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The last week in October was named Family Planning Week in Trinidad and Tobago. There was a press campaign, film shows and visits by members of the Family Planning Association to country districts, trade unions and even secondary schools advising on the harmful effects of venereal diseases

(which reports say have reached epidemic proportions) and advising on contraceptive methods available. In the popular mind the campaign was symbolised by the promise of "CONDOMS IN VENDING MACHINES FOR CARNIVAL" The government is giving full backing to these programmes euphemis-

tically described as "family planning activities" which has reduced the birth rate and allegedly "improved the quality of life". In what follows, *Mubammad Sayyid* assesses the claims put forward and the effects of the massive "family planning" exercises on the very purpose of our being.

The ability to procreate is one of the most precious assets given to us by our Creator for which we must be thankful and truly appreciative. No amount of wishing or crying will be able to restore to us that gift once we have lost it, either through abuse or through deliberate action on our part. It is with this thought in mind that we may discuss artificial contraception and sterilization as the means for curbing our present social evils.

When T.R. Malthus, the 18th century English propagator of the population control theory, conceived the idea that the world would be unable to sustain the continued increase in the human species, he was speaking as an economist ignorant of the workings of providence for the continued sustenance of mankind. His theory was never proven, nor can it be proven since it is definitely beyond the ken of men to know what the future holds, except what has been made known to us by the prophets of the Most High. It is on the basis of this conjecture that the whole system of birth control is established.

It is indeed alarming to note the way in which we have abused our powers of reproduction. The increase of population in Trinidad and Tobago has come mostly from unwed mothers and irresponsible fathers. Why is this so? It would be the simplest of answers to say

CONTRACEPTIVES - FOR WHAT?

that we are the victims of a slave mentality or that we are unaware of the circumstances which favour conception. This would in no way absolve us from the consequences of our actions nor would it remove the responsibilities which come with our ability to reproduce. Rather, the carefree attitude which is part and parcel of our present system of shallow living is the main reason for our widespread abuse of sex. We are now running blindly after the pleasure of the act without paying heed to the purpose of it and we are reaping the bitter fruit of our transgression of the natural laws of human life.

Instead of taking stock of the flaws in our present behavioural pattern and learning from our mistakes, backtracking and repairing the damage we have caused ourselves, we stubbornly plod on the same muddy ruts and seek to patch up the holes in our shoes instead of fixing the road. It is the policy of the Trinidad and Tobago Government to reduce the birthrate from the present figure of approximately 24,000 annually to 19,000

without disturbing the present social trends in the least. So a vast contraceptive campaign has been launched.

Under the guise of improvement of "the quality of life" for ourselves and our children, and in the name of development, we are being asked to dehumanise ourselves by artificially retracting our ability to reproduce. The methods available to us range from the "pill" to "tubal ligation" (permanent disconnection of the womb) for women to rubber condoms and vasectomies (cutting of the sperm delivery tube) for men. These various methods of contraception would presumably "enhance" our lives and simultaneously enable us to render yeoman service to the "national good". We would be much freer to fornicate and adulterate and to degrade ourselves to the level of true animals; mere castrated shells given up to the wanton pursuit of pleasure.

Already, even while the birthrate is decreasing, teenage pregnancies among the unmarried are increasing. Unwed mothers under 20 were responsible for approximately 3224 of the 5208 live babies born to mothers in the 15 - 20 age group in 1973. Even the number of pregnant schoolgirls is escalating. This is

"THE TONGUE CAN BE SILENCED, NOT THE MIND..."

(Pages 5, 6 & 7)

a clear indication of where the defects responsible for our plight lie. Yet, the "short-term solution" being adopted is not the readjustment of moral values, an overhauling of the whole rotten educational system, as would be expected by any rational being, but the provision of adequate contraceptive services for adolescents! Teenage pregnancies trigger off increased illegal abortions, usually performed by older women and medical quacks. The risks to the health of the young women are considerable since the methods of inducing abortion range from the consumption of poisonous concoctions, pills and hot stout, bush medicines and potions to the more direct method of "surgery" to remove the growing foetus. The risks include excessive loss of blood, blood poisoning, perforation of the uterus, followed by peritonitis, often resulting in death from lack of medical attention and even permanent infertility. During the first six months of 1976, 18% of women entering hospitals on account of illegal abortions were under 20 years! Yet the government and nation ignore the root of the problem and seek to prolong the sickening state of affairs by adopting the "easy way out"—artificial sterilisation.

We pay no heed to the steady increase of violent sex crimes which has developed in our society. Assaults are staged on males and females by members of either sex. Just a few months ago there was the case of a young lady being raped by a man and a woman; another of a teacher being stabbed and thrown into a pool to drown while his girl-friend was raped and stabbed; this month an expoliceman was jailed for raping a 10-year old. These are but a fraction of the number of rapes and assaults which take place annually and still we refuse to take heed. The increase of population and the upsurge of sex crimes stem from the same root—the moral break-down of the society. A national campaign promoting contraception including sterilisation cannot erase such a problem; rather, it can be seen as a major contributor to the moral degradation and the increased incidence of venereal diseases. Now more and more youth are turning to sexual experimentation since the removal (allegedly) of the risks of pregnancy. The statistics speak for themselves; birth control contraceptives are aids, not hindrances, to the destruction of the human species—mentally, morally and physically!

What do we do, Now? We must realise that we are the foundation of the society, which is dependent upon us for its continuation. Any change in our lifestyles would bring about a corresponding change in the social structure. The problems which we face today stem basic-

"Come, I will relate what your Lord has really prohibited you from:

Do not worship anything besides Him.

Be good to your parents.

Kill not your children on a plea of want (for God) provides sustenance for you and for them.

Come not nigh to shameful deeds, whether open or secret.

Take not life which God has made sacred, except by way of justice and law.

Thus does God command you that you may learn wisdom."

The Qur'an, 6 : 151)

The Pledge at Al-Aqaba

Prophet Muhammad, with a group of his companions around him, said:

"Take solemn pledge before me:

1. Not to worship anything along with God.
2. Not to steal.
3. Not to commit illegal sexual intercourse.
4. Not to kill your children.
5. Not to accuse an innocent person.
6. Not to be disobedient when ordered to do good deeds.

ally from our outlook on life, since the social structure is geared to achieve the fulfilment of our desires. As such, we must reorientate our views and change our habits to obtain the best possible results. But we cannot achieve anything valuable without desiring to obtain

the fulfilment of our purpose of creation. We must recognise that we are not the products of mere chance, that we are an integral part of a vast, harmonious system emanating from God, the Most High. We must take cognisance of the natural laws regulating the whole universe and resolve to work within the framework of the laws laid down for us by our Creator through the medium of the Prophets. This is the first step towards true social reform. The social structure must be geared to achieve the real purpose of our creation and to uplift us from the clutches of our animal passions. We are the prize of the Creation, different from the animals!

Our Whole existence must smack of purpose, must aim at liberation from evil influences and mundane goals and we must return to the guidance of God in every aspect of our lives. The only Guidance must be God's guidance and no law contrary to God's law must gain ascendancy over us. We are individually responsible for our lives and our destinies and we must each develop our sense of responsibility to God. The government must review the laws and bring them into harmony with the Divine commandments if they are really for our welfare. We must not sit back and allow our lives to be run arbitrarily.

As in the past, the Government has again shown its bankruptcy of morals and its blind disregard for the welfare of the citizens, as people not as statistics. The situation in which we find ourselves is onewhich poses grave danger, not only to us but to our unborn generations. We need to reverse the disastrous trend and nothing short of a revolution in our life style would do the trick. We must emphasize marriage as the only framework for sexual relations and condemn altogether pre-marital and extra-marital relationships because fornication and adultery are prohibited by God. We must restrict the indiscriminate mixing of males and females, and rebuild our educational system along moral lines. The laws of God must be the basis of our education. We must totally prohibit pornography in books, movies and songs, since sexual perversion takes root first in the mind. Clothes too must be subjected to the moral requirements. In short, the whole legal system must be overhauled and reconstructed to create a moral society. There is no "easy way" out of Hell. Partial solutions become permanent problems in the long run.

INTERNATIONAL SURVEY

The Resistance of The Oppressed

At last Dr Henry Kissinger's shuttle work has begun on the Black Continent. Many friends of the USA and enemies of Russia have been clamouring for the magic touch of the Secretary of State to be applied to an area whose mineral wealth and strategic position at world's sea routes make it scarcely less significant than the regions which had 'benefited' earlier from such intervention. Only that this time Dr Kissinger is unlikely to collect any international prizes.

The entire business must look to Dr Kissinger as a confounded bore, which yet must be attempted to help boost President Ford's chances at the election this November. For long years America's top expert in international affairs had been pinning his hopes on those valiant defenders of Christendom, the Portuguese colonisers. In a celebrated memorandum in 1969 for President Nixon on southern Africa, submitted by Dr Henry Kissinger, then an up and coming adviser on foreign affairs, he expressed his full confidence in the ability of the Portuguese system in Mozambique and Angola to survive indefinitely. The essence of Dr Kissinger's assessment of the situation was that the guerrilla struggle pursued by the national liberation movements in Portuguese territories had no chance whatever to bring their wars to a successful conclusion. The thing to do for America then was to endorse the status quo. No pressure should be put on the white minority regimes in the area to change or reform. America continued to import chromium from Rhodesia and went on trading with South Africa, although not in arms. American capital invested in South Africa reached 1.6 thousand million dollars in 1976.

INEVITABLE END

Even when the revolution in Portugal in April 1974 spelled out the inevitable end of the Portuguese empire, Dr Kissinger apparently failed to grasp the significance of this event for southern Africa. It needed the traumatic experience of the Cuban intervention in Angola to jolt the Washington Administration into action. His recent meeting with Mr Vorster in Zurich was the second in less than three months, and his coming visit to Africa will be the second in five months. But it took Dr Kissinger eight years in office to move on Africa and set his shuttle diplomacy finally in motion.

The American intervention has been welcomed by both Mr Smith

and Mr Vorster with scarcely veiled jubilation. Here at last was the most powerful nation of the West ready to make common cause with the beleaguered bastions of European civilisation in southern Africa, to launch a crusade against communist menace. Understandably, there was no such eagerness on the Black side to meet the American statesman. People like Mr Nyerere and Mr Vorster can scarcely have enough in common to produce an agreed view on American initiatives. No matter how critical most people in southern Africa may be of Russia and communism their main concern at the moment is the diabolical system of racial oppression and exploitation under which they are compelled to live and which is being sustained by white minorities.

DIPLOMATIC RECIPE

While the white ruling classes in southern Africa want Dr Kissinger and America to help preserve things as they are, as much as possible, the non-white people are only willing to give a minimum of the benefit of the doubt to American intervention — only in so far as this may conceivably be seen as moderating or reducing the present systems in Rhodesia, Namibia and indeed South Africa. The room of manoeuvre for Dr Kissinger is consequently very small.

The scope for confusing the issue and bluff or hoodwink the parties concerned — the vital ingredients of Dr Kissinger's diplomatic recipe — is much more restricted in southern Africa than it has been elsewhere. Neither Smith nor Vorster are likely to be moved by the Americans to make any real concessions at this stage to the clamour for justice in their respective States. One can understand this. Any concessions they would make now would be interpreted as signs of weakness and would only whet the appetite for more.

Mr Smith himself has made clear that he is quite unwilling to contemplate an early transfer of power to majority rule. This was why the negotiations with black opposition parties in Rhodesia came to nothing nearly two years ago. It has been also made clear by the Black leaders that violence was now the only way to get rid of Mr Smith and his regime. This point of view was most recently endorsed by the five 'front-line' African presidents meeting at Dar-es-Salaam.

PRIMARY CONCERN

The primary concern of the

African side in regard to Rhodesia is now to bring various political and guerilla factions to agree on common action and programme. Such disunity as there might be among the Black Rhodesians should not be seen as in any way guaranteeing the survival of the Smith regime. It is quite normal in circumstances of a national liberation struggle for different movements to compete for allegiance of the people. As time goes on the best and the most effective movement will assert itself at the expense of its competitors. At the moment this looks like being the Zimbabwe Liberation Army, ZIPA or the so-called third force. There is little doubt that any of the resistance party trying to win the upper hand by parleying with Mr Smith would merely sign its own political death warrant.

There is more opportunity for American mediation in Namibia or South-West Africa, although this may be more apparent than real. It seems highly unlikely that SWAPO, regarded by the UN and many others as representative of the Namibian people will agree to anything short of effective sharing in political decision-making in the territory. But South Africa will almost certainly oppose tooth and nail any such concession. The entire purpose of the South Africa's present diplomatic activity seems to create a buffer of subservient States at her borders, possibly controlled by the whites, but, if the worse comes to the worst, by Black Africans willing to cooperate with her.

CORE OF THE PROBLEM

The core of the problem, and there is no escaping from its logic, lies in South Africa and her domestic policies, and there the situation remains as gloomy as ever. The Government seems determined not to budge in matters that are really important, although under the pressure of events in Soweto and elsewhere there may be some cosmetic changes on the way.

The opponents of Government policies of racial discrimination in South Africa may draw comfort from increasing economic difficulties faced by Mr Vorster's administration as gold, the main earner of foreign exchange, has lost heavily in world markets. According to reports, about 20 per cent of the active Black population is out of work, which must add fuel to discontent.

It must also be regarded as encouraging that the so-called coloureds or people of mixed race

SOUTHERN AFRICA



and those of Indian descent are now much more ready to show solidarity with black people than they have been in the past.

'BROWN' POPULATION

This 'brown' population, numbering some two and a half million, has been bitterly disappointed at the lack of progress in regard to its demands for equality with whites. In particular the Government has rejected even some of the moderate recommendations of the Erika Theron Commission of Inquiry of 1973, dealing with matters concerning the coloured population. The Government has inter alia rejected the recommendation that political rights of the coloured be safeguarded by 'satisfactory forms of direct Coloured representation and a direct say for Coloureds at the various levels of government and on the various decision-making bodies'. The recommendation for abolition of the existing obnoxious laws on marriage and inter-racial sex has also been turned down. But there will be some extension of the rights of mixed race people in trade and business and other less significant improvements.

Both blacks and coloureds respectively resorted to demonstrations and riots recently, which have been suppressed by heavy loss of life. The pattern continues with oppressive monotony. More and more people in South Africa clearly prefer to die rather than live in frustration and humiliation. This in itself is not enough to change the situation in South Africa. Much more time is needed for that. But one can now envisage a development in which the resistance of the oppressed people becomes overwhelming, sweeping away the elaborate, inhuman arrangements for minority rule.

Karl Lavrencic

* * INTERNATIONAL SURVEY * *

THE ARABIAN PENINSULA Squeezing the Russians out

Recently Saudi Arabia has considerably stepped up its efforts to eliminate communist and Russian influences in the Arabian peninsula. The drive has been markedly successful in the Yemeni Arab Republic where the Government has announced that no military supplies would any more be coming from the USSR, which for the past 20 years had been the main source of North Yemen's arms. Instead North Yemen will be buying arms from the USA and France, and Saudi Arabia is going to foot the bill for these purchases, reported to be worth about 480 million dollars. The Saudis are also pleased to see the end of communist-led insurgency in Oman, as officially reported by the Muscat Government last December. But the going is much harder in South Yemen where the Government appears to bend as ever on its leftwing, pro-Russian course, in spite of Saudi offers of aid on condition that the Aden Government recognises the error of its ways and alters its pro-communist orientation. The tug-of-war between Saudi Arabia, backed by US, and Russia, supported by local communists and leftwingers, goes on in an obscure but vitally significant area of the world.

So far the Sultanate of Oman has most reason to congratulate itself. After more than ten years of bitter war against the communist-led guerilla in the southern region of Dhofar victory is said to have been won. If this is true the Muscat regime will have been one of the few in the world engaged in fighting communist insurgency that can claim final success. There is evidence from the other side too that the Sultan's claim is not an empty boast.

Libya to define its laws

Col. Qadhafi said in his Revolution Day anniversary speech that the next session of the peoples' general congress, which will meet before next May, will have the task of defining the laws

of the society. He declared: 'There is no law under which everyone of us can be reassured of his life, rights and duties, other than the laws of God. I do not imagine any constitution to be approved by the peoples' general congress other than the Qur'an from which all legislation and laws will be derived to meet every situation. This book must be the source of legislation' because 'the source of all legislations must be a firm one that cannot be changed or distorted'.

MUSLIM STUDENTS IN AUSTRALIA

Concern over Muslims in Patani, Philippines and India

The problems of Muslims in the South and South East Asia and the Far East were focussed at the ninth annual convention of the Australian Federation of Muslim Students Association held recently at the University of Queensland, Brisbane. The convention expressed deep concern over the problems of Muslims in Patani, Southern Philippines and India. It demanded the end of military repressions in Patani and Southern Philippines, the upholding of the right of self determination of the Patani Malays and the Moro people of Mindanao, Sulu, Palawan and Tawi Tawi. With regard to India the convention deplored the drive for coercive birth control and urged that the unjustified ban on the premier Muslim organisation, the 'Jamaat-e-Islami Hind' be lifted immediately.

Bilalian Islam?

A nine-page mimeographed report on the Black Muslim movement emanating from the US states that notwithstanding the recent cosmetic modifications, the movement very much remains outside Islam. It quotes:

'I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, and the Honourable Master Elijah Muhammad - before our Divine leader today - was the messenger that was raised up to lead us to a certain degree of knowledge' Bilalian Islam, March 5, 1976.

'W. D. Muhammad is the Lord of Dawn and I seek refuge with the Lord of Dawn'.

The report criticises those Muslim leaders who in their simple-minded zeal to win the society to Islam, appease, fund and support hypocrisy and blasphemy. Rather than winning new Muslims to the fold of Islam, this approach is weakening the brotherhood of Muslims in North America.

Hajj Rules 1396/1976

Saudi Arabia has issued new rules for the guidance of pilgrims going for Hajj this year. These cover the general rules, rules for pilgrims coming by land route, list of various fees, rent of lodgings in Mecca and Medina, the time schedules and duties of the *mu'allims* and Hajj guides etc. Reproduced below are the main points of these rules but the intending pilgrim is advised to check with the local Saudi embassy or consular office as to details or points not covered herein:

Time Schedules

- Last day for receiving applications for Hajj visa. — Dhul Qa'adah 20 (Nov 12/13).
- Last date for the arrival of planes at Jeddah airport. — Dhul Hijjah 4
- Last date for arrival by road at the land frontiers of Saudi Arabia. — Dhul Hijjah 1.
- (Details of arrival dates at various places in the country and parking instructions available from Saudi embassies).
- Last date for pilgrims to travel by plane to Medina from either Jeddah or abroad. — Dhul Qa'adah 29.
- Last date for pilgrims to leave Medina for Mecca by car or plane. — Dhul Hijjah 4.

Groupings

The pilgrims will be divided into six groups, as follows:-

1. Pilgrims of Southeast Asia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and China and Muslims of the same origin coming from Europe and America.
2. Pilgrims of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Burma and Muslims of the same origin coming from Europe, South Africa and America.
3. Pilgrims of South, West, East and Central Africa and Muslims of the same origin coming from Europe and America.
4. Pilgrims of all the Arab League countries and Muslims of the same origin coming from Europe and America.
5. Pilgrims of Turkey whether residing in Turkey or abroad; and,
6. Pilgrims of Iran whether residing in Iran or abroad.

The grouping of other pilgrims will be done on arrival.

For each group there has been set up an office with sections for allocating the pilgrim to a *mu'allim* and dealing with their transportation and other related matter.

Distribution of pilgrims among the *mu'allims* will be done outside Saudi Arabia in a selected number of Muslim countries, but in due course grouping would be completed in the countries of origin/departure.

Duties and functions of *mu'allims*, agents, guides and *zamzamis* have been laid down in detail. Generally *mu'allims* are required to receive the pilgrims from the reception centre on arrival, look after their comfort, guide them in the performance of the Hajj rites and take them to Arafat, to Muzdalifah, then to Mina and Mecca by prescribed transport.

Mu'allim is required to give every pilgrim in his charge a card bearing his (*mu'allim's*) name, his address in Mecca and the site of his tent in both Arafat and Mina. The card will also bear the name of the pilgrim. He will also take the custody of the pilgrim's travel documents till his travel formalities are completed.

Guides will accompany the pilgrim during his visit to the Prophet's Mosque as well as during the other visits, and, the *zamzamis* are to provide water from the well of Zamzam both inside the Holy Mosque and in other lodgings in Mecca.

These functionaries are also responsible for assisting the pilgrim in completing official formalities, to inform the authorities if the pilgrim is lost, to immediately get in touch with the nearest public health centre in case a pilgrim is unwell and inform the pilgrimage department and *Bait-ul-Mal* of the pilgrim's property in the event of his death, as well as for making arrangements for his burial.

The rules forbid any payment not stipulated in the official tariff, nor does any functionary have the right to collect any sum of money except for the goods or services he has himself ordered and received. The *mu'allims* and guides will be supervised and those failing in their duties will be disqualified or punished in accordance with the regulations.

Modes of Travel

Pilgrims may arrive either by air or by land route. Those wishing to change their mode of travel on homeward journey must obtain the permission of the ministry of pilgrimage. For pilgrims arriving by air, dates have been set down for their return and these have to be adhered to.

The Saudi Government has guaranteed free medical treatment and there would be offices under the ministry of pilgrimage to help and guide the pilgrim. The pilgrims on the other hand are expected to come properly informed about the rules and rites of the Hajj and while in Mecca and Medina, conduct themselves in a befitting manner and cooperate with the authorities in maintaining cleanliness as well as smooth running of transport and all other arrangements.

"THE TONGUE CAN BE SILENCED, NOT THE MIND..."

EXPRESSIONS....

As Muslims we believe that Islam represents a complete code of life. Yet, few of us make any effort to acquaint ourselves with the Qur'an which is the source of our faith. The present state of no-acceptance, no-rejection makes our conduct ambivalent. Since all our actions are governed mainly by considerations of competition and success our formal attachment to Islam creates a dichotomy in our life. Whether this dichotomy exists or not is a question which everyone has to answer for himself...

ON IGNORANCE

In order to understand the framework of belief, within which we should organise our lives, and the scheme of values, according to which we should make our decisions, we must begin with the study of the Qur'an. This is not an easy task. The first hurdle is our lack of knowledge of the Arabic language....

Apart from the question of language and the pitfalls of literalism anyone taking up an independent study of the Qur'an must face yet another problem: lack of encouragement from some of the ulama who have taken the Book into personal custody. They fear that if everyone were to study the Qur'an independently it would undermine the cohesion of the community. Every reader will interpret the Qur'an according to his own light and this will cause confusion. It is said that enough authoritative material is available and readers should follow the interpretation offered by recognised scholars rather than embark on personal study and research. How can a people who make no effort to understand the basis of their faith contribute to its growth through personal conduct? Ignorance may suit conformism but it is fatal for creative activity, and once a community ceases to be creative it must decline...

ON UNITY

History has disproved the view that

the unity of the ummah can be preserved through imitative adherence to an institution or a doctrine. Unity cannot take precedence over knowledge nor should it be pursued at the cost of all principles. Unity is a social and political concept and as such it must be regarded as a means to certain ends. If the end is solidarity and strength of the Ummah, then unity is a means to that end. But unity is not a precondition of good moral

The selections on this and the following two pages are taken from a new book, Translations from the Quran, by Altaf Gauhar.

Apart from an illuminating introduction on some of the fundamental issues of our times, the book deals with subjects which have been particularly emphasized and repeatedly explained in the Quran—justice, accountability, repentance and faith. One of the main purposes of the book is to emphasize "the need for each one of us to study the Qur'an independently and conscientiously... the only way to avoid imitative conformism and to contribute to the creative resurgence of the Muslim community".

Altaf Gauhar was the Chief Editor of the Pakistani daily Dawn and it was for his persuasive editorials that he was imprisoned in 1972 under a Martial Law Regulation. It was in jail that he first became acquainted with Maududi's Tafheem-ul-Quran. He was profoundly moved by the message of the Qur'an. Translations from the Quran is the result of that experience. The book may be consulted at the Islamic Trust Reference Library.

behaviour. The Prophet, upon whom peace, did not establish a united Ummah before propagating the divine message—a message which was meant to be practised by each individual believer. Unity was the consequence of a code adopted by a number of people, each regulating his conduct according to the norms prescribed in that code and contributing to the gradual evolution of the concept of unity. A united people do not necessarily mean a moral people. Indeed, the reverse has sometimes been the case. A people can easily unite to pursue immoral ends. The history of imperialism and colonialism is replete with such examples.

ON THE QUR'AN

The present state of stagnation will not end until each one of us recognises his responsibility to make a positive contribution toward the rebuilding of our society on the basis of our faith—a faith which liberates man and offers full scope for the growth of all human faculties.

It is ridiculous to fear that independent study may create doubts and raise questions to which it may not be possible to provide an answer. The human mind must be persuaded by argument, illustration, and experience. The tongue can be silenced, not the mind which demands satisfaction. And satisfaction is the pre-requisite of faith. The Qur'an is

the pre-requisite of faith. The Qur'an is one sustained argument, from the beginning to the end, an exhortation, a warning, a persuasive and painstaking presentation of ideas and principles. The life of the Prophet itself was a supreme example of persuasion. There was nothing arbitrary or dogmatic in anything that the Prophet did. Again and again, the Prophet was reminded by the Qur'an that his job was to convey the message. He was to communicate what was revealed to him and to model his own life according to that revelation. He was not appointed as a superintendent to maintain surveillance over the others or to become responsible for their conduct.

ON PRIVATE RELIGION?

Is religion a matter of shame, some sort of a hang-over of the past, which should be tucked away in a recess of private life? If that is so, our concern should be to save our lives from its pernicious effects. On the other hand if religion is not a disability or a disease and is accepted as relevant and helpful to one's private life then where is the justification to exclude it from public life? It is not easy to understand the distinction unless by private we mean our secret fears and hopes, loves and hates, frustrations and ambitions, secrets which we are either unconscious of or which we are incapable of expressing in any manner. Does all that remains hidden from the public gaze constitute private conduct? A crime which is never detected does not become a private matter because its perpetrator is not discovered. Does private mean that aspect of one's life which does not concern anyone else? If one lives in society anything worth doing or thinking must affect others. How does something which is good in private become evil in public or vice versa? That which is private for one individual may be public for another...In any case, how can the essential elements of faith be restricted in their application to a part of human life to the exclusion of the other parts?

Take the basic tenets of Islam: belief in God, belief in the Qur'an, which implies regulating one's conduct according to its teachings, belief in the finality of the Prophet, and belief in the hereafter. Which one of these concepts should be treated as relevant only to an individual's private life and repugnant or irrelevant to his public conduct? It would be illogical to suggest that privately one must believe in the unity of God while there should be no objection in public to submitting to other gods. Should one privately treat the Qur'an as a revealed Book, but in public have no hesitation in regarding other books as of greater relevance and significance, in view of what are called the contemporary realities? Is the hereafter a matter of conscience which has no relevance to our practical conduct? One cannot believe in any of these essential concepts in a partial or limited sense. If there is one God then there is no other God in public or private. If human dignity is compromised in

AL FATIHAH: CHARTER OF HUMAN LIBERTY

A LONELY wanderer in the darkness of night sees a sudden light — a flicker which develops into a radiant beam as he advances towards it. This is how the mind groping for expression discovers the right word. It is not just an intellectual exercise but an effort in which the whole being of man is involved; his instincts, reason, emotions, hopes and fears keep striking against his mind till the spark is produced.

The spark sometimes turns into a miraculous ray of light which illumines some dark corner of reality. The poet gets his word and it is inspiration. The Prophet his vision, under Divine guidance, and it is revelation. The difference is that the Prophet's expression, unlike the poet's, is not merely appropriate or original, it bears an indelible seal of perfection.

Al-Fatihah, the opening chapter of the Qur'an, represents man's discovery of perfect expression in a moment of awareness of reality. Commentators have referred to it as 'the prayer', 'the essence' and 'the foundation' of the Qur'an...

Let us first attempt a translation of this chapter or surah:

*In the name of God, the Merciful,
the Compassionate.*

All praise to God Who creates and sustains the worlds.

His Grace is unbounding, His Mercy infinite.

Master of the Day of Judgement.

We worship You alone and to You alone we turn for help.

Guide us on the straight path

The path of those who You blessed,
Not of those who went astray nor
incurred Your wrath.

public it cannot be retrieved in private. If the Qur'an is accepted as a book of guidance it must cover all facets of human life. If the Hereafter is not relevant to public conduct it has no relevance to private conduct either. Human conduct is indivisible. A champion of human liberty in private cannot be an instrument of oppression in public. A believer in the day of

According to authentic opinion it is the first complete surah which was revealed to the Prophet during the earliest days of his mission. The introductory note on this surah in (Maudoodi's) Tafheemul Qur'an contains the following:

This surah is, in fact, a prayer. It is placed in the beginning so that we may recite it to seek help as we begin to study the Qur'an. We pray for what we want and we address our prayer to the One Who is in a position to grant it. The reader takes up the Qur'an with the attitude of a person looking for guidance and he prays to God to show him the right path. Surah al-Fatihah is not an introduction to the Qur'an. It is man's prayer to God and the Qur'an is God's response to that prayer. "God Almighty, guide me," says man. "Here is the Book of Truth for your guidance," answers God.

The Divine attributes of mercy and compassion are extolled in the introductory verse.

The first verse appeals to God, to Whom all praise is due, as the God of the universe, not of any particular race or nation. He creates and nourishes the worlds and ensures their development to a state of perfection according to laws directed to serve a divine purpose and in a universal framework which is characterized by balance, moderation, tolerance, beauty and charity.

The second verse mentions the two attributes which sustain all that is created by God—grace and mercy, both infinite and inexhaustible. These attributes save man from the continuing effects of his lapses and transgressions and maintain

Judgement cannot be oblivious of his responsibility to render a complete account of his life, private as well as public. Since neither the tenets of Islam nor the conduct of man is capable of division into private and public this whole exercise of treating religion as a matter of private faith is no more than a secular device to eliminate the influence of religion from public affairs.

the balance in favour of good.

In the third verse, we come to the point of final judgement on man's conduct. You get what you earn. This establishes the principle of accountability.

Here I should introduce briefly the Qur'anic view of good and evil. Good is not dependent on form or ritual.

"Virtue does not mean turning your faces eastward or westward in prayer. It means belief in God, in the Hereafter, in the angels, in the prophets of God, and in Divine revelations.

It requires looking after poor relations, helping the needy, the indigent, the way-farer and the orphan and setting slaves at liberty for the love of God.

Be earnest in the prayer and offer regular charity. Those who honour their word, remain patient in distress and steadfast in their struggle against evil are truly faithful and virtuous." (2: 177).

Evil takes many forms but it always contains some element of transgression, excess, waste, misapplication or disorder and implies deliberate pursuit of these ends.

The struggle between good and evil is decided according to the law of requital, which is subordinate to the Divine purpose that good must ultimately outweigh evil and falsehood must yield place to truth. Without this not only would the essential balance be disturbed, the whole object of creation would be frustrated. The law of requital is in operation all the time but the final determination awaits the Day of Judgement when God as judge and master will 'decide the issue'. The concept of the Hereafter is inseparable from the process of evolution. It is arbitrary to assume that this process which governs growth and decay, selection and survival, generation and regeneration at different levels of existence, should come to an abrupt and final end in physical death.

The fourth verse is a charter of human liberty and dignity. Man enters into a covenant with God, which excludes all intermediaries, helpers and other masters. He breaks off all bonds of subservience at one stroke and proclaims that to God alone will he bow in obedience and to Him alone will he turn for help. I remember vividly the moment when I

first realised the significance of this verse. "We worship You alone, and to You alone we turn for help." It was a dramatic moment of freedom, a moment in which fear disappeared, and within me I felt a resurgence of confidence and faith.

Hegel rejected an objective God on the ground that such a presence stimulated fear, cowardice and selfishness. He described the relation between an existent God and man on the basis of his master-slave doctrine. If we assume that divine existence must always encourage slavish sentiments how would we explain the fact that belief in God has so often inspired man to rise to great heights of independence, fortitude and courage? A direct God-man covenant liberates man and relieves him of all those considerations which would compel him to enter into a chain of master-slave relationships with other men. The God-man covenant is thus a covenant of

freedom, which supersedes all other relations and covenants. This, in essence, is the message of this verse.

This surah is divided into two movements, the first of which culminates in the third verse followed by an affirmation of relationship in the fourth, bringing man into direct communion with God, and in the last three verses man makes his choice in favour of good.

He beseeches God for guidance in the fifth verse. Man has his instincts, his senses, and his reason to help him, but, exposed as he is to temptation and fear, he seeks Divine revelation for his guidance and protection.

In the last two verses man places himself in the mirrors of time, sees what would happen to him if he is led astray and prays devoutly that he may be guided on the right path, the path of those who are blessed.

LAMENT OF THE QUR'AN

As an ornament do they adorn me,
Yet they keep me, and sometimes kiss me,
In their celebrations they recite me,
In disputes they swear by me,
On shelves do they securely keep me
Till another celebration or dispute, when
they need me.

Yes, they read me and memorise me,
Yet only an ornament am I.
My message lies neglected, my treasure
untouched,
The field lies bare, where blossomed once
true glory,
Wrong is the treatment that I receive,
So much to give have I, but none is there to
perceive.

by Mahir-ul-Qaderi
Translated from the Urdu by Latif Choudry

THORNS ON THE ROAD

They have been friends for the past seven years. Not just mere friends: theirs was the inseparable link. They used to have the same interests, and similar points of view on most problems during their secondary school days. They parted, when Wafa got married and temporarily moved to town with her husband. On her return, Wafa discovered that her friend Nahla had undergone such transformation in her ideals and practices that she was reminded of the biological definition of metamorphosis. She had a long discussion with Nahla, and tried to point out to her how out-moded were her newly acquired ideals, and how impossible to put into practice in their present-day life. The conviction of Nahla in these ideals was becoming more and more firmly rooted. She continued in her study of Islam, the cause of all these changes, her friend's attempts to dissuade her notwithstanding.

She was naturally concerned about her lifelong friend, and wanted her to share in the new riches and blessings she had discovered in Islam. The Wafa she knew was a sensible, thoughtful girl, whose character was most admirable. She was sure she would, under normal circumstances, have joined her in her convictions about the Islamic principles without a moment's hesitation. But heavily dominated by her husband's "with-it" outlook on life, Wafa's heart seemed under a seal.

After their discussion, Nahla wondered how her friend would react to the news that she was intending to break off her engagement as a result of her belief in Islam. Her fiancé, unfortunately had turned out to be a slave of Western thought and culture and was the "modern" part-time, nominal Muslim.

On her way home Nahla felt tense and found her mind clouded with thoughts about Ahmad. The world became one lonely desert. But for her pious Uncle, she felt completely deserted. Even Wafa was in the opposite camp. She thought of life as Ahmad's wife, as she walked on with a rather sluggish pace. She imagined herself as the joyful mother with Ahmad's baby in her arms. How pleasant! She thought of God, and why she was denying herself these seemingly wonderful joys. His prescribed code

A short story adapted by the late Dr. Fatima Bugaigis. She was killed while aboard the Libyan passenger airliner which was shot down by the Israelis over the Sinai desert in 1972. There were no survivors. (Reproduced from 'The Muslim', London, January 1967.)

prevented her from marrying a man who had no regard for God's laws as Ahmad seemed to have. God or Ahmad? God, glory be to Him, of course—the Creator of all, Who has further given law and order for the guidance of the individual. She remembered the saying of Prophet Muhammad—peace be upon him: "A time will come when the individual will be holding on to his faith as if holding on to fire." Her uncle's words also reverberated in her ears: "There are many thorns on the road..." Her mind was made up, and she determined to face up to the consequences. It was good-bye to Ahmad, and she must find an occasion in which to convey this to him. Has she been fair to him, she wondered. Her action was quite justified. There did not appear to be any spark of *Iman* (faith) in his heart.

BEING 'WITH-IT'

What of the night he came to her home with tickets for her whole family to visit the notorious strip-tease club? When he told her about it, she had protested she could not go. Calling at places of sensual entertainment was forbidden in Islam. At this the whole family and Ahmad had laughed, and her sister had added that it was time she gave up her old-fashioned ideas. Ahmad had then decided to employ his ability of persuasion on her. He had told her her mind was living in the sixth century while her body existed in the twentieth. She should learn to move with the time. Their concerted effort was directed at convincing her of the impossibility of leading a pious and religious life in the present age. Wise people never tried, Ahmad had said. At first she had listened silently to all their jibes and taunts and ridiculous 'logic'. Then suddenly she had risen like an injured tigress and addressed them in as

sternly a manner as her muscles could bear. She quoted examples in their daily lives to illustrate what constituted being "with-it". She mentioned the case of her brother-in-law who had deserted her sister and her children to live in sin with a dancer. She had referred them to the woman next-door who came home drunk almost every night and indulged each time in indecent display for the entertainment of the whole street. Were they asking her to do the same to "move with the time"? A society that had no regard for human dignity, that had lost all sense of right and wrong could better be described as animal, not human. She had ended by declaring how she hated the society they lived in and her determination to fight it with God's help. They had all been mesmerised into silence and left her alone. She wondered for how long the conflict would endure.

AN ULTIMATUM

A partial answer to this came as soon as she arrived home. She greeted the family, and was going to discuss her visit to Wafa's home, when the phone rang.

She was nearest, and picked up the receiver. It was Ahmad. He had made bookings for her whole family to visit a different night club because he had thought she did not like the particular one to which she had been previously invited. Nahla answered somewhat aggressively that all night clubs were the same to her and she was not going. This brought very harsh words from Ahmad—in fact, an ultimatum. If she wanted their engagement to be maintained, she had better come. Her mother who had been standing beside her and overhearing all that was said then snatched the receiver from her hand. She assured Ahmad that she would bring the whole family, Nahla included, with her. He should not mind her childish rantings; it was that old humbug (her uncle) who had been working on her mind. She added that he should await them at the entrance to the club.

Lunch was a dreary affair and when it was over, Nahla decided a walk would do her confused mind some good. It was late in the evening when she returned. She had fallen asleep under a tree in

whose shade she had sought refuge in God, and solicited His help in her present predicament. She was relieved to find that the family had gone. The housemaid passed her the message they had left. In order not to keep Ahmad waiting, they had left without her. She was to join them at the entrance of the club. She had, willy nilly, to be there, her mother had said.

HESITATION

She went slowly up to her room, locked the door, and fell on the bed. She pressed her face hard against the pillow and began to sob. After a while she stopped sobbing and decided to assess her situation. Could she not obey her mother and the pleas of Ahmad and go just that once, a first and last occasion? Hesitation began to eat into her mind. She began to argue that she could still succeed in influencing Ahmad unto the path of God, and make him follow the Islamic code of living. A soft, liberal attitude might change him instead of her stern refusals all the time. She could gradually win him to her views by letting him have his way once in a while. This newly discovered idea lit her eyes with hope. The possibility of a solution made her feel a few stones lighter.

Her thoughts ran to him. She remembered how Ahmad at first was very sympathetic to Islam, encouraging her, and giving every impression of sharing her conviction. But God had shown her His mercy, and showed him up in his true colour. She mused over the little incidents from which she had been able to deduce that he had been faking belief all along in order to win her hand in marriage. He was a favourite with the other members of her family, for whom, poor misguided souls, Islam was boredom, in this "swinging" age. She had once overheard her parents telling Ahmad what a great achievement it would be if he could succeed in liberating her from her "fanatical obsession" with Islam. To do this he had to work tactfully and patiently. How odd that her parents should be the ones to advise a man on how to lead her astray, she had thought. The world must be going upside down. She could not help praying for God's mercy on them.

She had been forced to put up with all sorts of torment and ridicule at home. When her nerves seemed to be on the verge of a breakdown, she turned to her

uncle. He was the only relative who saw eye to eye with her on her principles. For it was through him that God's light had reached her. He had been the torch-bearer. She related all these happenings to him, and sought his counsel. His words were not easy to assimilate. They sounded very harsh, in that deep staccato of a voice he possessed. But she could see, through the glassy lumps of tears collecting in her eyes the truth in them. "The choice has to be made now," he said, "between your God, and your family and fiancé. There are many thorns on the road, my dear, on the road to salvation." Silence fell on the room for a moment. She decided to pull herself together. After a while she spoke. She had made up her mind already. She would continue to seek nearness to God, rather than yield. She implored him to pray for strength for her. His nod, accompanied by the characteristic smile of his that seemed to make his greying beard twice as wide as they really were, was most reassuring. He was obviously pleased with her decision. She left him, feeling much more resolute than ever before.

OBJECTION

She broke the news of her intention to call off her engagement to Wafa at their next meeting. Wafa was stunned. "You must be out of your mind, Nahla," she shouted. Nahla replied firmly that she was not. It would constitute a deliberate disregard for God's law if I didn't. Wafa started pleading. "This means, Nahla, that you would do the same to every man who offers to marry you. You will never find a husband if you continue like this. The young men of today are not interested in religion or anything to do with it. They like to behave freely without any of the inhibitions and restrictions of religion." "That's very true," retorted Nahla. "They have sunk so low, they are no better than animals who are slaves of their instincts." Wafa ignored this and continued. "Say what you like about them, but your future will have to be with one of them. You will have to learn to live with them, Nahla. I advise you to reflect deeply before you take such a very serious step."

Nahla's firmness was stunning. "I know all this," she replied, "I used to have beautiful dreams about my new life as a wife, and was looking eagerly forward to their fulfilment. But dreams

are not reality. I cannot spend the rest of my life happily with a man whose way of life is incongruous with mine. You know yourself how I used to love and respect him. But, thanks to God, my sense of values have been rectified by Islam. I can no longer honour and respect a man who indulges in open rebellion to God's injunctions."

Wafa's ears detected a subtle note of a feeling of superiority in these words. Her reaction was characteristically feminine and hostile. She diverted the conversation to Nahla's dress. She started to heap ridicule on her taste of clothes and the manner in which she "hid" her beauty. Nahla snapped back. "It seems man's nature has changed a lot. Husbands now desire their wives to display their beauty to the world like goods on the shop-windows. They are now so generous that they offer their wives sacred secrets for public entertainment." Nahla looked at her watch, and decided it was time to leave. She had to be home for lunch. Wafa did not want her to leave in an irate mood. She became affectionate, protesting she did not seek a quarrel but was genuinely concerned for her friend's future. She begged her to think again. Nahla thanked her and kissed her goodbye.

She rose up, took a few steps across the room to her wardrobe, and opened it to select a dress. Then she sighed heavily. Not a single dress she possessed was suitable for an evening out in a night club! As she was thinking of what quick adjustment she could make in one of her dresses to make it befit the occasion, her eyes caught sight of the copy of the Qur'an lying majestically in the top right hand corner of her wardrobe. Her heartbeats started coming very rapidly; her knees were becoming too weak for her weight. "Those passages of the Qur'an describing God's anger especially for those who accept Islam, and then renounce it—they would apply to me!" She could see clearly in front of her without opening the Book the words describing hypocrites and the punishment awaiting them in this life and in the Hereafter. She felt very weak and sat on the bed. She was deceiving herself! She was trying to compromise her faith. Slowly she began to reason with herself again.

How could Ahmad ever change when he realised he could have his way over her belief every other time? He would claim it a victory for himself, and

would look for more of such victories. Gradually, his influence would begin to weigh on her and she would find herself farther and farther from the "Straight Path"—the path of profit, the path of salvation. No! It could never work. She remembered Ahmad's ultimatum and hoped he would carry out his threat.

She began to imagine over again what life as Ahmad's wife would be like. She would have all 'mundane' luxury. His job would ensure that—provided she went his way. But she would then have become a traitor to Islam, and that meant God's anger. God's anger! Her heart missed a beat. She walked to the wardrobe and took out the copy of the Qur'an. Her hand was shaking, as she turned the leaves to select a portion to read. She would read from the second chapter. Gradually she became engrossed in it.

When she had finished, she looked at her face in the mirror. The colour had returned to it. She released a heavy sigh of relief. She felt elated and triumphant. God had granted her victory. He had rescued her. She raised her hands and offered thanks. She prayed to Him for a firmer conviction in Him, on which no doubts could tread.

She had a look at her watch. The wretched show should be over now and they must be on their way back, she thought. They would be furious with her. She felt indifferent.

All That Glitters...

Trinidadians who visited the Chinese Economic and Trade Exhibition last month were suitably impressed by the "spectacular" achievements of Communist China—from the elegance of its handicraft to the sophistication and technical efficiency of elaborate electronic devices. What was more impressive was that these developments were not simply the result of any imitative process but that they seemed to spring from a fantastic creativity inspired by the needs of China. In other words, it was not simply the case of the "transfer of technology" which has been causing nightmares to the less developed nations and which caused Eric Williams to make his famous speech sometime ago that Trinidadians couldn't even manufacture a bicycle. At least the Chinese exhibition should prompt us to look at the causes for this and should needle us to take some baby steps towards useful creativity, not the types which mushroom around Carnival time.

Anyway, it's presumptuous to even attempt to compare a puny nation of just over one million with one which is pushing close to a thousand million! It is clear however that the Chinese have been

considering their numbers as an asset. Also the sheer pressure of numbers may have forced the pace of industry and inventiveness. The Exhibition did not say so. It attributed China's progress to the teachings of Marx and Lenin and the dynamic leadership of the late Chairman Mao who was concerned to keep things on the boil by "lighting fires in the belly of the Revolution." It certainly is an interesting and a necessary exercise to establish or disprove any correlation between the alleged 'authenticity' of Communist doctrine on the one hand and the performance of Communists themselves.

Other reasons for China's "emergence" needs to be considered as well. Foremost among these is the effect of China's Colonial Empire on its prosperity. Yes, China does have a very large Empire on its very door-steps—the exceedingly rich regions of Central Asia and Mongolia etc. This fact is often overlooked. So while we may be dazzled by the brilliance, there is a darker side to the Chinese face and we should spare a thought for the people colonized by the Chinese Communists and who have been on the receiving end of the "revolutionary fires".

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Maddening

Madness! This must have been the exclamation of many people when they read about the conditions under which patients and staff at the St. Ann's Mental Hospital have to live and work. It took an advertisement in the daily newspaper to jolt the powers that be into attempting excuses and promising to take action.

The advertisement spoke of the staff being

1. Chronically and perpetually short of the basic drugs for the treatment of the mentally ill.
2. The conditions of the lodgings are as follows:

- a. patients sleep on the floor and, two or three to the bed.
- c. mattresses are in very short supply; those that are available are filthy.
- d. Bed linen is also in short supply.

3. Clothing is often unobtainable. The children can't go to school because they have no clothes.

4. The sanitary conditions are appalling. Scabies, lice, bugs, cockroaches, rats infest the hospital. The toilets do not work and typhoid is endemic in the institution.

These were just a few of the workers' grouses. The important question that arises is why were these terrible conditions—sub-human conditions—allowed to reach this stage, this crisis, without being remedied? Certainly, money, we are told, is no problem. At best it shows incompetence and at worst a callous disregard of citizen's welfare. What is more alarming is that some of the conditions listed exist in other hospitals as well.

Let us hope that some quick improvements would be effected. We all, both government and people, need to develop a greater concern for the human condition and attempt to give help and attention where it is needed and not be animated by the couldn't-care-less attitude of the "survival of the fittest".

COLLUSION?

It seems that a strong lobby is in action pressing for the adopting of Guyanese-type 'solutions' to our educational problems. An article in the latest issue of "Caribbean Contact" says:

"The system of dual control of education has to be ended and the denominational schools integrated into the state system." (The paper had previously "welcomed" the end to the system of dual control of schools in

Guyana.

We may note that the paper is published by the most powerful body of Christians in the Caribbean—the Caribbean Council of Churches. The Christians' recommending Government take-over of all schools must seem to indicate that they are operating from a position of strength and that in any future government take-over the Church would continue to exercise a dominant influence. One question is: Where would this leave the Muslim educational bodies? May we hope that they at least ask the question?

Dead Proposal

Last month, the Port-of-Spain City Council announced that plans were on the way for the creation of a crematorium. It was said that by burning the dead the problem of overcrowding at the cemeteries would be solved.

Such a step poses a serious problem for the Muslim community who not only have a set pattern of rules relating to burial but are also forbidden to burn their dead.

Viewed from the Islamic angle, the question of overcrowding would never arise. Islam gives man a particular position in the universe, a particular function in the scheme of things and definite aims and objectives to be attained in this life. Islam states that man's purpose is to be subservient to his Creator, that this life is a test of man's free will in the use and abuse of material things placed at his disposal and that he has to die, return to the earth whence he originally came, leaving with nothing except his deeds for which he will be held accountable..

A common practice in the cemeteries here is for grave sites to be sold and reserved for particular families. Sometimes this is done out of a desire to honour and respect the dead. Sometimes it is done to perpetuate a memory or a fame and elaborate tombs are built to emphasize the point. One is reminded of the Qur'anic verse, "Does man think that his wealth would grant him eternity?"

As an example of the Islamic solution to the problem, may we refer to the Muslim cemetery at Boundary Road in San Juan where Muslims are not allowed to buy graves and where graves have been dug at least three times in each spot in a period just over half a century.

We may also recall the burial of the

comment

late King Faisal of Saudi Arabia who was buried in an unmarked grave in the exact way prescribed by Islam for all Muslims whether rich or poor, although in this world he had great influence and affluence.

Man, even where death is concerned, often has the tendency to be ostentatious. Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace said:

"Each one of you is from Adam and Adam was from dust."

He also said:

"Each one of you must resort to a place of four cubits (the grave) and your affairs would be decided ultimately in the next life."

NO ROOM FOR COMMENT ON:

The opening of Parliament and swearing on the Qur'an to uphold the laws of the land.

The renewed question of dress in the Senate.

The continued mix-up of Islam with other systems symbolised by Hindus conducting Eid ul Fitr programmes and Muslims conducting Divali programmes and lighting 'symbolic deyas' and the ASJA official attending ecumenical services at the opening of the law session. The Attorney General's Report laying bare massive corruption in the Chaguanas Development project.

The importance of Local Government elections.

A Senior Minister in the Government threatening to "wipe out with power" and "wipe out effectively" an alleged malignancy in the Muslim community.

The forthcoming opening of a T&TMYO leadership training programme by the swinging Minister of Youth.

The T&TMYO educational seminar on 'Discovering the Qur'an'.

The Nationalisation debate in Parliament and Eric Williams holding up Libya as an ideal! Et cetera.

WE WISH "HAJJ MABRUR" TO ALL PERSONS PROCEEDING ON THE SACRED JOURNEY THIS YEAR. WE PRAY THAT THEIR EFFORTS AND THEIR SACRIFICES WILL BE ACCEPTED AND THEY WILL USE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR LIFE RENEWAL AND RE-DEDICATION.

TODAY, great battles are waged for the minds of men. Which way leads to sound solutions for the problems of poverty, powerlessness, racism, crime, exploitation and immorality? Does any one ideology have the programme necessary to alleviate the multifarious woes of contemporary society? Marxism? Capitalism? Nationalism? Revolutionary Suicide? Islam?

ALSO, do you want to remain part of the problem, or do you yearn to be part of the real solution? If you want to be part of the solution, check out ISLAM, for yourself and your future.

IT'S SOMETHING YOU OWE YOURSELF

ISLAM STANDS FOR

Worship and obedience to the One True God

Man's trusteeship over the earth's resources

Pure Thinking and Clean Living

Seeking Useful Knowledge

Honest Intentions and Good Works

Spending and Struggle in the path of Truth and Justice

Brotherhood (on the basis of faith and righteousness and not on the basis of race, colour, lineage or nationality)

Strong Family Units

Sexual relations only within Marriage

Self Discipline and Collective Effort

Belief in the Judgement of the Hereafter as the test of man's true worth, success or failure

Individual responsibility and accountability (to the Creator of all beings)

ISLAM CONDEMNS

False Worship (of idols, other men, vain desires, superstitions like horoscopes etc.)

Gambling (lottery, raffles, bingo, whe whe etc)

Fornication and adultery and all that encourages it (scanty dress, lewd songs etc)

Intoxicants (rum, beer, etc)

Unclean foods (the pig, blood)

Racialism

Idle Talk, Lying, Deceit, Backbiting

Stinginess or Miserliness

Usury, Hoarding, Bribery

Extravagance — in spending on unnecessary things

Laziness, Idleness

Asceticism (Life renunciation)

Monopoly, exploitation and injustice in all forms.

ISLAM — The Natural Way

ISLAM — The Universal Way - The Satisfying Way

For further information, contact **The Islamic Trust,**
Pundit Street, El Socorro Road, San Juan.

You are welcome to use the reference library at the above address, obtain books and magazines, and attend introductory sessions on Islam.

In these times
people must have standards

THE BEST STANDARD

THE MUSLIM STANDARD

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