

THE MUSLIM STANDARD

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CHANGING SKYLINES IN CARONI

IN THE HEART of picturesque Caroni, a name famous for its sugar cane plantations among other things, a new mosque will be formally opened on 22 Rabi-uth-Thani (Sunday 10 April 1977).

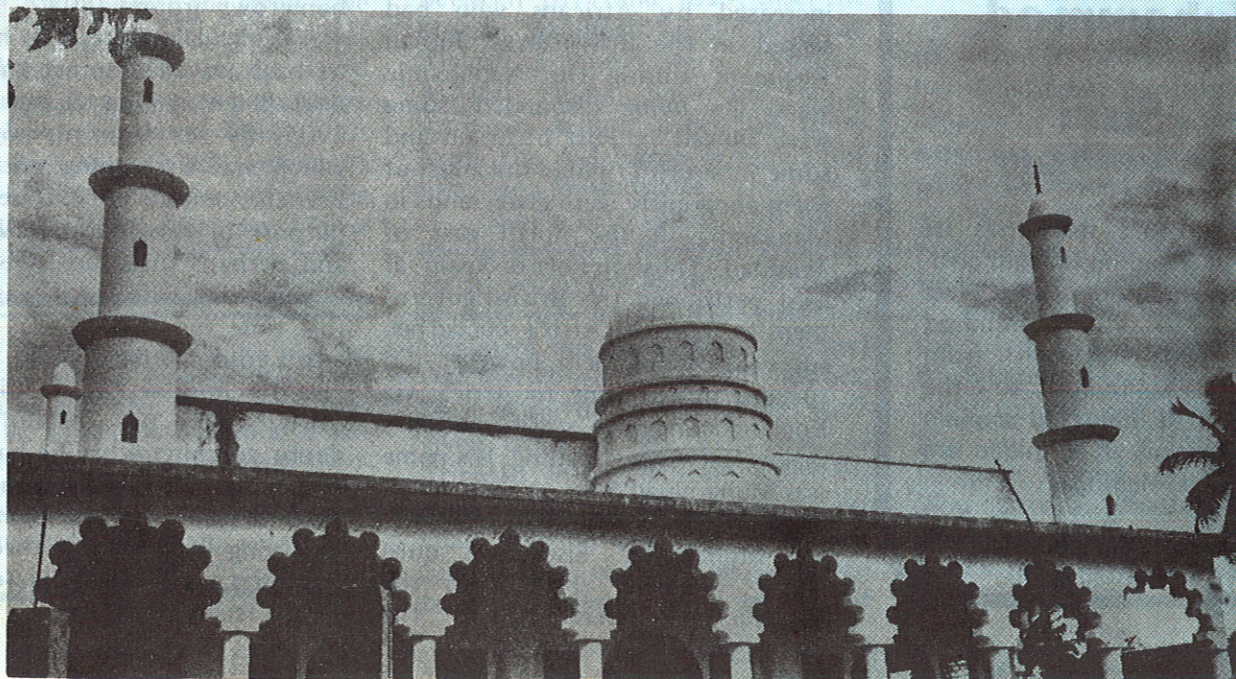
It stands on a site where stood three previous mosques dating back to the First World War. The modern concrete structure is in marked contrast to the mud walls and thatched roof of the first humble building. Its curved arches evoke memories of Cordoba and Muslim Spain and a distinguished Islamic past. Its dome is a miniature replica of the Prophet's mosque in Madina al-Munawwara, recalling an even more glorious era where things were done in devotion to and for the glory of God alone.

The mosque is to be named after the late Abdul Aleem Siddiqui who spent six months in Trinidad in 1951 and did memorable service to the community. The SIDDIQI MASJID as it is to be known and its ancillary buildings were erected in just over a year with resources from the local Jama'at only. It is an

example of what Muslims could achieve if their resources are properly mobilized.

The Siddiqui Masjid is being opened at a time when mosques throughout the island are far, very far from the throbbing nerve centres of Islam and the Muslim community that they should be. There was a time when the call ALLAHU AKBAR — God is the Greatest — going out from minarets and the hearts of believers was in itself a formidable challenge to the forces of Ignorance and evil. Today the call is muffled — it is no more than a whimper. Daily, instead of responding to the Call, Muslims are being snatched away by the secular attractions of the decadent system which surrounds them. The Message of the Mosque no longer goes out from the mosques.

We hope, *in sha Allah*, that the building and opening of the Siddiqui Masjid will be taken as an occasion to re-examine the functioning of mosques throughout the island. Let the call ALLAHU AKBAR once again inspire Muslims and be a challenge to Jahiliyyah (Ignorance) in all its forms.



THE MANDINGO MUSLIMS OF TRINIDAD

The Story of Muhammad

Sisei

(c. 1788 – 1838)

The following story has its roots in Manding Muslim civilization which dominated West Africa for three hundred years and stretched from beyond Timbuctu to the Atlantic. It helps to explain why Muslims in Trinidad are still called 'Madingas'.

Abdul Wahid Hamid

THE MUSLIM STANDARD, APRIL 1977

IT IS A WELL-KNOWN fact that the first Muslims to come to Trinidad were from West Africa although hardly anything is known about the nature of their presence and the extent to which they observed Islam. In the majority of cases, if anything, they must have been forced through the disabilities and inhumanities of the European slave plantation system either to observe their religion in secret or to renounce it altogether. The process can be better appreciated when compared with slave experiences in other islands of the West Indies and in the Americas which is currently highlighted in *ROOTS*, the monumental work of the American writer, Alex Haley. *

The history of these early Muslims in Trinidad is still largely obscure and the following is an attempt to cast a ray of light on this 'area of darkness'. It is largely based on the researches of Carl Campbell published in the journal of the African Studies Association of the West Indies.

Up to the early nineteenth century, there was a thriving Muslim community in Port of Spain led by one Yunus (Jonas) Muhammad Bath. Their numbers were increased by Africans who had served in the British West Indian Regiment during the Napoleonic wars. On being disbanded, some were settled in Port of Spain and some in south Trinidad but most of them apparently were given lands in Manzanilla in the north east of Trinidad. Those in Port of Spain at least petitioned the British government to return to Africa but did not succeed. One of them, however, did succeed in returning to Africa, via England, and his story certainly makes fascinating reading. His name was Muhammad Sisei.

Muhammad Sisei was born about 1788 or 1790 in the Gambia. He belonged to the

Mandingo people of the area, the majority of whom were perhaps Muslims at the time. His father's name was Abu Bakr (after the first successor to Prophet Muhammad) and his mother was called Ayishah (after the name of the Prophet's wife).

Sisei's birthplace was Niyani-Mar, a village on the north bend of the river Gambia, about 100 miles upstream from the Atlantic. At the age of eight Sisei was sent some distance away to Dar Salami (Dasilami) which was one of the centres of Islamic learning in the Gambia. There were many such places in the Gambia at the time, many of which were set up by Muslim merchants on their trading journeys through West Africa. This is one of the main ways in which Islam was spread in the region.

At Dar Salami, Sisei learned to read and write Arabic and he studied the Qur'an. It is said that the writing there was done on paper which was highly prized by the Muslims. This fact acquires importance when it is remembered that literacy has been one of the greatest gifts of Islam to Africa and indeed to many other parts of the world. Sisei stayed at this school for eight years, that is until the age of about sixteen, and he returned to his hometown around 1804.

For a time after this he is said to have travelled somewhat extensively even making a journey (in 1905) by sea from his hometown which was a shipping port to the French colony of Goree. The purpose of this journey was trade and perhaps to secure presents for his intended wife for it was around this time too that he was married—to a cousin named Aiseta.

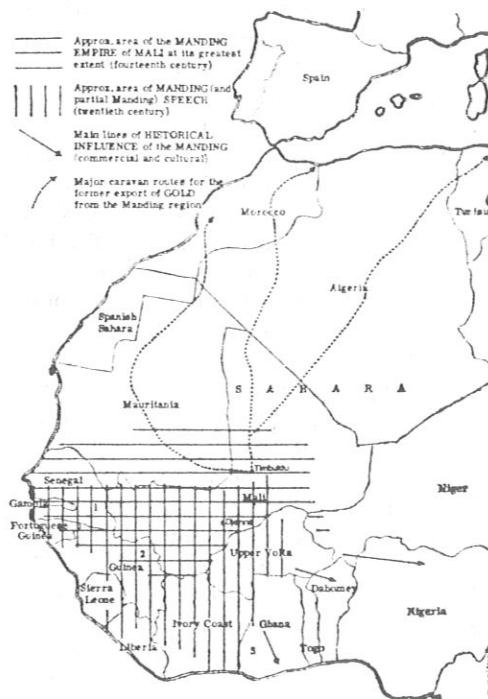
He now settled in his hometown, setting up a school and no doubt teaching what he had learnt in Dar Salami. For five years, from 1805 to 1810, he continued in this satisfying life, helping, through his teachings, to consolidated and spread Islam in the area.

But the early nineteenth century was a time of great unrest in West Africa and the Gambia in particular. Apart from the Anglo-French rivalry, there were wars between rival local chiefs. It was one of these local wars which brought Sisei's career as a teacher to an end. Rival chiefs were seeking to gain control of the banks of the Gambia river. One such chief was repulsed in the Upper Gambia and retreated downstream to increase his forces. He attacked Sisei's hometown and along with others Muhammad Sisei was captured. He was marched as a prisoner of war to Kansala where he spent five months and then to the port town of Sikkah. There he was sold to a French slaver which immediately sailed away.

Five days after sailing from Sikkah, the French slaver was intercepted by a frigate from the British navy which was trying to enforce the abolition of the slave trade especially on the West African coast. (Britain had officially abolished here slave trade from Africa in 1807).

Sisei was taken on board the British frigate to Antigua. Technically he was free and did not experience plantation slavery, the reason given being that it was difficult to fit free Africans into the small slave society of Antigua. Instead, he was immediately enlisted in the Third West India Regiment as a grenadier and given the name Felix Ditt. Originally, these black regiments were enlisted for service only in the West Indies. As a member of the

regiment, Sisei was one of the "Kingsmen" distinguished from the slaves. He saw active service against the French in Guadeloupe and was at one time stationed in Barbados.



MANDING CIVILIZATION IN W. AFRICA

Between 1811 and 1825, Sisei the Muslim Mandingo fought alongside Africans who were Yoruba, Ashanti, Foulah, Susu, and Hausa, some of whom especially those from the last three groups must have been Muslims also.

Sisei was to spend most of his life in the West Indies in Trinidad. He arrived in this island in 1816 but it was not until 1825 that the Regiment was demobilised and Sisei was discharged with good conduct. Most of the disbanded soldiers were given lands on the east coast of Trinidad, in the Manzanilla district, away from the slaves on the west coast plantations. But somehow Sisei never received or accepted land nor pension. And instead of

settling down with the other disbanded soldiers in Manzanilla he moved to Port of Spain and became a member of the Muslim group there led by Yunus Muhammad Bath.

Yunus Muhammad Bath it is said was a remarkable man leading a Muslim Mandingo community which lived in a certain part of Port of Spain, practised the religion of Islam and led a group existence. One of the main concerns of the group was to raise money to buy the freedom of Muslim slaves. Some of them did well economically but decided, as mentioned earlier, to petition the British government to

to repatriate them to Africa. One of the petitions addressed to William IV, King of Great Britain and Ireland begins with the Arabic invocation, *Allahuma Sally alla Mahomed*—

O God, bless Muhammad. The petitioners described themselves as "the followers of Mahomed, the prophet of God" and stated that "While slaves, we did not spend our money in liquor as other slaves did and always will do". On three occasions they petitioned the British government to repatriate them but their requests were not met. These Mandingo Muslims had to settle permanently in Trinidad.

Sisei however was determined to return to Africa. With money borrowed from another Muslim, he brought a passage for himself, his wife and young child to England where he arrived about the middle of 1838. His wife whom he had married in 1831 was a creole woman from Grenada.

In England, Sisei "fell under the friendly protection" of John Washington, secretary of the Royal Geographical Society, who used him to learn a lot about the languages and geography of West Africa. Washington, from whom much of these details of Sisei's life are known, also hoped that Sisei might be useful in future

* Alex Haley's search for his past has revealed a Muslim ancestry. The village of Juffore also from the Gambia from where his ancestor was taken as a slave has been and still is, according to Haley, completely Muslim. To commemorate this, he has built and dedicated a mosque in Juffore itself.

British expeditions into the interior of Africa.

From Washington, we get an idea of the kind of personality that was Muhammad Sisei. This Muslim was said to be quick and intelligent and a strict follower of Islam. He knew the Qur'an very well and certain parts of it he always carried with him. He even wrote Mandingo in Arabic characters and he is said to have shown the general intelligence that travellers usually associated with the Mandingoes.

Muhammad Sisei left England and returned to the Gambia. His native town, Nyani-Maru, was so easily accessible by boat, that there is every possibility that Muhammad Sisei, alias Felix Ditt, did get back to the place of his birth.

The story of Muhammad Sisei is a remarkable one in the history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Similar fascinating accounts have been researched and told, some in more detail than others—see for example *The Fortunate Slave* by Douglas Grant, published in 1968 by Oxford University Press, which deals with the story of Ayyub ibn Sulayman (Job ben Solomon), the son of a Fulani amir, who was captured and brought to America in the 1730's.

There must be many individual lives like that of Muhammad Sisei which could be a rich field for enquiry. And apart from individual lives, in the Trinidad context, what became of the Muslim communities in Port of Spain, Manzanilla and South Trinidad is an intriguing subject for further historical research.

Sources:

Slavery Days in Trinidad by C R Ottley, Trinidad, 1974.

Mohammedu Sisei of Gambia and Trinidad c.1788–1838 in Bulletin of the African Studies Association of the West Indies, No. 7 by Carl Campbell.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

At Least Clear The Rubbish

After being almost three years overdue, the Local Government elections are finally here. A total of 100 seats will be contested altogether in the three municipalities of Port of Spain, San Fernando and Arima and in the seven county councils of St. George, Caroni, Victoria, St. Patrick, St. Andrew, St. David, Nariva-Mayaro and Tobago. The ruling PNM will be fielding candidates in each of the divisions. The ULF, the official opposition in parliament, will only contest seats in Trinidad because of the current issue relating to possible self-government of the island. The DAC the one initially crying for self-government after winning the two Tobago seats in the last general elections will be going all out for the Tobago County Council seats. They don't intend to contest all the Trinidad seats. The Tapia group which lost all seats in the last elections and which came out strongly in favour of more power to local authorities, has decided to concentrate its efforts on the Port of Spain municipality.

The continued postponement of the local elections since 1974 has been a symptom of a widespread 'comess' now found not only in the public services but in nearly every area of public concern. Echoes of this chaotic situation can be heard in the daily cries of frustration from many segments of society. But the disturbing point is that very little attempt has been made to relate the disabilities endured by the people to the importance of local government. While there is much publicity given to the number of seats and the parties contesting, very little information is made available concerning the powers and functioning of local government. It is unreasonable to expect an electorate to choose a person for a job without knowing what that job involves. In the present situation people have a right to know whether local government exists merely on sufferance from the central government as has happened for the past two decades or so, or do they have the right to take initiatives on their own, to attempt to provide solutions to the day to day problems that are faced

and to have some control over the powers of the purse.

Local government involves largely the meeting of public needs by the provision of essential services. These services can often best be provided with the help of local people who have an intimate knowledge of local conditions. Since local authorities may, in a sense, be said to stand mid-way between Parliament and the people, the trend exhibited by the ruling government towards greater centralized government and control reflects perhaps its lack of confidence and meaningful contact with the people and this to a large extent is responsible for the present chaotic situation.

Now we are faced with two vital questions? How can local government regain its rightful role in the present situation? And how can the estrangement between the government and the people be reconciled?

It is really very difficult to see any easy and painless way out of this situation. Nothing short of a revolution in social habits, economic relations and political behaviour in which the individual and his environment really and truly matter, can bring about the required change.

So far as local government in particular is concerned, we know that in some places abroad they have the right to levy rates and that they are in charge of building and maintaining schools, roads, parks, libraries, hospitals, clinics, cemeteries, providing facilities for youth in the area of leisure and recreation, collecting and disposal of refuse, general sanitation, pest control and a host of other functions.

There is no end to the initiative and enterprise which an energetic and competent local authority, given the right type of support, can display. But if the new local governments succeed in providing at least an efficient system of rubbish collection and disposal, Trinidad would be a cleaner and a more pleasant place in which to live!

Muhammad Yasin

SEARCHING FOR TRUTH

Interview with Brother Fareed Abdul Jabbar

What motivated you in the first place to leave Trinidad?

All praise to God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, for providing me with the opportunity to travel and visit the United States. Primarily I went there for medical reasons and also at the insistence of my parents, to become more committed to my secondary schooling thereby averting my involvement in the political arena.

How do you view the constant migration of 'Third World' peoples to North America over the last few years?

On the one hand I sympathise with those who leave their countries in ever increasing numbers in search of opportunities in Europe and North America. However, my sympathy depends on one's motivation or intention. I agree with a person whether Muslim or non-Muslim who migrates with the express purpose of furthering his or her education. Right here in Trinidad there are thousands of people with few outlets for developing their educational potential. The educational opportunities in the 'developed' countries are more within the grasp of the general populace than in the Third World countries. Most leaders in the world today, whether West Indian, African, Asian or Arabian are educated in the 'developed' countries.

However, education is supposed to free us, not enslave us. The political inferiority of Muslims today proves that the education imparted to them is not comparable to that which produced a generation unsurpassed in human history 1400 years ago. There was a time when Europe was still in its Dark Ages and the great centres of learning were in Cairo, Baghdad, Mecca, Medina, Timbuctoo and Cordoba. Europe and the rest of the world flocked to these cities to drink from the pure and refreshing waters of knowledge.

When Muslims of Spain, for example began to indulge in un-Islamic practices and excesses, such as wine-drinking, false worship and drawing and carving animals, their great civilization was overrun by a then inferior and fanatical one. At the same time that the

Muslim areas of learning fell, the western world became the inheritors of most of their knowledge.

I sympathise with those who migrate for the purpose of acquiring knowledge in order to bring themselves and their societies closer to their Creator. But not so with those who migrate for the sole satisfaction of the 'Nafs al-Ammara (their passions) by indulging in useless and wasteful luxuries and pleasures which to a large extent is fostered under the present education system.

At what point did you become a Muslim? Can you describe the circumstances leading up to this?

It is difficult to say at what point I decided to become a Muslim. I have always been searching for the Truth. As far back as I can remember this search led me to becoming involved in various political activities mostly related to 'black consciousness'.

The students at the college I attended were mostly white with an annual parental income of over US \$50,000. I was amazed then at their upbringing and mannerisms — drunkenness, lesbianism, homosexuality, back-biting and every ill that manifested itself in their society. But when I examined my way of life I did not find any solutions to offer. The values that I was brought up with in Trinidadian society, Black Power, Communism or any other 'ism' did not provide solutions; in fact they aggravated matters.

Around this time, I met this person from Gambia and we became friends — indeed, more than friends, brothers. We became united. We helped each other and upheld loyalty and sincerity to each other in a manner that I never did achieve with anyone else before. This Gambian, a Muslim, introduced me to the practicality of brotherhood that is Islam. I visited his family in New York City, sat on the floor and ate with my fingers and experienced for the first time in my life what family love and togetherness were.

I came to know that there is no generation gap in Islam. All those things that I was looking for presented themselves, not in an ideology, nor in a

constitution, nor in words but in practice. This brother showed me how to pray and to clean myself. Can you imagine that for close to twenty years I was using water but did not know how to clean myself with it?

What of the Muslims in North America? Can you tell us something of their activities that may be of benefit to us in Trinidad?

I think that we have a lot to learn from them. As an example, take the Dar-ul-Islam movement in the USA. In thirteen years the brothers and sisters have established a network of masjids, schools, meatstores, newspaper and have even gone so far in New York City and Washington DC to begin to consolidate a physical community where the Shari'ah (Islamic Law) is compulsory. How did they accomplish this, in spite of the notable absence of 'maulanas' and 'alims' (learned scholars) among them? Simple! By strict adherence to the injunctions of the Qur'an and to the Sunnah (practices) of Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace. By stressing the performance of Fajr (morning) and Isha (night) prayer in congregation; forming closely knit Jamaats and Usrahs (family groups); pledging to obey an Imam (leader) or those placed in authority; commanding the ladies and men to dress properly and by preserving their rights in the face of all difficulties.

Muslims have lived in Trinidad for 400 years. As ever before they need to place emphasis on adherence to strict Islamic laws. All that is needed is a clear and sincere desire to establish LAA ILAAHA ILLALLAH (There is no god but Allah), the guidance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah (practice of Muhammad) and to read and implement the ideas from learned scholars found in many books today.

We need to organise ourselves into viable Jamaats with more effective leadership. We should eat, sleep, walk, talk, dress, write, bathe and do everything according to the values of Islam.

May Allah bless us with the whole Truth and strengthen us with knowledge and conviction.

What is the purpose of existence and the final destination? This big question has always been faced by mankind. But praise be to Allah this has never been a problem to the Muslims.

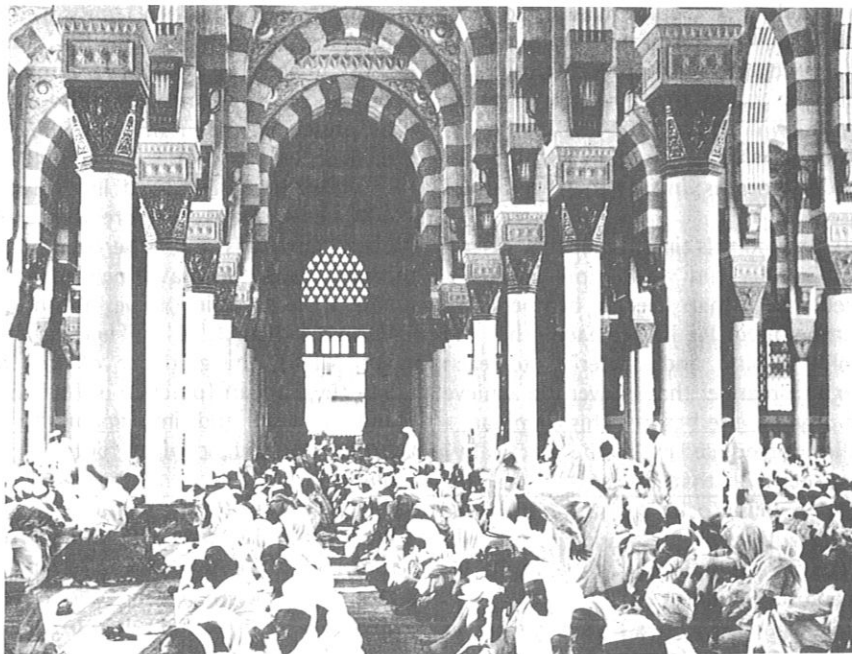
Allah says in the Qur'an: "I have only created jinns and mankind that they may serve (worship) Me." To serve or worship Allah is to believe in Him and follow His 'Shariah'. The Shariah consists of Ibadah (e.g. Salah, Zakah, Hajj, Fasting) and Mu'amalaat (laws which govern the relationship between individuals, families, communities and the state). In this article, I would like to emphasise on Ibadah, especially prayers and places of worship—mosques.

The whole earth is a mosque

One of the gifts of Allah to the Muslim ummah or community is that He has offered them all the earth as a place of worship. The Prophet, peace be upon him, has said, "Wherever you are and it is the time of Prayer, pray. For that place is a mosque."

Building mosques

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, is reported to have said, "If anyone builds a mosque for Allah, seeking his pleasure, Allah will build a house for him in paradise."



Arcade of Prophet's Mosque, Medina

THE WHOLE EARTH - A MOSQUE

Visiting and entering mosques

Abu Said al-Khudri reported God's messenger as saying, "When you see a man frequenting the mosque, testify that he has faith, for Allah says: The mosques of Allah shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in Allah and the Last Day."

It is preferable to recite the following du'a (supplication) when you leave your home or intend to go to the mosque:

*"Bismillaahi tawakaltu 'alayhi
wa laa hawla wa laa quwwata
illa billaahi."*

"In the name of Allah, in Allah I put my trust, and there is no might and power except by the will of Allah."

It was the practice of the messenger of Allah to enter the mosque with the right foot and say, "O Allah, open to me the gates of your mercy." And when leaving he would say, "O Allah, I ask of you from your abundance."

Abu Qatada reported Allah's messenger as saying, "When one of you enters the mosque he should pray two rak'ahs before sitting down."

The best among the mosques

There are only three mosques which have special significance: the House of God in Mecca, the Prophet's mosque in Medina and Masjid al Aqsa in Jerusalem.

The Ka'bah was the first mosque established on earth. Allah says, "The first house (of worship) appointed for men was that at Bakka (Mecca) full of blessings and of guidance for all peoples." It is the qibla (direction) for the prayers, a place for pilgrimage, and exclusive for Muslims only. It is called the Haram—the inviolable or sacred mosque. The Prophet's mosque in Medina was the second haram. Al Masjid al-Aqsa was the first qibla of the Muslims before Allah asked the Prophet to change the direction to the Ka'bah in Mecca.

The cleanliness of mosques

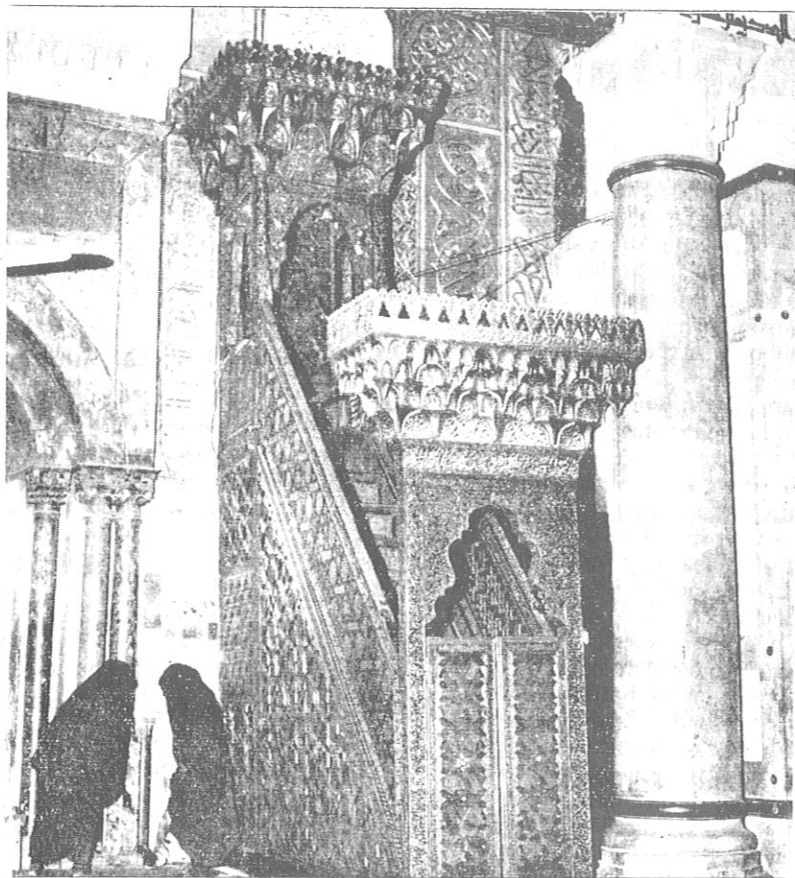
Aisha said that Allah's messenger ordered that a mosque should be built in a residential district and that it be cleaned and perfumed."

The Prophet is also reported to have said, "These mosques are not good for urine or dirt. But they are for praising Allah and the recitation of the Qur'an."

'Umar, the second caliph, said in one of his Friday sermons, "O people, you eat two plants in which I see nothing except that they are unpleasant—onion and garlic. I have seen Prophet Muhammad, if he smelt them from someone, order him to leave for al-Baqi (a cemetery)."

What is permitted in mosques

Selling, buying or advertising of one's own property is not allowed inside the mosque. Abu Huraira reported Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, as saying, "if anyone hears a man crying out in the mosque about something he has lost, he should say, 'May Allah not restore it to you, for the mosques were not built for this.'" The Prophet also said, "If you see a man selling or buying inside the mosque, say: May Allah not make your trading profitable."



Mimbar of MASJID-AL-AQSA, Jerusalem

Places forbidden for prayer

Ibn 'umar said that there are seven places which the Prophet, peace be upon him, forbade people to pray: a dunghill, a slaughter house, graveyards, the middle of the road, bathrooms, places where camels kneel and drink, and on the roof of the Ka'bah.

Congregational Prayer

Besides the many advantages which the mosque bestows for the activities of the Muslim ummah and in establishing the law of Allah on earth, prayer still remains its most important function. Congregational prayer is highly recommended to Muslims, as a sign of unity, and unanimous submission to Allah. Congregational prayer holds great reward. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "A man's prayer in congregation is twenty-seven times as valuable as his prayer alone." The messenger of Allah also said, "Do not forbid the women to come to the mosques, but their prayer in their houses is better."

Ahmad Abdallah

Recitation of immoral poems or praising of unjust and impious rulers is not allowed. Poems of wisdom or encouraging to good deeds are acceptable. Raising of voices, even in the recitation of the Qur'an is not allowed if it is undertaken in such a way as to disturb others.

Talking in the mosque is allowed concerning almost every field of life, even if it yields laughter, as long as the matter is within the moral code of Islam. It is narrated that the Prophet used to sit on his prayer mat after the Fajr (Dawn) prayer for ibadah until the sun would rise. When he stood up, and if the companions were chatting and laughing about their old times in Jahiliyya (the days of Ignorance), he would smile.

Eating and sleeping is also allowed in the mosque. Ibn 'Umar narrated that they used to take a nap in the mosque during the time of the Prophet. Abdullah ibn Abbas said that they used to eat bread and meat in the mosque.

In the Next Issue
THE KHUTBAH



Those who oppose faith

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ ۝
مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ ۝
سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ ۝
وَأُمْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ ۝
فِي فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ ۝

"Perish the efforts of Abu Lahab. Perish he himself. His wealth and what he has earned will not exempt him. He will be plunged into flaming fire. And his wife, the wood-carrier, upon her neck a halter of palm-fibre."

The Qur'an, Chapter 111

Abu Lahab whose real name was Abdul Uzza Ibn al Muttalib, was an uncle of Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace and blessings. Abu Lahab was one of the most unbending foes of the Messenger and the ideas he was propagating. His intimidation and ill-will towards the Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, knew no limits. His wife was duly supporting him in his virulent, relentless campaign.

Al Bukhari, the famous Muhaddith (narrator of sayings of the Prophet), related on the authority of Ibn Abbas, that the Prophet, peace be upon him, went out to Batha, a large square in Mecca. This was at the beginning of the public stage of his mission. He climbed a hill and summoned the people of Quraysh some of whom responded and he addressed them:

"Were I to tell you that an enemy will be attacking you, would you believe me?"

"Yes," they replied. (Because they never knew Muhammad to have told a lie).

"So listen to me," he said, "I am Allah's messenger, sent to order you to submit to and worship Allah alone and nothing else besides Him. I am warning you of a gruesome torment from Allah if you do not submit."

Abu Lahab was there and snapped at him, "Damn you! For this you have gathered us?"

From that time Abu Lahab and his wife continued to launch their unyielding persistent onslaught against the Prophet and his mission. The fact that they were close neighbours to the Prophet made the situation worse still. Abu Lahab's wife used to carry thorns and sharp wood and place them in the Prophet's path.

This surah was revealed therefore, as a counter-attack against their hostile campaign. Allah had then taken over the command of the battle. "Perish the hands of Abu Lahab, perish he," is both an implicit decree as well as a statement of fact. In one short verse, an action is realised which draws the curtains over a scene of a completed battle. What later follows in the surah is merely a presentation and a descriptive account of what took place with the remark that "wealth and all that he earned will not exempt him (Abu Lahab) from being defeated, vanquished and damned."

That was his fate in this world, but in the Hereafter "he will be plunged into flaming fire". And his wife, the wood-carrier "will reside therein with him, having upon her neck a halter of palm-fibre with which, as it were, she is being dragged into hell, or which she used for fastening wood bundles together.

The language of this surah contains remarkably powerful likeness between the subject matter and the atmosphere built around it. Abu Lahab will be plunged into a "lahab" which is the Arabic word for flames of fire. His wife who wraps up thorns and sharp woods and puts them in the Prophet's way will meet the same fate.

Thus the humiliating picture of Abu Lahab and his wife has been recorded to last forever in this eternal book, Al Qur'an to show Allah's anger with them for their animosity to His messenger and the ideas he was advocating.

All those who choose to take a similar attitude towards Islam therefore shall meet with the same disgrace, calamity and frustration, both in this life and in the hereafter as their fitting punishment and reward.

—Adapted from Fi Zilal Al Qur'an by Sayyid Qutb.

In these times
people must have standards

THE BEST STANDARD

THE MUSLIM STANDARD

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The Islamic Trust announces that its Bookshop and Reference Library at Pundit Street, El Socorro Road, San Juan will now be open as follows:

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THE MUSLIM STANDARD

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In the previous issue, the article on this subject dealt with the attitude of Muslim man as producer, employer, employee and as consumer. The article continues:

IV. The Attitude of Muslim Man in Saving.

If the income of Muslim man is in excess of his needs, he will save part of it. What will he do with his saving? If he intends to hoard his saving as gold and silver, etc., he will face two important principles of Islam. The first is the prohibition of hoarding. Because Allah says in the Qur'an: "Those who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah, unto them give tidings, O Muhammad, of a painful doom." (9:34).

If Muslim man has to keep his saving for a particular time, more than one year, with the intention of future investment, then comes the second principle of Islam, namely, the payment of the compulsory tax (ZAKAT) on that saving. Because Muslim man has to pay Zakat — 2.5% of his idle saving, after one year; if he keeps his saving idle for a long time, his wealth will be decreased by time due to payment of alms. Therefore a wise Muslim man will not keep his saving idle, both to obey the commands of Allah and to promote his economic activity.

V. The Attitude of Muslim Man as Creditor.

We have seen that a wise Muslim man is not supposed to hoard his saving and keep it idle. Therefore there are two other possibilities. Either he may lend his money or use it for an investment. If he intends to extend loans, and make it as an economic activity to earn income and not only as social assistance, he faces the important principle of Islam: Prohibition of gains out of money without having risk of investment. Because Allah "permits trading and prohibits usury" (2:275).

Under these conditions a Muslim man cannot have a legitimate (pure) gain out of his money without himself working or sharing the risk of investing. Therefore to gain a legitimate (pure) income he cannot lend his money to other people or companies or to banks or even to the State through buying bonds etc. to gain an income of interest. If he lends his money without interest as a

ECONOMIC BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS IN ISLAM

PART TWO

good loan (Qard-ul-Hasana), he may not have to pay alms for it in that year unless he gets his money back. So in this case his wealth will not be decreased but it cannot be increased either.

VI. The Attitude of Muslim Man as Investor.

The most rational and lawful way then for Muslim man is to invest his savings on production. Through investment his income will probably be increased. If he is successful, he will establish some new ventures or have new shares from other establishments. However, even if his income were to grow, the consumption level and the standard of living of Muslim man is not supposed to be much increased in relation to the average prevailing level of spending.

The necessity for investment by Muslim man will stimulate the economic growth in any given area. This will provide more employment opportunities and so on.

A Muslim man who has reached the peak of economic success will, however, face the same basic principles of Islam. The Prophet has said: "The second type of man whose sin will not be forgiven is the man who does not have responsibility for other people". Such principles of Islam lead Muslim man into the field of social assistance, stimulating his behaviour into spending his wealth in the way of Allah. — because a good Muslim man, after having paid a particular proportion of his wealth and income as Zakaat and realising that each Muslim is responsible for other Muslims, remembers the good news of Allah saying to him: "Allah has

blighted usury and made almsgiving fruitful..." (2:276)

A rich person, through consumption, reaches a maximum point of satisfaction. After that, for additional consumption, the returns will be diminished rapidly down to zero, even to a minus quantity. This results in dissatisfaction and makes man exasperated; he deviates and follows his bestial desires. A Muslim man does not descend to such a level because his consumption is limited by Islamic principles anyway, before his satisfaction level decreases to zero level. As he has no conspicuous consumption, he could not go into illegitimate areas. In spite of this fact, when the marginal utility of economic consumption diminishes, Muslim man increases his social spending. In this field the rule of diminishing return does not function. The reverse obtains: social satisfaction increases with social expenditure.

Muslim man, therefore, rationally turns to the field of social assistance when he behaves according to Islamic principles. When Muslim man increases his social expenditure, his prestige increases much more among the poor. This situation transforms the feelings of class struggle and hatred into feelings of brotherhood and social harmony. In such circumstances Muslim man meets with the people who need help.

VII. The Attitude of Muslim man as Lender of Good Loans (Arabic: Qardu-l-Hasanah)

Muslim man provides loans to other Muslims because Allah commands him: "Give the kinsman his due, and the needy, and the wayfarer, and squander not thy wealth in wantonness." (17:26) "Those who believe and do good works and establish worship and pay the Zakat, their reward is with their Lord". (2:277) "If the debtor is in straitened circumstances, then let there be postponement to (the time of) ease; and that ye remit the debt as almsgiving would be better for you if you did but know." (2:280) "The likeness of those who spend their wealth in Allah's way is as the likeness of a grain which groweth seven ears, in every ear is a hundred grains. Allah gives increase manifold to whom He wills." (2:261)

Continued on page 11

FOOD
SURVEY**THE CASE FOR DETAILED LABELLING**

With the advent of mass production techniques applied to food processing and packaging and with advances in food processing technology, the quantity and variety of packaged food available to the consumer today is simply staggering. You can obtain from pre-mashed potatoes to pre-cooked curried mutton, from ready to eat solid food for the baby to ready-to-cook meat ball mixture.

Many of these products do not have on their labels adequate information as to what are the ingredients in them and in what quantities they are present. Many are presented to the public through "high pressure" advertising (sometimes bordering on dishonest advertising)..

In this situation, the consumer finds himself at a great disadvantage. Firstly, the advertising generally appeals to his emotions or his ego rather than to objective assessment. Consequently, when he goes to the shop or supermarket, he has already been biased in favour of one brand of product, very often not from a nutritional standpoint but because that brand will give him all that he ever dreamed that he should get out of such a product. Secondly, because of insufficient information on the label the consumer is unable to determine (i) what food value he would obtain from the product and (ii) whether the product contains ingredients which are unlawful for his consumption from, a religious standpoint.

Muslims in particular are placed in a plight in the assessment of what products are lawful for consumption. Confused and insufficient labelling of products is in marked contrast to the clarity of Islamic injunctions. God says in the Qur'an:

"O you who believe! Eat of the good things wherewith We have provided you and render thanks to God if it is He whom you worship. He has forbidden you only carrion and blood, and swine flesh and that which had been killed in (the name of) any other than Allah. But he who is driven by necessity, neither craving nor transgressing, it is no sin for him. Indeed God is Forgiving, Merciful!" (The Qur'an 2: 172-173)

And also:

"Eat of that over which the name of Allah has been mentioned if you are

believers in His revelations. And eat not of that whereon Allah's name has not been mentioned, for indeed, it is an abomination." (6: 119,122)

And again:

"O you who believe! Strong drinks and games of chance and idols and divining arrows are only an infamy of Satan's handiwork. Leave them aside in order that you may succeed." (5:90)

Therefore foods forbidden to Muslims include:

- (1) Pork or any ingredient derived from it.
- (2) Carrion or any ingredient derived from it.
- (3) Blood or anything derived from it.
- (4) Alcohol or anything in which it is an ingredient.
- (5) Any flesh of animal or bird which has not been slaughtered with the mention of Allah's name or anything derived from such flesh.
- (6) Foods on which the name of deities other than God is pronounced.

Packaged foods, synthetic foods and drinks contain ingredients derived from so many sources that the Muslim is well advised to obtain all possible information about a product before deciding to consume it.

The Islamic Trust is in the process of investigating food products available locally to determine which products are lawful (halaal) for Muslims. Letters were sent to various food factories and visits arranged and made. In addition to this, literature research was done on certain food ingredients and preservatives. The following are some of the results of the investigation:

1. Lever Brothers West Indies Ltd. indicated that the lecithin added to their margarine (Blue Band, Golden Ray, Dorina) was derived from soyabean and that the products are made from vegetable and fish oils. These products can therefore be considered halaal. (See write-up on lecithin below).
2. Bermudez Biscuits indicated that the shortening used in their products is vegetable. We feel that this should be indicated on the labels.
3. It was ascertained from Holiday

Foods that their Corn Curls contain a cheese powder manufactured by Kraft foods. It is therefore most probably unfit for consumption by Muslims for the reason set out below (see literature research on Cheese). However, Holiday Foods assured us that the oil used in the production of the Corn Curls is not re-used for the nuts and channa so that these products can be considered permissible.

4. Charles Candy Co. indicated that the lecithin used in their candies is derived from soybean. They also stated that all the ingredients of their confectionery, except milk, are derived from vegetables. We understand, however, that alcohol is used in the manufacture of their chocolate confectionery and a letter has been sent to the company enquiring if this is in fact so.

5. The food plant of Catelli Primo was visited where macaroni was seen in production almost entirely by mechanical processes. The ingredients of the macaroni are all halaal as well as the tomato ketchup. However the range of soups and canned vegetables contain some meat flavours and ingredients and are not halaal.

LECITHIN: Literature research

Lecithin is found everywhere in the animal and vegetable kingdoms where oil is present. It is present in the brain, nerves, liver, kidneys, meat, egg yolk, fish sperm, blood corpuscles, plants, grasses, seeds etc. Commercially, however, it is obtained mainly from bean and to a lesser extent from peanut, corn and egg yolk.

Lecithin is used in the food industry as an emulsifier, e.g. in margarine, confectionery, ice-cream. Egg yolk lecithin is used in the pharmaceutical industry.

Conclusion: Although lecithin appearing in food products is most likely derived from vegetable sources, and thus halaal, checks should be made with local food manufacturers who use lecithin to determine the precise source from which the Lecithin is derived.

CHEESE: Literature research.

Cheese is manufactured from the

Cheese eaters are informed that most manufacturers are now using pepsin, an enzyme obtained from pig stomachs together with rennet for milk clotting processes.

curd or substance formed by the coagulation of the milk of certain mammals by milk-clotting enzymes.

The classical enzyme preparation for making cheese is Rennet which is manufactured by soaking strips of the stomachs of milk-fed calves in brine for a few days. However, owing to the steady increase in cheese-making throughout the world, and the diminishing number of milk-fed calves available, there is now a world shortage of true rennet and a 50:50 mixture of rennet and pepsin is now in common use. Pepsin, also an enzyme like rennet, is obtained commercially from pig stomachs.

Milk clotting enzymes can also be obtained from plants and are used for the manufacture of vegetarian cheese. Among such enzymes are bromelin, derived from the pineapple and ficin, derived from the fig.

Conclusion: most of the cheese available on the local market is probably made from rennet and pepsin. Muslims should therefore not eat any cheese unless they are sure that the enzymes used are from plants.

On the basis of the findings so far, we feel that the competent authorities in the first instance the government, should take measures

- (i) to ensure that manufacturers of all packaged foods available on the local market list on the labels all the ingredients and quantities in which they are present. For example, shortening used should be detailed to state whether it is butter, vegetable shortening or animal fat like lard and the percentages in which these are present;
- (ii) to set up the machinery for verifying that the label reflects the true composition of the product.
- (iii) to test each product periodically to ensure that the composition of the product remains as stated.
- (iv) to increase and improve efforts to educate the public at large in nutrition.

LETTERS

I have been a regular reader of your monthly paper since its inception in 1975. What I have found truly inspiring is the dauntless attitude reflected in enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong both within the Muslim community and the wider society as a whole. The treatment of issues relating to morality and the preservation of the family has been consistent and sustained...

It has been reported in the daily press that a further government grant has been extended to the Family Planning Association so that it may carry on its "good" work and much praise has been lavished on the alleged success of the family planning programme.

Within a period of three weeks the Minister of Health who had announced the government grant complained about the increase of venereal diseases among women in Trinidad! And sometime after the Roman Catholic archbishop highlighted "pressure" groups calling for the legalising of abortion.

The problems highlighted by these two eminent functionaries have in fact been nurtured by the very FPA and the ideas and the policies which it promotes. The FPA which emphasises the use of contraceptives for both the married and the unmarried has been partly responsible for the increased promiscuity now found at all levels of society. The results of this promiscuity can be seen in the increase in V.D. and the demand for legalized abortion. In trying to solve one problem in their own way, secular legislators often end up by creating more nightmarish ones.

What I would like to ask is: Who

advises the government in such matters? Does the government really care about the overall welfare of the citizens, as people and not as statistics? And what is the Muslim community doing about such issues?

*Yours in Islam,
M. Khan,
PORT OF SPAIN*

TML—Upholding Truth

All praise to Allah for granting courage and faith to the brothers and sisters of the Trinidad Muslim League for breaking the un-Islamic ties with the Ahmadiyya organisation of Lahore, as reported in the last issue of The Muslim Standard.

Let us hope, in sha Allah, that the change will be the beginning of a greater awareness of the faith and a commitment to its practices. It would be nice if the lofty building which is the mosque at St. Joseph could cease to remain locked and dormant most of the time and being simply a tourist attraction and become a place of regular worship..

Also the Muslim League manages some primary schools and we should hope that the courage they displayed should also be shown in the undertaking to make the schools a means for producing Muslim men and women who will be conscious of their duties. It is to be hoped that concerned members of the Muslim community as a whole would join with the members of the League in upholding the Truth together.

May Allah guide us all.

*Yours in Islam,
Muhammad Abdul Hakim Balewa
ST. JOSEPH*

Economic Behaviour (Continued from page 9)

"Whatsoever good things ye spend, it is for yourselves." (2:272)

Good loans are given without economic interest, just for the sake of Allah. Now, to whom should Muslim man give good loans? Allah says, "Alms are for the poor who are straitened for the cause of Allah and who cannot travel in the land (for trade). The unthinking man accounteth them wealthy because of their restraint. You shall know them by their mark; they do not beg of man with importunity. Whatsoever good thing you spend, indeed Allah knows it." (2:273)

So the Muslim man should provide loan to other good Muslim who is in need of help. In this way a good Muslim will be

supported. In this way the social and economic structure of society comes into harmony with each other and people are stimulated to behave as good Muslims in economic life. The same principle can be extended to corporate institutions such as an Islamic bank, providing credit possibilities to the people and helping to develop different sectors of economic life as in industry, agriculture and trading.

The principles outlined above when put into practice would lead to a balanced society and economy. But this depends mostly upon the growth and education of the type of Muslim Man described above.

CONSIDER TIME



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

- ١- وَالْعَصْرِ
- ٢- إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ
- ٣- إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ
وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

Indeed Man is in a state of loss...

Except those who have firm faith (in God),

Do good deeds,

Join together in promoting Truth

And join together

in

Patience, Courage and Determination.

(The Qur'an, Chapter 103)