

# THE MUSLIM STANDARD

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## THE HUMANITY OF JESUS

"Jesus, like all the prophets of God, is no more than an ordinary human being whom God judged to be worthy of communicating His message to the people of his time."

—pages 8 & 9.

## CHINESE COLONIZATION

They refer to it as 'Hsia Fang' or Downward Transfer

## FRAMING THE PEOPLE OR

## A CONSTITUTION

While prating about constitutional rights and freedoms, do we know what it is to be really free?

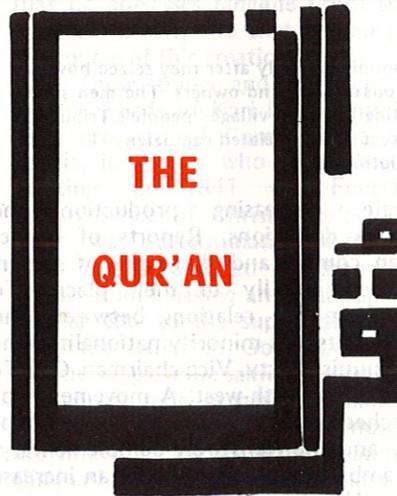
## COMMUNISM



With the spread of socialism/communism in the West Indies, it is important for followers and others to have an idea of its sources, its aims and its methods. Is it simply an economic programme and workers' control, or is it much more far-reaching?

Would you believe that Marx believed that man was his own God and that Lenin said: "We do not believe in any values above society. They are flagrant lies, and for us all values are subject to the interests of the struggle of the working class"?

## DISCOVERING



"Never has any book—not excluding the Bible—been read by so many with a comparable intensity and veneration; and never has any other book supplied to so many, and over so long a span of time, a similarly comprehensive answer to the question, "How shall I behave in order to achieve the good life in this world and happiness in the life to come."

See pages 5, 6, 7, & 8

- Six Years of the IRO  
ALL AH WE IS ONE?
- ASJA, The Community and the Nation
- SENATOR BROOME  
Of The Colonial Connection, Nationalism and Propriety in Dress
- The Magistrate & the Pastor  
'Stand up for Justice'.

pages 10 & 11

## CHINA'S EMPIRE GO WEST YOUNG MAN!

Often nowadays China is held up as the model of a progressive socialist state which is working for liberation not only in China itself but in many parts of the world. However, it is often forgotten that China, like the Soviet Union, has its own Empire, but partly because this vast empire is right on its doorsteps, it is frequently ignored.

two years. The CPR sent 600,000 settlers to Chinghai, Kansu, Ning-hsia, Sinkiang and the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region and may thousands of others were sent to Yunnan, Kweichow, western Swechwan and other southern rural minority areas. However, the result of the lack of facilities in the settlement programme of the newcomers were low

## INTERNATIONAL SURVEY

religious practices and language. So in most of the areas tense situations arose due to lack of co-operation between the newcomers and the locals. It was difficult for the young people of the nationalities to regard themselves as anything but inferior since the Hans were provided with better job allocations, computation of work points and living arrangements.

There were cases of conflict and violence over using land for crop versus grazing areas as the local ethnic population were mainly herdsmen as with the Tibetans and Mongols. Not enough was done to publicise the party's official policy on freedom of religious belief and respect for local customs, with the result that minority tradition was treated with contempt.

Inevitably, Chinese rusticated urban youth prefer assignment to a nearby suburban commune and avoid at all cost transfer to more remote areas such as Sinkiang. When they fail in their efforts they are rusticated to further remote areas where most of the Chinese ethnic minorities live.

■ June Tenfel Dreyer: 'Go West Young Han: The 'Hsia Fang' movement to China's minority areas'. Pacific Affairs, No. 2, 1975.



Land reform campaign launched by the Chinese Communists shortly after they seized power in 1949 is reported to have cost the lives of untold thousands of land-owners. The men shown here, bound together and with heads bowed, are awaiting trial by a village "people's Tribunal". Many additional thousands died or were executed in a related campaign to suppress counter-revolutionaries."

## INDONESIA

### FOREIGN AID

With international aid, Indonesia has embarked on a massive birth control programme.

Approximately US\$100 million have been invested and a further \$9 million will be spent annually. The Indonesian birth control agency has 15,000 workers with fleets of 7 jeeps and motor cycles. It has established 2,500 clinics in Java and Bali and 12,000 village stores with contraceptive supplies. Birth control is taught in schools and on the radio.

It is reported that the majority of Indonesians however see large families as an asset and are resisting the programmes so far because they hold that God is the only One who increases and decreases sustenance. It is a pity that such massive resources and energies are not being deployed to tackle some of the more pressing problems of education and social development

Below is an account of the Chinese policy of colonization or 'downward transfer' and the conflicts it has led to in the 'minority' or colonized areas. It is estimated that there are about 60 million Muslims especially in the minority areas of Sinkiang and Hansu provinces together with Mongols and other nationalities in other areas.

The goal of the Chinese policy of downward transfer—'Hsia fang'—of the Han Chinese (the master race in China) youth to the border areas is 'to reduce cultural and caste differences between city and countryside, to aid in economic development and to siphon off excess population from urban areas'. There are 'two other aims specific to minorities: to facilitate integration of China's ethnic minorities... and to strengthen the security of China's land borders...against invasion'.

The movement began in 1956 and picked up momentum in the following

morale, decreasing production and massive defections. Reports of clashes began coming and thousands of settlers returned illegally to their places. To investigate the relations between Han immigrants and minority nationalities the Communist Party Vice-chairman Chu Te toured the north-west. A movement was launched to teach the minorities that they and the Hans were complementary. An ambitious plan called for an increase in the 'Hsia Fang' movement.

The acceleration in rustication involved transfer of large numbers of the Han Chinese people to minority areas, again without adequate preparatory work: living quarters, fuel and even food were insufficient for the newcomers. The authorities began utilising the grazing areas of the minorities for the agricultural purposes and tried to requisition of more grain and livestock from the minorities. Reforms were imposed on the ethnic group which, moreover, meant, for the minorities, attack on their way of life,

# COMMUNISM

by DR. SAID RAMADAN

The correct way to gain acquaintance with socialism and communism is to study the works of those who formed its philosophy—such as Marx, Engels and Lenin or even to go back as far as the writings of the predecessors such as Feuerbach, who is regarded as the philosophical source from which their ideology has been derived, and Hegel, from whom Mark borrowed his dialectic principle.

Communism is not simply an economic system and theory for regulating production, distribution and exchange of goods and services. It is, in the first place, an ideology based on a materialist philosophy which regards matter as the source of all power, and the dialectical materialist interpretation of history as the only way to a correct understanding of the truth. Beyond matter, it holds, nothing else exists.

Feuerbach expressed this materialist philosophy clearly in his statement in 'The Principles of Philosophy' and 'The Essence of Christianity':

'Religion is simply a leech sucking on the blood of humanity and growing fat on it. It kills the desire for greatness in the heart of man. God is no more than a superstition woven by the collective imagination of a humanity profoundly pessimistic regarding its own grandeur. The divine attributes, sanctified by man and at whose altar he prostrates himself, are in reality nothing more than the attributes of man himself, manifesting themselves in the world of his dreams and attaining an apex of perfection. The intellect stood powerless before them, and so it embodied them in a being to which it gave the name of God. The pious and humble man is simply a prey to be torn apart by the fever of imagination.'

Marx, for his part, reproached Feuerbach with still being a prey to idealism, since he had attained this conclusion by a purely speculative and negative method. The correct method was to descend into the world of reality, the world of matter, and to interact with it. A materialist interpretation of history should be followed by materialist action and a struggle against those class differences which had made man a prey to superstition: 'The philosophers have analysed the world; our task is to change it.' However, Marxist realism which wishes to change the world has not

deviated a hair's breadth from Feuerbach's deification of man. This is clear from the following statement in Marx's 'Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law':

'Our critique of religion brings us to this conclusion: that man is the highest being in the eyes of man.'

He continues to expound his atheism:

'Man is independent in his essence, for he does not find in it an adequate and satisfying life unless he gains his very existence from it. A man who lives by the grace of another being will find himself subject to it. The life of such a man is in the shadow of another being not simply when that being appoints himself as a guard to watch over his life with care, but when he creates life in him and is the source thereof. It is therefore extremely difficult to put an end to the idea of the creation in the minds of the people. Communist man must believe that the entirety of history is the creation and work of man, and that nature proceeds side by side with man in the course of history. He must further be convinced that he possesses tangible proof that he created himself, and that he can pursue the course of this creation.'

These strange and superficial words are the words of Karl Marx himself, the first 'prophet' of Communism! As for Engels, it was he who said, when commenting in 1841 on Feuerbach's 'The Essence of Christianity': that the book was 'a termination of the discussions that have lasted for thousands of years without having any real object, and a final end to the superstitions arising from the belief in God.' Lenin, when commenting on the same book, said: 'The critique of religion has been completed with these great lines. Now we must go to the limit: to a definite and final elimination of religion.' It was also Lenin who uttered the famous saying: 'Religion is the opium of the people, an evil species of spiritual narcotic.'

The strange thing is that those who deified matter and man in this way, and reproached religion with being an evil spiritual narcotic, made of their atheism a new and terrifying religion. From their inability to believe in God the Absolute, Who is unrestricted by any definition, they proceed to a ridiculous inability to define matter, their new idol. This is best demonstrated by these words of Lenin:

'It is not rational that we should

seek any definition for matter. What does it mean to define a thing? It is to describe a concept with a similar concept. Now matter is First Being, and no concept contingent upon it can describe it!'

Then they make of themselves prophets of the new religion, and their followers deify them as can clearly be seen if you criticise them in the presence of any Communist. It is enough to read the declaration issued on the death of Lenin: 'Lenin is dead, but he lives on in all the members of the party. Every member of the party is a particle of Lenin's body, while our Communist family is a total embodiment of Lenin.'

(Compare Christian beliefs about Jesus.) Such words are devoted to that same Lenin who had insisted on collectivizing land in such an inhuman manner that the peasants went on strike, and a wave of terror swept over the land. Then came the appalling famine of 1921-22 which claimed from 15 to 20 million victims, so that Lenin was obliged to change his policies and partially to restore to the peasants the right of ownership. What error could be more far-reaching than that contained in this deification and what 'narcotic' more perilous than this?

The philosophy of dialectical materialism is the basis for the whole Communist ideology, with its hatred of the bourgeoisie and its deification of the proletariat. From it, too, is derived the Communist attitude to wards private ownership. Those who say that it is possible to separate the economic aspect of Communism from its ideological aspect have either never really studied it or, on the contrary, are only too well versed in it and its propaganda tactics: namely, the permissibility of lying, deceit and treachery as long as it furthers the triumph of the ideology and the victory of 'the struggling proletariat'. There is a famous saying by Lenin: 'We do not believe in any values above society. They are flagrant lies, and for us all values are subject to the interests of the struggle of the working class.' For the prophets of Communism, the meaning of 'values' and 'ethics' is restricted to that which benefits the struggle of the working class, and does not relate to anything else.

The impossibility of separating atheism from the economic aspect of Communism is clearly brought out in

these words of Marx in his letter to Hardtmann: 'The religion of the workers consists in denying God and in attempting to revive the divinity of man.' Concerning his own teaching, he also said: 'It is a religion that deifies man.' Lenin wrote a book called 'Materialism and Empiricism', in which he attempted to maintain the unity of Marxism and frustrate the attempts made by democratic socialism in the nineteenth century to separate the economic aspect of Communism from its philosophy of dialectical materialism. He said: 'We must fight against religion. This is the a-b-c of materialism and Communism in particular. Religion and Marxism are incompatible, both in theory and practice.'

It should be remembered that the socio-economic aspect of the Communist ideology which tempts some people is a wavering, constantly changing aspect, which has never been firmly established throughout its history. If we begin with the Communist Manifesto drawn up by Marx and Engels in 1847, we find it summarizing the battle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in terms of 'the abolition of private property'. However, the meaning of 'private property' does not go beyond the ownership of the means of production by the bourgeoisie. The Manifesto says in fact:

We do not in any sense wish to abolish private ownership of the fruits of labour, an ownership which is necessary for human life and its reproduction. This ownership does not bestow the slightest profit by means of which one man might gain control of the labour of another. That which we wish to do away with is the cruel and oppressive type of ownership which makes the worker live only for the production of capital in the measure required by the interests of the ruling class.'

Then came Lenin, and he passed beyond these bounds. Everything was to be shared—land, industry and labour. No one had the right to possess anything. Everyone became a paid labourer. Capital was transferred from the bourgeoisie to the state, which was supposed to be 'owned' by the victorious proletariat. The land was seized from the peasants, but they resisted and the result was the terrible famine of 1921-22 referred to earlier. Thereupon Lenin abandoned his plan, partially restored to the peasant his right of ownership, and matters quieted down until a new turmoil broke out in the year 1928-30. Once again ownership was made illegal. The peasants revolted and struck again, and the secret police went to work among them, beating, killing, banishing and filling the prisons. According to the admission of official Communist reports,

the number of victims was as high as a hundred thousand dead, while the opponents of Communism put the figure at double that amount. In 1932-33 famine occurred again, this time claiming five million victims, as the Soviet Government has admitted. The rulers of Russia were obliged to change their course in order to save the country, and decided to grant the individual peasant a small plot of land, a barn and some livestock for his personal use, on the condition that ownership remained rested in the state and the peasant became a member of a 'kolkhoz' or agricultural co-operative, which might expel him at any time. The result of all this was an overall decline in the level of production, until poverty and despair became general and an atmosphere of terror reigned. It was for this reason that Andre Gide renounced Communism after a visit to Russia, although previously he had been an enthusiastic believer in it. He said:

'How could man not be disgusted at the sight of the contempt or at least the lack of care shown by those in power to those beneath them: the servants, the assistants of the officials, male and female workers, in short, to use the word that comes to mind, 'the poor'. They claim that there are no longer any poor people in Russia, but there are still many, many poor people. I had hoped not to see them in Russia...I went to Russia expecting not to see any poverty!' (1)

This painful and changing history of the abolition of private ownership is caused by the fact that the Communist ideology was a reaction to two historic facts of the nineteenth century: the corruption of the men of religion and the oppressiveness of the propertied classes. These two facts were responsible for the lack of balance in the reaction they aroused, which was characterized by a denial of all religion and revulsion against the instinct of ownership in man.

The fact that the desire to own is an instinct rooted in human nature is denied by Communist theory. In practice, this theory has always collided and clashed with this instinct, whereas 'Marxist realism' should have led to a confrontation with, and acceptance of, human nature as it is, not to a hopeless struggle against it. For natural laws always predominate and cannot be successfully fought against. Marxism has substituted for the desire to own, which throughout history has impelled man naturally and instinctively to produce and multiply wealth, a theoretical dream existing only in an imaginary 'contented Communist society', which has not yet been established. In this society, the power of the state is supposed to

'The religion of the workers consists in denying God and in attempting to revive the divinity of man...It is a religion that deifies man.'

—Karl Marx.

diminish gradually until it finally disappears, so that humanity might be purified of all the 'diseases' of the bourgeoisie, and the guiding principle might become 'from each according to his capacity and to each according to his need', without there being any organ to establish either 'capacity' or 'need!' (2)

By these utopian postulates Communism has committed precisely what it accuses religion of doing, namely, drugging men with ideals. In fact, it is far more utopian than any religion, since all religions recognize man's natural, instinctive desire to own property, and agree that the nature of man contains both good and evil. They are further agreed that man's task in life is to purify his inner self so that evil may not predominate in it, and that he must exercise his natural right to property in such a way as not to encroach upon the rights of others and not to deny the bond of humanity which enjoins upon him cooperation with and equity for all. No religion has ever maintained that men can be transformed into angels, as Communism claims to be possible—although the society of which it dreams has not yet come into being well over a century after the Manifesto of Marx and Engels!

Marxism in practice soon returns to reality and confronts man as he is; but instead of attributing its failure to establish Communism to a basic error in its interpretation of the nature of man, it maintains the cause to be a deep-seated 'reactionary' tendency in man which must be eradicated. In the context of its programme, it therefore lays down that the promised reign of Communism must be preceded by a necessary transitional period known as 'the dictatorship of the state'. In his 'Critique of the Gotha Programme', Marx says on this subject: 'The period of transition known as the dictatorship of the state lasts between the abolition of the (bourgeois) state and the coming of the new world.' Lenin insists on the same point despite all the popular rebellion which he experienced: 'Anyone who does not recognize the necessity of dictatorship for a revolutionary class to secure its success knows nothing of the history of revolutions or wishes to know nothing.' (3) I do not know how anyone

with respect for his own intelligence could accept these words. How could the dictatorship of the state lead to the disappearance of the state? How could a human being whose every action is under the scrutiny of a dictatorial apparatus and who is forbidden by it to possess more than a very restricted income, with the state arbitrarily changing the value of the currency from time to time, so as to rid him of his 'reactionary tendency'—how could this condemned man be a transitional stage in the evolution of the angelic man of the 'contented Communist society'?

Communism, after separating production from private ownership, and depriving man not only of the incentive of personal gain but also of any belief that would cause him to feel responsible before God, was obliged—despite its materialistic and 'realistic' nature—to replace the motives it had fought against with another that would impell man to work. It substituted for man's natural instinct and his consciousness of responsibility before God nothing more than a vague promise designed to unfold all of man's hidden productive capacities! All of this was bound to bring about a permanent dictatorship.

The 'promised' Communist society which is to arise from the dictatorship of the state in an entirely incomprehensible way may well correspond, in the Marxist faith, to the promise of paradise in the faith of those who believe in it but with one basic difference: the paradise of God is a reward for the responsibility shown by man for his actions during his brief earthly existence. The paradise of Communism, on the other hand, is to be brought about by an ineluctable and arbitrary dictatorship, after a period of 'transition' to which no limits are set!

Over a century filled with the sacrifice of millions of human lives, the horrors of famine and the darkness of jails: the result of all this has simply been a 'transitional period', a dictatorship of the state, and a dream that has deceived the feeble of sight for scores of years—the dream that a dictatorship might give birth to an offspring totally unrelated to it, the happy society with neither ruler nor ruled.

1. Andre Gide, *Retour de l'U.R.S.S.*

2. This principle of the Communists is the slogan for the 'next' stage of society, the stage of Communism. They are now supposed to be in the stage of Socialism the slogan of which is 'from each according to his capacity, and to each according to his labour'.

3. Lenin, P.B.L., Vol. XXII, p.13.

\* \* THE MESSAGE OF THE QUR'AN \* \*

## THE ULTIMATE WISDOM

*Read in the name of thy Sustainer, Who has created —  
created man from a germ-cell!  
Read! And thy Sustainer is the Most Bountiful One who  
has taught (man) the use of the pen — taught man what  
he knew not...*

With these opening verses of the ninety-sixth chapter — with an allusion to man's humble biological origin as well as to his consciousness and intellect — began, early in the seventh century of the Christian era, the revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad, destined to continue during the twenty-three years of his ministry and to end, shortly before his death, with verse 281 of the second chapter:

*And be conscious of the Day on which you shall return  
to God, whereupon every human being shall be repaid in  
full for what he has earned, and none shall be wronged.*

Between these first and last verses (the first and the last in the chronological order of their revelation) unfolds a book which more than any other single phenomenon known to us, has fundamentally affected the religious, social and political history of the world. No other sacred scripture has ever had a similarly immediate impact upon the lives of the people who first heard its message and, through them and the generations that followed them, in the entire course of civilization. It shook Arabia, and made a nation out of its perennially warring tribes; within a few decades, it spread its world-view far beyond the confines of Arabia and produced the first ideological society known to man; through its insistence on consciousness and knowledge, it engendered among its followers a spirit of intellectual curiosity and independent inquiry, ultimately resulting in that splendid era of learning and scientific research which distinguished the world of Islam at the height of its cultural vigour; and the culture thus fostered by the Qur'an penetrated in countless ways and by-ways into the mind of medieval Europe and gave rise to that revival of Western culture which we call the Renaissance, and thus became in the course of time largely responsible for the birth of what is described as the "age of science": the age in which we are now living.

All this was, in the final analysis, brought about by the message of the Qur'an: and it was brought about through the medium of the people whom it inspired and to whom it supplied a basis for all their ethical valuations and a direction for all their worldly endeavours; for, never has any book—not excluding the Bible—been read by so many with a comparable intensity and veneration; and never has any other book supplied to so many, and over so long a span of time, a similarly comprehensive answer to the question, "How shall I behave in order to achieve the good life in this world and happiness in the life to come?" However often individual Muslims may have misread the answer, and however far many of them may have departed from the spirit of its message, the fact remains that to all who believed and believe in it, the Qur'an represents the ultimate manifestation of God's grace to man, the ultimate wisdom, and the ultimate beauty of expression: in short, the true Word of God.

Muhammad Asad

The Qur'an is a unique book. It does not, like other books, enunciate at the very beginning the subject it deals with and the objects it intends to achieve. Its style and method of explaining things are also quite different from those of other books one commonly reads. Above all, it is not a book on 'religion' in the sense this word is generally understood. This is why when a reader approaches the Qur'an with the common notions of a book, he is rather puzzled by its style and manner of presentation. He finds that at many places the background has not been mentioned and the circumstances under which a particular passage was revealed have not been stated. As a result of these things, the ordinary reader is unable to benefit fully from the most precious treasures contained in the Qur'an, though occasionally he may succeed in discovering a few gems here and there. Only those people become victims of such doubts as are not acquainted with these distinctive features of the Qur'an. They seem to find miscellaneous topics scattered all over its pages and feel difficulties about its meanings. Nay, even those verses, which are absolutely clear, appear to them to be quite irrelevant in the contexts they occur.

The reader may be saved from all these difficulties, if he is warned beforehand that the Book he is going to study is the only book of its kind in the whole world; that its literary style is quite different from that of all other books; that its theme is unique and that his pre-conceived notions of a book cannot help him understand the Qur'an. Indeed, these may even become a hindrance. . .

Whether one believes the Qur'an to be a revealed book or not, one will have to consider, as a starting point, the claim that is put forward by itself and its bearer, Muhammad, peace be upon him, that this is the Divine Guidance.

The Lord of the Universe, its Creator, Master and Sovereign created Man and bestowed upon him the faculties of learning, speaking, understanding and discerning right from wrong and good from evil. He granted him freedom of choice, freedom of will, freedom of action and gave him authority to acquire and make use of the things around him. When the Lord of the Universe granted man this autonomy, He warned him very clearly and precisely, leaving no doubt in his mind as to the kind of relations he should have with Him, as if to say, 'I am your Master and Sovereign and that of the whole universe; therefore you should worship Me and none else. You are neither independent in My Kingdom nor the subject of anyone else, to whom you might owe obedience or worship; You are

being sent to the Earth with certain powers for a fixed term of time for your test. After that you will have to return to Me. Then I will judge your performance in the world and decide whether you have come out successful or failed in the test. Therefore the right course for you is to accept Me voluntarily as Sovereign and worship Me alone and act in the world according to the Guidance I shall send you, and live on the Earth with the conviction and understanding that it is merely the place of your trial. Your real object in earthly life should be to come out successful in the final judgement. Therefore any other course different from and opposed to the Divine Guidance, will be wrong. If you adopt the first course, (and you have full liberty and freedom to adopt it), you will achieve peace and tranquility in this world and win the home of eternal bliss and joy (paradise) in the next world, to which you shall have to return. And if you follow any other course (and you are quite free to do this also, if you so choose) you shall incur My disfavour in this world and eternal sorrow and affliction in the Hereafter, where you shall be thrown into the abyss of Hell'.

Accordingly, God made arrangements for the Guidance of mankind and appointed His Messengers (prophets) from among the people themselves and bestowed upon them the knowledge of the Truth and the Right Way of life. They were charged with the mission to invite people to the Right Way. The Messengers themselves believed in God and acted in accordance with the Guidance they received from Him. They were raised from different nations in different lands. They all had one and the same religion which was based on the Unity of God and accountability in the Hereafter. They all taught the same way of life that was taught to the first man at the very start of his life in this world. They all followed the same guidance, that is, those fundamental and eternal principles of morality and culture which were prescribed for the first man. All those who accepted their invitation became one community, which was in duty bound to follow the Divine Guidance and to do its best to establish it and to guard against any transgressions.

During their respective terms, these Messengers fulfilled their mission as they were inspired to do. However, the majority of people were not inclined to accept their invitation and even those who joined their community gradually became corrupt. So much so that some of these communities totally lost that Guidance and others tampered with the Command-

ments of God and mixed them up with false things.

Then the Lord of the Universe sent Muhammad (peace be upon him) as His Last Messenger to fulfil the same mission for which messengers had been sent before him. He extended his invitation to all human beings, including the corrupt followers of the previous messengers and asked them to follow the Right Way. He organised all those who accepted the Divine Guidance into one community, which in its turn, was required to re-establish its collective way of life based on the Guidance and to exert itself to

## DISCOVERING READ, UNDERSTAND

reform the world which had gone astray. The Qur'an which was revealed to Muhammad is the Book which contains that Invitation and that Divine Guidance.

### CENTRAL THEME

Now that we have some idea of the nature of the Qur'an, it has become easier to determine the subject it deals with, its central theme and its aim and object.

The subject it deals with is MAN: it discusses those aspects of his life that lead either to his real success or failure.

The central theme that runs through the Qur'an is the exposition of the Reality and the invitation to the Right Way based on it. It declares that Reality is the same that was revealed by God to Adam and to all the Messengers after him, and the Right way is the same that was taught by all the Messengers. It also points out that all theories contradictory to this Reality, invented by people about God, the universe, man and his relations with God and the rest of His creation, are all wrong and that all the ways of life based on them are erroneous and lead to ruinous consequences.

The aim and object of the revelations is to invite man to that Right Way and to present clearly the Guidance which he has lost because of his negligence or has perverted by his wickedness.

If the reader keeps these three basic things in mind, he will find that in this

Book there is no incongruity in the style, no gap in the continuity of the subject no lack of interconnection between its various topics. As a matter of fact, this Book is not irrelevant anywhere with regard to its subject, its central theme and its aim. From its very beginning to its end, the different topics it deals with are so intimately connected with its Central Theme that they may be likened to the beautiful gems of the same necklace, despite their different colours and sizes.

The Qur'an keeps the same object in view, whether it is relating the story of the creation of the Earth or of the

## THE QUR'AN

# STAND, FOLLOW

Abu'l Ala Maududi

Heavens or of Man or is referring to the manifestations in the Universe or stating events from human history. As the aim of the Qur'an is to guide man and not to teach Natural Sciences or History or Philosophy or any other science or art, it does not concern itself with these latter subjects per se. The only thing with which it is concerned is to expound the Reality, to remove misunderstandings and mis-conception about it, to impress the Truth upon the minds, to warn them of the consequences of wrong attitudes and to invite humanity to the Right Way. The same is true of the criticism of the creeds, of the moral systems, of the deeds of men and communities and of its discussions of the problems of Metaphysics etc.

That is why it states or discusses or cites a thing only to the extent relevant to its aims and objects and leaves out unnecessary and irrelevant details and turns over and over again to its Central Theme and to its invitation round which every topic revolves.

When the Qur'an is studied in this light, no doubt is left that the whole of it is a closely reasoned argument and there is continuity of subject throughout the Book.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

As different people turn to the Qur'an with different aims and objects, it is not possible to offer any general advice about the method of its study so as to fulfil the requirements of all. I am,

however, interested only in those people who want to understand it and seek guidance from it for the solution of human problems. I will therefore offer some suggestions which may help satisfy their needs and remove their difficulties.

The pre-requisite for understanding the Qur'an is to study it with an open mind. Whether one believes it to be a revealed book or not, one should, as far as possible, free one's mind of bias in favour of or against it and get rid of all pre-conceived opinions and then approach it with the sole desire of understanding it. Those people who study it with preconceived notions of their own read only their own ideas between its lines and cannot, therefore, grasp what the Qur'an wants to convey. It is obvious that this method of study can never be fruitful even with other books but it is utterly fruitless when applied to the study of the Qur'an.

There is another thing which must be kept in view. If one wants to have merely a cursory acquaintance with the contents of the Qur'an, then perhaps it might suffice for him to read it once. But if one wishes to have a deep knowledge of it, one will have to go through it several times and each time from a different point of view. Those who desire to make a thorough study of the Qur'an should read it at least twice with the sole purpose of understanding, as a whole, the system of life it presents. One should also try to find out its fundamentals and the way of life it aims to build on them. During this preliminary study, if some questions occur in his mind, the reader should note them down and patiently continue his study, for he is likely to find their answers somewhere in the Qur'an itself.

After getting a general insight into the Qur'an in this way, one should begin its detailed study and take down notes of the different aspects of its teachings. For instance, one should note down what pattern of life it approves and what it disapproves. One should note down the qualities of a good man and those of a bad man, side by side in order to bring both the patterns clearly before his mind simultaneously. Similarly, one should note down, side by side, those things which lead to the success and salvation of man and those which lead to his failure and ruin. In the same way, he should put down under different headings, the teachings and instruction of the Qur'an about creed, morality, duties, obligations, civilization, culture, economics, politics, law, social system, peace, war and other human problems. These notes should be consolidated to form a complete sketch of each aspect of

the teachings and then fitted together to form a complete system of life.

Then, if one desires to know the Qur'anic solution to a certain human problem he should first make a study of the relevant literature, both ancient and modern, and note down the basic issues. He should also make use of the research so far made into the problem and note down the points at issue. He should then study the Qur'an with a view to finding out the answers to those issues. I can say from my own personal experience that when one studies the Qur'an with a view to making research into any problem, one will find an answer to it even in those verses which one had skipped over without ever imagining that it lay hidden therein.

But in spite of all these devices, one cannot grasp the inspiring spirit of the Qur'an unless one begins to put its message into practice, for the Qur'an is neither a book of abstract ideas and theories which may be studied in an easy chair nor is it a book of religious enigmas which may be unravelled in monasteries and universities. It is a Book that has been sent down to invite people to start a movement and to lead its followers and direct their activities towards the achievement of its mission. One has, therefore, to go to the battlefield of life to understand its real meaning. That was why a quiet and amiable person like Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him) had to come out of his seclusion and start the Islamic Movement and fight against the rebellious world. It was the Qur'an that urged him to declare war against every kind of falsehood and engage in conflict with the leaders of disbelief without any consideration of the consequences. Then it attracted good souls from every home and gathered them under the banner of its leader in order to fight against the upholders of the old order who organised themselves into a gang to oppose them. During this long and bitter struggle between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, which continued for twenty-three years or so, the Qur'an went on guiding the Movement in every phase and at every stage, until it succeeded in establishing the Islamic way of life in its perfection.

It is thus obvious that one cannot possibly grasp the truths contained in the Qur'an by the mere recitation of its words. For this purpose one must take active part in the conflict between belief and unbelief, Islam and un-Islam, truth and falsehood. One can understand it only if one takes up its Message, invites the world to accept it and moves on and

*Continued on page 8*

Who is Jesus? What is his relation to God? Is he God? Is he the son of God? Or is he divine in some other way? Or is he at least not an ordinary human being? What does it mean then to say—as we do—that he is the 'word' of God, the 'spirit' of God, that he is the son of a virgin lady, that he spoke in the cradle, or that he used to heal the blind and so on.

These are the questions we will address to the Qur'an and seek its guidance. It is not of course possible here to give all the detailed Qur'anic answers to these questions. We shall therefore be content with a brief account.

The best way to approach our topic is the way the Qur'an itself approaches it. It is reported that in the ninth year after the Hijra, a delegation of Christians from the city of Najran, which included some learned men, visited Muhammad, peace be upon him, in order to argue with him on some matters concerning the nature of Jesus. And it was on that occasion that the first eighty three verses of Chapter Three of the Qur'an were revealed to the Prophet. I suggest that first the chapter should be read bearing in mind this fact. But as it is, we cannot now do more than briefly dwell on a few of those eighty three verses. Of course, Chapter Three is not the only reference for anyone who wants to know what the Qur'an says about Jesus. There is a whole chapter that goes by the name Maryam or Mary, and the story of Jesus and the Christians is referred to in so many other parts of the Qur'an. So, as I implied earlier, when we confine ourselves to these few selected

*Continued from page 7*

on in accordance with its Guidance. Thus alone will one experience and understand all that which happened during the revelation of the Qur'an. This is a wonderful experience and worth any trials.

In this way the Qur'an will lay bare its spirit even though one might not be able to understand all the lexical meanings of its words and solve all the intricacies of grammar and rhetoric. The same formula applies to all its Commandments, its moral teachings, its instructions about economics, and culture and its laws regarding different aspects of human life. These things can never be understood unless they are put into practice. It is thus obvious that those individuals and communities who discard it from practical life, cannot understand its meaning and imbibe its spirit by mere lip-service to it.

(This is from me and) true knowledge is with God. I have full trust in Him and turn to Him for true guidance.

verses, we are only going to have a glimpse of that Qur'anic account.

*Alif, Lam, Mim. Allahu laa ilaaha illa huwa. Al Hayyu Al Qayyum. (Transliteration of the Arabic).*

Thus the sura begins. It tells us something about God that is relevant to our problem. This is because the most important job of religion is to give man a

other things to stand or to be, by giving them whatever is necessary for their existence. So nothing except God is self-subsisting; everything else is dependent for its existence upon Him.

The true God, then must be one. He must be eternally living and He must sustain all other things while not being in need of anything to sustain Him. Can we apply any of these qualities to Jesus? By no means.

## THE HUMANITY OF JESUS

*(upon whom be peace)*

by DR JA'FAR SHEIKH IDRIS

clear and correct conception of God in the light of which he can worship Him and through the guidance of which he can correctly deal with the many problems that confront him in all aspects of his life. The better we know God, the more we love Him and the happier we become irrespective of our external circumstances. The love of God is the quintessence of religion and the only way to the peace of mind for which man naturally yearns but seldom attains.

*The true god is one; there is no God except Him, the Living, the Sustaining. (Translation of the Arabic.)*

The true God is one. Why? The general answer is given in a verse of another chapter; 'If there were in the (heavens and the earth) gods besides the true God, they would both have been in disorder.' (21 : 22). But we need not go into the details of this now. In the course of our present verses, and concerning our particular problem, the nature of Jesus, it will soon become clear why he cannot be another God.

### Al Hayyu, The Living

God is the only true living being because He has been and shall continue to be eternally living, while the life of all the so-called living things is only temporary, being preceded and followed by death, or non-existence. And even their temporary life, unlike God's, is interrupted by sleep and slumber, which are forms of partial death.

### Al Qayyum, The Sustainer

The Arabic word, Qayyum is derived from Qama—to stand up, or to continue to be, and it literally means one who stands by himself and causes

But God is not only eternally living and eternally sustaining His creation; it is He—as we read in verse 4—Who forms us in the womb. We know what to do when we wish to beget child. Surely we do not form it in the wombs of our wives, let alone in the wombs of virgin ladies. This is why in denying that He has children, God says: 'How should He have children seeing that He has no consort?'

**Al-Aziz:** The Almighty is one who cannot in anyway be overcome, the one who always gets what He wills, and to whom nothing is done against His own will.

**Al Hakim:** The Wise One who does everything in a perfect way and to serve a good purpose.

Again though we roughly attribute these qualities to men, it is only to God that they are attributed in their perfect and absolute sense. However strong or wise man becomes he is essentially weak and fallible.

Let us now look to the verses 35-51 where part of the story of Jesus is directly related. (While reading, please refer to these verses in any good translation of the Qur'an). In this account we have two things, besides the birth of Jesus which happened in a very what we call a miraculous-way. Zachariyya, the Prophet of that period, and the husband of Mary's aunt (or sister) discovers to his astonishment that Mary sitting alone in her room and cut from the outside world is nevertheless being supplied with provisions. And when he asks her, wondering, how it comes to her, she simply says, 'From God. Truly God provisions whomsoever He wills without reckoning.'

It seems that Zachariyya being

impressed by this wonderful divine grace, which reminded him that God's power of doing things is not limited to the ways familiar to us, restored his hope of having a son. So once he had heard Mary's reply he turned to God and prayed to Him to grant him a child. Again to his astonishment his prayer was accepted and he was to have a son despite his old age and his wife's barrenness. Yet Zachariyya who surely must have been pleased and thankful to God still wonders, 'Lord, how shall I have a son, seeing I am an old man and my wife is barren?' Indeed how? Well, simply because God does what He wills.

When the birth of Jesus is seen against this background, it does not seem very unusual or extraordinary. If food suddenly appears in a closed room, and if a child can be begotten by parents one of whom is too old and the other barren, why shouldn't a child be born to a virgin lady? And it becomes more natural if we remember—as the Qur'an reminds us in this chapter that Adam had no parents at all. If Jesus is thought to be divine by virtue of his miraculous birth, then not only Adam and John but even Mary's miraculous provisions are divine. If it be foolish to say so, then it is equally foolish to say that Jesus is divine.

### Jesus—the word of God

*'God gives thee good tidings of a word from Him whose name is Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary.'* 3:5.

How can a man be a word? A word is something that we mention or speak. The word of God emanates from Him. It is what God says, not what He creates, while man is something which God creates not something which He says. Some people interpreted this and similar expressions literally and said that Jesus is himself the word, that Jesus and the word are identical, and that is why he, unlike other men, is a Divine being. But we read in this chapter that John is also the word of God. Is he also divine? And what about this verse: 'Say, if the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would be spent before the words of my Lord are spent though we brought replenishment the like of it.' 18:108. Are all these infinitely many things divine?

In replying to a heretic who said that Jesus is himself the word, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, the famous imam, said in his small pamphlet: 'Surely God has deprived you from understanding the Qur'an. Jesus is not the 'Be!' (Arabic: 'kun'). But it is by the 'Be!' that he became.' So now we know what is the word. Whenever

God wills to create something he says to it 'Be!' and it becomes. The created thing is called the word of God because it comes as a result of this word; it is caused by this word, but it is not itself the word. Even in modern English you say, 'Take my word for it'. The person whom you address does not, on hearing this, jump at your mouth trying to snatch the word therefrom. And when someone, seeing you engaged in doing something of which he does not approve or which he does not quite understand, asks: 'What are you doing?' and you answer, 'These are the boss's orders or instructions', surely you do not mean that the thing you are doing is itself the orders or instructions. What you mean is that you are executing the boss's orders. It is also the same when we say either in English or Arabic, 'This is the will of God'. Similarly, when we say that something is the word of God, we only mean that it is an execution of the word of God, i.e. God's will or decree expressed in a word.

It follows from all this that when we say that Jesus is the word of God, we are in fact emphasising the fact that he is not divine, that like Adam before him and in fact like everything else, he is a created thing. That is why when Mary wondered how she was to have a son, God said, 'When He decrees a thing, He does but say to it: 'Be! and it becomes'. It is regrettable that an expression which is meant to assert the humanity of Jesus should be taken as strong evidence of his divinity.

### Jesus—the spirit of God

So much for Jesus being the word of God. What about his being the spirit of God? When we talk about the spirit of man, we usually mean something that partially constitutes his personality. Some people interpreted the spirit of God in the same manner and concluded that being the spirit of God, Jesus contains in his being something divine. But in the Qur'an the same expression is used in the case of Adam, about whom God says, '...and breathed my spirit into him'. 15:29.

The correct interpretation is that 'the spirit of God' like the 'servant of God', 'the messenger of God', 'the house of God'—all mean something which God owns, not something that is part of Him. Its relation to God is—as the learned Muslims say—a relation of the thing owned to its owner, not a relation of a part to its whole.

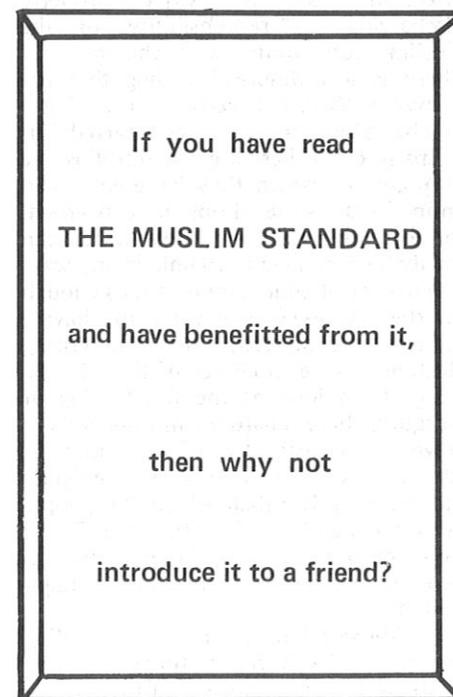
Jesus then, like all the prophets of God, is no more than an ordinary human being whom God judged to be worthy of having the honour of communicating his

message to the people of his time. His miraculous birth is only one of the many 'signs' (Arabic: ayaat) that God shows to mankind that they may know and have faith in Him. Jesus, peace be upon him, is neither in any way divine as those who exaggerate in their respect for him claim, nor is the honour of his righteous mother Mary—the purified and chosen lady—to be doubted as those who hate him maliciously insinuate. He is a chosen prophet to be sincerely loved and respected, but not to be worshipped.

There is an authentic saying of Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace:

*'If anyone testifies that there is no god but God alone, who has no partners, that Muhammad is His servant and messenger; that Jesus is God's servant and messenger, the son of his handmaid, His word which he cast into Mary, and a spirit from Him; and that paradise and hell are real, God will cause him to enter paradise, no matter what he has done.'*

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## comment

### ASJA'S AGM

## ITEMS FOR THE AGENDA

This month, ASJA holds its Annual General Meeting. ASJA is the major organisation of Muslims in this country. It controls about 60 mosques, runs seven primary schools, one boys' and two girls' secondary schools. It regularly observes traditional occasions like the birthday of the Prophet, his Mi'raj and other commemorative events. By these and other varied activities, the ASJA, it is maintained, has kept Islam and the Muslim community alive in Trinidad and Tobago.

Certainly, ASJA is well placed to fulfil a useful and dynamic role within the Muslim community and in the nation as a whole. It is the most 'democratic' of the existing Muslim organisations holding AGM's at which the membership is free to question and participate effectively. Other organisations hardly hold any

AGM's are normally periods of heightened activity and ASJA members, both officials and the rank and file would be concerned to review the past year's activity and look ahead to the future. This is an appropriate time for members to take a searching look at the activities of the organisation and its direction. Is the ASJA properly discharging its responsibility to the Muslim community and the nation? There is a widespread feeling that the answer is, 'No'. It is certainly true that a number of projects have been started, but in many cases these are not fulfilling the purposes for which they were embarked upon. So far as the schools are concerned, for example, there are some which can hardly be described as Islamic in any way. The matter of education is serious enough for the organisation to think of having full-time, dedicated, and practising Muslims to be in charge of the schools. Also, if we look at the functioning of mosques, there is hardly a mosque up and down the country at which one can go on a Friday and listen to an intelligible and relevant Khutbah which the people can understand and benefit from. There are many other areas of the under-utilization of mosques which can be highlighted.

Above all this, there is the feeling that the ASJA is out of touch with the needs of the community and the nation. A manifestation of this is that up to now

the ASJA does not seem to have given serious attention to the work of Islamic da'wah (propagation). One result of this has been to make the Muslim community a very introverted one. It has also induced a sense of complacency in the Muslim community with certain disastrous consequences. Frequently too in the recent past, the ASJA has taken stands on certain issues which many consider to be Islamically indefensible.

Priority attention needs therefore to be given at the coming AGM and thereafter not to details of projects but to a fundamental re-appraisal of the purpose of the organisation—to uphold the Qur'an and the Sunnah, to command the good and forbid the wrong. May God grant us guidance and success.

"And those who strive in Our way," says God in the Qur'an, "We shall certainly guide them on Our paths."

### THE CHURCH

## SWIMMING WITH THE TIDE

Now that the talk of revolution and self-determination is in the air in Southern Africa, the Roman Catholic Church has come out in favour of allowing black children to enter its schools and blacks to pray in churches which have been the preserves of whites.

If the principles of equality, love and respect for human dignity were enshrined in the Church's teachings, why, it may be asked weren't these 'concessions' not granted before? The exercise seems to smack of expediency and swimming with the tide which is often characteristic of the Church's policies in other areas. However, if it is a genuine change of heart, it is to be welcomed.

Also making some encouraging noises has been the Anglican Archbishop of Johannesburg, here in Trinidad for the Anglican Church Council meeting. Talking of racism in South Africa, he said he was "involved in the black liberation struggle, because I believe in God. All people want self-determination as an inalienable right". "Black people," he went on, "have to accept that they are humanity...a people in the sight of God. They must not be servile, docile, obsequious...but must stand on their two feet and confront white men as persons to persons." Stating that majority rule was bound to come to South Africa, he declared that he was "committed to reconciliation".

Meanwhile, the Dutch Reformed Church (or as Dr. Williams has characterized it the 'Dutch Deformed Church')

which has been the bastion of apartheid in South Africa remains as adamant as ever and must be looking on uneasily even as 'petty' apartheid slowly crumbles.

## DOUBLE STANDARDS

A pastor, belonging to the Church of the Nazarene, St. James, who gave out receipts with used stamps was saved from being jailed. The magistrate told the pastor: "Had it not been for your age and status in society, I would have sent you to jail."

We are thus to conclude that there are two standards of justice in operation—one for the lower classes in society and another for the more 'respectable' or wealthy or influential, the sort of thing Chalkie was talking about when 'he took up his guns again'. The result of such double standards is the corruption of society.

There is a need for us all to consider our whole concept of justice, as much as other values in society today and no doubt verse 135, chapter 4 of the Qur'an is a solid starting-point:

*"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Justice, as witnesses to God, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for God can best protect both. Follow not the lusts of your hearts, lest you swerve, and if you distort (Justice) or decline to do Justice, verily God is well-acquainted with what you do."*

### SENATOR BROOME

## PROPER DRESS

When Senator Broome of the African National Congress entered the Senate clad in authentic African 'threads' and was refused a seat by Senate President, Dr. Wahid Ali on the grounds of his 'improper dress', he triggered off some crucial questions about cultural and political identity as well as the basic question of the impropriety or otherwise of various types of dress.

Ironically, it was at a time when the senators were involved in the crucial task of cutting the constitutional umbilical cord from the British monarchy and preparing the way for a sovereign democratic Republic. But alas! There doesn't seem to be much confidence in our ability to find our own way and discard the coat tails and the wigs, the excessive formalism and the ties

that bind. Even after becoming a Republic, for example, the Privy Council would continue to be the highest court in the land.

But while it may be distasteful to wear British 'threads' because of an aversion to British imperialism, must one turn to other clothes simply because it represents one nationalism or the other? One cannot determine proper and improper dress simply by asking whether it is a jacket and tie, a shirt jac or a dashiki or in the case of a woman whether it is a maxi or a mini, a halter-back or see-through, a pants suit or an evening gown.

There are three basic requirements according to Islamic principles for proper dress: it should cover—in the case of a man at least from the navel to the knee and in the case of a woman, her body with the exception of her face, hands and feet; it should be loose-fitting and it should not be transparent.

It so happened that Senator Broome's dress fulfilled all these principles and was a strong reminder in fact of the Islamic legacy in Africa.

Dr. Wahid Ali was surely familiar with all this and was merely upholding an empty formalism.

It is ironical that when people dress modestly they are ridiculed and otherwise they are admired and applauded. This brings to mind the results of the march past at the recent joint T&TMYO-ASJA Sports meeting. In announcing the results the judges explained that the team which performed best was made joint winners with the next best team because the former wore 'improper' pants and the latter 'proper uniform'—shorts.

Dress should be worn, therefore, not merely because of convention or fashion or for nationalistic identification, but because they are modest and decent and proper.



## SIX YEARS OF IRO

### ALL AH WE IS ONE?

Out of the convulsions of 1970 came a unique organisation, unique not only in Trinidad & Tobago but in world religious history—the Inter-Religious Organisation, the IRO. Never before has such a wide spectrum of religious persuasions joined together to pursue common social, economic, religious and political objectives. There are 34 organisations represented on the IRO, from various brands of Christians (Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Salvation Army etc), Hindus (Maha Sabha, Arya Samaj, Rabir Panthi etc), Qudiyanis, Bahais and Muslims. The organisations represented all profess to believe in the 'Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man'...

The initiative for the founding of this, in many respects, bizarre body came strangely enough from the Muslim organisation, the Anjuman Sunnatul Jamaat Association Incorporated, and was spearheaded by Dr. Wahid Ali, a member of that organisation. Addressing the formative conference of the IRO at the Trinidad Hilton in April 1970, Dr. Ali said:

"May I ask you to consider what a salutary effect it would have on the conscience of this nation for the leaders of Christianity, Hinduism and Islam to stand on a common platform from one part of the country to another, disuading people from hate and violence and inviting them to love, unity and brotherliness; joining their voices against deprivation and human indignity and putting their shoulders together to the task of winning a better life for the depressed masses of this country."

Such heady rhetoric did result in some major achievements, one of the most notable of which was the calling back of Dr. Eric Williams after his 'resignation' and giving the government a new lease of life. Apart from this, some brilliant ideas on social reform and economic betterment were broached by the IRO: labour exchanges to help the unemployed, night shelters for the city's destitute, the use of the old market in George Street, Port of Spain, to provide care for the aged, prison reform and even a home for unwed mothers. But contrary to expectations, the IRO, after six years has not turned out to be 'a dynamic force for improving the lot of the country's have-nots' but as another 'well-intentioned dispensary for sermons'.

Sermons it has given in abundance with the new type of 'ecumenical' service being held all over the country, on national occasions, at trade union meetings, at Divali celebrations etc. What an incongruous sight Dr. Wahid Ali must have cut as a Muslim delivering sermons to commemorate Divali. There was an occasion when an IRO pundit walked out of a service immediately after saying his piece and it is reported that he was later upbraided by Dr. Ali for his lack of courtesy. The search for a common national religious ideology had begun to turn sour.

There was no need after all for every one to fuse together under the 'All ah we is one' philosophy to demonstrate a tolerance and respect for each other. But for the Muslim community in particular, one major negative effect of the IRO has been to limit the role of Islam. It has tended to induce a spirit of passivism and dependence on the IRO to solve problems rather than an active interest in maintaining and carrying forward the Islamic message. And meanwhile, the other bodies, having been given a new respectability and lease of life, have continued to forge ahead.

One of our readers sent this in:

"May I, through the medium of the Muslim Standard congratulate the brothers of the ASJA in putting out their Islamic Calendar which I found to be very educational and informative especially to the Muslim community of Trinidad.

It is a long time now since the Muslims have been looking forward to such a calendar in order to know important dates and festivals in Islam. But what strikes me very much as being out of tune is the number of 'Urus Shareefs' (death anniversaries) that have been highlighted. To my mind these Urus Shareefs are insignificant and of no interest to the community.

Before we highlight or celebrate or commemorate birthdays and death anniversaries, we should ask ourselves if these were the practices of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, or of his companions and if not we should leave them off...'

"Man can have nothing but what he strives for."

—The Qur'an.

## WHAT IT IS TO BE REALLY FREE

Someone once said that there are two types of freedom—the freedom to do what one *ought* to do and the freedom to do what one *wants* to do. In the former case, that freedom implies a responsibility—to oneself, to others and (if you acknowledge Him) to God. In the latter case, freedom implies a certain amount of licence—to do what one wishes irregardless (as the Americans would say) of the effects on others and of the consequences.

The talk of fundamental rights and freedoms has been very much in the air especially since the Government has run roughshod over Parliament and the country to enact a new Constitution for us. By and large it acted with the untrammelled freedom to do what it wanted and it was only through the vigilance of some sections of the community, the lawyers in particular, that certain potentially draconian measures in the proposed document were dropped.

This all shows, of course, the necessity and the usefulness of being vigilant and taking a stand. But in the final analysis, can we expect paper guarantees—which after all is what the Constitution is—to ensure that our basic human rights are protected? The answer is decidedly 'No'. How many are the excellent constitutions in the world which are interpreted, changed or set aside completely by 'emergency rules', 'due processes of law' and other types of legal fiction to suit one group of power-hungry people and oppress another! The UN Bill of Rights which 'guarantees' so many rights and freedoms is a dead letter in this century of macro-economics and macro-politics, of violence and totalitarianism.

No man-made constitution can in the long run guarantee man his rights and his freedoms. In the same

way that rights are 'given' they can be taken away. This can be done either brashly as in the socialist/communist states or more subtly as in others.

For things to work reasonably well, there need to be on the part of both the governing and the governed, a consuming passion for sincerity, trust and responsibility. The Government so far by its indecent haste has yet to show conclusively that it possesses this mutual trust but it is to be hoped that some of the fears of continuing high-handedness would prove false, for the good of individuals and the country as a whole.

But what if they don't? Then if the people possess the qualities of true freedom, a freedom which is at once delicate and powerful, not dependent on the whims and the machinations of man but based on the consciousness of personal responsibility to the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, then no earthly power can subdue, coerce or deny those inalienable rights.

To illustrate this, there is the true story told by a Danish traveller in North Africa. He was visiting the prisons in Libya during the Italian occupation. He saw a group of prisoners listening to another prisoner who was reciting the Qur'an from memory. He said of them: "Their faces shone with a sublime calm, as if they hardly knew they were in prison. Not a flicker on their faces revealed that they were prisoners on the brink of death. I felt a deep admiration for these men from the mountains who would not give in, but who preferred death to slavery."

This was in 1930. Do we, in the light of such stirring experiences, and while prating about constitutional rights and freedoms, know what it is to be really free?

In these times  
people must have standards

THE BEST STANDARD  
THE MUSLIM STANDARD

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