that she seeks, Israel is not prepared to withdraw, still less to settle the Palestine refugees in their own homeland, and now demands individual negotiations with each individual, separate Arab state, and negotiations under the duress of Israeli occupation of that state's territory. Ladies and gentlemen, this is the doctrine of "divide and conquer" and these are conquerors' terms. If Israel persists in these terms, there will be no peace in the Middle East. Counsels of moderation such as Abdul Nasser was able to impose upon his colleagues in the recent Khartoum summit conference of Arab states will be rejected. The doves

will have lost out and the hawks will say "we told you so." And I don't have to tell you who the Arab hawks will be. And the conflict will continue between the Arab states and Israel until a fourth or a fifth or a sixth round finally plunges the whole Middle East into a holocaust, when one or possibly both sides dispose of the nuclear weapon.

There is a dangerous tendency among many Arabs to equate the present situation with that of the Crusades. "It took us," I've heard this often said by Arabs, "it took us 200 years to get rid of the Crusaders. All right! If Israel will make no terms, if Israel will make no amends to the Palestine people, we will wait 200 years and we will get rid of them in the end as we got rid of the Crusaders, another alien state, another European incursion, another Western beachhead upon our shores. We will get rid of it."

Ladies and gentlemen, this is dangerous talk because Saladin, who finally destroyed the Crusader state, fought Richard Coeur-de-Lion with swords and lances and not with atomic bombs, and yet this is the prospect for the Middle East in the fourth or the fifth or the sixth or some round, if nothing is done to bring a just and honourable settlement today.

Meanwhile the relative calm on the West Bank of today which we hear about from the Zionists — how happy the Arabs are to be selling postcards to all those nice tourists from Israel — this relative calm, ladies and gentlemen, is largely due to the state of shock of the inhabitants, and it will give way, all too soon, if nothing is done, to a state of guerrilla war in which the Israelis will be driven to use ever more brutal methods of suppression, just as the Germans and the Japanese and the Italians were forced to escalate their suppression of national resistance movements in occupied territories in World War II. I was in France in 1940 and I remember exactly the same feeling, the same atmosphere amongst the French people as I am told now exists on the West Bank of the Jordan. How pleased the French were to be out of the war! How thankful they were that the Germans, far from being terrible people, behaved so correctly! No women were raped, no babies were butchered. And yet, ladies and gentlemen, not many months afterwards, somebody lost his head and somebody else lost his temper and somebody started shooting and the Germans shot back. And by 1944, innocent men and women were being taken out and shot as hostages because somebody had blown a bridge five miles away.

I don't care who the occupying power is. These are the sort of bestialities to which occupation gets driven by national resistance movements such as will come on the West Bank of the Jordan, and in the Gaza Strip, so long as Israel struts and strides in those areas, insisting upon conquerors' terms. And it is surely inconceivable that sane men in Israel or anywhere else, however callous they may be to the sufferings of humanity, it is surely inconceivable that sane men could invite such a prospect upon themselves. It is surely inconceivable that the United Nations could permit such a disaster to be perpetrated. Yet if nothing is done, and if nothing is done now; if the United Nations fails to endorse the terms and the concessions offered by the Arab states for a settlement: recognition, termination of the state of belligerency and freedom of passage for Israeli shipping through Suez and Aqaba; and if Israel cannot be induced to accept and to honour these terms and to do, for her part, what is necessary to bring about a settlement — then, ladies and gentle-

men, these disasters will happen as surely as we are sitting in this hall tonight, however much it may cost the Arab world.

There is an old Arab couplet by an unknown poet which demonstrates my argument far more eloquently than I could.

Let none be with us proud or overbearing,  
For we can be more foolish and more daring.

And however foolish or foolhardy it may seem to some people, the Arabs will never abandon the cause of their dispossessed brothers of Palestine and will never accept that the land of Palestine shall remain as it is today under the occupation of an alien western state. Everything else, everything else — Aqaba, Suez, frontiers, Syrian Heights, Gaza Strip, even the city of Jerusalem — everything else is comparatively a side issue relative to this basic human issue of the people of Palestine. This is what this conflict is all about and this is the issue that has to be settled.

You and I know, ladies and gentlemen, that there is only one nation in the world today which can induce the Israelis to settle it, to accept the terms now offered by the Arabs, and to redress the wrongs done to the people of Palestine. There is only one nation that can do this, and that is the United States of America. In 1956, when Israel had conquered far less territory than today, after the Suez episode, the United States told her to withdraw. Britain and France objected; they had to: they had gone into the thing with Israel. They said, "These people are misunderstood, they have suffered a terrible injustice, they should not be asked to withdraw unconditionally." But the United States said, "Withdraw!" and so the Israelis withdrew. Today no such American pressures seem to be available and Israel is able, indeed encouraged, by this totally negative attitude in Washington to stand pat upon her conquests. And once again to the Arabs the Western world seems to be encouraging Israel to expand at the expense of the Arabs. Once again the suspicions of the Arabs are confirmed that Israel was created and is still being used as a Western outpost to dominate an Eastern race.

Through you, therefore, ladies and gentlemen, tonight I would issue this appeal on this historic occasion, the fiftieth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. I would issue this appeal through you to the government of the United States. In the name of everything that you want to see created in the Middle East, stability, security and peace for all nations in the area, and in the interests of America's best relations with the Arab and the Muslim world, use your influence on Israel to accept an honourable and just peace such as is now within her grasp, such as the Arabs have now offered, and to work out through the United Nations the means by which such terms can be translated into effect.

#### **Settlement that might emerge for the future**

Perhaps I might be permitted to add this further thought as to what sort of settlement might emerge for the future and I hope I shall not be thought too starry-eyed an idealist in what I have to propose. I think I have said enough of the dangers and the disasters that are implicit in the present stalemate. There is, however, one aspect of the situation, of this highly explosive and dangerous situation in the Middle East today, which might be turned to the account of a truly imaginative solution.

I have always felt, and many people who knew Palestine

in the old days agree with me on this, that, quite apart from the human problems that are involved, the human suffering of the people of Palestine, one of the worst results of creating a Western Zionist state in the Middle East was that, in doing so, we destroyed the state of Palestine by carving it into two, or, rather, into six different parts. For the state of Palestine, notwithstanding all that happened in the 1920's and the 1930's, was by far the most cultured and educated state in the Arab world and had been so ever since the days of the Ottoman Empire. Now, it just so happens that geographically Palestine has been reunited — by conquest and occupation, yes — but reunited, nonetheless. Is it too much to hope that such counsels of wisdom and imagination might prevail even at this late hour amongst Israel's leaders as would enable the state of Palestine to be recreated not just geographically but politically as a bi-national, multi-racial state? Is it too much to ask that Israel should say openly, and mean it, that a Palestinian Arab has the same rights to live and work in Palestine as a Palestinian Jew, and to share on equal terms with his Jewish cousins in the running of his country, insuring that the essential interests of each community are safeguarded and preserved?

Now, ladies and gentlemen, before any of you dismiss this idea as the ravings of a lunatic internationalist, which perhaps I may be, let me ask you what you would have thought in World War II if I had come to you and said that the answer to the problem of Europe was for France and Germany together to create a European community in which they would pool their economic resources and work towards the creation of a European political federation. You would have said, "He is a raving lunatic internationalist." And yet, ladies and gentlemen, twelve years after the war ended this is precisely what France and Germany did, and are doing today. Twelve years after the end of World War II! And France and Germany, after all, had a tradition of mutual enmity, jealousy and hatred which has never existed, could not exist, between Arab and Jew. Is it so impossible to create a bi-national state out of what are, after all, two segments of the same race?

Now it may be argued that this would fly in the face of all that Zionism stands for. But even before June 5 the Zionist dream of the state "as Jewish as Britain was British" had not been fulfilled. Even before June 5, Israel had an Arab residue of 300,000, the ones they couldn't evict, the ones who stuck it out, and stayed behind, which was about 15% of the total population. And today Israel occupies an area with nearly a million-and-a-half Arab inhabitants in it; that is almost 40% of the combined population, which scarcely accords with the old Zionist concept of a racially pure Jewish state in the Middle East. 40% Arab! What would the old Zionists say? Thus, whatever final frontiers Israel might, in her present mood of intransigent euphoria, be ready to settle for, there will always be, as there must, a sizable Arab complement in that area.

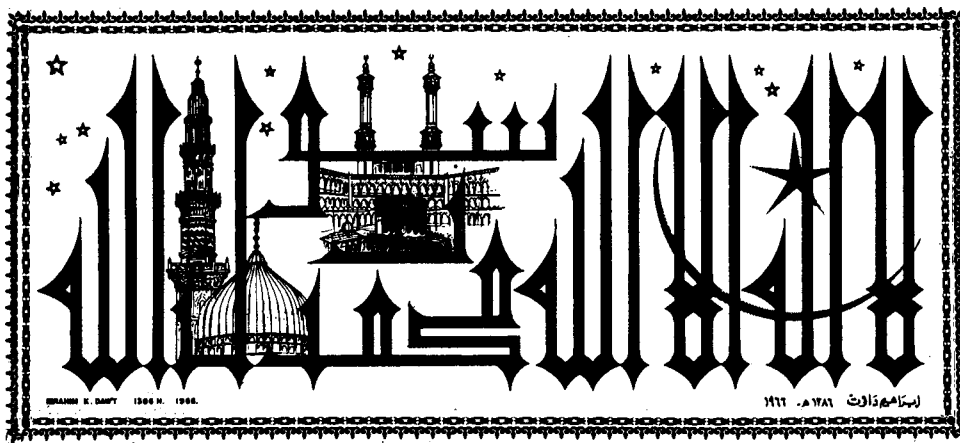
But the smaller the area, the less physically able the Israelis will be to resettle Palestine refugees, and Palestine

refugee resettlement lies at the heart of any peace settlement with the Arabs. Only the whole of Palestine offers enough scope, given the rate of Jewish settlement both before and after the creation of Israel, and given the natural increase in the numbers of the Palestine refugees. Only the whole of Palestine offers enough scope for a solution of the Palestine refugee problem.

Therefore, I put it to you, if sufficient sanity could be brought to bear upon these issues, it seems that here we have a marriage of necessity and opportunity. The need to solve the problems of the Arabs of Palestine requires the reunification of Palestine, and the opportunity to recreate a politically unified Palestine could be seized from the existing situation where Palestine has already been reunified, if only as a geographical entity. Likewise, in the creation of a bi-national state in Palestine lies the best hope of eradicating the suspicion of the Arabs that the sole aim of the West is to create a Western beachhead in the Middle East. The benefits which could flow from this are almost unbelievable and certainly infinite in number.

Yet no one could deny that such a bold step as the offer to recreate a bi-national state in Palestine would require a great act of faith on the part of all concerned. For the Jews to admit so large an Arab minority would require as much courage as for the Arabs to accept to live in a state with so great a Jewish majority. Clearly, too, other problems such as the loss of the West Bank to the state of Jordan would also have to be resolved by some economic arrangement with the reconstituted state of Palestine. And there would probably have to be a cooling-off period to allow for tempers to subside, where perhaps the United Nations could help by taking the West Bank under some form of trusteeship until the final arrangements could be worked out to knit together the two parts of Palestine, Jewish and Arab. But if the Jewish people are to find any security in the Middle East then they must live with the Arabs and let the Arabs live with them. *Apartheid*, whether it is practised in South Africa against the Bantu or in Israel against the Arabs, is both as repugnant as it is ultimately impractical.

And however long it takes, and however much it costs, in human effort and financial outlay, it is imperative that a start should be made now along this road and that means the earliest possible initiative by the United States of America with the government of Israel. Mr. President, the alternatives in human suffering and material destruction which a failure to act now could visit upon Jews and Arabs alike are too hideous to contemplate. Today, on the fiftieth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, the Middle East is poised as never before upon the edge of the most awesome precipice. Yet today the Arab world is ready as never before to play its part in settling with Israel on the basis of a just and honourable peace. This, therefore, is probably the best chance that has ever been offered to the peacemakers to end this tragic conflict. But let us be under no illusions: it may well be the last!



(There is but one God. Muhammad is His Messenger.)

# The Sword as Wielded by Muslims and Christians for Propagation of their Faiths

by MUHAMMAD 'ALI

II\*\*

**Which one of the two, the Christians or the Muslims, shed blood without any justification?**

**Persecution of the Jews by the Christians**

*The most significant difference between the Muslim and Christian holy wars is that the wars by Muslims were fought when weak in self-defence whereas those by Christians when they had power*

## Gibbon on the Christian wars

Now it remains to show which of the two peoples, Muslims and Christians, have shed blood without any justification for doing so. The Muslims, it will be admitted on all hands, began to fight when they were weak and persecuted by a very strong enemy, while the Christians began to fight when they had acquired strong temporal power by becoming possessors of the Roman Empire. Again, the Muslims fought against those who persecuted them, while the Christians first took up the sword against their own peaceful subjects only because they did not accept Christ as God. In fact, while the Muslims fought to put an end to religious persecution, the Christians established the principle of persecution for the sake of religion by their fighting! This is the most important and significant difference between the Muslim and the Christian holy wars.

It is a fact that during the first three hundred years after Jesus, Christianity, notwithstanding the concessions introduced by Paul, made no great progress. During this whole time, the Roman Empire remained its centre of action, yet till the conversion of Constantine, hardly one in twenty persons had accepted the Christian faith. Gibbon, in his *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, writes :

“According to the irreproachable testimony of Origen, the proportion of the faithful was very inconsiderable when compared with the multitude of an unbelieving world . . .

The most favourable calculation, however, that can be deduced from the examples of Antioch and of Rome will not permit us to imagine that more than a twentieth part of the subjects of the empire had enlisted themselves under the banner of the cross before the important conversion of Constantine” (Vol. 2, Chap. 15).

With the conversion of Constantine, the course of Christianity changed. At first by persuasion and then by persecution the ranks of Christianity began to swell. The persecuted became themselves the cruellest of persecutors. With temporal power in their hands, the Christians deemed it their duty to destroy idolatry. “The ruin of Paganism,” says Gibbon, “in the age of Theodosius, is perhaps the only example of the total extirpation of any ancient and popular superstition ; and may, therefore, deserve to be considered as a singular event in the history of the human mind. The Christians, more especially the clergy, had impatiently supported the cruel delays of Constantine, and the equal toleration of the elder Valentinian ; nor could they deem their conquest perfect or secure, as long as their adversaries were permitted to exist. The influence which Ambrose and his brethren had acquired over the youth of Gratian and the piety of Theodosius, was employed to infuse the maxims of persecution into the breasts of their imperial proselytes.”

\*\*Continued from *The Islamic Review* for April 1968.



### **Lecky on the Christian wars**

Lecky says in his *History of European Morals* : “ A large portion of theological ethics was derived from writings in which religious massacres, on the whole the most ruthless and sanguinary upon record, were said to have been directly enjoined by the Deity, in which the duty of suppressing idolatry by force was given a greater prominence than any article of the moral code, and in which the spirit of intolerance had found its most eloquent and most passionate expressions . . . The new religion, unlike that which was disappearing, claimed to dictate the opinions as well as the actions of men, and its teachers stigmatised as an atrocious crime the free expression of every opinion on religious matter diverging from them.” According to Draper, in his *The Intellectual Development of Europe*, among the ecclesiastics “ the universal opinion was that it was right to compel men to believe what the majority of society had now accepted as the truth, and if they refused, it was right to punish them.” Of St. Augustine, Lecky says :

“ For a time he shrank from, and even condemned, persecution ; but he soon perceived in it the necessary consequence of his principles. He recanted his condemnation ; he flung his whole genius into the cause ; he recurred to it again and again, and he became the framer and representative of the theology of intolerance.

“ The arguments by which Augustine supported persecution were, for the most part, those which I have already stated. Some of them were drawn from the doctrine of exclusive salvation, and others from the precedents of the Old Testament. It was merciful, he contended, to punish heretics, even by death, if this could save them or others from the eternal suffering that awaited the unconverted. Heresy was described in Scripture as a kind of adultery ; it was the worst species of murder, being the murder of souls ; it was a form of blasphemy, and on all these grounds might justly be punished. If the New Testament contained no examples of the apostles employing force, this was simply because in their time no priest had embraced Christianity. But had not Elijah slaughtered with his own hand the prophets of Baal ? Did not Heseekiah and Josiah, the King of Nineveh, and Nebuchadnezzar, after his conversion, destroy by force idolatry within their dominions, and were they not expressly commended for this piety. St. Augustine seems to have originated the application of the words ‘ compel them to come in ’ to religious persecution.”

### **Christians launched forth persecution as soon as they attained to temporal power**

Thus had Christianity, as soon as it attained to temporal power, launched out into the cruellest persecution of its own subjects who had in no way offended it. The cruellest Muslim monarchs were never guilty of such atrocious deeds. They may have shed much blood, sometimes even unjustifiably, but they were never guilty of the heinous deeds of persecuting people who had once settled under them peacefully. A Christian writer tells us that “ one illustration of the Mohammadan spirit is to be seen in the fact that whenever a country is conquered by Mohammadans, its churches and temples are taken by force and turned into mosques ”. It is absurd to make such generalizations from one or two instances, when thousands of ancient churches or temples are still standing in countries conquered by the Muslims. But the fanaticism with which Christian priests and monarchs destroyed the Pagan temples of the Roman Empire, “ the most

splendid and beautiful monuments of Grecian architecture ” is not paralleled in the history of the most savage people. This cruelty becomes the more heinous when it is considered that this demolition was not made in the excited moments of victory over an enemy, but it was the result of the cool deliberations of Christian monarchs and priests against peaceful subjects. The following account from Gibbon would give the reader a fair idea of the “ Christian spirit ” of bigotry, fanaticism and persecution :

### **Gibbon on the “ Christian spirit ” of bigotry, fanaticism and persecution**

“ A special commission was granted to Cynegius, the Prætorian prefect of the East, and afterwards to Counts Junius and Gandentius, two officers of distinguished rank in the West ; by which they were directed to shut the temples, to seize or destroy the instruments of idolatry, to abolish the privileges of the priests, and to confiscate the consecrated property for the benefit of the emperor, of the church, or of the army. Here the desolation might have stopped ; and the naked edifices, which were no longer employed in the service of idolatry, might have been protected from the destructive rage of fanaticism. Many of these temples were the most splendid and beautiful monuments of Grecian architecture : and the emperor himself was interested not to deface the splendour of his own cities, or to diminish the value of his own possessions. These stately edifices might be suffered to remain as so many lasting trophies of the victory of Christ. In the decline of the arts, they might be usefully converted into magazines, manufactories, or places of public assembly ; and perhaps when the walls of the temple had been sufficiently purified by holy rites, the worship of the true Deity might be allowed to expiate the ancient guilt of idolatry . . . The laws of the emperors exhibit some symptoms of a milder disposition, but their cold and languid efforts were insufficient to stem the torrent of enthusiasm and rapine, which was conducted, or rather impelled, by the spiritual rulers of the Church. In Gaul, the Holy Martin, bishop of Tours, marched, at the head of his faithful monks, to destroy the idols, the temples and the consecrated trees, of his extensive diocese.”

We are told further how when Marcellus, a Syrian bishop, resolved to demolish the temple of Jupiter in Syria, and the solidity of the temple defied the force of the strongest tools, the foundations of the temple were undermined by the fanatic bishop to carry out his resolve. The great temple of Venus at Carthage, which had a circumference of two miles, was converted into a church, as was also the majestic dome of Pantheon at Rome, and those who seek an evidence of the warlike spirit of Islam from the conversion of St. Sophia’s church at Constantinople into a mosque need to be reminded of the numerous instances of similar conversions by the Christians. But if the Christians did not convert every Pagan temple into a church, the circumstance by no means redounds to the glory of Christianity, for, as Gibbon tells us, “ in almost every province of the Roman world, an army of fanatics, without authority and without discipline, invaded the peaceful inhabitants : and the ruin of the fairest structures of antiquity still displays the ravages of those barbarians, who alone had time and inclination to execute such laborious destruction.”

### **Gibbon on why the Pagans did not put up a resistance to Christian persecution**

It may be thought that though the Christians demolished Pagan temples and proscribed the religious practices of

idolatry and persecuted the idolators, they did not shed much blood in forcing the new religion upon its subject people or that the alternative of baptism or of death was never actually proposed by any Christian Emperor for his subjects. But this was due more to the slavish submission of the Pagans to their masters than to any want of severity on the part of the Christians. Gibbon says :

“Had the Pagans been animated with the undaunted zeal which possessed the minds of the primitive believers, the triumph of the Church must have been stained with blood ; and the martyrs of Jupiter and Apollo might have embraced the glorious opportunity of devoting their lives and fortunes at the foot of their altars. But such obstinate zeal was not congenial to the loose and careless temper of Polytheism. The violent and repeated strokes of the orthodox princes were broken by the soft and yielding substance against which they were directed ; and the ready obedience of the Pagans protected them from the pains and penalties of the Theodosian code. Instead of asserting that the authority of the gods was superior to that of the emperor, they desisted with a plaintive murmur, from the use of those sacred rites which their sovereign had condemned. If they were sometimes tempted by a sally of passion, or by the hopes of concealment, to indulge their favourite superstition, their humble repentance disarmed the severity of the Christian magistrate ; and they seldom refused to atone for their rashness, by submitting, with some secret reluctance, to the yoke of the Gospel. The Churches were filled with the increasing multitude of these unworthy proselytes, who had conformed, from temporal motives, to the reigning religion ; and whilst they devoutly imitated the postures, and recited the prayers, of the faithful, they satisfied their conscience by the silent and sincere invocation of the gods of antiquity. If the Pagans wanted patience to suffer, they wanted spirit to resist ; and the scattered myriads who deplored the ruin of the temples yielded, without a contest to the fortune of their adversaries. The disorderly opposition of the peasants of Syria, and the populace of Alexandria to the rage of private fanaticism, was silenced by the name and authority of the emperor.”

### Persecution of the Jews by Christians

For all these excesses committed by the Christians and their unjustifiable persecution of the idolators, it would be well-nigh difficult to accept the theses that they were impelled to such severities by their strong hatred of the superstitions and impure practices of idolatry. Their only desire seems to have been to swell the ranks of Christianity, not to uproot any evil. In fact, they had themselves adopted many of the evils of idolatry, the doctrine of the Trinity itself being of a Pagan origin. They persecuted the Jews with even greater fanaticism, and if the alternative of baptism or sword was not proposed in the case of idolators, it was proposed and in a most cruel manner carried into effect, in the case of the Monotheistic Jews only because they rejected Jesus Christ. The atrocities which were practised by the Christians upon the Jews are absolutely unapproached in cruelty in the history of the world. From the time when Christianity first obtained temporal power till very recent times, the Jews were persecuted in every Christian country and under every Christian government with relentless cruelty. It is impossible for me to give in a few lines an adequate idea of these Christian atrocities, for, as Archdeacon Jortin, in his *Persecution of the Jews*, London 1876, remarks,<sup>1</sup> “the account of the Jews who have been plundered, sent naked into banish-

ment, starved, tortured, left to perish in prisons, hanged and burnt by Christians, would fill many volumes.”

The conversion of Constantine to Christianity was the signal to them for a long course of persecution of the severest type. Constantine is said to have cut off the ears of the Jews who assembled to re-build Jerusalem, while Eutychius adds that “the emperor obliged them all to be baptised and to eat pork at Easter” (Jortin, vol. 2, p. 206). Constantine burnt all their cities in Palestine and slew all he could find, without sparing even the women and children. As the Christian empire gained strength, the persecution of the peaceful Jews became severer. “At Minorea,” as Gibbon tells us, “the relics of St. Stephen converted in eight days, five hundred and forty Jews; with the help, indeed, of some wholesome severities, such as burning the synagogue, driving the obstinate infidels to starve among the rocks, etc.” In Alexandria the Jews were “expelled from the city, their houses plundered, and their synagogues appropriated to the use of the Church.”

Justinian went still further, and according to Gibbon, “in the creed of Justinian the guilt of murder could not be applied to the slaughter of unbelievers, and he piously laboured to establish, with fire and sword, the unity of the Christian faith.” Acts of violence were resorted to by bishops to compel the Jews to become Christians. In the beginning of the seventh century “ninety thousand Jews were compelled to receive the sacrament of baptism ; the fortunes of the obstinate infidels were confiscated, their bodies were tortured, and seems doubtful whether they were permitted to abandon their native country.” The council of Toledo in 663 C.E. issued the decree “that all the children of Jews should be taken away from their parents and put into monasteries, or into the hands of religious persons to be instructed in Christianity” (C. Fleury, *The Ecclesiastical History*, Oxford 1842 (ch. 8)). The same council also enacted that a Christian convert found speaking to a Jew should be considered a slave and the Jew so spoken to should be publicly scourged. The fourteenth council of Toledo in 694 C.E. ordered “the abduction of Jewish children”. In some cases the children of Jews were ordered to be imprisoned in monasteries so that by finding salvation in Christianity they might be saved from eternal damnation.

### Persecution of the Jews in France

In France a law was enacted in 615 C.E. by the Council of Paris by which no Jew could entertain a suit against a Christian until he had received from the bishop “the grace of baptism”. In 630 C.E. a great number of the Jews were compelled to migrate on account of an ordinance which “enjoined all who disbelieved in Christ to leave that kingdom”.

During the crusades the Jews were especially exposed to the atrocities of the Christians. Gibbon says :

“At Verdun, Treves, Mentz, Spire, Worms, many thousands of that unhappy people were pillaged and massacred, nor had they felt a more bloody stroke since the persecution of Hadrian. A remnant was saved by the firmness of their bishops, who accepted a feigned and transient conversion ; but the more obstinate Jews opposed their fanaticism to the fanaticism of the Christians, barricaded their houses, and, precipitating themselves, their families, and their wealth into the rivers or the flames, disappointed the malice,

<sup>1</sup> The facts and quotations relating to these atrocities are taken from *The Crimes of Christianity*, a publication of the Free Thought movement in London.



or at least the avarice, of their implacable foes.”

According to Milman,<sup>2</sup> the frightful massacre of this race in all the flourishing cities in Germany and along the Rhine by the soldiers of the Cross, seemed no less justifiable and meritorious than the subjugation of the more remote enemies of the Gospel. Basnage<sup>3</sup> relates that at Worms the Jews sought refuge in the bishop's palace, where they were given the choice of sword or baptism, and those who did not adopt the latter alternative committed suicide. At Treves, Jewish mothers are related to have stabbed their daughters when they saw the crusaders coming; at Bavaria twelve thousand Jews were massacred. Wherever the crusaders went, the poor Jews had only a choice between death and baptism. In England, their fate was as bad. They were plundered and massacred indiscriminately.

Hecker writes :

“The noble and mean bound themselves by an oath to extirpate the Jews by fire and sword, and to snatch them from their protectors, of whom the number was so small that throughout all Germany few places can be mentioned where they were not regarded as outlaws and martyred and burnt . . . All the Jews in Basle, whose number could not have been inconsiderable, were enclosed together in a wooden building, constructed for the purpose, and burned together with it, upon the mere outcry of the people, without sentence or trial, which indeed would have availed them nothing; soon after the same thing took place at Freyburg.” And again :

“At Spires, the Jews, driven to despair, assembled in their own habitations, which they set on fire, and thus consumed themselves with their families. The few that remained were forced to submit to baptism; while the dead bodies of the murdered, which lay about the streets, were put into empty wine casks and rolled into the Rhine, lest they should infect the air . . . At Strasburg, two thousand Jews were burnt alive in their own burial-ground, where a large scaffold had been erected; a few who promised to embrace Christianity were spared, and their children taken from the pile. The youth and beauty of several females also excited some commiseration; and they were snatched from death against their will. Many, however, who forcibly made their escape from the flames were murdered in the streets.”

#### *Persecution of the Jews in Spain*

In Spain, the Jews and the Muslims were equally subjected to persecutions by the Christians on the accession of Ferdinand and Isabella. On 30 March 1492 an edict was issued by the Christian monarchs that all unbaptized should leave the kingdom by the end of July. They were not permitted to carry with them any gold or silver. Lindo thus describes their sufferings :

“The misery suffered by the unfortunate exiles is almost indescribable. Some of the vessels took fire, and they either perished in the flames or were drowned; others were so overloaded that they sank. Many were wrecked on barren coasts and perished with hunger and cold; those who survived were exposed to further troubles and misfortunes. Some captains purposely prolonged their voyage, to force them to buy water and provisions at any price they chose to extract from their unfortunate victims.”

Some of these miserable exiles reached the coast of Genoa and would have perished there, but for the timely help rendered by some merciful Christians who proposed the

alternative of cross and provisions or neither, and the poor wretches had at last to yield.

#### *Persecution of the Jews in Portugal*

In Portugal, the same fate was reserved for this despised people. Don Emanuel married the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella on condition that he should expel all the Jews and Muslims from his country, and accordingly in December 1496 C.E., all unconverted Jews were ordered to leave Portugal within two months. Another edict of a later date ordered all Jewish children under fourteen to be taken from their parents and brought up as Christians.

This inhuman order was carried into effect by pious Christians and the horrible scene is thus described by Lindo<sup>4</sup> :

“It was a horrid and wretched spectacle to see tender children taken from the arms and breasts of their distressed mothers; fathers, who fondly held them in their embrace, dragged about to force them from their arms. To hear the cries, sighs, groans, lamentations, and female shrieks that filled the air was dreadful. Some were so distracted that they destroyed their children by casting them into wells; others, in fits of despair, made away with themselves.”

But their troubles did not end here :

“A fresh edict now went forth, that all children between fourteen and twenty should also be taken from their parents and baptised, and multitudes were dragged forcibly by their hair and by their arms into the churches, and compelled to receive the waters of baptism, together with new names, being afterwards given over to those who undertook to instruct them in the Catholic faith. Next, the parents themselves were seized, and were offered to have their children restored to them if they would consent to be converted; in case of their refusal, they were to be placed in confinement for three days without food or drink. It is indeed wonderful that any mortals could be proof against so terrible and fiendish an ordeal; yet, to the glory of the Hebrew race, very many still remained unmoved. Resistance was, however, not to be tolerated, and it was, therefore, decreed that the same fate was to be meted out to the adults and to the aged as had already been the portion of the younger members of the race of Israel. Amid the resistance, men and women in the flower of their days, or the decrepitude of age, were dragged into the churches and forcibly baptised, amid the mocking and exultation of an excited populace” (Mocatta<sup>5</sup>).

#### *Persecution of Muslims in Spain*

These are only a few instances of the bloodshed by Christianity for its advancement. The bloody deeds of Charlemagne, who spread Christianity with the sword, and the cold-blooded murder of the Muslims in Spain are two other notable instances showing that for a long time Christianity adhered to the principle of persecution for the sake of religion. The clergy were the chief advocates of this principle, and even where monarchs were sometimes willing to yield to the pitiable entreaties of their suffering subjects, the clergy used their influence to dissuade them from such a human course. When the Jews were ordered to leave Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella, if they did not accept baptism, an influential Jew threw himself at the feet of the monarch, and

2 Henry H. Milman, *History of the Jews*. London 1872.

3 Jacques Basnage, *The History of the Jews*. London 1708.

4 E. H. Lindo, *The History of the Jews of Spain and Portugal*. London.

5 Moses Mocatta, *The Inquisition and Judaism*. London 1845.

offered a very large sum of money in consideration of the order being revoked. The king and the queen would have been prevailed upon, but the clergy so loved their enemies that they could not suffer them to live in a Christian country. Milman<sup>6</sup> says :

"The Inquisitors were alarmed. Against all feelings of humanity and justice the royal hearts were steeled, but the appeal to their interests might be more effectual. Thomas de Torquemada advanced into the royal presence bearing a crucifix. 'Behold,' he said, 'him whom Judas sold for thirty pieces of silver. Sell ye him now, for a higher price, and render an account of your bargain before God.' The sovereigns trembled before the stern Dominican, and the Jews had no alternative but baptism or exile."

Such is the record of Christian holy wars and such the conduct of those who were inspired by the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel of Christ. And while every Christian country was blindly engaged in bringing people by force into the fold of Christianity, no voice was raised against the justifiability of these cruel and inhuman deeds. The whole of Christendom for hundreds of years considered the principle of persecution for the sake of religion as the most important doctrine of the Christian religion. If there had been only exceptional cases of such persecution or if they had been resorted to by some tyrant here and there and generally the Christians and their clergy had used their efforts to suppress these diabolic persecutions and murder of innocents, we would have been willing to exonerate Christianity of the horrible crime with which it stands charged, but the circumstances under which these cruel persecutions were carried on only deepen the blackness of that crime. Christianity persecuted those very men who sought its shelter as the ruling power. It turned against its own helpless subjects who had not the means even if they had the will to make any resistance. It is a most ghastly picture of bloodshed and there is no parallel to it in history.

## MUSLIM HOLY WARS

### Early Muslims compelled to fight in self-defence against a powerful enemy

Let us now consider the case of the Muslim holy wars. I have already said, and history proves this assertion, that the Muslims were compelled to fight against a powerful enemy who was carrying his persecution of the converts of Islam to the last extreme. The mighty persecution which was carried on against Islam by the unbelievers is not equalled even by the terrible persecution of the Jews by the Christians so far as the nature of the persecution is concerned. The number of converts was not very great and most of these became voluntary exiles when they saw their opponents bent upon extreme measures of persecution. Twice the Muslims sought refuge in Abyssinia whither they were unsuccessfully followed by the Quraysh. The third time a place nearer home was chosen for refuge and the converts, one and all, including the Prophet Muhammad himself, fled to Medina. The Quraysh, who had pursued them so far as Abyssinia, could not allow them to propagate Islam unmolested in Arabia itself, and accordingly they now resolved to exterminate Islam by dealing a decisive blow to the Muslim society. It was at this juncture in the persecution of the Muslims that they were allowed to fight against their persecutors, who sought to turn them away from the new religion. Ample evidence of this is met within the Holy Qur'an, about whose reliability there can be no question.

*Some verses of the Qur'an on wars by Muslims to show why the Muslims had to wage them*

Some more references to the Qur'an are worth mentioning here. In 2 : 214 we read :

*"But they will not cease to war against you until they turn you from your religion, if they be able."*

This verse shows clearly that the unbelievers had taken up the sword to persecute the Muslims and to force them to desert Islam and to revert to idolatry. The Muslims were very few compared with the unbelievers, but they defeated the unbelievers in several battlefields. But the Quraysh only became more exasperated and they were now bent upon destroying these Muslims by the sword. It was on account of the smallness of their numbers that some Muslims feared, and it is to this that the verses preceding the one quoted above refer :

*"War is prescribed to you ; but to this you have a repugnance : Yet haply you are averse from a thing, though it be good for you, and haply you love a thing though it be bad for you ; and God knoweth, but you know not" (2 : 216).*

The necessity of war on the part of the Muslims is also explained in 2 : 217, which says :

*"They will ask thee concerning war in the sacred month. Say : the act of fighting therein is a grave crime : but the act of turning men aside from the path of God, and unbelief in Him, and to prevent access to the Sacred Mosque, and to drive out its people from it, is worse in the sight of God."*

Thus it was the act of turning the Muslims away from the path of God and preventing them from the performance of their religious duties for which the unbelievers unhesitatingly used the sword, and compelled the Muslims to embark on defensive wars. Any sensible person would see that under these circumstances the ordinances relating to war were absolutely justifiable. The Muslims took up the sword not to force the unbelievers to accept Islam, but to resist being forced to desert Islam and accept idolatry.

Various other verses in the Holy Qur'an show that the one thing which the unbelievers desired to bring about by all their persecutions was to make the converts to Islam desert their faith. For instance, in 4 : 89, we read :

*"They (the unbelievers) desire that you should deny the truth of Islam as they have denied, and that like them you should also be unbelievers."*

And in 40 : 2, we read :

*"If they (the unbelievers) overtake you anywhere, they will prove your foes : hand and tongue will they put forth to injure you, and desire that you become infidels again."*

The seventy-fifth verse of the fourth chapter testifies to the same effect :

*"But what reason have you for not fighting in the way of God (i.e., for the defence of Islam) and for (the deliverance of) the weak among men and women and children (who are being persecuted by the unbelievers and) who say, 'O our Lord ! bring us forth from this*

<sup>6</sup> Op cit., *History of the Jews*.

*city whose inhabitants are oppressors ; and give us a defender from Thy presence and give us a helper from Thy presence.' "*

Consider also the following verses which show how many of those who were convinced of the truth of Islam were forced to remain unbelievers :

*" The angels when they took the souls of those who had been unjust to their own weal, demanded, What hath been your state ? They said, ' We were the weak ones of the earth (and, therefore, could not resist the unbelievers).' They replied : ' Was not God's earth broad enough for you to flee away in ? . . . Except the men and women and children who were not able through their weakness to find the means of escape nor could they see their way to fly away . . . Whoever flieth his country for the cause of God will find in the earth many refuges and abundant resources.' "*

#### **A much misconstrued verse of the Holy Qur'an considered**

The verses quoted above will give the reader a clear idea of the circumstances under which the Muslims fought. The holy wars of Islam were undertaken with an object exactly the opposite of that with which the holy wars of Christianity were undertaken. The Christians sought to force their religion upon the idolators and the Jews by means of the sword, and the Muslims only resisted being forced to change their religion by the sword. Christianity began to fight when it had attained civil power, while Islam had to fight in the days of its weakness against mighty and powerful enemies. We further learn from the Holy Qur'an that the Muslims were required to fight only so long as religious persecution continued and they had to stop when there was no persecution. The Holy Qur'an states this plainly on several occasions. Thus 2 : 193 runs as follows :

*" And fight against them until there be no more persecution from the truth and religion should be practised for God, but if they (i.e., the opponents of the Muslims) desist (from persecuting the Muslims), then let there be no hostility save against the oppressors."*

As these words are often misconstrued, it is necessary to consider their significance at some length. The Arabic word *fitnat-un*, i.e. persecution, indicates originally a burning with fire, and hence affliction or a trial, or civil war or slaughter or seduction. As used in this passage it means the seduction of the Muslims from the true religion. Thus the meaning of the verse would be that the Muslims should continue to fight so long as they are persecuted by their opponents on account of their conversion to Islam. This is the true significance of this word, as the context itself shows. But there is greater misapprehension regarding the meaning of the phrase *Wa yakun al-Din lillâh*, which is ordinarily translated as meaning "and the only worship be that of God" or "God's religion (i.e. Islam) only should prevail in the earth." This interpretation is clearly wrong, for it contradicts the very next words, which say that "if they desist, then there should be no hostility against them, for hostility should be carried on only against the oppressors." Now if the Muslims were required to fight against the unbelievers until they all accepted Islam, the words "if they desist . . ." would not have followed the injunction. The Muslims are enjoined to cease all hostilities if the unbelievers desisted from persecuting and oppressing the Muslims, and hence the words *yakun al-Din lillâh* do not carry the significance that

Islam should be the only religion of the people. In consonance with the context these words only mean that there should be no hindrance in adopting the religion of Islam and performing its ceremonies. The Holy Qur'an, therefore, enjoined the continuance of war only so long as the persecution of the Muslims continued, and when perfect religious freedom was established, then there was no ground for carrying on religious wars. Resistance of persecution was, therefore, the only ground of the Muslim Holy Wars.

That the words under discussion carry the signification pointed out above is also shown by the conduct of the Prophet Muhammad. If the Holy Qur'an had given an injunction to the effect that the unbelievers should be fought against until they all became Muslims the Prophet Muhammad would have been the first man to see to it that it was put into effect. Now it is a fact that these verses were revealed in connection with the earlier Muslim wars, and they were revealed after the battles of Badr and Uhud. That they lay down a general rule of conduct in the matter of war is clear from the fact that after these two battles the Prophet Muhammad never attacked his opponents, the unbelievers, first. History has recorded for us that the Prophet's friends defended themselves against the attacks of the unbelievers. In the famous battle of Ahzâb, a ditch was dug round Medina as the only measure of defence against a mighty attack of the idolatrous tribes of Arabia. (This battle is known as the battle of the Confederates or the battle of the Ditch.)

#### *The truce of Hdaybiyyah*

It was in the fifth year of the Hejira and two years after the battle of Uhud that the revelation of the verse under discussion took place. It was at this time that the Prophet set out for a pilgrimage to Mecca with sixteen hundred companions. But this journey was begun in the sacred months during which all hostilities were suspended in Arabia from very ancient times and this tradition was respected in the whole of Arabia, so that no one dared to violate it. But in the persecution of the Muslims the Quraysh paid no regard even to this established tradition and accordingly when the Prophet Muhammad reached Hdaybiyyah, the Quraysh opposed his further progress, and would on no account allow him to visit Mecca. A truce was drawn up on this occasion by which both parties agreed to discontinue all hostilities for a period of ten years. Such a truce was in perfect agreement with the injunction contained in the above verse if we adopt the right interpretation, for the Muslims were required to fight with the unbelievers only when the latter fought against them and persecuted them, but as they promised to cease hostilities and persecution of the Muslims, the Muslims also promised to cease fighting them for a like period. But if the injunction is considered to carry the significance that so long as the unbelievers were not converted to Islam they should be fought against, the truce concluded at Hdaybiyyah directly contradicted this Divine injunction, which required that fighting should not be stopped until Islam was the religion of the whole of Arabia. These and many other circumstances show that the injunction was never considered by the Prophet Muhammad to carry the signification which hostile critics foisted upon it, and that it only meant that the Muslims should continue to fight until they were safe from the persecution of the unbelievers.

*Continued on page 40*



## CHILDREN'S PAGE

By OLIVE TOTO

### *BISMILLAH*

#### **To the five-year-olds**

Ask your mummy and daddy to please read this story to you or perhaps that big brother of 12 years old may read it to you. He might even learn something. Who knows?

#### **Bismilláh**

He was just an ordinary man tilling the ground. It was time for him to leave off his work and eat the food he had brought with him. This man felt happy. He had just said a little prayer before his food and now he was going to enjoy the food which his wife had packed for him. A little group of youngsters played nearby. They were too young to worry about class, creed or colour. One of them was the son of a rich man. The other two were from working class families.

The little group was playing away quite happily. Just then the little rich boy who was amongst the group left it and went to watch the worker who was eating his food. He gave the little boy a piece of his bread to eat.

"This is the best food I have ever tasted," said the youngster.

"It also tastes very good to me," said the worker. "For my Prophet Muhammad has said, 'Nobody has eaten better food than the food which he earns from work done by his own two hands'."

"But," said the little boy, "my daddy does not work in the field like you. I think that is why your food tastes better than ours."

"What does your daddy do?" asked the man.

"He owns this field and has many people working for him like you, but he does not use his hands as you are doing," said the boy.

"Dear little boy," said the worker, "perhaps your daddy works hard with his brain. I know your daddy well. He made a contract with me and has never broken it and he does not enslave me nor sell my labour out to others and he has always paid me the money due to me before the perspiration is off my brow. But, little one, I said a prayer over the bread which you have eaten; this your daddy does not do. My food is plainer than yours; but because I work hard, I enjoy it. You know, little one, my Prophet has said, 'Pay a man before the perspiration is off his brow.' He has also said, 'On the day of judgment God will not be pleased with a man who enters into a promise and lightly breaks it, nor will He like the person who enslaves and sells a free person, and spends the money on himself.' The Prophet also says, 'God also dislikes the man who engages a worker and takes full work out of him and then refuses to pay him his wages.' Your daddy has never done any wrong in this direction. When you go home, little one, just ask your daddy to say these words, *Bismilláh* before you eat your food and you will all be happy."

The boy went home and told his father all that had happened. "Pouff," said the father. "The man you have been talking to is a follower of that man who claims that he is the Last Prophet. Why, he himself used to tend sheep and goats at one time and these animals were owned by the Meccans."

A follower of the Prophet who happened to be visiting the father at that time said, "I have heard what you said to your son. Our Prophet says that 'God did not send a

prophet into this world who has not acted as a shepherd sometime or the other looking after the sheep and goats'." But, said the follower, "You know nothing about God or His Last Prophet. You have never troubled to find out."

"Why, that is true," said the father. "I have never thought of that before. Come tomorrow, my dear friend, and we will have a good talk about this man whom you seem to believe in so much."

The little boy spoke up. "Please teach daddy to say *Bismilláh*, I like the food that has *Bismilláh* said over it."

The follower turned to the little boy. "You know *Bismilláh* means 'In the name of God', and what is better than to eat food upon which you have asked God's blessings?"

The little boy went to bed pleased with his day and quite tired out. Saying *Bismilláh* to himself until he fell fast asleep.

The next day the little boy, whose name was Abu, jumped out of bed. He was so excited. Today he was going to see his uncle, who lived twenty miles away in a very fine house. And he always enjoyed himself when he went there. Abu called out to his father's slave, whose name was Tariq. The slave came and washed Abu. He looked at the slave. "Why is he darker than my daddy?" he thought. "Of course! He is much older than my daddy is."

But in reality this slave was younger. Hard work and sadness had made him look older. But even then Abu's father was better than some slave owners. Tariq had a wife. She had to work also. They had a little boy of the same age as Abu. His name was Mahmud. He also would grow up to be a slave. Perhaps Abu's father would give him to Abu, who knows?

Whilst Tariq was washing Abu, he said to Tariq, "Do you know anything about God and the Last Prophet?"

"Please, little one, I am not allowed to think," said Tariq, "and ask me no more questions. Your father bought me and my body to work and that is all."

"But," said Abu, "yesterday a worker in the field said that my daddy paid what he owed and always paid for any work done. Why is he like this to his slaves?"

Tariq said, "Your father bought me from a trader, so he feels he owes me nothing. I am just a black body and lucky if I don't get beaten. My wife works all day long and your daddy lets us have a little food."

Just then Abu's father called out, "For goodness sake, come along, boy. We have a journey to take."

Abu said goodbye to Tariq and then rushed out to his father, who was standing by the door looking out into the garden.

"Daddy," said Abu, "whom are you looking at?"

"I am looking at that boy of Tariq's, sitting there doing nothing and eating my food," said the father.

Abu looked and saw the boy was eating a piece of old dry bread. "Daddy," said Abu, "he is only of my age. You don't surely want him to work. And look at what he is eating. Only an animal would eat that dirty old piece of bread. He must be very hungry."

Now Abu began to feel very sad. Yesterday, whilst he had

been sitting with his daddy's worker and eating his nice meal, over which *Bismilláh* had been said, he had asked the worker about the way his father treated Tariq and why.

The worker said, "Your daddy does not know what our Prophet said. He said many things about all men being equal but he also said, 'Do unto others what you would have them do unto you and reject for others what you would reject for yourself.' Your daddy has you. He would like you to be treated with kindness and he would like you not to starve. But does he do unto Tariq what he would like to be done to himself? No. He does not. He could give little Mahmud better food than he does. We know some of us must work, but not as slaves."

Now this conversation had all come back to Abu. So he turned to his father and said, "Daddy, this little boy and myself are just six years old. Would you like to see anyone thinking that I should be working? Also you give me dates and milk and even too much to eat. I wonder if Mahmud said *Bismilláh* over that dry, horrible piece of bread."

The father turned to his son and said, "Do you mean to tell me that you are still harping on what my worker told you yesterday? I tell you to forget it, my son. Because if you listen to any followers of that Prophet, who say that there is only one God, when you grow up, you will not have a slave at all, because he says, 'All men must be free and that one should not keep a slave.' So for goodness' sake, come along," said the father, "and I don't want to hear any more of your *Bismilláh*."

"Oh! that reminds me," said Abu. "You promised that follower of the Prophet, whose name is Abbass, that you would see and talk with him today."

The father then got very angry, "I have no time for such things, boy."

Abu felt hurt that his father could break a promise. The father saw his look and said, "All right, I will send Tariq to him and tell him not to come today."

"Daddy," said Abu, "do you know what I heard your friend Abbass saying?"

"Well! What did he say?" asked the father.

Abu said, "Abbass told me that his Prophet said, 'Shall I tell you who is the very worst amongst you? It is those who eat alone and whip the slaves and give to no one.' You do not whip Tariq, but you give him very little to eat," said Abu.

"Oh! So now my six-year-old son is telling me what to do," said the father.

"No," said Abu, "I am only telling you what Abbass told me and if you think that I am being rude, then I am very sorry. You know the worker in your field told me of another saying from his Prophet which was meant for me."

"That's interesting," said the father, "I thought I was the only one in need of words of wisdom."

Abu knew his father was making fun of him. So he said, "These are the words. 'God's pleasure is in a father's pleasure and God's displeasure is in a father's displeasure.' Daddy? Are you free?" asked Abu.

"My dear boy," said the father, "If you do not stop this nonsense, I shall sell Tariq and his family. Also never talk to me about being free. Why, you don't even know the meaning of the word free."

"Oh! daddy, I do," said Abu.

"What is the meaning then?" asked his father.

"Daddy," said Abu, "I saw Tariq looking at a bird in the air, and I said, 'Why do you look at that bird?' He answered, 'He is free'. I asked him if he would like to be like that bird. He did not answer at once and when he did answer he said, 'Little one, you are free, no one owns you as a slave.'"

The father stopped talking.

Abu got into the caravan with his father and the servant. And Tariq was sent on his way. Whilst in the caravan going along, Abu could not stop talking about being free and about the poor little slave and his bread.

By now Tariq had set out on his three-mile journey to the house of Abbass. As he went along the sun started to beat down on to his back as it was nearing noon. He felt weary; for he had worked hard before setting out on this little journey. So when he arrived at Abbass's house he was really thirsty. At the door of the house he could see the master, Abbass, who came out to meet Tariq and he greeted him with *Assalmu Aalaykum*, which in English means "Peace be with you", and this is a Muslim greeting.

"Peace," thought poor Tariq, "what peace shall I ever have? Anyhow," Tariq thought to himself, "this is the first time I have ever had such a greeting given to me." He then delivered his message and turned to go away. Abbass called him back and asked him to sit down on a bench which was there. Abbass then went into the house and brought out a cup of water and some dates.

"This is all I have to give you," said Abbass. "Please take it with God's blessings."

The slave grew a little bold and said, "Thank you, kind sir. But please tell me. Whose blessings did you say?"

"God's blessings," said Abbass.

"Do you mean the head idol?" asked Tariq.

"I do not mean the head idol," said Abbass. "I mean the true God. You cannot see Him but He is everywhere, guiding those who want Him."

"But He does not want me," said Tariq. "No one wants a black slave. No one wants to love me. They only want to beat me."

"My man," said Abbass, "our Prophet says that 'all mankind is one and that you must be freed'."

"Freed?" said the slave. "How could I live without a master over me, ready to beat me?"

Abbass felt sad. He said to Tariq, "God is your only master and He leads you. If only I could afford it I would buy you and your family from my friend, so that you could be free to worship God if you wanted to."

"But if I believed in what you say," said Tariq, "even if it were true, I would most likely be killed or tortured. So even if your Prophet did say good words regarding us..."

"What words are you thinking of?" interrupted Abbass. "There are so many wonderful words of wisdom about our slave brothers."

Tariq said, "Those words you told me a few minutes ago about clothing us."

"Ah! I know," said Abbass. "It is this that our Prophet says: 'They are your brothers, whom God has placed in your care. You must give them to eat of what you eat, and clothe them as you clothe yourselves.'"

"Please tell me nothing more and let me live as I am living," said Tariq.

"You are not living," said Abbass. "You are half dead. You do not even use your eyes and ears, they are your master's. If you used your ears you would surely have heard that all the idols are going to be broken very soon. And if you used your eyes, you would surely have seen some brave follower of our Prophet saying his prayers to the One and Only God. Yes, I know you are a slave. But please try to help yourself. For God helps those who help themselves. Please, Tariq, do not think I am being harsh, I am not. Now from today onwards start by respecting yourself. And when you have done this. I will help you in many ways to be happier than you are today. I will show you the way to God, my God, your God, the True God. But only if you wish it, for my religion compels no one to listen if they feel they cannot."

"This morning," said Tariq, "little Abu mentioned God and the Last Prophet and I felt afraid."

"Afraid of what?" asked Abbass. "You were not afraid of God and His Prophet. You were afraid of what your master might do to you if you started to think for yourself."

"Perhaps it is that," said Tariq. "But I have a wife and child and now I understand why some slaves have been left in the terrible hot sun on the hot sand, tied down by their masters. I had heard the word Muslim whispered by some of the slaves but I took no notice."

"Oh! you will find God in the end," said Abbass, "and you will say prayers to Him."

"Will that please Him?" asked Tariq.

"Your question is not so simple as it seems. Of course, it pleases God that you turn to Him. But, Tariq, He gains nothing out of it. It is you who gain. You are speaking of God as if He were a human being. God wants you to be pleased and happy. Talking to Him through your prayers and believing in Him helps you through all hardships. God wants nothing from you. But it helps you when you give your love to Him and then your obedience to God will come naturally and then it is that God will be pleased with you, because even if you are not perfect. you will have tried. And if you become a Muslim you are expected to believe in all the prophets and the Last Prophet, Muhammad, who brought Islam from God."

Tariq, in his mind, could see the slave in the sand suffering because he wished to say "God is One." "No," he thought, "this is too much for me." He jumped off the bench on which he was sitting and ran for his dear life as if he had seen a lion or tiger, and he did not stop running until he reached his home. His wife asked, "What is the matter?"

"Please ask me nothing," said he. But all the time through his mind kept resounding the words of Abbass, telling him to use his ears and eyes. No! he could not. He would not listen. "I would suffer too much," thought Tariq. "Could

the words of Abbass be true when he had said that there was a God who even loves my family, although we are slaves — and that a man is on this earth who is called the Last Prophet who says that myself and my family are as good as any other, and that there must be no slaves? Can it be true that someone loves my little Mahmud and that someone is watching over him? Oh, I must forget all this,” said Tariq to himself, “I must work and die, perhaps to be sold and parted from my family. No! this is too great a thing for me to believe in.”

While all this had been happening, Abu and his father were travelling in a caravan full of comfort and every kind of food. But Abu could not eat the food. He felt that it would choke him. Every time he tried to eat he could see in his mind's eye that picture of poor little Mahmud (the slave child). And so he refused to eat anything.

His father got very angry and said sarcastically, “Say your *Bismillāh* over this food as the worker told you to do and then you will enjoy it.”

“Daddy,” said the little boy, “the man in the field was happy when he said *Bismillāh*. He was talking to his God. I may be only six years old but I feel much older than I did yesterday. I now know that the worker was happy with his God and that he had been good to everyone. Why, he even gave me some of his meal because, having played about and got dirty, he thought I was poor until I told him who I was. No, daddy, I have no right to that word. I have no one to say it to.”

And so the journey came to an end. In those days it took longer to do 20 miles. Abu had eaten nothing. He felt he could not.

“Never mind,” thought his father, “we are now at his uncle's house and he would never refuse to eat there.”

Father and son were met by the uncle and then they were taken inside to have a meal. The food looked lovely but as a slave passed it to Abu, he suddenly seemed to hear those words, “Your father bought me and my body.” He looked at the slave and said, “Are you bought? Is your body not yours?”

The father and uncle were horrified. But the slave pretended not to hear and as he placed the food down, Abu thought he heard the slave whisper something. But he did not know what it was. If only that slave would say *Bismillāh*, thought Abu.

Everyone started to eat but Abu could not eat. Every day for two days the same thing happened — Abu could not eat. He started talking to himself and crying. A doctor was called in, also a pagan, who was supposed to work wonders by magic. But still little Abu lay still and longed to go home to see little Mahmud. “I want to go home,” whispered Abu. The doctor said, “I can do nothing for him. Perhaps he will feel better tomorrow.” The next day Abu was still ill. All he wanted was to see Mahmud eating nice food. The doctor was called in again. Now Abu would not stop talking and crying.

The doctor said, “I should take him home to his mother if I were you.” So Abu was placed in the caravan on a nice mattress, and father and son started out on their homeward journey. Abu said that he would not eat until he got home. When he got home, he was so ill that he could not walk. He asked for Tariq to come out and carry him. Tariq picked Abu up. Abu put his arms around his neck. He loved Tariq and

he closed his eyes whilst Tariq carried him slowly until they were indoors. Abu was brought in and placed on a couch.

Tariq said, “Little boy, what ails you?”

Abu said, “I want to see your little son.”

Tariq said, “You must ask your father's permission first.” The father said that the little slave boy could come in. The little boy, Mahmud, came in to see little Abu.

“What is the matter with you?” asked Mahmud.

“I was thinking all the time of you,” said Abu, “and how you just eat only that horrible bread!”

“Do not worry about me,” said little Mahmud. “I am only a slave boy.”

“But I do care,” said Abu, “and unless you eat with me I will not eat.”

Little Mahmud said, “I must not,” and he ran away.

Abu's father was quite worried about his son. He called an old worshipper of an idol and asked him to pray for his son.

“I don't want him,” said Abu. “I want to see your friend Abbass.” Abbass was called and Tariq was sent to fetch him. Abbass walked along with Tariq. He would not let Tariq walk behind him. As they walked along Abbass asked him what the matter was with Abu.

Tariq said, “I do not know but I do know that he is very sad and ill. Perhaps the God you spoke to me about will help him, because, after all, he is not a slave.”

Abbass stood still and looked at Tariq. “Can't you understand or don't you want to?” said Abbass. “I have told you God loves all alike if they are good. The wicked have to be punished but if they are sorry God will forgive them also. Tariq,” continued Abbass, “black, yellow, brown or white, they are one in God's sight. Slave, rich man or poor man. But God says there must be no slaves.”

Tariq sighed, “It is too difficult for me to understand,” said he.

“It is too easy. That is the trouble with you,” said Abbass.

As they entered the house Tariq whispered, “I believe in one God. So please teach me in secret. I do not wish my family to suffer.” Abbass nodded his head. He was very happy. Abu's father came out and asked Abbass if he knew of any medicine to cure his son.

“Please let me see your son alone,” said Abbass. He went in and saw the little boy. “What ails you, son?” asked Abbass. The little boy told Abbass how unhappy he was because he loved his daddy and mummy but he knew it was not the way to treat anyone as the slaves were being treated.

“You are a very clever boy,” said Abbass. “I am going to pray for you, and I will start my prayer with the words you know. Those words are *Bismillāh*.” The prayer was said and then Abbass asked Abu to eat.

“I will eat only if my little slave boy eats with me,” said Abu. Abu's father's permission was asked. Although he did not agree to such a thing he had to say yes, because he knew that his son's life was in danger and that he would not eat unless this slave boy ate with him. And so Abu ate with his little slave boy and got better.



When Abu grew up he became a Muslim, having been told all about Islam by Abbass. The little slave, also grown up, was a slave no longer. He worked for Abu and received a wage for his work. Strange to say, Abu's father did not torture Tariq when he heard that he had become a Muslim. He was really afraid that his son might start another hunger strike if he touched Tariq. After many years Abu's father and mother became Muslims after seeing their son's way of life, and so Tariq and his wife received a wage and looked

after Abu's father and mother. Needless to say, Tariq's wife became a Muslim and, of course, Mahmud also became a Muslim. And so peace was brought about all through a worker impressing a little boy by his saying *Bismillāh* over his food.

For did not our Prophet say to us that anything started without first saying *Bismillāh* is like an animal without a tail — that is something missing, something unfinished, something imperfect?

## What Our Readers Say . . .

### MO'TAMAR al-'ALAM al-ISLAM

(THE WORLD MUSLIM CONGRESS)

171-B, Block 111,

Sir Syed Road,

P.E.C.H.S. Karachi-29,

Pakistan

24 June 1968

H.E. U THANT,  
Secretary-General,  
United Nations,  
New York, U.S.A.

#### ENCROACHMENT ON SACRED PROPERTY BY ZIONISTS IN JERUSALEM

Your Excellency,

Allow me to draw your attention to recent encroachments on sacred Muslim property in Jerusalem under the cover of archaeological excavations. These encroachments, unless they are stopped, may become very explosive. As such the situation is bad: these will only worsen the situation by adding new fuel to the flame.

(1) The alarming news can be seen in pages 5, 8 and 9 of the weekly Overseas Edition of the *Jerusalem Post* for 10 June 1968.

(2) As is known to you — as reported by your Personal Representative, Ambassador Thalmann — the Israelis, after occupying Old Jerusalem had wantonly dynamited and bulldozed 135 houses belonging to Muslim *Waqfs* (Endowments) in the Maghribi Quarter adjoining the Haram Sharif, the sacred place of the Muslims, which includes the *Masjid al-Sakhrah* (Dome of the Rock) and *Masjid al-Aqsá*. Your Personal Representative rightly commented in his report: "To the destruction of the war, new destruction has been added" (paragraph 20 of the Thalmann report).

(3) Two facts had been established by the Commission appointed in 1930 by the United Kingdom as Mandatory Power, with the approval of the Council of the League of Nations. The first was that the legal proprietary right to the Wailing Wall belongs exclusively to Muslims. The second was that during the period of Islamic sovereignty over Jerusalem, free access of the Jews to the Wailing Wall was recognised as a custom.

(4) The demolition of buildings in front of the Wailing Wall in June 1967 was in direct violation of Article 53 of the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949, which expressly prohibits any destruction of properties belonging to private persons or to the State or public authorities or organizations.

(5) In spite of the U.N. General Assembly Resolutions 2253(ES-V) and 2254(ES-V), which considered invalid the measures taken by Israel to change the status of Jerusalem and called upon Israel to rescind those measures and to desist from any action which would alter the status of the holy city, the Israelis had flagrantly ignored the directives of the U.N. General Assembly and had expropriated further Muslim property. We had hoped, in vain, that they would restrain themselves at least after the Security Council Resolution of 21 May 1968.

(6) According to the reports and pictures published in the *Jerusalem Post* issue referred to above, they have begun to encroach on the Wall itself and beyond, under the pretext of carrying out archaeological excavations to discover the foundations of their Temple which was destroyed by the Roman Emperor Titus in 70 C.E. A careful scrutiny of the reports in the Jewish paper, the *Jerusalem Post* shows that they began digging in the pavement before the Wailing Wall and have been tunnelling beneath the *Masjid al-Aqsá* and the *Masjid al-Sakhrah* (Dome of the Rock), both amongst the most sacred places of worship for all the Muslims of the world.

The Israelis have chosen to make the announcement about the coins, etc., they claim to have found; the announcement reported in the *Jerusalem Post* for 10 June 1968 was made on 7 June 1968, the anniversary of their occupation of the holy city, after 100 days of digging work. About 120 people were working in addition to professional staff and some 10,000 cubic metres of earth had so far been removed. "Earth is shovelled into baskets which are passed from hand to hand, hooked on to a pulley and cranked up to ground level." They speak of the discovery of a "tunnel", perhaps a sewer, through which they crawled for a "distance of 17 metres" by the light of matches. We question whether any tunnel or sewer was discovered deep under the holy site? The probability is that for a hundred days, according to their own admission, they have been illegally, immorally and sacrilegiously tunnelling under the Muslim holy places.

(7) Tunnelling by Jews into the depth of Muslim sacred places is not a new thing in Muslim history. There is on record the case of two Jews, agents of some Jewish secret society, who came to Medina disguised as Muslims and were quietly busy digging a tunnel to reach the Prophet's tomb at Medina, until the plot was discovered and put an end to. If the Jews try to repeat history the Muslims will be compelled to do likewise.

(8) And especially as Jewish leaders have made no secret



of their designs and ambitions, the news about archaeological diggings beneath the Muslim holy places is full of ominous forebodings. Jewish leaders have repeatedly declared that the Temple of Solomon would be rebuilt on the site of the Dome of the Rock inside al-Aqsá Mosque and their blueprint was published in the U.S. *Time* magazine last year. When the *Time* magazine correspondent asked Jewish leaders how they could build the Temple because the beautiful Dome of the Rock stood there, a Jewish leader was reported to have said that earthquakes come and that it was not necessary for the earthquakes to be caused always by nature.

On behalf of the Muslim peoples of the world, I earnestly appeal to you to take necessary and immediate action to prevent further encroachment and sacrileges on the Muslim holy places in Jerusalem.

With assurances of our highest consideration,

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

INAMULLAH KHAN

Secretary-General, *Mo'tamar al-'Alam al-Islámi*  
(World Muslim Congress)

## “*Akrimu 'al-Hirrah*” (Respect the Cat) — The Prophet Muhammad

Hast heard the story, how one summer's day  
Within a mosque, a cat once hap'd to stray,  
Just at the time God's Prophet had gone there,  
To make, as was his wont, the Zuhr prayer?  
With measured tread, it step'd with noiseless feet,  
And, 'fore God's Prophet, calmly took its seat,  
And purring gently, sat there calm and still,  
Afraid of nought, suspicious of no ill,  
When lo! by Allah's will, e'er wise and good,  
The cat was seized with pains of motherhood,  
And 'twixt its pangs, common to all of earth,  
There in the mosque, to kittens three gave birth.  
“Remove the brute,” then loudly one did cry,  
“To thus pollute the mosque, sure it should die.”  
“Say not such words,” God's Prophet then did say,  
“Remove it not, in peace let it here stay,

“Do not a thing its feelings now to jar,  
“Respect the cat — *Akrimú al-Hirrah*.  
“This cat hath only done that which it should,  
“And hath performed its work of motherhood,  
“What Allah hath decreed for all the race,  
“As Nature's law, sure can be no disgrace,  
“And Muslims learn from this the lesson, that  
“Allah doth teach to all, Respect the Cat,  
“Thy father honour, and thy brother love,  
“Protect thy sister, but of all above,  
“Respect thy mother, she it was who bear  
“Thee in her womb, and lavished on thee care  
“Known but to Allah; Muslims think of that,  
“This cat a mother is, Respect the Cat!”

MUSTAFA H. M. LEON

*Continued from page 4*

respect let us resort to the views and the edicts of the most acknowledged Muslim theologians and jurists:

The *Allámah* Ibn Humám opines that the limbs of a child are not formed until four months of pregnancy. In his view, therefore, abortion during the first four months is legal. The *Fatáwá-e 'Alamgiri* says: “The woman too has a right to abortion provided the limbs have not been formed; and they begin to form after 120 days of pregnancy.”

Shámí does not put any limit of period in these words: “A child within the womb of mother is not a human being according to our school of thought.”

The *Mauláná* Rashíd Ahmad Gangohí, of the famous Dár al-'Ulúm, of Deoband, in India, in his pronouncement (*Fatwá*) No. 637 says: “Abortion is lawful before the soul enters the child in the womb, but after that it becomes unlawful.”

The jurist (*Mufti*) Muhammad Shafí, of the same Deoband, in

his pronouncement No. 64199, vols. 3 and 4, p. 97, endorses the views of Shámí as quoted above. Similarly, the *Mufti* 'Azíz al-Rahmán of Deoband, while discussing a question in respect of a divorced woman, declares abortion as lawful. (The *Azíz ul-Fatáwá*, question No. 7/1048, pp. 29, 30.) Another *Fatwá* by the same jurist says that as long as the limbs are not formed in the womb, the child is not to be considered a human being. (The *Fatáwá-e Dár al-'Ulúm*, Question No. 1599/295.)

Taking all the arguments, both for and against, the following resolution of the Second Congress of the Academy of Islamic Research, held at Cairo on 13-26 May 1965, at which thirty-five Muslim countries were represented, gives a very balanced view on the subject of birth-control:

“Birth-control is to be resorted to only in cases of absolute necessity and this is a matter that is left to the parties concerned to decide upon such a necessity. As regards to what constitutes necessity, this is a matter which rests purely with the conscience and religious feeling of the individual.”

# Salient Features of Islam

THE following is a very brief account of Islam and some of its teachings. For further details, please write to the IMAM of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England.

**ISLAM: THE RELIGION OF PEACE.**—The word "Islam" literally means: (1) peace; (2) submission. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

**OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.**—Islam provides its followers with a perfect code, whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

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

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

**ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.**—These are seven in number: Belief in (1) God; (2) Angels; (3) Books from God; (4) Messengers from God; (5) the Hereafter; (6) the Premeasurement of good and evil; (7) Resurrection after death.

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

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

**PILLARS OF ISLAM.**—These are five in number: (1) Declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messenger-ship of Muhammad; (2) Prayer; (3) Fasting; (4) Alms-giving; (5) Pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine at Mecca.

**ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.**—The Muslims worship One God — the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Just, the Cherisher of All the worlds, the Friend, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

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

**ETHICS OF ISLAM.**—"Imbue yourself with Divine Attributes," says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His Attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine Attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

**CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.**—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature, which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels, and leading him to the border of Divinity.

**THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN ISLAM.**—Man and woman come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainments. Islam places man and woman under the like obligations the one to the other.

**EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.**—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches and family honours are accidental things: virtue and the service of humanity are matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

**PERSONAL JUDGMENT.**—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion which, according to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

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

**SANCTITY OF LABOUR.**—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

**CHARITY.**—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others, and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.

## ISLAM & DEMOCRACY—Continued from page 13

the individual, from the moment when the individual definitely lost the notion of his own intrinsic value and the intrinsic value of others. Incidentally, we should point out that from this moment in history Muslim civilisation ceased to exist, since it was no longer based on the value of man, on the nobility with which "God had honoured him". It is perhaps reasonable to conclude that this is the fate of all countries which lose the notion of the nobility of man.

### The future of democracy in Muslim countries

And now it should be possible, if not to give a reply to our second question — since this theme has been developed in other *exposés* — at least to express an opinion on the future of democracy in Muslim and Arab countries. There has been without any doubt a renaissance of the democratic spirit in these countries. In some of them a new urge towards democratization has begun, and there have been a number of encouraging results. But generally speaking this new departure will succeed only in the measure in which it proceeds to a new evaluation of man, an evaluation in the very consciousness of man himself, so that man is raised above the level of the despot and the slave.

Only Islam is fitted to undertake this new evaluation in those countries where the social tradition has been formed with the Qur'an as its basis.

## HABIB BOURGUIBA'S SPEECH—Continued from page 18

tures, thus causing an inevitable and profound cleavage. In Tunisia, it is unthinkable that our religion should disappear, and our society lose its personality. For nothing is more precious than the religious basis of our civilisation and the spiritual values on which we have been nurtured. We believe that an evolution of religion is necessary, and we firmly reject any kind of revolution that is purely materialistic. Our chief concern is to rectify the spiritual truths, to give back to religion its driving force, and to adapt it to the realities. By doing this we shall have accomplished our mission and delivered the divine message, in conformity with the precepts of the Holy Qur'an. It is this urge to renew, to restore, to revivify, which has always inspired our activities since the day when we acquired independence.

If we have undertaken this interpretation of the Islamic precepts, in domains of the most varied kinds, it is because we are jealously attached to our religion, because we wish to keep intact its moral foundations, and preserve our future generations from the negative influence and evil efforts of certain ideological activities, well-known to many of us. Taking as our example the far-seeing action of our predecessors, we have adopted this method of religious "restoration" in order to divest the faith of certain defects, of certain retrograde aspects, which constitute hindrances to the youth of our country, who are naturally enthusiastic about modern civilisation, and thus Islam can no longer be accused of being static and lifeless, or of being reactionary. We are firmly convinced that the structures of a religion depend on men's intellectual levels. They can either let it remain in a state of stagnation and lethargy, or make it living and dynamic. Our duty is to preserve our religion, and in this reason will be our guide. Because it is founded on reason, Islam has acquired a universal scope, and has made reason the most reliable guide for all human activity. It has thus ensured its perenniality and its ability to evolve in strict harmony with reason.

In undertaking this important work of "evolutionary" interpretation, our one concern is to merit God's blessing and the peace of our conscience. And then we can address God without pride or vanity and say: "Do Thou be our Witness? We have accepted our mission and we have done our best to deliver the message. Grant us Thy pardon, and it is to Thee that we shall return."

## THE HOLY WARS—Continued from page 32

### Views of the hostile critics of the wars of the Prophet Muhammad

The later wars of the Prophet Muhammad did not differ in character from the earlier ones, and the Prophet Muhammad did not undertake a single expedition to compel any tribe or people to accept Islam. Hostile critics make a difference between the earlier and later injunctions relating to war which occur in the Holy Qur'an, and while admitting that the earlier injunction related only to defensive wars or wars undertaken to resist persecution, they assert that the later injunction laid down the principle of fighting with the unbelievers to compel them to accept Islam. But if there had been any such difference in the injunction occurring in the earlier and later chapters of the Holy Qur'an, a similar difference should have been observed in the practice of the Prophet and in his earlier and later undertakings. For it cannot be doubted that it was the first duty of the Prophet to carry out all such injunctions. The Holy Qur'an even tells the Prophet that the obligation to fight against the unbelievers lay only on him:

*"Fight thou in the way of God (i.e., to defend Islam); no soul shall be compelled to fight except thyself, and urge on the believers, haply God will restrain the fighting of the unbelievers" (4: 86).*

Hence the injunctions to fight were addressed in the first instance to the Prophet himself, and if we are unable to point out any difference between the character of his earlier and later wars, there can be no denying the conclusion that the later injunctions, like the former, related only to wars undertaken to defend the Muslim society and to resist their persecution by the unbelievers. To show that there was actually no such difference, I need only refer the reader to the Prophet's last expedition, which was undertaken in the ninth year of the Hejira (631 C.E.). This expedition is known as the campaign of Tabúk, and the larger part of the ninth chapter, in fact the whole of it from the 38th verse to the end, is devoted to it. It was in this battle that those who stayed behind and did not join the Prophet's standard against the enemies of Islam were termed as hypocrites against whom the Prophet was commanded to "strive strenuously", as remarked previous to this. Being the last of the Prophet's campaigns, it may be taken as the most typical of all the Muslim holy wars. We have, therefore, to see whether this expedition was meant to compel any tribe to accept Islam or whether it was to meet an attack of the enemy. To show this, I need not weary the reader by long quotations from historical works, as the two marginal notes made by Muir in his *Life of Mahomet*, London 1861, "Gathering of Roman feudatories on Syrian border", and, "Mahomet projects counterexpedition. Autumn A.H. ix", are sufficient to prove that the expedition was defensive.

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