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The Message Of Eid - ul - Fitr

All the actions of a Muslim are orientated towards earning the good pleasure of God. This applies to his fasting as it does to his festivals and festivities.

The two main festivals of Islam undoubtedly possess profound religious significance. The festival of Eid-ul-Adha commemorates that supreme act of devotion by Patriarch Abraham who was readily willing to sacrifice his first-born in order to fulfil the will of God.

The other important Islamic festival is Eid-ul-Fitr. Literally, it means the Festival of the Breaking of the Fast, and is therefore essentially for those who have fasted in the month of Ramadan.

Fasting is for the purpose of developing a sound Islamic character. The virtues of discipline, patience and regularity in the observance of one's duties should leave a lasting, beneficial and invaluable effect on the life of a Muslim and his community.

But Islam is not pure rigour. There are avenues for a Muslim to enjoy a certain freedom in an atmosphere of warmth, cordiality and affection. Eid is such an occasion where a Muslim can be festive yet with a sense of God-consciousness and dignity.

There are times, however, when the serenity of Eid is marred by unhealthy disruptions from both within and without. Many non-Muslims are either unaware of or have ignored the fact that Eid is basically a religious festival and have exploited and polluted it with practices of revelry and libertine gaiety.

Some Muslims also contribute to the desecration of this festival by allowing these practices to continue unabated and also in the manner in which they themselves sometimes celebrate Eid; for example, when questioned by non-Muslims about Eid, some reply that it is a Muslim Christmas!

THE CRISIS IN EDUCATION

During the course of his recent statements on government plans for the future of education in Trinidad, the Prime Minister, Dr. Eric Williams, said:

'If a national model is firmly established and Government policy objectives clearly stated, it is very likely that, given adequate time, support and advice, these (denominational) organisations can conform to the national model...'

Although earlier he had paid tribute to the contribution of denominational schools, his statements clearly showed a decided preference for evolving a unified national policy on education and reducing to a minimum the role of the denominational organisations. This is of course in keeping with a growing secularization process. Some would even suggest that it is an indication of the growing threat of totalitarianism, trends of which are becoming more and more ominous in the Caribbean, in Guyana and Grenada for example.

In practice, any government plan to have a unified education system would not involve, however, any drastic changes but would merely be in the nature of a mopping up operation. For, the degree of governmental influence in the assisted schools (in such key areas as curriculum programming, the selection and placing of students, the control of staff etc) has already brought about the practical merging of denominational schools into the mainstream of national policy.

In the case of Muslim schools, government influence and constraints have been a contributory factor in these schools not really fulfilling the purpose for which they were established, namely, the imparting of an education based on Islamic

principles and the evolving of a distinctively Muslim personality. Another major factor, of course is the lack of Islamic vision and knowledge and the sheer incompetence on the part of existing Muslim Educational Boards so far as the running of specifically Islamic institutions are concerned.

There is an acknowledged crisis in education which is facing the country as a whole. Perhaps the main problem is not the fate of Common Entrance Examinations, Junior Secondary schools or school building programmes and facilities. These are of course major issues. But what seems to have gone wrong is a veritable loss of direction, a lack of appreciation of the type of individual the education system is supposed to produce. At the heart of the problem really is the division of life into the secular and the religious and the growing importance attached to the former. The solution lies in a totally integrated approach to education and not one where 'religion' is pigeon-holed into one or two periods in a school's curriculum.

How this integrated approach is to be achieved remains the big problem facing educationists and in particular Muslim educationists. And it is a problem which has to be tackled urgently.

The proposed Conference on Education being organised by the ASJA Religious and Social Services Committee can be a very timely one. One issue the Conference would have to give serious attention to is whether full participation in national educational policies would serve the needs of the community or whether it may be necessary to evolve a truly independent and alternative education system within the Islamic framework of knowledge.

Egypt - Israel Agreement

ACCORD AND DISCORD

The recent agreement between Egypt and Israel that not only 'the conflict between them' but 'in the Middle East' as a whole shall not be resolved by military force but by peaceful means' was as profound a development as the creation of the 'Government of Israel' over 27 years ago.

The agreement is the first quasi-formal recognition of the 'fact' of the Israeli state by an Arab government. Although several Arab leaders in the past—including Gamal Abdel Nasser—was willing to recognise Israel, strong feeling in the Arab world prevented them from committing the great act of treachery. For this indeed is how the recognition of the alien, imperialistic, racist settler state that has successively expanded its borders in 1948, 1956, 1965 and 1972 and displaced millions of Palestinians has been considered. Egypt, by this agreement has withdrawn from the Pan-Arab front and given up the 'sacred cause' of the uprooted Palestinian people. It is expected that Syria and Jordan would follow suit in the not too distant future.

The details of the present agreement need not concern us here. (For these, see *Impact International*, Vol. 5 No. 17). What seems obvious is that for every apparent Egyptian gain or Israeli 'concession', the Israelis have chalked up numerous benefits and assurances from the U.S. government. (After all, the agreement was negotiated by America's top Jew, none other than Henry Kissinger himself).

For example, the Israeli giving up of the Rodeis oilfields in the Sinai is counteracted by a U.S. promise to finance the building of emergency oil storage facilities in Israel and should the need arise even to supply Israel from her own reserves.

Also, behind the buffer zones created, the Israelis can have unlimited troops and armaments while the Egyptians can only have a permitted maximum of 8,000 men, 75 tanks and 60 artillery pieces on the west bank of the Suez Canal.

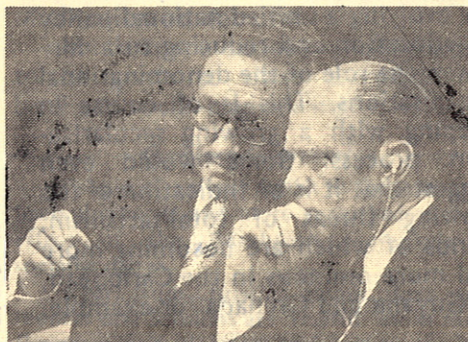
Topping it all is the now no longer 'secret' US assurances to be responsible for Israel's energy, economy and defence needs on an annual basis, supplying it with the latest nuclear technology and weaponry that could be effective up to a few miles from Madina in Saudi Arabia. The people of the United States cannot be aware of the tremendous burdens they are letting themselves in for.

The next stage in these peace moves would be to get separate agreements with

Syria and Jordan. Although this would give Israel the pleasure of having its position recognised, it is unlikely that it would satisfy the ambitions of this expansionist state, for the Zionists who believe in Eretz Israel still have considerable influence.

The Israeli-Sinai accord has naturally produced a lot of discord in the Arab world. Vehement disagreement has naturally come from the Palestinians, who are now more vulnerable than ever. Agreement has come from some rather unusual quarters—from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Foreign Minister has said his government appreciated the efforts of the US Secretary of State to end the problem between the Arabs and Israel. Such a statement could hardly have come while King Faysal was alive. Perhaps that's why he was assassinated.

Certainly, the agreement would not bring lasting peace to the area. Such peace cannot be achieved until the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people are recognised. And this cannot be done so long as the present state of Israel exists.



Plotting.

ALL DEVELOPMENT AND NO POLITICS OR RELIGION IN INDONESIA

The news from Indonesia present a grim picture. The government, under the leadership of General Suharto, appears to be making concerted efforts to curb the activities of Islamic organisations which have been infiltrated from within.

Permission for a students' meeting has to be obtained from the authorities. At one meeting, the authorities prohibited the Islamic Students Association of Indonesia from discussing 'politics'. They were allowed to discuss 'Religion'. When asked if the Qur'an was alright, the reply was 'yes'—'if

THE MUSLIM STANDARD, OCTOBER 1975

you don't discuss the parts dealing with 'politics'.

Many arrests have been made all over Indonesia of youth and student leaders, also of preachers. 'Politics' is also forbidden from the mimbar in the mosque although it is alright to talk about development and the Pancasila (the five state principles).

Was this the Indonesia that Eric Williams was referring to in his Point Fortin speech some time ago?

SUDAN'S FIFTEENTH COUP REPERCUSSIONS

Lt.-Col. Hasan Husayn 'Uthman's two-hour coup on September 5 was the 15th coup attempted in the Sudan since the coming into power of Major General Gaffar el-Numayri. Eight of these were officially admitted and three had ended in bloodshed.

Evidently, the regime has outlived its credibility and is there because it is propped up from outside. Some observers feel that the present upheaval is likely to bring the communists back to the fore. The unrelenting politics of attrition seems now to threaten not only the economic future and social stability of Sudan but also its territorial integrity.

Sudan is the largest country in Africa.

ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY FUND

The Permanent Committee of the Islamic Solidarity Fund meeting in Cairo last month considered outstanding proposals to establish Islamic universities in Niger and Uganda. It also discussed proposals to support Islamic Institutes in Turkey and the International Islamic News Agency, IINA.

Other proposals related to strengthening Islamic solidarity, supporting Muslim youth activities and financial assistance to some drought-stricken areas in Africa.

The fund which has an initial capital of 50 million dollars is expected to be raised in due course to 350 million dollars.

BISHOP CRITICISES FAMILY PLANNING

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Accra has criticised family planning programmes as being more or less leading to promiscuity. The introduction of various types of contraceptives is breeding immorality among Ghanaians, particularly the youth, said the Bishop.

Due to world-wide inflation and shortage of foreign exchange, Ghana is permitting only four charter flights for Hajj this year.

ISLAM - A MESSAGE AND A METHOD

ZABAR BAKSH

The 13th Annual Convention of the Muslim Student Association of North America and Canada was held at the University of Toledo, U.S.A. from 29 August to 1 September 1975.

The four-day Convention began with Juma Prayers on Friday 29 August 1975. It was attended by more than two thousand (2000) delegates from all over North America and Canada. Trinidad was represented by the President General of ASJA and the Secretary General of T & TMYO.

EFFICIENT PLANNING

The Convention committee taught us a lesson in Planning I will always remember. Everything was thought of and duties were assigned to different individuals who executed these with precision and a sense of dedication. The whole compound of this University Campus was alive and buzzing with activity.

Persons were put in charge of transportation, catering, registration, baby sitting, bazaar and book shops, Conference rooms, public address systems, overseas guests, sign posting information, cleaning, and every other thing that will make more than 2000 men, women and children spend a very happy weekend Islamically as one family. This was no easy achievement with the limited manpower and resources available to the Convention Committee. May Allah bless these young men for their foresight and imagination.

MAJOR POINTS DISCUSSED

In addition to the efficient preparation, the Convention committee could not have chosen a more appropriate theme at this moment in the history of the Muslim Student Association, namely —

'The Islamisation Process — its challenges and realisation.'

Some of the major points emerging from the discussions were:

1. That the Islamisation process can only come about with a proper knowledge of the Koran, Sunnah and Seerah of the Prophet of Islam.

2. That a translation of this knowledge in the practical life-style of every conscious Muslim is an essential ingredient on the Islamic road to change. (That knowledge should only be for action).

3. That the Islamic method of this Islamisation process which was shown and exemplified by the Noble Prophet must be ascertained and followed as far as possible, bearing in mind some changes to cater for changes in time.

4. That Islam is both a message and a method which has laid down its own methodology. Since this is good for all times, it must of necessity, have certain fixed and certain flexible aspects. The fixed aspects cannot be interfered with and they form the bedrock of the Islamisation process or the framework of operation which sets the limits and the standard for doing things according to the dictates of Allah and as practised by the Prophet, peace be upon him.

The flexible aspect, on the other hand, leave room or the details and other essential ingredients that might be required because of time and space dimensions, improvement of man, his knowledge and his environment, and other such circumstances providing, however, that the boarders outlined in the fixed aspect above are not infringed in any way. An example of the fixed aspect is that any Islamic call must begin with a call to Tawheed, simply because this was the way of the messenger.

Tawheed implies a proper understanding of the oneness of His powers, His attributes, His likes and dislikes and that mankind should only submit voluntarily to this will and and sovereignty rather than the

will and sovereignty of man over man. It was therefore, not a call to political reform, moral reform or any such thing, but a call to an understanding of the Creator, the relationship of mankind to Him, and the purpose of life in this world with reward or punishment in the hereafter.

5. That in any single community it would be better if only one movement existed, co-ordinating and controlling the efforts of the Dawah. However, where there are more than one group or organisation or individual that are conscious of their duties with respect to this Call, then it is desirable that such groups, organisations, or individuals should co-operate with each other in the work that is at hand.

6. That any Islamic effort must be properly 'planned'. Planning here has a special meaning like most concept values in Islam, though it refers to those things that one normally thinks about when we talk about planning. It also specifically refers, in this context, to the plan, method, strategies and the divine way pointed out for the deliverance of mankind.

7. That the Islamic community must cease to be followers, and once again become leaders and pace-setters in all walks of life. That the Islamic norms, patterns and way of life must become the order of the day rather than apeing the customs, values and practise of taghoot (anti-Divine forces).

There were many, many more points that were discussed. It was the acceptable view that the Divine Way given in the Koran and Sunnah must be re-instated in the lives of man as shown by the Messenger. Similar results could be achieved today if one adopted the path followed by the Prophet of Islam.

THE NATION OF ISLAM Muslims or Not?

ALYASA ABDULLAH

Since the death of Elijah Muhammad, there have been some 'changes' in the principles of the 'Nation of Islam' and rumours are that the 'Black Muslims' as they are popularly known are turning in the direction of Islam—the Islam that was taught and practised by the Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, the last and final messenger whom God in His wisdom sent for the guidance and mercy of mankind.

An analysis of the alleged 'changes' will show, however, that the Nation of Islam has not undergone any fundamental change in its ideology and programme such as would bring them into the fold of Islam and make them members of the world Muslim Ummah (community).

It was hoped that with a change of leadership, there would follow likewise a change in the basic principles in the organisation's programme, considering that the styled 'spiritual leadership', Wallace Fard Muhammad, the son of Elijah attended one of the oldest Islamic institutions, the Azhar university in Egypt.

Indeed in his address to the American people, Wallace did outline plans for change that would create a 'rebirth' or a 'resurrection' which would give the organisation a new image and bring it closer towards establishing ideological relations with the global Muslim community. He has, for example, declared that the whites are no longer 'devils' and that membership of the 'Nation of Islam' would be open to them and all others. The door however is only 'slightly ajar' and not wide open.

Some modifications in the nature of their basic principles have taken place but these appear quite confusing there being no clarity as to what is Islam and what is not. For example, they have refuted the Christian doctrine of the Trinity but have reinstated it by a 'symbolical interpretation'. There is frequent use of symbolism in their message giving one the feeling that their foundation is without stability and full of mystery and that their beliefs are so flexible and vague that they can give almost any interpretation to suit the occasion.

If we examine their fundamental principles and their 'new beliefs' we can ascertain whether they can be described as Muslims or not and whether they have progressed to Islam or not. This will determine for us our relationship with them.

To do this we need to note that the beliefs and practices of a Muslim are enshrined in the Qur'an—the last revealed Guidance from God which was sent to Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, for the guidance of mankind. If a person is said to possess or hold fast to fundamental beliefs and practices which are not found in the Qur'an and which run counter to basic Qur'anic teachings, then that person cannot claim any relationship with Islam nor can he claim membership of the Muslim community. That person therefore remains outside the fold of Islam. With this established principle in mind, we will proceed with our analysis, letting the Qur'an decide for us whether they are Muslims or not.

Among the present beliefs of the Nation of Islam are that the Creator, Sovereign, Sustainer and Nourisher of the Universe—ALLAH—is a man who appeared in the physical form and person of Wallace

Fard Muhammad in July 1930. He is 'the long awaited "Messiah" of the Christians and the "Mahdi" of the Muslims'. His purpose for coming is to redeem the lost and found tribe of Shabazz (the Black Nation) and that He (Allah) spoke face to face with Elijah Muhammad appointing him a warner to this tribe.

The above beliefs clearly run counter to the teachings of the Qur'an which tells us about the nature of God and His attributes so that man may worship Him and not be deceived into false worship by funny notions about the Creator. The Qur'an says:

"Say, He is Allah, the One and Only God, the Eternal, the Absolute. He begetteth not, nor is He begotten and there is none like unto Him."

—Sura 112 : 1-4.

It again says:

"No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision. He is above all comprehension. Yet He is acquainted with all things." 6 : 103.

There is no need to explain the meaning of these ayaat (verses) for one can clearly see that they completely refute the theory of God in human form.

As to the question of Allah speaking face to face with Elijah Muhammad, the following verse is relevant:

"It is not fitting for a man, that Allah should speak to Him (face to face) except by Inspiration, or from behind a veil or by the sending of a messenger to reveal with Allah's permission what He wills for He is the Most High, the Most Wise."

—Sura 42 : 81.

On the question relating to the alleged prophethood of Elijah Muhammad, we may cite the following verse:

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Apostle



Wallace D. Muhammad
"Supreme Minister of the Nation of Islam"

of God, and the seal of the prophets. And Allah has full knowledge of all things."

—Sura 33 : 40.

The Nation of Islam has thus differed with the Muslims on two fundamental beliefs relating to the nature of God and the finality of the prophethood of Muhammad, upon whom be peace. They also differ with Muslims regarding a third fundamental, belief in Akhirah—the Hereafter or life after death and the Resurrection.

According to their official organ—Muhammad Speaks—the Nation of Islam believes not in the physical resurrection of man but in a mental resurrection. Elijah Muhammad in his Message to the Blackman states that there is no such thing as dying and coming up out of the grave... "when you are dead you are DEAD". This is the accepted belief of unbelievers for the Qur'an says: "They the unbelievers say: 'What! when we are reduced to bones and dust, should we really be raised up to be a new creation?' Say (Muhammad): 'Nay, be ye stones or iron or created matter which in your minds is the hardest to be raised up! Yet shall ye be raised up!'" (17 : 49-51)

• From this brief analysis, we can see that the Nation of Islam has no relationship at all with Islam or the Muslims and have remained as they were previously, outside the fold of Islam and therefore NON-MUSLIMS. For a denial of any one of Islam's fundamental principles stated above, automatically puts one outside the pale of Islam.

The leaders of the Muslim Ummah (community) and the Muslims in general should be very watchful and critical of these deceptive moves. For the Nation of Islam in relation to the Muslim community can play only one role—that of a disruptive and disintegrating force. If the Muslims, through negligence, apathy and acquiescence allow them to infiltrate the Ummah, then they will always pose a threat to its stability, unity and harmony just like the Ahmadis and the Qadianis represent a cancerous threat to the existence and integrity of the Muslim Ummah.

ISLAMIC STUDIES SYLLABUS IN OUTLINE

The following is an outline elementary syllabus on Islamic Studies which has been prepared specifically for evening and week-end madrasahs or maktabas. The syllabus is being successfully followed in some such schools abroad and it is hoped that it could be of benefit here in Trinidad.

LEVEL I (Minimum age 5 years)

1. Bismillahi-r Rahmani-r Rahim, its meaning and uses
2. The meaning of the words Islam and Muslim
3. The Shahaadah and its meaning in English
4. Surah al Fatihah and its meaning in English
5. The seven articles of Faith
6. The five Pillars of Islam
7. The names of the five daily prayers
8. The four revealed Books
9. The performance of Wudu
10. Stories from the life of the Prophet, peace be upon him, taken mainly from the Meccan period
11. Some Muslim habits in daily life: manner of greeting, eating, speaking, cleanliness etc.
12. The Arabic Alphabet

LEVEL II (Minimum age 7 years)

Required to know above.

1. Intensive course in reading and writing Arabic, after which the student should be able to read any passage from the Qur'an. Memorizing of last five surahs of the Qur'an
2. Wudu and things which make it void
3. The performance of Prayer, including Adhan and Iqaamat
4. The months of the Muslim calendar and important dates and occasions.
5. The life of the Prophet, peace be upon him—Meccan period and Hijrah
6. Concepts of Halal and Haraam
7. The articles of faith in some detail
8. Some project work - e.g. the uses and structure of the mosque

LEVEL III (Minimum age 10 years)

Required to know above. Emphasis again on fluency in reading the Qur'an

1. Complete reading of the last Juz' of the Qur'an
2. Memorization of the last 10 surahs
3. Ten attributes of Allah
4. The Pillars of Islam in some detail
5. The life of the Prophet, peace be upon him: Medinan period to conquest of Mecca, Farewell Khutbah and completion of mission
6. Muslim behaviour (akhlaaq): Faith, modesty, courage, kindness, brotherhood, truthfulness, generosity etc.

7. Memorizing of ten ahadith of the Prophet, peace be upon him.

LEVEL IV (Minimum age 12 years)

1. Reading of the Qur'an from beginning with a view to completion. Revelation, arrangement, purpose of the Qur'an.
2. Memorizing of 20 short surahs with translation of and some commentary (tafseer) on each surah
3. Tawheed — 20 sifaat of Allah - Iman, Kufr, Shirk, Nifaaq
4. Muslim concept of Reward and Punishment
5. Ghusl—manner of performing and when
6. Salaat—various types and importance. Five daily prayers, Jum'a, Eid, Tarawih, Janaza, Safar, Tahajjud, etc.
7. Fasting—Significance and details
8. Zakaat—Significance and details
9. Hajj—Significance and details
10. Jihaad—
11. Duas for special occasions
12. Muslim institutions in outline associated with birth, circumcision, marriage, divorce, inheritance, waqf, the mosque etc.
13. Social relations—responsibilities and relationship to environment
—Duties to children, parents, relatives, orphans, the needy, elderly etc.
—Relationship to environment inculcating a sense of Islamic values on the basis of what is Halal, Haram, Makruh, Mustahabb, Mubah in particular situations at school, and regarding such things as dress, food, relations between the sexes entertainment, etc.
14. Life of the Prophet, peace be upon him, in some detail.
15. Life of the Sahabas.
16. Heritage of Islam—Arts, Sciences, Architecture etc. (Project Work).
17. The spread of Islam. The unity of the Muslim Ummah.

The reading list that accompanies the above syllabus will be published in the next issue of *The Muslim Standard*, in sha Allah.

The message of Islam is universal. It addresses itself to the entire human race and accepts all human beings in its fold—whatever be their race, colour, language or nationality. It is the religion of equality—all followers of Islam stand at par, enjoy equal rights and privileges and make one ideological fraternity. Islam stands, not for life-denial, but for life-fulfilment. It presents a complete code of life which provides guidance for all fields of human existence—whether they be moral and spiritual or material and mundane, whether they relate to personal or social and political aspects of living, and whether they are concerned with national or international areas of human action. Islam's appeal is to human reason and conscience. It creates an openness of mind and heart, cultivates a critical and empirical attitude and disapproves of bigotry and dogmatism. Islam is both a missionary religion and an education force for it invites the entire humanity to seek the blessings of the Divine Bounty that is Islam.

The mission of Muhammad, being Islam in practice, is a complete revolution to liberate humanity—a revolution that encompasses all aspects of human life and liberates man from all kinds of tyranny.

The mission of Muhammad is a revolution against the tyranny of polytheism. The tyranny of polytheism is one that has deep roots in human history despite the fact that many prophets of God—from Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus to Muhammad—have brought messages for the guidance of mankind expounding the eternal religion of God. These messages all teach that God is Perfect, beyond similarity and partnership. Everytime people deviate from the eternal religion of God (monotheism or belief in one God), they succumb to the tyranny of polytheism in its many forms—the worship of idols, other men, saints, wealth and possessions. Islam liberates man from such false

worship and directs him to the worship of the One God—the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe.

The mission of Muhammad was a revolution against the tyranny of race prejudice and colour prejudice. It declares that all men are from the same origin, thus establishing the unity of mankind and destroying the hated tyranny of racial prejudice. It has established one measure of human worth, which rests not on the colour of skin, birth, or language, but exclusively on the fear of God and obedience to Him, and doing good to people.

O People, we have created you from a man and a woman, We have made you nations and tribes that may know each other. Indeed, the most honoured from amongst you in the sight of God is he who fears God most. (The Qur'an, 49:13)

And the Prophet said: 'Whoever raises the call for tribalism is not one of us. Whoever fights in the name of tribalism is not one of us.'

This tyranny—the tyranny of racial prejudice, still plagues those societies which have not been guided by the mission of Muhammad. The problem of the blackman and the Red Indians exists in the United States, and the subjection of black by white has reached critical proportions in South Africa and Rhodesia. In this century the Nazi philosophy of Aryan superiority caused immeasurable suffering to all humanity. And this day the state of Israel stands like a thorn in the side of the Arab nation in the name of the myth of the Chosen People.

The mission of Muhammad is also a revolution against fanaticism. It declares religious freedom in its greatest form.

NO COMPULSION IN RELIGION:

What is right is distinct from what is wrong. Thus whoever disbelieves in the false gods and believes in God, has indeed grasped the most trustworthy

handhold that never breaks. (The Qur'an, 2:256)

O Mankind, reverence your Guardian Lord, who created you from a single person, created of his like, his mate, and from them twain scattered countless men and women. (The Qur'an, 4:1)

The tyranny of religious fanaticism was thus destroyed. The

ISLAM A LIBERATION FOR

protection of freedom of conviction and freedom of worship became a duty incumbent on every Muslim to the upholders of other religions in the Muslim domain. And when war was legitimised in Islam the Qur'an explained the reason for it:

To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight) because they are wronged and verily God is most powerful for their aid. (they are) those who have been expelled from their homes in defiance of right (for no cause) except that they say, our Lord is God. Did not God check one set of people by means of another there would surely have been pulled down monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which the name of God is commemorated in abundant measure.

(The Qur'an, 22:39-40).

In this verse, the monasteries,

the churches and the synagogues are mentioned before the mosques, to emphasise the necessity of their protection. Furthermore, the freedom thus instituted goes to the point of protecting the polytheist so long as he is incapable of harming the Muslims in their religion. This is so because he is excused for being ignorant.

AM ATING RCE

If one of the pagans asks thee for asylum grant it to him so that he may hear the word of God and then escort him to where he can be secure. That is because they are men without knowledge. (The Qur'an, 9:69)

This is the zenith of tolerance for which humanity has been striving in many countries.

The mission of Muhammad was a revolution against the tyranny of social stratification. Everything might have been acceptable to the leaders of the Quraish (the leading tribe in Mecca where Muhammad's mission began) except the abolition of their custom of pride in their genealogy and in their fathers and grandfathers. It was not above the intelligence of these leaders to see the futility of their religious beliefs, the stupidity of their convictions about their idols, and it was not beyond them to realise that

Muhammad's call was immeasurably better than their religion. Yet they resisted his mission by every force they possessed. Why? Because what he called for was equality, the destruction of their overlordship, social differences, pride of genealogy and inherited possessions.

1400 years have elapsed since the passing away of the Prophet Muhammad, but humanity still struggle in its uphill climb to those noble horizons which Muhammad achieved in reality, and not simply in aspiration.

The mission of Muhammad was a revolution against the tyranny of injustice, transgression and dictatorship—a revolution which deprived rulers of all special privileges and of all self-imposed authority, because it made everyone dependent on the Shariah, the Law of God, and it gave the nation the right to choose whoever is to implement the principles of the Shariah.

By taking the right of legislation from man, and returning it to God alone, no human, whether individual, group or class, can have any opportunity of imposing its rules on others. No one else has the competence to legislate except on the basis of the Shariah of God, and God is the Lord of all. In obeying the laws of God, no one will feel that he is subservient to the will of man. In this way all are equal because they bow before the one God, Allah.

Thus the system which was brought down by Muhammad stands unique among all systems known to mankind. It stands unique in the fact of achieving complete equality in the system of government and the total destruction of dictatorship by an individual or a class in matters of legislation.

As for justice in the execution of the Shariah, Islam has reached the summit to which humanity can hardly aspire at the moment.

Let not the hatred of others to

you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice: that is next to piety and fear God.(5:9)

This is absolute justice, which is not swayed by love or hatred. Its principles are not changed by affection or dislike—the sort of justice which is not influenced by blood relationships or feuds.

Under this type of justice all are treated equally and all enjoy the same rights without regard to family social position, money or influence. Outsiders enjoy the same rights even if there is enmity between them and the Muslims. This is the highest point of justice which no national or international law has yet reached.

Those who doubt our statement should review the justice that the strong nations mete out to the weak ones, and justice that warring armies mete out to each other. Let them look at the justice of the white man to the black and the red men in the United States; the justice of the white to the coloureds in South Africa. These are current problems known to everyone.

The most important aspect of Islamic justice is that it is not simply theory, but an actuality which was realized in the Muslim society, and which can be realised in any Islamic oriented system.

The mission of Muhammad was and still is a revolution against the tyranny of man—tyranny of man over woman. For it was this revolution which established for the woman her human rights in a noble form at a time when the intellectual circles of Rome were engaged in discussion whether the woman had a soul or not.

Muhammad ibn Abdullah (peace be on him) struggled all his life to destroy tyranny in all its forms, whether in the sphere of the spirit or in the sphere of matter. Humanity, in its long history has never known another man who has accomplished so much to its welfare in such a short span of time.

It is Ramadan. The scene is the Croisee in San Juan—a place that is known as the 'City That Never Sleeps'. The Croisee is a strange mixture of posh business places and run-down rickety road-side stalls—overspills from the San Juan market. There is always a variety of smells (fish mingling with Indian incense) and noises. There are people, and stray dogs roaming in bands, very much as beggars do. Also moving in a band is a group of young boys about nine to eleven years old. They can be seen at all hours of the day and night. I get to talking with them. Here is how the conversation with one of them runs:

A: Son, what is your name?

K: Keith Hamilton.

A: How old are you Keith?

K: Eleven years.

A: Where do you live?

K: I live in the Croisee.

A: How do you mean you live in the Croisee? Then where do you sleep at night?

K: I live in the Croisee and sleep underneath tables in the market.

A: Where are your parents?

K: My mother is dead and my father is in the States.

A: Where did your father leave you when he went to the States and why are you allowed to roam the streets like this day and night?

K: My father left me with a lady, and the lady only beat me up and does not give me anything and I have to do all the work.

A: How do you eat, Keith?

K: I beg people for money and if they do not give me I pick up bottles and sell.

A: Have you eaten for the day? (4.30 pm)

K: No, nothing at all.

A: Can you read or write?

K: No.

A: Have you ever gone to school?

K: No.

A: What do you want to do when you grow up?

K: A electrician.

A: Where are you going from here?

K: I don't know

Keith and his friends Kenny Alleyne and Ian Fergusson were dressed in torn, dirty clothes and were bare-footed. They all told similar stories. Either one parent is dead or both are in some foreign country seeking their fortune.

I have since spoken to people who know these boys and many of them have said that the boys are naturally bad! I suppose it is an easy way of dismissing the problem. And problem it certainly is!

No doubt there are more boys of the same age in different parts of the country who find themselves in a similar situation.

Who is responsible? Is it mainly the parents? Or is it that our society as a whole has become callous and inhuman?

Most important, what can be done to help these wretched boys? Where are they going from here? Where can they go?

Where do they go from here?

Ashraf Abdul Majid al-Khudri

Sex, Morality and the Family

"Paradise lies at the feet of thy mother."

The above statement was made about 1,400 years ago by Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace. To the non-Muslim the statement may appear meaningless, but to Muslims it carries immense weight when viewed in its correct perspective.

All that is basic in a child's life is literally assimilated at the feet of the mother. He who is fortunate enough to have a mother's attention at that tender age is truly blessed.

An infant is an empty receptacle when born. It is sinless and innocent. As time passes, it learns and yearns for simple affection which only a mother can best give. Such qualities as the fear of God, love and respect for elders, and regard for people's property are all taught and instilled in the Muslim home. The mother who spends adequate time with the child or children as is the case in a proper family, is the individual foremost in imparting these virtues. Nor is the role of the father overlooked. The Prophet, peace be upon him, has stated that "the best gift a

father can give to his son is good manners". Child rearing from an Islamic standpoint is thus a duty vested in both the parents.

The solution to many of these problems lies in establishing and preserving the sanctity of married life. Islam advocates marriage as the only and the best form of sexual association that a sensible society could adopt.

Today in our so-called modern and advanced world, conditions especially in the Western world are quite adverse to the creation and fostering of sound and healthy family relationships. Family disunity and individualism are prevalent on a global scale.

Here in the West Indies, we see mothers, especially African mothers, having to be both providers for and comforters to their children. These situations occur in homes that lack men as providers and father figures. Due to the promiscuous nature of

Hakim Abdullah Muhammad
Officer at St. Michael's Home
for Boys, Diego Martin

many of the 'lower income bracketers' one often finds women having three or more children for different partners with none of them giving financial or any tangible aid to the women or their offsprings.

Automatically these women are forced into menial work and family life then disintegrates. The time that the woman should have been spending in moulding the character of the child is spent on the job. On returning home she has to attend to domestic duties and has little or no time for the children. Such a situation if not rectified becomes chronic and perennial.

Children in such homes begin to feel unwanted and eventually drift into delinquency. Truancy, stealing and a total disregard for others' property are all traits of these socially handicapped and unfortunate children. If apprehended by the law, they face institutionalisation. This may either help children to better themselves or worsen their

The caller rang. The teacher picked up the phone.

Caller: Who's speaking?

Teacher: (Knowing that it is the caller who must first identify himself). To whom do you want to speak?

Caller: (In an insistent tone). Who's speaking?

Teacher: To whom do you want to speak?

Caller: Are you a teacher at the school?

Teacher: Yeah.

Caller: What's your name?

Teacher: (Realising the ridiculousness of the situation).
Tom Jones.

The caller was a man in high authority. The next thing the teacher knew was that his appointment was being terminated! He is now on the transfer list.

Some humanitarian please give him a job.

All this happened at a Muslim school. And why should we be incredulous, or if we are concerned with justice, even furious? After all

condition. Children's institutions are places where a child learns other vices vices that they probably never knew existed!

The solution to many of these problems lies in establishing and preserving the sanctity of married life. Islam advocates marriage as the only and the best form of sexual association that a sensible society could adopt. Almighty God abhors fornication. Sex is, according to Islam, a sacred, physical and reproductive function performed by people bound together in marriage. It is not to be abused nor wantonly used even in marriage. It has its time and place.

"Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty, and say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty."

Chastity in Islam is not a one-sided affair for women alone. It is for both sexes.

HERE & THERE

ON AUTHORITY + TEACHER FIRED
OVER TELEPHONE + MUSLIMS AND
THE NATIONAL PLEDGE + IMAM ON
PUBERTY + SWINE AND CHEESE

we are constantly being told to respect, honour, and obey authority. The lesson is drummed in almost as soon as we start cutting teeth.

On Monday 6 September, Universal Children's Day, all the children at our schools whether under-nourished or with bright shining faces would be required to echo the solemn National Pledge:

I will honour my parents, my teachers, my leaders and those in authority.

It must be some basically insecure adult who framed that pledge.

(Incidentally, there are people who are fond of quoting the Qur'anic verse which means 'Obey God and obey the messenger and those in authority from among you.' But the verse does continue: 'And if you differ on a matter, then refer it to God and the messenger.')

But back to the pledge. It is otherwise a very difficult thing to follow. Take the bit in it about serving God and country at the same time. This should at least evoke a lengthy thesis on Religion and Nationalism. Or the part about working together with people 'of every creed' for 'the greater happiness of all'. That's why perhaps we've got so many Muslim girls marrying non-Muslims.

Still on authority, one wonders where a top Imam from the South got his authority for saying from the mimbar recently that the age of puberty is reached between 15 and 18 years. Incidentally the Hanafi position is that the minimum age for attaining puberty in the case of girls is 9 years and in the case of boys 12 years and everyone is presumed to have attained puberty at 15).

The Imam's ruling may however be

valid as a possible explanation of why we are suffering from under-development or retarded development of some sort.

Finally, is there an authority or some knowledgeable person in Islamic Shari'ah who would comment on the following letter which was sent in reply to a query from a sister in the U.S. to the Kraft (Cheese) Consumer Service.

Dear Ms. Lewis,
Thank you for your recent phone call inquiring about the ingredients in Kraft Natural Limburger Cheese. Following is a list of ingredients included in our Limburger Natural cheeses: pasteurized milk, cheese cultures, salt, enzymes and calcium chloride.

You also inquired whether this product contains any animal derivatives. Many of our cheese products do contain a coagulating enzyme derived from either beef or swine. The most common method of coagulating milk is by the use of an enzyme preparation, rennet, which traditionally was made from the stomach of veal calves. Since the consumption of calves for veal has not kept the pace with the demand for rennet for the preparation of cheese, the world has developed a distinct shortage of this enzyme. Consequently a few years ago it became a common practice to mix the rennet extract from calves' stomachs with the pepsin enzyme derived primarily from the stomachs of swine.

With these facts in mind, it is almost impossible for us to assure you that any cheese product which you might purchase from Kraft is absolutely free from animal derived enzymes.

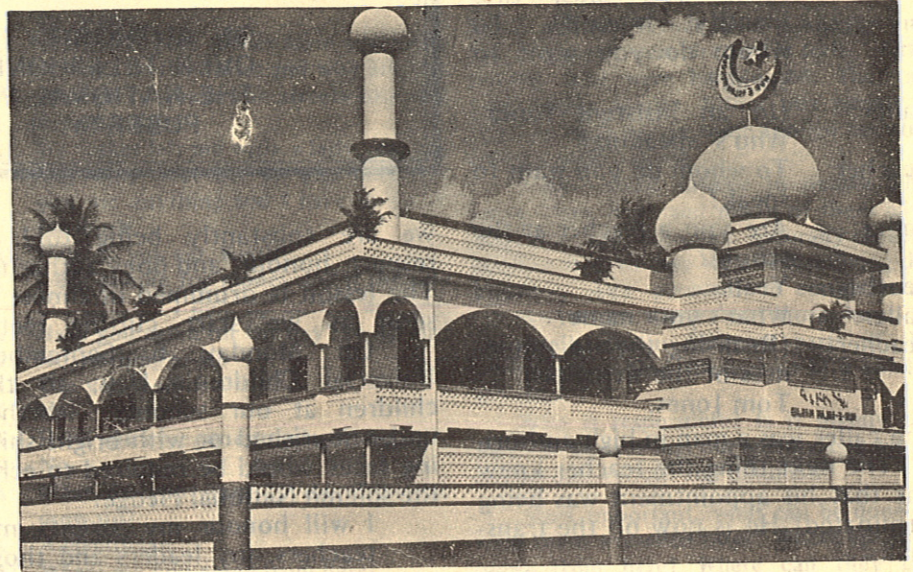
THE DAY THE IMAM RESIGNED

The resignation of Mr. Razack Ali from his position as Imam of the Nur-e-Islam Mosque and his subsequent re-instatement have left the community in a state of shock, bewilderment and even of resentment in some cases.

Imam Razack has been one of the most respected Imams in the country. He was chosen 17 years ago by the entire Jamaat to fill the position. Throughout this time he carried on his duties with devotion and selflessness. At the beginning of Ramadan, on 7 September, he chose to resign (and not simply to take a rest for a while as the Mosque Board has since put out) and unilaterally hand over his duties and his position to Hatiz Memi, a recent arrival from India.

The reasons that the Imam gave for resigning were not at all clear cut. It is fairly certain that he resigned against the dictates of his better judgement. He has been known to be deeply concerned about the lack of Islamic motivation on the part of the Mosque Board, which is headed by Kamaluddin and Sham Mohammed, and of which he has been a member. He is also at times found himself embarrassed by the type of decisions and discussions at meetings of the Board whose lengthy nature was having an affect on his health.

Since earlier this year, he had been contemplating resigning from the Imamate because of the pressure that was brought on him for reading out a notice that Arabic study sessions were to begin at the Mosque on 2 June. It was the reading of this notice that brought down the wrath of the Mosque Board on his head and he subsequently insisted that he could not in conscience bring himself to stop the reading and study of the Qur'an in the Mosque. But in his resignation speech, the Imam went back on this stand and called for



Family Mosque?

the stopping of the class 'for the sake of peace' and in order to rid himself of the 'stigma' of having read out the announcement. This took place after a four-hour long Board meeting. The Imam had finally succumbed to the dictates and pressures of the Board and given up his Islamic stand. He had compromised himself perhaps not fully realising the implications of his actions. He tried to please everybody and has ended up not pleasing anyone, perhaps not even himself.

Two days later, the Imam was re-instated by the Board. This re-instatement in fact signifies a change in the Imam's position and represents a diminution of his standing and authority. It means technically that he is no longer the Imam of the Jamaat who had elected him in the first place but the Imam of the Board which has re-instated him. The position of the Board has been correspondingly strengthened and the Jamaat as a whole has been weakened.

The Nur-e-Islam Mosque Board was initially appointed by a group of Trustees composed of members of the Muzaffarr and Mustapha families. Additions to the Board are now done on a picked basis. The Jamaat as such has little say in the running of its affairs. The Islamic principle of shura (consultation) certainly does not operate in matters relating to the affairs of the Jamaat. Defending this position, Kamaluddin Mohammed, Chairman of the Board said in a speech after Tarawih prayers on 10 September that 90% of the Jamaat were 'family' members.

The sort of stand taken by the Board's chairman is serving to undermine the spirit of brotherhood and co-operation based on Islamic values and replacing it with one based on kith and kin considerations. This is repugnant and is creating a feeling of alienation, of not belonging. It is for this reason that some brothers who have recently adopted Islam say that they do not feel

'comfortable' in the place.

The Mosque Board has since issued an expensively produced Report on the 'problem' at Nur-e-Islam. It is nonetheless a pathetic document filled with lies and obfuscation and bringing in a number of irrelevant issues while at the same time quoting the Qur'an. The Report shows among other things that the Mosque Board is unable to address itself to the real needs of the community. It merely insists on obedience to a sham 'law and authority' and is threatening court action and eviction from the Mosque. One wonders whether they are thinking of bringing in the police or the Regiment!

On a serious note, this is not the place to go into all the issues raised or to deal with the Report point by point. There are undoubtedly more important things to do. But it is worth noting that the Imam himself has admitted that there are serious misrepresentations in the Report. One correct impression the Report does portray however is that of an Imam under the subjection and domination of the Mosque Board. If there is any problem at the Mosque, let it be said that it is of the Mosque Board's own making. The Imam would be found to agree with this conclusion.

Other Jamaats in the country can learn many lessons from the situation at the Nur-e-Islam mosque. Some of these lessons are:

1. That masjids belong to God (according to a Qur'anic verse) and not to any family or group.
2. That in Islam, authority derives from the Qur'an and the Sunnah and is not something arbitrary or whimsical.
3. That imams should not compromise their principles for the sake of peace at all costs and for the sake of achieving a spurious unity. Unity must be on the basis of the Qur'an and Sunnah.
4. That the affairs of any Jamaat should be run on the Qur'anic prin-

ROUND UP Of Community News

ASJA Head On World Council of Mosques

The President General of ASJA, Shaffick M.S. Rahaman, has been elected to a 30-member World Supreme Council of Mosques in Mecca. The Council was the outcome of the 'Mosque Message Conference' which discussed:

1. The message and functions of mosques.
2. The Mosque as a centre of intellectual activity
3. Better training and status for Imams and their Assistants.
4. Planning of Mosque and ancillary facilities.

As a result of his appointment, the President General is to prepare a report on "Muslims and their plight in the Caribbean Region" to present to the Saudi authorities.

IMG Statement on 'Black Muslims'

The President General of the Islamic Missionaries Guild of the Caribbean & South America, Naseer M. Khan has issued a pamphlet entitled 'Black Muslims Still Unbelievers', in which he said, "The Black Muslims are trying to reshape their public image to gain wider respect and acceptance. Additionally, they are bidding for the Arab 'petrodollars' by soliciting the sympathy of misguided Orthodox Muslims whose support would give their organisation a semblance of authenticity."

ciple of shura (mutual consultation) and on the principle of co-operation on the basis of righteousness and piety.

It is clear that the Nur-e-Islam Jamaat has a lot of re-construction to do if the standing and authority of the Imam are to be maintained, if the principles of shura and Islamic justice are to be instituted and if, on the whole, the authority of the Qur'an and the Sunnah is to be paramount.

Big Plans at Nur-e-Islam

According to a bulletin from Nur-e-Islam Mosque Board's Public Relations Officer, Mr Zaid Mustapha, the Mosque Board is 'to embark upon two or three major projects of far reaching dimension to the Muslim community'. No further details were given.

The bulletin also states that after consultation with members of the Islamic Advisory Council, the Sadqa Fitr for this year is fixed at \$1.25 per head.

EID DINNERS

Nur-e-Islam

The San Juan Muslim Ladies Organisation, in collaboration with the Nur-e-Islam Mosque Board and the Islamic Youth Organisation, will be holding their Annual Eid Dinner at the Nur-e-Islam Mosque on Saturday 18 October at 7.30 p.m. There will be special accommodation for ladies. Tickets available from Razack Mohammed (638-3196) or members of the Ladies Organisation.

T&TMYO

The Trinidad & Tobago Muslim Youth Organisation (Youth arm of ASJA) will be holding their 11th Annual Dinner on Saturday 11 October at 7.00 pm at the West India Club, 3 Saddle Road, Maraval. Tickets are \$8.00 each.

Marabella

The Marabella Muslim Youth Organisation will be hosting their Eid Dinner on Saturday 18 October at the Marabella Mosque..

Charlottesville

The Charlottesville Islamic Youth Association will be holding their Eid Dinner on Sunday 12 October at 3.00 pm at the Charlottesville Muslim School.

comment

If the Government were a Public Company...

From recent reports by the Auditor General it would seem that there is a lot of 'monkey pants' and 'fishy business' with regard to the manner in which public money - running into millions of dollars - is being squandered in this country.

In a public Company, the Police Department would have already been called in and prosecutions might have already been laid. The Board of Directors would have been dismissed and possibly the winding up of a Company might take place. More than that, the Directors might be required to pay back Company funds which they are responsible for under their care as this would be considered a serious breach of trust in running the affairs of the Company. In matters of fraud, it is the Court's prerogative to look behind the veil of incorporation. Such is the gravity and seriousness of the affairs we are considering.

Can the Government dare treat these affairs in the same manner as they would treat a public Company under similar circumstances?

Legalising Adultery

The move to have common-law unions recognised by Caribbean governments which came in a resolution of the Caribbean Workshop on Social Legislation sponsored by the University of the West Indies and the UNICEF Pre-School Child Development Project, is definitely not a solution to the existing problems of illegitimacy.

The resolution is certainly far-reaching in its implications. It will do irreparable damage to the solemnity, sanctity, stability and security of family life. It will serve to encourage and foster unhealthy and unstable relationships among our young people. It will give further rein to the West Indian man to choose this avenue rather than

proper marriage with the responsibility that this entails. It would in fact amount to a legalisation of adultery and fornication. And so on.

Certainly the problem of illegitimacy in the Caribbean is of staggering proportions. Essentially it is a direct result of the conditions obtaining under slavery. To deal with the problem is certainly not to accept and acquiesce in slave conditions. What is required is a concerted effort at moral regeneration, and to hold steadfast to the norm of marriage which is the best solution for a rational society to adopt.

The Workshop resolution is also a pointer to the state of confusion and bankruptcy of thought on the part of our would-be legislators. Faced with problems, the modern tendency is to try to abolish them by legalising them. This has been done in certain of the so-called developed countries, in the case of homosexuality, prostitution and abortion on demand. The Workshop incidentally also called for a legalisation of abortion on demand.

Much more serious thought has to be given to these attempts at legal and social engineering.

Godless Guyana?

People of various faiths in Guyana are becoming more and more perturbed at the effect of the Burnham's Government socialist drives.

Apart from Christian groups, there are reports that Muslims are 'fearful' about the Government's ideology which they say is 'Godless'. A group has come out strongly against the compulsory National Service instituted by the government to achieve its aim of the Co-operative Republic.

The Guyanese government has since stated that its policies are not directed against religion and that people are free to worship as they please and that their socialism is of a totally different brand.

Let us hope this is so because from the fate of religion and religious groups in socialist and communist countries, the people in Guyana who follow religion can expect no joy.

We may cite the total and insistent campaign against Islam and Muslims in the Soviet Union and moreso in places like China and Albania.

EID MUBARAK
TO ALL

In these times
people must have standards

THE BEST STANDARD

THE MUSLIM STANDARD

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- o Projecting Muslim standards of thought and conduct as the solution to problems.
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