

THE MUSLIM STANDARD

Number 23

September 1977 / Ramadan 1397

25 cents Monthly

The intended Rabita (Muslim World League) Conference, September 24th-26th, gives one the opportunity to analyse the present condition of the Muslim Community, identifying its problems and offering suggestions to the Rabita committee for possible inclusion in its agenda with the aim of finding solutions to the problems.

Muslim girls to non-Muslims; the consumption of intoxicants and haraam food by some Muslims: gambling etc.

(6) The poor Islamic quality of Muslim leadership.

(7) Identifying Islam and the Muslim community with Indian culture. Most non-Indians therefore, think of Islam as an 'Indian' religion and this is often a great barrier to the proper presentation of Islam as a universal message.

(8) The lack of essential institutions for

the framework of Islamic epistemology.

(4) People are becoming conscious of their duties as Muslims and some of them embarked on certain programmes to enlighten the community; for example:—

a. Teaching Arabic - A start has been made to read and write the script. Some structure and vocabulary have also been done.

b. Organising study circles in some localities. A basic training programme (studying Qur'an, Hadith and other books

GUIDELINES FOR RABITA CONFERENCE

The Muslim Community seems on the surface to be fairly organised, - with a number of Mosques and schools, but it is, in fact, in a state of ignorance of the basic principles of Islam; and though there is the feeling in it that all is well, this is not the case.

This has led to:—

(1) A lack of emphasis in the Faraid of Islam and too much concentration on what is peripheral or questionable as far as Islam is concerned.

(2) The division of life into that which is secular and that which is religious, thus reducing Islam to a small, even insignificant place in one's life.

(3) Muslim institutions having only the sentimental satisfaction of being called 'Muslim', but with a curriculum divided into secular and religious; sometimes forty-five minutes daily, if any at all, devoted to Islamic Instructions.

(4) Government's march towards Secularism, its policy to de-culturise the community in the process of evolving a common basis of nationhood by formulating a 'National Norm' in Education where Muslim institutions will have to fall in line.

(5) The stresses of living in a plural society and a tendency towards reducing everything to a common denominator which can truly be represented by calypso, music and rum. One blatant result of this interaction is that many things directly contravening the Shariah are in vogue, for example: the marriage of

example:—

a. For the proper collection and distribution of Zakaah.

b. For higher Islamic training with the result that there are very few people, possibly two, in the community with a competent knowledge of the Arabic language or the Islamic Shariah. Also, no proper training for Imams, teachers etc.

c. Until recently, no adequate literature or proper reference library in Islamic subjects.

(9) If this ignorance of Islam is not checked other problems affecting the wider community may affect the Muslim community, if they have not done so already. For example:—

(a) The disintegration of the family.

(b) Abortion. (c) Corruption in high places. (d) Economic disparities.

(e) Crime. (f) Rise of Socialist/Communist tendencies.

However one should not be discouraged because there are also many positive aspects:—

(1) An increased awareness of Islam (perhaps amounting to an Islamic awakening) in Trinidad and in the Caribbean generally. Islam is now spreading to the various Islands - Grenada, Barbados, St. Kitts, Dominica etc.

(2) The relative freedom that exists in the country for the dissemination of Islamic teachings.

(3) The Muslim community possesses institutions - masjids and schools which can be re-invigorated or reformed within

related with Islam, teaching of the performance of Salaah etc.) is being conducted.

c. Establishing the basis of a proper Islamic reference library.

d. Establishing a bookshop with a wide range of books.

e. Publishing 'The Muslim Standard', a monthly newspaper concentrating on education and dawah, projecting Muslim standards of thought and behaviour.

f. Publishing tracts and books on Islam

g. Establishing contact with other Caribbean areas.

There is an urgent need to concentrate on and carry forward, Insha Allah, the work of Islamic Dawah and education. It is hoped that at the Rabita conference delegates and organisers can devise ways and means to satisfy the needs of the Caribbean area.

One may suggest that the Rabita conference consider practical ways of:

1. Establishing a regional and autonomous Islamic Institute for Dawah purposes - training teachers, Imams, youth leaders, etc.

2. Assisting present Muslim schools in evolving a curriculum based on Islamic principles.

3. Establishing properly run libraries and bookshops with up to date literature.

4. Setting up machinery for collection and distribution of Zakaah.

5. Organising regional youth camps.

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First international youth camp

The first International Youth Camp organised by the World Assembly of Muslim Youth and the General Secretariat of Islamic Conference was held in Abha, Saudi Arabia, August 6-12th. 113 representatives from over 58 countries, including 25 university students from Saudi Arabia, participated in the camp.

The camp aimed at 'Deepening the Islamic brotherly relationship and strengthening the friendly ties among the Islamic youths in different parts of the world.' This it did by 'creating a pure Islamic atmosphere and providing a camp environment suitable for physical exercises and activities to help the youth live Islamic lives in a simple atmosphere.'

The daily programme from 4 a.m. - 4 p.m. included Salaah, Qur'an reading, lectures, reports from participants, physical exercises, competitive sports, entertainment, meals etc.

In this atmosphere, participants were able to live in a relaxed manner and at the same time learn more about the problems facing the Muslims in different countries and what were the possible solutions. The camp reflected the universal brotherhood of Islam by having various races and nationalities living together in a very friendly way.

Participants were also fortunate to perform Umrah and visit many holy places including Arafat and the Prophet's Mosque in Medina.

The World Assembly of Muslim Youth informed the participants that it is prepared to assist groups throughout the world, including the Caribbean by:—

1. Translating and supplying literature.
2. Providing leadership training for Muslim Youths and setting-up youth camps.
3. Providing lectures at Seminars and Conferences
4. Arranging scholarships at Saudi Arabian universities and
5. Financing these projects to a

large extent.

Finally the youths were reminded that they are the ones to establish a strong foundation for the Muslim Community. Their role is to liberate the Muslim personality from unislamic thoughts and ideas.

ECONOMIC ORDER BASED ON ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES

The Islamic Council of Europe convened an International Economic Conference in London on July 4-9th, 1977, to discuss the theme: The Muslim world and the Future Economic Order.

The conference was guided in its deliberations by a profound consciousness of its responsibilities toward mankind and the pivotal role which the Ummah must play in evolving a comprehensive way of life in accordance with the values and principles of Islam.

Islam presents a complete human order of which the economic system is an integral part. The Conference identified the following as some of the essential characteristics of the Islamic economic system.

(i) Faith in Allah Who has given man the capacity to choose between good and evil and to assume full responsibility for his conduct.

(ii) The economic system is based on social justice, equity, moderation and balanced relationships.

(iii) It is a universal system embodying eternal values which safeguard man's rights constantly reminding him of his obligations to himself and to society.

(iv) It strictly forbids exploitation in all forms and strictly prohibits riba (interest of any kind).

(v) It honours labour, enjoins work and toil, encourages man to earn his living by honest means and to spend his earnings in a rational way.

The prevailing economic system has proved arbitrary, sterile and unjust; it has operated throughout history to the increasing detriment of the Third World. The so-called new International Economic Order, which lacks any moral basis, has no prospect of realising its stated objectives. The conference emphasized the need of evolving a new order based on Islamic principles.

The Conference noted the enormous material and human resources of the Muslim world which, if properly utilized, could satisfy the economic needs of the people.

NEWS-SPOT

The conference declared that these recommendations can be implemented only by the collective political will of Muslim states, that the Muslim peoples, dedicated as they were to Islamic ideals, look forward to early fulfilment of their aspirations and that it is the duty of the governments of Muslim countries to respond to their hopes by establishing an equitable Islamic Economic Order in which they can live peacefully and which might serve as a model for the economic endeavours of the rest of mankind.

62 Billion Riyal Saudi Aid

The annual report of the Saudi Development fund released last month said the value of Saudi aid to the third world countries in Asia, Africa and the Middle East countries, totalled SR 34,000m of which about SR 21,000m were in the form of loans and grants to a number of developing countries.

The value of credits to which the Saudi Development fund had committed itself also totalled over SR 4,640m. These were for the implementation of several development projects in the fields of agriculture infra structure and health education in Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

Saudi Arabia has also contributed SR 2,500m to a number of regional and international development banks. Total grants and aid extended by the Kingdom for humanitarian purposes added to about SR 852m.

The Saudi aid programme represents more than 2% of its gross national product.

Wrong Dismissal

Following the introduction of Friday as the country's weekly holiday with effect from July 1, the Government of Pakistan has decided to shorten duty hours on Sunday for its Christian employees who will now work on Sundays from 11am to 2.15 pm instead of from 7.30am. In Britain, however, last month the House of Lords turned down the appeal by a Muslim teacher about his 'right' to have time off for Friday prayers. Mr. Iftikhar Ahmad, a school teacher, was dismissed from service by the education authority for missing, every Friday, three-quarters of an hour of his teaching duty. The dismissal had been upheld by the high court.

REAWAKENING OF MUSLIM WOMEN

Part 1: With Reference to Muslim Belief

Summary: Women has been delegated responsibility; Islam addresses her directly; she needs no intermediary from among men.

A woman in Islam is an independent human being. Responsibility for her actions and beliefs has been delegated to her directly, and no intermediary is required. Once she is adolescent and has knowledge of Islam, she is accountable for her actions.

A woman's response to the call of Allah will not be sincere unless it is voluntary and stems from a genuine interest—it cannot be offered in proxy through a father, husband or other relative. For example in the early years of the nubuwwa (prophetic mission) groups of people pledged themselves to the Prophet. Both men and women participated in these pledges.

People acted as individuals in accepting or rejecting the Islamic call, irrespective of their sex or family. Fatima bint Al-Khattab accepted Islam while her brother was Kafir; Zainab bint Rasool Allah—her husband was Kafir; Umm Salim bint Malhan—her husband was Kafir; Hawa bint Yazid underwent bullying by her husband Qais ibn Al-Hatim for being a Muslim; Umm Kulthum bint Uqba Ibn Maieth was the sole member in her family to accept Islam, and migrated; Haritha bint Al-Muammil, her sister Umm Abbis Ar-Rumiya, and Summaya bint Khabbath were tortured and persecuted for becoming Muslim; Um Habiba bint Abi Sufyan persevered the hardships of emigration, and later when her husband Abdullah ibn Jahsh accepted Christianity, she persisted in her belief.

Women, through the strength of their faith propagated Islam amongst their relatives in various ways: Umm Sharik Al-Quraishiya Al-Amiriya—through secret means among women—until this was discovered and she was tortured and expelled by the Meccans; Umm Salim—who insisted that her fiancé become Muslim as a condition for marriage. She said, "By Allah, a man like you Abatalha should not be refused, but you are an unbeliever, and I am a Muslim. So it is not lawful for me to marry you, but if you accept Islam then that is my dowry."

Just as acceptance of Islam is a woman's personal decision, so also are her actions. Worship is based on one's in-

INTRODUCTION

This message on the role of women in Islam is based entirely on the Qur'an and Sunna. It attempts to demolish and invalidate the contemporary misconceptions which exist among Muslims on this subject. It also attempts to strengthen the confidence of Muslim women in confronting the misguided trends of modern times.

"May Allah brighten the face of a being who assimilated the principles of Islam and transmitted them righteously". The writer of this message, though relying on the basic sources of Islam, does in no way restrict the potentialities and qualities of women. He has no intention of limiting any rights of women that have been naturally bestowed by Allah. However, the approach adopted attempts to put right, in a consistent manner, the injustices which have been imposed on Muslim women.

This message is primarily addressed to Islamic workers, men and women so that they should resort to the Qur'an in this issue and pioneer a bold movement of women led by those who seek guidance only from Islam. It is difficult to visualise the existence of a complete Islamic movement without the presence of women, or in the absence of their activities.

This study is directed in general to the Muslim nation. It is essential to have the correct concept of women in Islam, and the knowledge of how to implement it in practice, if there is to be an Islamic revival and the building of a new and pure culture.

But how can Muslim women be reawakened? This is the central question of this article. The answer is two-fold:

tentions. The reward or retribution for a woman's actions are decided without man's recommendation. The family is not a collective unit when it comes to

accountability to Allah. The individual accounts for himself or herself alone. On the Day of Judgement there is to be no union between husband and wife concerning their fate. Neither can provide relief to the other.

The Qur'an contains numerous verses which place emphasis on individual accountability: "...And they are all coming to Him on the Day of Judgement individually..."; "...On the Day that a being flees from his brother, mother, and father, wife and children..."; "...the one who acts righteously, be it male or female ..."; "...Allah gave an example to those who disbelieved, the wife of Noah, and the wife of Lut..."; "...And Allah gave an example to those who believed, the wife of Pharaoh..."

Part 2: With Reference To Islamic Law

Summary: the basis is that there is a unified and self-consistent law; the message is general and addressed to both men and women; particular rules cannot be made if there is no basis for them in the Shariah.

The Shariah is but a practical expression of the requirements of belief. Separate Shari'ahs do not exist for men and women. Within the body of the Shariah there are only a limited number of rulings that are separate for men and women, so that in each case, religious adherence may more closely match their human nature. The basis is a single, unified and self-consistent Shariah. Particular rules cannot be made if there is no evidence for them in the Shariah.

Whether in the fard ul Ain (a duty compulsory on the individual), prayer, fasting, Zakat, pilgrimage, zikr, or in the matters of conduct—trust-worthiness, fairness, charity, ihsan, piety, decency, men and women have an equal responsibility. Woman also has a duty in the fard ul Kifaya (collective responsibility which protect the integrity of religion. She should be prepared to perform these obligations, and is as responsible as a man if these duties are not undertaken.

Woman is exempted from some obligations such as providing economic support to the family, attending congregational prayer, or taking part in war. She is not obliged to do any of these if her help is not required by man. However, she can participate in these activities

if she so desires though it becomes obligatory if man has failed to do them.

No one can prevent women from doing righteous deeds in everyday life. The Prophet ordered them to give charity and they responded to his command. They attended congregational prayer, even fajr and isha, during the time of the Prophet. Women like Hamna bint Jahsh, Al-Rabie bint Muawiz, laila Al-Ghifariah, Umm Al-Dahak, served in the battlefield by supplying warriors with water, nursing the wounded and carrying them to safety. Women like Safia bint Al-Mutallib, Nusaibah bint Kaab, Umm Haram and her sister Umm Salim participated in actual fighting.

The Shariah has bestowed on women the same responsibility and freedom given to man. She can engage herself for marriage to a man, verbally or in writing. She can refuse or leave a man who is imposed on her. However, the marriage contract should be attended by a guardian, and for a divorce to be valid, it must take place before a judge. The case of Immam bint Al-Asmad Al-Mughiri is an example of engagement by writing. As examples of verbal engagements there are the instances of the women who offered themselves in marriage to the Prophet.

A woman cannot be compelled to believe. A wife of Christian or Jewish faith should not be compelled to Islam. Women can acquire unlimited knowledge. The Prophet placed emphasis on educating women. They used to attend the study groups which met to listen to him. A woman is free to express her opinion—for example Aisha used to make verdicts (fatwa) in the presence of the Prophet, and later in the presence of his successors. It is well known that in Islam woman has the right of possession.

In the Shariah woman has a responsibility to participate both in family and general affairs. Asma bint Abu Bakr and Zubair ibn Al-Awwam have consulted each other over their children's affairs, even after divorce. Woman can contribute in political issues, elections and criticism. Al-Bidaya Wal-Nihaya refers to the contribution of women attending Muslim gathering (refer to the sahih hadiths (authentic traditions) on attendance of women to Eid-prayer even those who did not pray, and the celebrations of Abyssinians).

There are no practices exclusively for men, apart from the responsibilities described earlier which were obligatory for men and optional for women. There is no dominance of man over woman except within the framework of the marital life, established on the principles of willingness, consultation and ihsan (right con-

duct). Within this ambit man has the responsibilities of economically supporting the family, of enjoining the good, and meting gentle punishment in cases of extreme deviation by women (Ta'deeb). Parental supervision and discipline applies equally for both sons and daughters.

Public life is not a field for men only. There is no segregation between men and women in situations where Muslims gather; prayer (refer to the command of the Prophet not to prevent women from the mosque, even during the night, and his order to let the women attend Eid prayers; Hajj, despite all overcrowding in performing the rituals and study circles (Majlis). The Prophet preached to men and women in the same place. The questions put by both men and women even related to marital relationships. At one of these joint study groups a woman once questioned the Prophet, why he remarked that women would outnumber men in Hell. Once when the Prophet arranged a special study circle solely for women he explained that this was done for practical reasons. The growing size of the joint meetings had meant that women had not been able to hear properly.

Woman can go out for her needs, to the market, shopping or on business, even if she is subjected to inconvenience and rudeness. The Prophet permitted women to go out for business even after the verse on veil, hijab (The Clans, 33) for his wives was revealed. The verse on women's garments (The Light, verse 31) followed incidents of misbehaviour in the streets of Medina. Righteous women were subjected to rudeness from men passing the time by the side of the streets. In this situation, the Prophet did not forbid women from leaving their homes, but instead gave them instructions on how to dress outside. The Prophet also told the men to observe the "rights of the streets" i.e. to lower their gaze on seeing women.

Qibla Umm bani Ammar is an example of a woman who conducted trade. Al-Shifa binti Abdullah ibn Abdishams, was appointed by Umar to be in charge of part of the shopping Centre.

There is no isolation between men and women within the home. Women can receive family guests, talk to them and serve them. The Prophet used to visit women like, Khawl binti Qais, Al-Shifa binti Abdulla, Malika binti Al-Harith, Ummu Waraqa binti Abdullah. He used to eat or say prayers in their houses. Even the bride used to serve guests herself (refer to hadith of Ummu Usaid, the bride of Abu Usaid Al-Sa'idi). The Prophet visited the house of Iyas ibn Al-Bakeer without the wife being segregated.

The well known veil hijab is one of the rulings that was specifically directed

to the wives of the Prophet, since their status is unlike that of other women. Their accountability is doubled be it in reward or punishment, as stated in the Qur'anic verse (The Clans, 33) that a wife of the Prophet should not appear before men, not even if only her face and hands were exposed, which is permissible for other Muslim women. From the text of the verse, it is obviously restricted to the wives of the Prophet. It contains injunctions on the stay of women in the Prophet's house and the way the Muslims should speak to his wives. A further injunction forbids the Prophet's wives from remarrying. The circumstances of the revelation (Asbabal-Nuzool), confirm its exclusiveness to the wives of the Prophet only. Many authentic Hadiths state that it is a confirmation of Umar's comment on the prolonged stay of the guests on the wedding day of Zainab binti Jahsh, the Prophet's wife. Further confirmation is that women like Asma binti Al-Nu'man and Qibla binti Qais, who the Prophet left before revelation, were not called "the mothers of the believers" (Umahatul-Muminin). They were not asked to put on the veil and they married again subsequently. The verse of the veil was revealed in Dhul Qaida five years after Hijra and the Muslim women were not affected by it later.

Islamic social life is directed to serving Allah, and if communication between men and women is permitted, it is a test which a Muslim should avail as an aspect of worship. It is prohibited to exploit the relation between men and women as a chance for sexual enjoyment outside lawful marital and family relations. There is no place in the Islamic faith for flirting sexual inclinations that enslave the people, their energy and relations.

Adultery is forbidden as are confessions of sexual desires of a man for a woman. The Prophet has forbidden meetings in privacy between an unmarried man and woman, and also entering the house of a lonely woman, except in a group. However, privacy of individuals is respected: there is the hadith of the woman from Ansar who came to the Prophet. He took her in privacy to the side of the road, but within sight of people, before giving her advice.

A prolonged gaze or stare of a man to a woman or vice versa is forbidden because such a gaze invites temptations. Actually, the gaze should be lowered the moment a temptation arises (refer to the order in the Qur'an to lower the gaze—the Light verse 31-32) and the Prophet's order not to prolong the gaze. The prohibition is not for any gaze—it is for glance intended to arouse sexual seduction. For example there is the hadith of

Al-Fadl ibn Abas, who stared with admiration at a beautiful woman. The Prophet said after he turned away the face of Al-Fadl "I have seen a boy and girl and I expected seduction."

Overcrowding of men and women to the extent of direct contact of bodies is not allowed except in a practical issue like Haji. Wherever, men and women are to be together, in houses, streets, gatherings or public occasions, then the situation must be adjusted to the teachings of the Prophet. There must be sufficient room so that breaths remain apart. The Prophet also advised that a special entrance for women should be set up in mosques. He also advised separating crowds of men and women in the streets. He advised all men to wait in the mosque until all women were out.

Men and women are forbidden to expose their bodies or intend to seduce one another by appearance or gestures. The Qur'an ordered women to hide their ornaments except those that appear casually and not to show more than their faces or hands and not to go outside with perfume on. The Prophet repeatedly warned against those women who tempted by body movements. The Qur'an also warned men who confront and try to tempt women.

No relation between men and women is allowed if this paves the way to temptation and illegal sexual relations. The Qur'an warned against approaching adultery. This is the framework for situations which are not mentioned above.

Therefore, greeting women is allowed and also talking to them with decent intention and in the manner the Prophet used to. Casual hand greeting, if part of a local custom, is not forbidden if done with purity of intention. The Prophet explained he did not greet women in the Pledge as this was a feature restricted to the Pledge itself. In some other narratives he greeted women with a piece of material on his hand and he delegated Umar to do it sometimes. Families are allowed to gather and eat together at home or otherwise taking into account the above precautions. Persons engaged for marriage and divorcees are given greater freedom in meeting and talking with each other (refer to the hadiths on engagement and the hadith of Mughaiith who used to chase Buraidah in the streets of Medina asking for the reconciliation she had refused).

The occurrence of temptation is dependent on three factors. First, self control, which is part of one's upbringing and resistance to temptation. Second, the subject of discussion between the man and the woman. Third, the environment in which the meeting takes place.

PERSONAL CLEANLINESS

This article is the final one in a series of articles on Personal Cleanliness by Dr. M. Khan.

Perineal toilet

Muslims are asked to clean the perineal region and the region between the thighs by washing with water especially after defaecation or urination. In the absence of water, the instructions are based on the surgical principle of cleaning away from the cleaner to the dirtier area. The habit of cleaning the perineal region with tissue paper alone does not in fact clean the area? It only wipes off the faeces and spreads a thin film of faecal matter over the area. The combination of modern scientific knowledge which makes tissue paper commercially available and Muslim cultural practice would produce the best results. Thus tissue paper can be used first and water afterwards. The same principle can be applied to other fields and thus a society better than the present one can be produced.

Method of defaecation

Muslims adopt a squatting position and according to the *hadith* they have to lean heavy on the left foot. They also use the left hand in the toilet of the region. These all seemed to be based on anatomical knowledge. Professor Ian Bird in his text-book of Surgery writing about appendicitis states that the squatting position helps complete evacuation of the colon and thus avoid stagnation at the tail

end of the gut.

The last part of the digestive tract where faeces accumulates is in the left side; hence the leaning on that foot is helpful. Similarly the use of the left hand helps to press the left thigh against the left side of the abdomen. In spite of this method (squatting) being superior to the sitting position, most of the toilets in new governmental buildings in Muslim countries have western type of toilets—which people, it is interesting to note, use the eastern way. In cold countries where splashing of water has to be avoided some research on this line can produce a design of toilet meeting both requirements.

Muslims have to clean the area between the thighs and the groin by washing thoroughly with water after urination. Here again, the etiquette while urinating is to adopt a squatting position. This also has an anatomical basis being the only way of evacuating the passage from the bladder completely. Further, it helps to avoid splashing of urinary droplets over the body or clothes, though this can be achieved building receptacles at higher levels.

It should be remembered that urine and faeces are unclean substances teeming with bacteria. The habit of washing the perineal region along with the habit of shaving the hair in this region enables the Muslim to keep this region which is the greatest source of body odour, clean and free of smell. Circumcision which is practised by Muslims is in line with this objective. The medical advantages enjoyed by Muslim men as a result of practising this custom—apart from cleanliness of the area is freedom from strains of urine, i.e. the lessening of near absence of

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There is no justification for the isolation of women in Muslim societies. Some Muslims are doing this, on the grounds of avoiding the greater evil (Sadu Al-tharai). Such practices deprive women from the benefits of Muslim society, such as co-operation, learning and other sincere and benevolent actions. Women should enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and should show concern about communal life and collaborate for

the establishment of the Islamic social order.

"The believers, men and women are protectors, one of another: they enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, practise regular charity, and obey God and His Apostle. On them will God pour His mercy: for God is Exalted in power, Wise."

(Repentance, 71).

The modern concept of fundamental rights is of course not identical with the guidance provided by Islam in the field. Modern constitutional theory of the free western world proceeds on the assumption that the State has the right to make or un-make any laws, and the fundamental rights are so many limitations on its law-making power. In case of disputes as to whether fundamental rights have been transgressed or not, the Superior Courts act as the final arbiters. An individual has a right to demand the enforcement of his rights, irrespective of the role he plays in the society. In short the rights of an individual have priority over his duties. The Qur'anic teachings on the subject, however, proceed from the opposite end. The primacy of duties and obligations over rights is constantly emphasized in the Qur'an. The way to salvation, for an individual as well as for a community, is according to the Qur'an by constant vigilance over the performance of one's duties. The Prophets, whom Allah sent to provide examples to be emulated, were constantly busy in the performance of their duties without demanding any recompense from the society, and without worrying about public recognition, pomp, or wordly glory. The path of spiritual development is illuminated by sacrifice. Those alone achieve the highest spiritual prizes who genuinely sacrifice their lives and their wealth in the path of Allah and can say, "My prayer and my ritual sacrifice and my living and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds" (Suratu-l An'am, 6:163).

The key to the Qur'anic principles on this subject lies in the verse: "Allah has bought from the believers their selves and their possessions; for that, theirs is Paradise" (Suratu-t Tawbah, 9:110). The life of a true believer after entering this covenant by which he sells his life and wealth to Allah becomes that of a trustee in regard to his trust. Selling his life and wealth to Allah means that he agrees to expend thereafter whatever he has

received in trust from Allah according to the priorities fixed by Allah. Some of these obligations pertain to the social relations of the believers. Looked at from this angle, the major duties of the believers in regard to their fellow beings may be considered as the latter's rights.

The duty to earn a lawful livelihood and to contribute to the common pool for social security by way of Zakah, being that of the individual, the Public Authorities, acting as the agents of the community are under no further obligation than this, to look after the need of the helpless ones — of those who suffer permanent disabilities always and all the time, and of those who suffer from temporary disabilities, - till the disability is removed; and to intervene whenever any one takes undue advantage of another. These principles from a constitutional angle operate as limits on the powers of public authorities. They do not permit public authorities the power or the right to lay down or change the groundrules of the society or its priorities. The Shari'ah being the source of authority (and also the criterion for adjudging the validity of its exercise) the public authorities are mere instrumentalities for its operation and enforcement.

Right to Protection of Life

According to the Qur'an, human life is sacrosanct. Of several verses which affirm the inviolability of human life except for just cause, the following may be noted:

"And do not kill the soul Allah has forbidden, except for right". (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:33).

"...whoso killed a soul not for retaliation for a soul slain, nor for corruption done in the land, shall be as if he had slain mankind altogether; and whoso gave life to it, shall be as if he had given life to mankind altogether". (Suratu-l Ma'idah, 5:32).

The Right to Justice

The first and foremost duty of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was to establish Justice, and this continues to be the duty of the community's Ruling Agencies. Not only are the public authorities bound to provide justice to all, but

everyone has a right to protest against, injustice. In this regard the following verses, amongst others, may be noted:

We have sent our Prophets with clear messages and revealed to them the Scripture and the balance to measure truth with the object of establishing justice among men. Suratul Hadid-57:15.

"O, ye who believe, be steadfast in the cause of Allah, bearing witness in equity; and let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just, that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is aware of what you do." (Suratu-l Ma'idah, 5:8).

HUMAN RIGHTS

Protection of Life

The rights to :

Privacy, Property

And whoso judges not by that which Allah has sent down, these it is who are the disbelievers," (ibid. :44). And whoso judges not by what Allah has revealed, these it is who are the rebellious." (ibid :47).

The Right to Equality

Between man and man, the Qur'an recognises only one criterion for superiority and that is due to more righteous conduct. All distinctions based on parentage, tribal relationships, colour and land are irrelevant. The following verse is the great charter of this.

"O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female; and We have made you into tribes and sub-tribes that you may recognize one another. Verily, the most honourable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware." (49:19).

The Prophet has said "O men, all of you are descended from Adam and Adam was made of clay. There is no pride whatsoever in ancestry. There is no merit in Arab against a non-Arab. Verily the most meritorious among you in the sight of God is he who is God-fearing.

Duty to the obedience of what is Lawful and Disobedience of what is Unlawful.

The clear implication of the idea of

the Rule of Shari'ah is that a person is liable to obey only what is lawful and to dissociate from, disobey, and even to correct if he can, what is unlawful. Most of the relevant verses in this context have already been noticed above. The most comprehensive statement is contained in the following verse: "And help one another in righteousness and piety and abet not one another in sin and transgression." (Suratu-Imaa'idah, 5:2).

Right to Participate in Public Life

According to the Qur'an, establishment of authority in this world is a grace of Allah in favour of the whole com-

TS IN ISLAM

e, Justice, Equality, Freedom,

y, Economic Stability, etc.

Adapted from 'The Muslim'

munity whose members are constantly alive to their duties and obligations. The character of such a community is that their affairs are settled by mutual consultation. The most direct verses on the point are:

"Allah has promised to those amongst you who believe and do good works that He will make them succeed (the present rulers) in the earth as He caused those who were before them to succeed (others): and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them and He will surely give them peace in exchange of fear." (24:55).

"And whose affairs are (decided) by mutual consultation." (42:38).

"And consult them in the matters (of administration)" (Surah Aal 'Imraan, 3:159).

Right to Freedom

Modern constitutions divide freedom into various sub-divisions like freedom of expression, freedom of movement, etc. The Qur'an on the other hand, amongst other directions, makes one comprehensive declaration that no person in authority, even a Prophet, has the right to enslave another in any manner. Allah says:

"It is not for a man that Allah should give him the book, and authority and prophethood and then he should say to the people become slaves unto me, apart from Allah; but (he would say): Be

solely devoted to the Lord because you teach the book and you study (it)." (Surah Aal 'Imraan - 3:79).

It should however be clearly understood that the word slave in the above context is used not in the technical sense of 'slavery' but in the general sense of being wholly dependent on another. The Qur'an makes it clear at several places in the Book that the Qur'an itself is the ultimate criterion. Allah makes the Prophet declare:

"Shall I seek for judge other than Allah when it is He who has sent down to you the clearly explained Book."

(Suratu-I An'aam, 6:115).

Right to Freedom of Conviction

According to the Qur'an, Man becomes truly entitled to spiritual honours when he willingly chooses the right path. No one can be forced into becoming rightly guided. The following verses may be noted in this behalf:

"There should be no compulsion in religion. Surely, right has become distinct from wrong; so whosoever refuses to be led by those who transgress, and believes in Allah, has surely grasped a strong handle which does not break. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

(Suratu-I Baqarah, 2:256).

"Admonish, therefore, for thou art but an admonisher." (Suratu-I Ghaas-hiyah, 88:21-2).

"thou hast no authority to compel them."

"We know best what they say; and thou has not been appointed to compel them in any way. So admonish, by means of the Qur'an, him who fears My warning." (50:45).

"Say, 'O ye men, now has the truth come to you from your Lord. So whosoever follows the guidance, follows it only for the good of his own soul, and whosoever errs, errs only against it. And I am not a keeper over you.'" (Surah Younus, 10:108).

Right to Freedom of Expression

The believers are under an obligation to speak out the truth without fear and without desire to show favour. Amongst other verses, the following is a comprehensive mandate to this:

"O ye who believe, be strict in observing justice, and be witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or against parents and kindred. Whether be he rich or poor, Allah is more regardful of them both. Therefore follow not low desires so that you may be able to act equitably. And if you conceal the truth or evade it, then remember that Allah is well aware of what you do." (Suratu-n Nisaa', 4:135).

Right to Protection against Persecution for Difference of Religion

The right to be protected against persecution for differences in faith or opinion is a clear corollary of the right of freedom of conviction. It has been expressly mentioned, because many sins have been committed by over enthusiastic well-meaning fanatics.

"And revile not those whom they call upon beside Allah, lest they, out of spite, revile Allah in their ignorance. Thus unto every people have We caused their doing to seem fair. Then unto their Lord is their return; and He will inform them of what they used to do." (Suratu-I An'aam, 6:108).

"For each of you we (have) prescribed a Law and manifest way. And if Allah had willed He would have made you (all) one people, but (He) tries you by that which He has given you. Vie, then, with one another in good deeds. To Allah shall you all return then will he inform you of that wherein you differed." (Suratu-I Maa'idah, 5:48).

Right to Protection of Honour and Good name

According to the Qur'an protection of the good name and honour of the members of the community is a very high priority in social values to be guarded by everyone and particularly the Ruling Agencies. Allah seriously warns the community against loose talk, making of reckless allegations and spreading of rumours. Allah says,

"O ye who believe! let not one people deride another people, who may be better than they, nor let women deride other women, who may be better than they. And defame not your own people nor call one another by nick-names. Bad indeed is evil reputation after the profession of faith; and those who repent not are the wrongdoers." (Suratu-I Hujuraat, 49:11).

"O ye who believe! avoid most of suspicions for suspicion in some cases is a sin. And spy not, nor back-bite one another. Would any of you like to eat flesh of his brother who is dead? Certainly you would loathe it. And fear Allah, surely Allah is Oft-Returning (with compassion) and (is) Merciful" (ibid :12)

"Verily, those who accuse chaste, unwary, believing women are cursed in this world and the Hereafter. And for them is a grievous chastisement." (Ibid, 23-24).

Right to Privacy

Privacy, according to the Qur'an is the right of everyone. It is essential for a full flowering of a personality. The following verses may be noticed:

"O ye who believe! enter not houses

other than your own until you have asked leave and saluted the inmates thereof. That is better for you, that you may be heedful. And if you find no one therein, do not enter them until you are given permission. And if it be said to you, 'Go back', then go back; that is purer for you. And Allah knows well what you do." (Suratu-n Nour, 24:27-28).

The Economic Rights

It is the duty of the community of believers to look after those who have suffered permanent or temporary disability, and for that reason cannot contribute to the social security provided by the system of *Zakaah*. Allied to this obligation is the natural corollary that believers must have an opportunity to labour and to acquire the good things of life and to get full and fair compensation for their labour.

"And in their wealth there is share for one who asked for help and for one who is deprived."

(suratu-dh Dhaariyaat, 51:19).

"And do not devour your wealth among yourselves through falsehood, and offer it not as bribe to the authorities that you may knowingly devour a part of the wealth of other people with injustice."

(Suratu-l Baqarah, 2:188).

"Say, 'who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has produced for His servants, and the good things of His providing?' Say, 'They are for the believers in the present life and exclusively for them on the Day of Resurrection.' Thus do We explain the Signs for a people who have knowledge."

(Suratu-l A'raaf, 7:32).

"There is naught for man but what he laboured for." (Suratu-n Najm, 53:39)

The Right to Property

There are many verses in the Qur'an which prescribe rules of conduct in which the spending from and application of one's wealth is the operative part: for example, payment of *Zakaah*, *sadaqah* and making of certain expiations. People are encouraged to earn by lawful means and to spend their wealth in accordance with the guidance provided by Allah. He says:

"And when the prayer is finished, then disperse in the land and seek of Allah's grace, and remember Allah much, that you may prosper." (Suratu-l Jumu'ah, 62:10).

"Children of Adam, take your adornment to every place of worship; and eat and drink, but be not prodigal. He does not love those who exceed limits. Say, who has forbidden the adornment of Allah that He has brought forth for His

servants and the good things of His providing? Say, they are for the believers in the the present life (and) exclusively on the Day of Resurrection. Thus do We explain the Signs for a people who have knowledge." (Suratu-l A'raaf, 7:31-32).

Allah also makes it clear that, in this behalf, the obligations of the believers are also the duties of the Governing Agencies. He says:..

"The believers are such that if We give them authority in the land, they establish prayer and give *zakaah*, and enjoin good and forbid evil." (Suratu-l Hajj, 22 : 41).

But where the believers and their Governing Agencies are called upon to apply the lawfully earned wealth according to the priorities fixed by Allah, the hoarders of wealth have been promised a severe chastisement. He says:

"Woe to every back-biter, slanderer, who amasses wealth and counts it time after time. He thinks that his wealth makes him immortal. Nay he shall be cast into crushing punishment."

(Suratu-l Humazah, 104:2-4).

In short, the Qur'an's approach to the question of private property may be summarised thus:

It is possible to own property, it is incumbent upon the believers to work hard and to create wealth and acquire the fruits of their labour. But the duty to earn carries a further obligation to earn by lawful and moral means. Spending in the path of Allah of some of the wealth acquired by unlawful and evil means would not wash away the sins of all misdeeds. It is also equally important that they should not hoard what they lawfully earn, but spend it freely in the categories that God has established. It will be open to the Governing Agency of the believers to regulate the system of spending in the path of Allah (infaq fii sabiili-Llah) of which the first example is the establishment of the Baytu-l Maal (State Treasury). In normal conditions a State may place less direct burden on the individual leaving him free to perform his obligation voluntarily. However, in times of some national emergency, War and the like, every individual may have to carry a burden far greater than in ordinary times.

Right to Adequate Remuneration and Compensation

The dignity that Allah has conferred on the children of Adam, and the Law of Just Requit that he has prescribed for all mankind, requires that both in this world and in the hereafter each man must get fair requital for what he does; and even in the matter of exposure to hazards he should be dealt with fairly. Allah

says:

"And for all are degrees according to what they did; and that Allah may fully repay them for their deeds; and they shall not be wronged."

The Governing Agencies, therefore, have no right to take without compensation from whom they please and to give without regard to needs and conduct to whom they please!

All the fundamental rights have been neatly summarized in the famous Sermon of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, at the last pilgrimage when he said: Verily, the most honourable in the sight of Allah is he who is most righteous amongst you. A coloured man has no preference over a white man, nor a white man over a coloured man, nor an Arab over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab, except for righteousness.

Adapted from 'Impact'

BOOKS AVAILABLE AT THE ISLAMIC TRUST BOOKSHOP

Sahih Muslim Vols. 1 to 4	\$80.00
The Preaching of Islam	\$12.00
Qadianism — A critical study	\$ 4.00
Islam Versus Socialism	\$ 4.00
Prayers of the Prophet	\$ 2.00
The Orations of Muhammad	\$ 3.00
Al Hizb Al - Azam	
A collection of Prayers	\$ 3.00
Towards Understanding Islam	\$2.50
Women In Islam	\$3.00
The Children's Book of Islam	\$2.75
Family Life in Islam	\$2.75
Islam - Its Meaning and Message	\$19.50
The Autobiography of	
Malcolm X	\$4.50
Writings of Nazir Ahmad Simab	\$3.00
Qur'an Reading Made Easy	\$1.00
Qur'anic Arabic Reader	.75
The Straight Path	.75
Islam and Buddhism	
in the Modern World	\$4.00
Islam - The Religion of the Future	\$2.00
Islam - Between Ignorant	
Followers and Incapable Scholars	\$2.00
Introduction to Islam	\$3.00
The Qur'an Interpreted	
(Parts 1 & 2);	\$25.00
Islam - The Essentials	.75
'Nur' and 'Impact' Magazines	\$1.00
Juz'Amma (Last Juz)	
30th Part of the Qur'an	\$1.50

uretheretes, paraphysinosis and carcinoma in the region in man. In woman, writing about the incidence of diseases of the cervix in "Pill on Trial", Paul Vaughn and Dr. S. I. Macmillan noted; "None of these diseases produce the evidence indicating the relation between the customs of circumcision and a carcinoma of the cervix." Yet it is surprising that in scientifically minded England, it is getting more difficult to have a child circumcised under the National Health Service.

In cases where the toilet of the lower part of the body—between the umbilicus and the knee is neglected, a host of unpleasant effects and diseases can arise: body odour, boils or abscess in the region, skin diseases in the region and infections of the various parts of the area. In cold climates where woolen garments are used, it is especially essential to keep the area clean as the garment is not changed frequently. Even the use of underpants does not solve the problem. Underpants should be used in addition to and not in place of. People who do not pay attention to these hygienic principles are carrying on their body bacteria laden clothes.

Bathing

Every Muslim and Muslimah—after puberty—has to take a bath. When married, a bath is necessary when the spouses have sexual contact. Women have to take a bath after their cycle. Unmarried men have to take a bath after their cycle. In addition Muslims have to take a bath before the Friday prayers. Taking a bath on Friday, putting on clean clothes and using perfume are all recommended and are important measures for having a fragrant congregation on Jumma day instead of a smelly one. In huge crowds a stuffy atmosphere is likely to develop when people perspire more both in hot and in cold countries.

Method of taking bath

Muslims are not allowed to take a bath in stagnant water.

Further, the dirty parts of the body are washed first and then the cleaner. The habit of taking a bath in the tub is not hygienic. While sitting in the tub full of water, all the dirt from the body floats over the water and sticks to the margin of the tub. When the water is allowed to drain away the level of the dirt can be seen sticking to the lower part of the

body. Even when the tub is filled with clean water the dirt that has stuck to the body and the sides of the tub contaminates the water. If the tub has to be used the best way is to wash the lower part of the body and the arm pits first. Then after cleaning the tub again fill it with water and stay in it as long as desired. Lastly, wash the whole body with running water.

Taking a bath or making *ghusl* involves the preliminary of performing *wudu*: washing the hands, mouth, nose, face including eyes, rubbing the head, ears, neck, and washing the feet. Thereafter the whole body is washed, the right side first and then the left.

This article has been written partly to make Muslims realise the richness of their culture. One would expect the scientifically advanced people to be more appreciative of certain hygienic principles but often this is not so.

The advance of scientific knowledge by itself cannot and does not ensure that people would make use of this knowledge. A Muslim, however when adopting and carrying out the principles of Islam does so with the conviction of their usefulness and great benefit, and also with the feeling of moral obligation that they must be carried out. In the case of personal hygiene, this attitude ensures that the principles are moulded into a set pattern of habits and behaviour.

Two distinct advantages of Islamic culture are its direct approach—in this case to remove the cause of uncleanness—and its universality which implies that it can be practised in the poorest of societies. The believers in the days of the Prophet and for a long time afterwards perhaps did not understand the entire significance of the Prophet's teachings, but believed in them nevertheless. Today the scientific mind tries to understand this significance and the inner meaning behind certain habits and practices. This indeed is a healthy attitude, so long as one remembers the limitations of the knowledge of the day, and the completeness of truth embodied in the religion of Islam.

An Islamic class for children is being conducted at The Islamic Trust premises every Sunday from 9 - 10.15 a.m. Those who are interested may attend.

Renewed Interest in Arabic

The ability to read the Qur'an in Arabic brings immense pleasure to the heart of a Muslim. Many parents appreciate this unquestionable fact and some encourage their children to attend Maktabas for several years in order to develop reading skills with respect to Qur'anic Arabic.

For some time now, The Islamic Trust felt that the reading and writing of Qur'anic Arabic can be learnt within thirty hours. Last year four of these courses were organised and they were successful. (Al-Hamdu Lillah). With this encouragement four more courses were organised this year.

The first was held at Munroe Road Mosque Hall for three weeks, June 6th-24th from Monday to Friday 7 - 9 p.m. The class consisted essentially of about 25 students from that Jamaat. Both male and female attended the course.

A similar three-week course was held at The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine in conjunction with the Campus's Islamic Society. More than fifty persons, again of both sexes registered for this course. The age of the participants ranged from approximately (15) fifteen to (50) fifty.

The third course was held at the Couva Mosque Hall. This was for two weeks, July 18th -29th from 9 a.m. - 12 noon. It catered mainly for school children on vacation. It was attended by over twenty-five students from Couva and surrounding districts.

Finally a refresher course in reading was held two weeks before Ramadan, August 2nd-12th from 7 - 9 p.m. at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine.

Participants from all four courses were always co-operative and enthusiastic; consequently teaching and learning were made much easier. Inter-student relationships generated friendliness, self-help, co-operation and tolerance and these were features which stood out prominently. Also pleasant student-teacher relationships are also worthy of mention.

It is hoped that other persons will avail themselves of the opportunities, In Sha Allah, to learn to read and write the Arabic Script. Also that those persons who have already benefitted from the courses will make an effort to go a step further and learn the Arabic language with the aim of understanding the Qur'an in its original form.

RABITA CONFERENCE

6. Preparing Dawah aids - books, tracts, audio-visual aids, etc.
7. Assisting new Muslims to establish themselves economically.
8. Sending Muslim workers from abroad to give lectures, conduct training programmes and camps for youths etc.
9. Granting scholarships to local Muslims to study in institutions abroad.
10. Establishing permanent regional offices with full-time staff to carry out these programmes.

It has been a feature of many conferences that decisions are taken but not many are implemented. Let us hope that this would not repeat itself.

In summarising, it may be stated that there is a dire need to gain a wider and deeper awareness of Islamic beliefs and behaviour in its widest sense in order to carry out, "Amr bil Ma'ruf wa Nahy anil Munkar" in its widest sense i.e. to accentuate the positive and eradicate the negative.

Rabita, (Muslim World League) with headquarters in Mecca, Saudi Arabia will be convening its first South Western Hemisphere Conference in Trinidad and Tobago from the 24th - 26th September, 1977.

The inauguration ceremony and formal opening will be held at the Chaguaramas Convention Centre on Saturday 24th September, 1977 and will include a number of local dignitaries headed by the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago Dr. The Rt. Hon. Eric Williams who will deliver the principal address.

The foreign contingent will be headed by the Secretary General of the League, His Excellency Sheikh Muhammad Ali Al - Harakan, a former Minister of Justice in Saudi Arabia and Bro. Ahmad Karim Gaye, Secretary General of the Islamic Conference of Senegal and a former Minister of Foreign Affairs. Delegates from as far North as Mexico in South America as well as all Caribbean territories will be participating.

According to the Director of the conference Ahmad H. Sakr, the aims are:—

1. To bring together the representatives of each and every Islamic centre and Muslim community organization;
2. To let them co-ordinate their activities regionally and nationally.
3. To help them mobilize their human and material resources.
4. To let them arrange their priorities and plan for the future.
5. To establish a Standing Council for Co-ordination.

A 'Wake' - To Keep Awake

In Trinidad, the 'land of Calypso and Steelband', as it is sometimes referred to, one is always familiar with the observation and sight of a 'wake' at the home of a recently deceased person.

A 'wake' is what is locally referred to as a situation where persons including friends and relatives gather the night after someone dies to keep awake in order to console and express their condolences to the relatives of the deceased.

Sometimes, these 'wakes' are held for a few consecutive nights and unfortunately extends for nearly a whole week in some cases.

Before a 'wake' loudspeakers parade the streets and surrounding areas of the deceased, announcing the death and the names of the relatives concerned. The whole district automatically responds to this announcement. Some would react with grief and consternation while others would acknowledge the intimation with glee and optimism for the opportunity to spend a night of pomp and grandeur, and exhibiting card skills.

In this society, consisting of multi-racial and multi-religious groups, people gather at the home of the deceased to observe the 'wake'. This 'wake' is normally marked with the presence of gamblers, including the orthodox type referred locally as 'cassas'. They assess the situation of the 'wake' with a view to fall on easy victims who might have a few cents on them. Rum-drinkers also grasp this opportunity to obtain 'free Rum', from the relatives of the deceased the latter taking pride in patronizing the participants. Coffee and biscuits are also served on this occasion. In a well-off family these biscuits are served with cheese. This patronization results so that the participants of the 'wake' as the name implies, would be kept awake.

Such is the disgusting sight of a 'wake' in Trinidad. Salt is placed in the wound when the gambling and drinking start, the 'tempo' and noise increase louder and louder as the gambler wins another 'pool' and the rum-drinker 'blazes' another 'nip' of rum.

These habits and practices are seen seeping into the homes of Muslims, except where the head of a family makes a firm stand against these practices.

On the particular night of a 'wake',

a few of the relatives of the deceased may be conscious of the needs of the occasion and according to their religion, chant, sing hymns, or observe whatever practices that their religion require of them, despite the 'Casino' atmosphere in the background.

This is a situation where a rational human being should be very concerned and perturbed at this deplorable state of affairs on the observance of a 'wake'. It should, instead of being a time of spreading joy and happiness, be one for REFLECTION for the participants of such a 'wake'. A reflection based on the fact that one day they would become 'deceased' persons.

On such an occasion one should be aware that he has to give a full account of his life on the day of accountability. The Quran says: 'Nobody will bear the burden of another'. (The Qur'an 29:12) Our deeds in this world based on our relationship with our family, friends, co-workers, and the community at large would determine our fate.

A 'wake' should be a time when a person should be made conscious of the fact that Allah gives and takes life as He pleases, whether he is wealthy and rich or poor and destitute. Allah says in the Quran: 'Death will find you even if you are in towers built up strong and high.' (The Quran 4:78).

Instead of allowing those people gathered at a 'wake' to idle, gossip, play cards, gamble, or drink rum, an effort can be made to exhort them towards righteousness. Some of the knowledgeable persons can read and explain verses of the Quran and instructions of Muhammad, peace be upon him, pertaining to death and the purpose of life.

Mourning on the death of dear ones comes out naturally and is therefore commendable. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, wept at the death of his son Ibrahim and some of his beloved companions.

It is however, a duty on Muslims to show condolence on the death of his brother-Muslim and convey words of sympathy and consolation to the relatives of the deceased. The best words of condolence according to Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, are: 'Verily we are from Allah, and to Him we shall return.'

Siddique Abdul Hamid.

LETTERS & COMMENT

A Cross to Bear

It is to the disgust of some sections of our community that the Trinidad and Tobago Government continues to retain the name "Trinity Cross" as the highest award in the country. This clearly shows the relationship the government intends to maintain with the different religious groups.

This year's list showed that a prominent Muslim, Dr. Wahid Ali, was named as a recipient of the 'Trinity Cross'. The Muslim community, knowing that the Trinity and the Cross represent beliefs and symbols contrary to basic Islamic principles, waited overnight to hear what stand he would take. Surprise was in store for many as the media publicised Dr. Ali's acceptance of the award.

One would have thought that this occasion was an ideal opportunity for someone in Dr. Ali's position to refuse to accept the 'Trinity Cross'; request another award, possibly a lower one or make representation to have the name of the award changed.

A Little Will Suffice

We received this letter from Muhammad Hamidullah (a reputed scholar and an author of many books) in reply to a letter 'Muslims in Dominica' published in the last issue of the Muslim Standard.

The Editor,

As-Salam alaikum wa rahmatullah.

I thank you for sending me copies of your journal, number 22 has just arrived. Will you kindly and brotherly permit me to make an observation?

It is nice to publish letters explaining the need of the community in different parts of the world. But let it not happen that the afflicted brethren should not get even the equivalent of the expenditure of postage of their letter.

I am particularly afflicted by the letter of the Muslims in Dominica, published on pg. 11. Let us not always think that it is the duty of the Saudi Government with its petro-dollars. One must know that this respected government receives everyday demands of millions of dollars from all parts of the world, and everybody addresses the petition to them.

If they donate the totality of their revenues, that would not suffice. So we individual Muslims must also try by way of self-help.

I am not rich, an old man, retired on pension, yet I shall contribute my mite. So please ask brother Sulaiman Abdus-Sabur what would be the minimum cost of a small mosque, even a piece of land with a tin-shed hut. Once the real need is known, you will ask contributions, on your responsibility, which is before God alone, and ask the brothers in Dominica to organize themselves into an association, register the site of the mosque according to local law and run it on the Islamic rule of self-help. For readers of other countries, when asking donation, please precisely mention for instance, if it is the U.S.A. dollar or something else which is meant.

Hope you will not get offended by this brotherly and Islamic suggestion. God enable you.

Yours in Islam,

Muhammad Hamidullah
4 rue de Tournon,
75006-Paris.

Edible Cheese

In issue No. 18 (April 1977) of the Muslim Standard, the food survey mentioned that some cheese manufacturers use pepsin and rennet for the milk coagulation process. These enzymes are either synthetic or extracted from the stomachs of animals (in some cases the swine). This information left many Muslims skeptical as to which brand of cheese was permissible to be consumed.

More recent information reveals that some manufacturers use microbial coagulants and/or plant enzymes for the same process.

So far three brands, available in Trinidad, are known to be made by using microbial or plant enzymes and are thus permissible. They are:

1. Philadelphia Cream Cheese.
2. Whipped Cream Cheese.
3. Neufchatel Cheese.

For further information, consult the Islamic Trust Reference Library where a booklet entitled 'Cheese' is available. It is based on recent research done by Dr. Ahmad Sakr, Professor and Chairman, Department of Chemistry and Nutrition, National College of Chiropractic, Illinois.

Misleading Media

During the past few years, 'Indian Programmes' are broadcast over radio and television on 'Eid' day. However,

similar programmes organised by the same people are broadcast on 'Divali'

These programmes tend to give non-Muslims the impression that 'Eid' and 'Divali' are the same when actually they represent totally different religious beliefs. This mix-up is brought out in the incident where a woman travelling in a taxi in St James said "Drop me by the Indian Church" meaning the Muslim Mosque.

It is suggested that Eid programmes reflect basic principles of Islam and the significance of Eid.

Recitation and translation of the Qur'an; speeches on different aspects of Islam; films of Muslims at Eid gatherings; and any other items explaining and propagating Islamic ideology may be included in the programme.

Equality in Dress

With the reopening of schools, many students, especially those in Secondary schools donned their new uniforms. Boys in long pants and girls with skirts but this was embarrassing for some girls.

During the vacation some parents visited Principals with the hope of convincing them that they should allow their daughters to dress according to the dictates of their beliefs. Islam requires that females over the age of puberty should wear clothes that are loose and opaque. They should also cover the body with the exception of the face, hands and feet.

Hence if someone desires to follow her religion (wearing skirts or pants up to the ankle) she should not be deprived of her rights. It is wrong and against our constitutional rights for some Principals/Vice Principals to prevent persons who wish to dress properly especially as our National Anthem boasts - 'Where every creed and race find an equal place.'

It is suggested that Muslim organisations take up this matter with the Ministry of Education and Culture.

THE ISLAMIC TRUST
Opening Hours
MONDAY - FRIDAY
4 p.m. - 8 p.m.
SATURDAY - SUNDAY
8 a.m. - 8 p.m.

comment

NEED FOR QUICK ACTION

On Eid day especially, Muslims all over the world adorn themselves with their best apparel and perfume after taking a bath and head for the nearest Mosque joining large congregations offering praises and thanks to Allah.

It is such a pleasant sight to see so many Muslims and one experiences such a joyful feeling to be among them on the day of Eid. The Mosques are filled again, nay overflowing; a fragrance pervades the atmosphere, all waiting for the Imam

Invitations are extended and people in groups leave in different directions to taste the many delicacies prepared. Members of families visit one another and gifts are exchanged.

A genuine feeling of brotherhood is displayed throughout the day. Some recall their experiences of the month of Ramadan just completed. They all speak cheerfully of them but also express dissatisfaction at the attitude which some Muslims display nowadays. They show concern for those who treat fasting as trivial.

Not too long ago all those who were supposed to fast, and even some younger ones fasted for the whole period but now there are people who treat it casually and abstain from fasting without any justifiable reason. One wonders if the percentage of those who fast, especially among the youth, is decreasing.

It is very important to determine if this attitude is because of general ignorance of Islam or it is a state of disbelief. Whichever it is, it is seriously undermining the Muslim community and creating doubts in the minds of the younger ones.

One wonders also if this negligence is indicative of a general neglect of other basic Islamic practices like Salaah, things to eat and drink etc. If this is the case, then there is need for some quick action to keep our younger ones in the fold of Islam.

One may suggest a literacy campaign to educate the masses, particularly the youths about Islam. This can be done in seminars, study groups, youth camps, family get-togethers and through radio and television.

Emphasis may be on clarifying basic concepts and implementing basic practices. The Qur'an with a clear translation, the Hadith and any good books on Islam, (and there are many available now) should be used as our texts.

This can be done by groups already organised for the propagation of Islam. However, much will depend on the initiative of the individual to prepare himself as a Muslim and a standardbearer of Islam.

Attempts can also be made to inform the non-Muslims about Islam hoping also that with our renewed interest and commitment to it, they would be able to see it reflected in our lives.

In these times
people must have standards

THE BEST STANDARD

THE MUSLIM STANDARD

WHAT WE AIM AT:

- o Establishing obedience to the authority of God and adherence to the example of His messenger, Muhammad, upon whom be peace.
- o Projecting Muslim standards of thought and conduct as the solution to problems.
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to announce the beginning. In the meantime you recognise and greet old friends; you hear the jingling of coins outside as fellow Muslims distribute charity and often one touches your shoulder to allow him to advance in search of seating accommodation.

After prayer, there are warm embraces and exchange of greetings. The deepest feelings of the Muslim community are expressed on this occasion.