

THE

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A dark cloud appeared on the horizon of my early life the day my mother and father separated. Before this, I was a member of the happiest family in our area. I attended the Arima Hindu School then proceeded to Holy Cross College. After obtaining some success in G.C.E., I found myself outside of those protecting walls. I was about to face the outside world which had always attracted me while I was confined to the classroom. I had read so much about it that it should have been familiar and friendly; however, now that I was in it, I was no longer attracted to it. In fact, were it possible, I would have gone right back to school.

All the books had depicted life as being one long vacation, what I saw looked different. Gone were the leisure and pleasure of free days which I had enjoyed so much. My school-boy politeness suffered drastic reformation after being bruised by the coarse hide of adult rudeness. Life became a hard, serious, unpleasant business, not vacation! There was no place to run, hide or seek cover! There were no more school-mates, teachers, classrooms, no more theories, only the cold, hard practical thing: the rat race!

My first job brought me into contact with my chief companion for many years afterwards — the

## THE TURNING POINT

Muhammad Sayyid

"The more I found out about Islam the more I regretted my past life. My hate for the system which cultivated the beasts of immorality, lewdness, fornication and general frustration grew—the system responsible for the moral and physical destruction of countless brothers and sisters..."

cigarette. My circle of friends expanded when I was able to show what most craved but did not have — money. Armed with these two weapons, I carved a niche out of life and established myself as an adult. I learned quite early that good people never got rich and bad people ruled the world. The worse your morals, the better you fared. With this philosophy I set about establishing a reputation. The introduction of marijuana on the block helped, and soon I out-smoked, out-cussed and out-drunk any "hooligan" in the area. As I had abandoned "religion" before leaving school, God's laws did not apply to me.

I read books about "astral travel" man's 'powers', black magic and every "weird" thing I could get my hands on. I gained the reputation of being a "brain" on the block. Looking back, I must have been the most stupid "brain" in the country! By the time I arrived in Port of Spain, my mother, father, brothers and sisters and friends were almost

convinced that I was mad!

From sunrise to sunrise, I would be in various stages of intoxication! "Grass" was my energy and pleasure my goal! "Flash-cloth", slang and smoke would announce my arrival and departure, music provided my soul with inspiration and my fingers and lips with expression. My art "masterpieces" depicted some of the lewdest scenes ever. My whole life was confined to a narrow circle of grass, music, clothes and painting, result — frustration!

I was twenty years old when I first came into contact with a Muslim brother. At this time, I was "shacked-up" in a common-law union. I had sobered up a bit and was pursuing means of development. This brother made me aware of a truly, divinely-ordained way of life. Only after the "breaking up" of this "union" did I pay much attention to the brother's speeches. I visited one place of worship; borrowed books from him and read them. Through Allah's Mercy, the light of understanding permeated the fog of ignorance!

I became aware of the existence of a Creator, unseen but not mysterious, loving and forgiving, All-Powerful, who cared for me so much that he provided me with everything I needed to live a harmonious life. I found out about the last Prophet, Muhammad, who had brought the Scriptures in its totality. I became more engrossed in the study of this system and daily the conviction of its reality dawned upon me. I read about the Brotherhood of Man, its practical existence and achievements, as it once existed under the Prophet's command.

My life underwent a complete change when I read a translation of  
*continued on p.3*

**ISLAM  
NO  
INDIAN  
RELIGION!**

*See page 8*



## INTERNATIONAL SURVEY

### THE SOAKPIT OF WESTERN INFLATION

Effective October 1, the international crude oil price has been raised by 10% to \$11.15 a barrel.

The new price, which will remain in force until next June, was decided at a stormy meeting of the 13-nation oil consortium, Opec.

The decision had to be a compromise between the extreme Iranian stand that a 35% increase was necessary to compensate for world inflation and the Saudi position favouring a continuation of the existing freeze at \$10.46 a barrel. In between were those who wanted an increase varying from 5% to 28%. After bitter haggling and high drama threatening the break-up of the cartel, the oil nations settled at an increase of 10%.

A notable development in this price controversy was the defection of the usually hawkish Algeria to the doves' side. Like Saudi Arabia, Algeria did not favour any high increase and played a great moderating role in this inflammable debate. And Saudi Arabia's Zaki Yamani is credited with having developed the suspicion that notwithstanding all those threats about occupying the oilfields and the great show of opposition to any rise in the price of oil, the US does not really want the oil prices lowered. The threats against the oil states were in fact designed, designed to achieve an increase in the price of oil by hardening their resolve to stand up to imperialists' threats. On the other hand the oil price increases have had the significant effect of strengthening the US dollar.

The US indeed has been the greatest manipulator and beneficiary of the oil embargo and price increase drama. ('Impact' had said this as far as January, 1974 See The Problem of the Arab

#### SAUDI SECOND FIVE-YEAR PLAN

The Saudis plan to spend \$142 billion on their second five year development plan. Much emphasis is placed on the educational aspect with the hope of solving their longterm manpower problem. The ambitions plans calls for increasing the number of students in elementary and secondary schools from 943,000 to 1,400,000, vocational students from 4,000 to 31,000, university students from 14,500 to 49,000. Other increases include hospital beds from 7,600 to 19,000, doctors from 1,900 to 4,200, first-class roads from 2,256 miles to 8,100 miles, and berths from 26 to 72.

Also included in the programme will be the development of a steel plant, a new airport and petro-chemical complexes.

Billions, 'Impact', 4.1) However it would seem the oil states have still not done their work. The latest price of \$11.15 a barrel is virtually the same as recommended by the Project Independence Report of the US Federal Energy Administration. The report published in November, 1974, envisaged a minimum price level of \$11 a barrel. Keeping the price at this level will enable the US to exploit its own energy resources and attain independence by 1980. A price lower than \$11 would mean a continued dependence on imported oil and this is what the US wants to get rid of.

The problem of inflation is an altogether different phenomenon and the oil states by seeking to compensate themselves by increasing the price of oil, on the contrary, help propel inflation. Having tied themselves more and more closely to the inflation-ridden economy of the industrial nations and by opting for a hyper-development strategy, the oil states have allowed themselves to become the soakpit of western inflation.

#### NIGERIA

##### DEMOCRACY DEADLINE

We intend to hand over power to a democratically elected government of the proper by October 1, 1979! So announced Brigadier Muritala Muhammad, The ruler of Africa's most populous state at the country's 15th Independence anniversary celebration after detailing a five-phased programme intended to ensure a return to civilian rule before the end of 1979. Brigadier Muritala had about three months ago ousted General Gowon who had himself come to power through a military coup and who had also pronounced a return to civilian rule.

Having come so soon after the coup, and particularly when no such promise had been proffered at the time of the takeover, Brigadier Muhammad's commitment to a timetable for return to democratic rule must inspire confidence. However, the dismantling of a military rule voluntary or otherwise, has always been a difficult and risky proposition. If the military rulers happen — or pretend — to be too good, the nearer the country draws to the democracy deadline the country reverts to a state of non-government. The outgoing regime feels unable to take firm and timely decisions and with expectant politicians wildly jockeying for power the country gets to near chaos situation resulting in another coup or a postponement of return to civilian rule because of the feeling that probably the military had not yet

completed its task of preparing an orderly return to democratic order. If the timetable is too long, newer factors of economic, social or political discontent step in and the regime, having lost its original revolutionary sheen, is unable to cope with it, making way for another set of generals or colonels to try to set the house in order — all over again.

#### IMPROPER DRESSES BANNED

The Holy Ghost Cathedral in Onitsha, East Central State, Nigeria, has banned the wearing of improper dresses in church services. These include sleeveless gowns and blouses, mini skirts, topless and transparent dresses.

#### KENYATTA'S ADVICE

President Kenyatta told the All-African Conference of Churches to work for the eradication of the inferiority complex planted by the colonial powers. The black man believed in God long before the first white man set foot on the continent... African customs and traditions can be seen in the Old Testament (of the Jews) as well as in the Holy Qur'an. Kenyatta said politics and religion cannot be divorced from each other and called on the churches to move in step with the African heartbeat.

#### CAMBODIA: 'FRATERNAL MUSLIMS'

A Pnom Penh report said the Khmer Muslims have been given complete freedom in conducting their business and in maintaining their religion and are plunging into the battle to increase production to improve their living standards.

#### PHILIPPINES: AUTONOMY TO MUSLIMS?

President Marcos told a group of surrendered Muslim rebels that the Government will give the fullest possible autonomy in all Muslim areas and equal rights in the country as long as he remained president.

#### IINA HQ IN JEDDAH

Despite an earlier decision to have the headquarters of the International Islamic News Agency, IINA, located in Tehran, Jeddah has now been chosen 'in view of the special significance of Saudi Arabia in the eyes of the Muslim world.

One of the junior army officers who organised the Bangladesh coup of August 15 speaks below about how the job was done—the disillusionment with Sheikh Mujib, the corrupt despot, and the certainty that the people wanted Islam.

The big question now is: Is the new leader, President Mushtaque, living up to expectations? A clue can be found in a speech he made on the night of 27 Ramadan. "On this holy night," he said, "and by the unbounded mercy of Allah Ta'ala...I am announcing the decision to restore to the people their lost democratic rights." He went on to give a programme and a time-table for this "to salvage not a sinking boat but a sunken boat" through reliance on God and our resources".

The following story is reproduced courtesy, Impact International, London.

My disillusionment had begun the day I had arrived in the country of my dreams. But I must say we, not I, because this applied to almost all of us.

The Bangladesh we found was totally different from what we had been told, what we had imagined you aspired for. The nearer you came to Sheikh Mujib, the more revolting you felt. In no time he had evolved into a corrupt despot yet when it came to India he would virtually take orders from them. There was one Brigadier . . . in the Dacca High Commission. He was

## BANGLADESH THE INSIDE STORY

posted as an ordinary diplomat, not as a military attache, but he acted as India's viceroy. Those of us who demurred even slightly were branded as 'Pakistanis'. Of those who were repatriated from Pakistan, about 200 officers were dismissed. All officers and men who had a fighting record in the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war were considered unsafe and summarily demobbed, although the country needed experienced and brave officers.

Those of us who had an opportunity to go outside the country were able to witness the indignity of belonging to the poorest and the most corrupt State in the world.

The political process having been blocked, there was no other way except to remove the man. As soon as the idea was broached we found, to our surprise, a near unanimity. Everyone had suffered and felt the same way. We decided to act when we were completely sure that the people of Bangladesh wanted to be liberated.

No, we didn't intend to kill him or his family. When the officers went to Sheikh Mujib on August 15 they had only asked him to sign his abdication. He lost his temper and started to abuse them. He wanted to phone the then chief of staff, Major General K.M. Shahullah, and was

allowed to do so. Even then the officers only wanted to take him into custody. It was at this stage that his son, Jamal, burst in and opened fire. Mind you, the first casualty was an army soldier.

As soldiers we are trained to carry out orders and immediately after carrying them out we are used to reporting. But this had been a different assignment. To be honest, the moment the task was accomplished there was a crisis. We didn't know whom to report to. We didn't know what was the next step. There had been a sense of mission and the mission had been accomplished. We had wanted to make it as painless as possible.

No, the declaration about the Islamic Republic was a genuine one. It could not be accidental. It had definitely been planned to be so. Of course we had not considered the pros and cons of the matter. We had not reckoned with outside pressures. We were sure that the people wanted Islam. So we said, why shouldn't they get it?

Later on other factors intervened. Maybe it reflects on our weakness. The threat of Indian intervention could be imaginary or over-played but what can you do if all Brigadiers and Generals tell you that India would intervene? We had to yield because we were no rebels. We had only taken upon ourselves the limited task of deliverance and that had been accomplished.

We have done our job. Now either President Mushtaque will do the planning and execute it otherwise someone will step in.

the Holy Quran. I still smoked and drank, but rarely. Shortly after reading the ninth chapter, I embraced Islam. I embraced Islam with the conviction that this was the right thing to do. I went to various places with a group of brothers who were inviting wayward Muslims to remember Allah. I joined in with a will and strove to know more about Islam. The real peace of mind that I experienced in the first few weeks was not ruffled by anything I encountered. That was my first taste of reality for the longest while.

The more I found out about Islam, the more I regretted my past life. My hate for the system which cultivated the beasts of immorality, lewdness fornication and general frustration grew. To this day I hate the system which is responsible for

the moral and physical destruction of countless brothers and sisters. I saw clearly, and understood, the true facts of life within those first few weeks. The facade of hypocrisy and deceit which permeates the present day system fell away before the force of knowledge that is Islam and laid bare their sickening secrets. I have devoted my life since then to practising Islam.

I reject all forms of Nationalism, Racism, Socialism, Communism, or any other "isms" put forward by man to rule other men. I am a member of the Brotherhood of believers. I am trying to submit myself totally to the rule of my Creator. Here the judgement is not by colour, race, language, family ties or past, no, it is by deeds! Truth takes root in the heart and drives me

on to greater efforts. Here I am spared the mind-befogging dogma of the Trinity, Atonement, the Saviour, etc.

My duty here is to please God by obeying the injunctions of the Quran and following the example of His Prophet. I cannot claim to be "saved" since God, and He alone, knows whether my deeds are accepted! Only on the Last Day will I know the reality! Until then, I am content to strive for complete Submission to God's Will!

*"The command belongs to God alone.*

*He commands you not to worship anyone except Him.*

*This is the right way of Life."*

—The Qur'an, 12 : 40.

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

*The following are some recommended books to be used with the outline syllabus on Islamic Studies suggested in the previous issue of The Muslim Standard.*

**The First Primer of Islam** Muslim Educational Trust, London, 30pp.

Attractively produced. Deals with the basic elements of the faith in fairly simple language. Contents deal with God, meaning of Islam, Muslim, Angels, Books of God, the Qur'an, the Prophets, Muhammad the last Prophet, Life after death, the articles of Faith.

**The Second Primer of Islam,** MET, 16 pp.

Deals with the pillars—Salaat (Prayer), Zakat (the Purifying tax), Fasting and Hajj—with concise treatment of the meaning of faith and worship in Islam.

**Catechism of Islamic Teachings,** Islamic Youth Movement, San Juan.

Questions and answers on Islam and the life of Muhammad, peace be on him. Includes duas for special occasions, and transliteration and translation of short surahs (chapters) of the Qur'an.

**Elementary Teachings of Islam,** Abdul Aleem Siddiqui, Several prints, 88pp.

A standard work in question and answer form. Provides details on the articles of Faith and the pillars of Islam.

**Ahsanul Qawa'id,** Shamsuddin Batrudawi.

A well-graded and neatly laid out 'Qaidah' arranged in 30 lessons for reading the Arabic script of the Qur'an.

**Muhammad the Last Prophet,** Imam, Vehbi Ismail, Igram Press, USA, 167pp.

A biography of the Prophet in a 32-part story as told by a father to his daughter.

Told with the 'artistic skill of a scholar', the aim is to 'arouse the interest of the Muslim youth to read more detailed books on the life of Muhammad and to point toward him as a shining example in their daily lives'.

## READ REFLECT REACT

**Islamic Correspondence Course,** Muslim Students Association of the US & Canada.

Arranged in eleven units: Basic Principles of Islam, the Life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him), Prayer, Fasting, Pilgrimage, Poor-due, Prophets of God, the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, Moral Teachings of Islam, Qur'an and Hadith, Muslim Ceremonies and Holidays.

Intended for self-study and for teaching children above the age of eight.

Each unit has a question paper at the end which serves the purpose of a test.

**Glimpses of the Holy Qur'an.** Muhammad Azizullah.

Deals with the nature of and need for the Qur'an; the oneness of God, mission of the Prophets, legal aspects etc.

**Glimpses of Hadith,** Muhammad Azizullah.

In two parts. Part I deals with the definition and classification of Hadith. Part II contains a selection of Hadith on various subjects illustrating their importance in everyday life.

**Islamic Ethics and Personal Conduct,** A.S. Hashim, Crescent Publications, USA, 90pp.

Seventh in a series of Islamic books for children. Others in the series also recommended.

Deals in detail with recommendations of the Qur'an and Hadith concerning qualities which Islam encourages and discourages, relationships with family, environment etc. An important book.

**The Islamic Heritage, Esso (Libya) Publication, 36pp.**

A picturesque and well-illustrated booklet on Islamic arts and sciences and Islam's contribution to civilization.

Subjects covered: Architecture, Engineering, Navigation and Geography, Mathematics and Astronomy, Medicine, Horticulture, Crafts, Metallurgy, Calligraphy, Literature, Philosophy.

**Qur'anic Advices,** Marmaduke Pickthall, 156pp.

Provides guidance on moral, social, legal and political aspects of life. This

selection of Qur'anic verses is given with the Arabic text and English translation in parallel arrangement.

**The Eternal Message of Muhammad,** Abd-ar-Rahman Azzam. Mentor paperback, 254 pp.

Shows how Islamic ideals and laws can provide the foundation for a just society.

First part deals with the life of Muhammad and the origins of Islam.

Second part considers Islamic attitudes toward social reform, war, treaties, and 'the maintenance and perpetuation of civilization'.

**Saviours of the Islamic Spirit,** Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, Lucknow, India, 418 pp.

Biographical sketches of important Muslim historical personalities like Umar ibn Abdul Aziz, Imams Malik, Shafi'i, Hanbal, and Abu Hanifa, Al-Ghazali, Salahuddin (Saladin) and others.

**Islam the Misunderstood Religion,** Muhammad Qutb, Darul Bayan, Kuwait, 358pp.

Written especially for modern 'educated' persons both Muslim and non-Muslims. Treats of topics like Is Religion Antiquated?, Islam's attitude to slavery, private ownership, the class system, communism, sexual repression, non-Muslim communities etc.

**Towards Understanding Islam,** Abul A'la Maududi, 177 pp.

One of the best introductions to Islam with chapters on The Meaning of Islam, Faith and Obedience, Prophethood, the Articles of Faith, Prayer and Worship, Din and Shari'ah (Law).

Emphasises the natural, logical, universal and eternal nature of the religion that is Islam.

**The Preaching of Islam,** T.W. Arnold, (preferably 1st edition)

A detailed and scholarly account of the spread of Islam in Africa, Asia and Europe. Required reading for those who allege that Islam was spread by the sword.





LONDON APRIL-JUNE 1976

From April to June 1976, London would be the venue for what would probably be the greatest event in the presentation of Islamic civilization to the West — the World of Islam Festival.

The Festival has been under preparation for the last five years. It is the outcome of an earlier festival held in 1971 which was described as a "landmark" in the relationship between the West and the Muslim world.

That first festival with a concentrated month long programme of lectures, an exhibition of Muslim art and architecture and artistic performances gave to hundreds of Europeans their first serious view of Islam and the richness and variety of Muslim culture. The 1971 Festival however was merely 'a statement of intent'. What is being planned for London next spring is a Festival whose impact would be profound and far reaching.

The World of Islam Festival hopes to reflect the splendour of Islamic civilization and encourage a new, informed understanding of Islam for both lay man and scholar. In a preliminary programme just published, the organisers of the festival state: "Islamic civilization, spreading east to Indonesia, west to Morocco, north to Tashkent and south to Nigeria, has brought a sense of cultural unity to many diverse races. For over 1300 years it has given to the world a culture of great artistic and intellectual achievement, with the Qur'an as its inspirational source and Mecca as its religious centre. In cities

## REFLECTING THE SPLENDOUR OF ISLAMIC CIVILISATION

like Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, Fez, Cordova, Isfahan, Istanbul and Delhi, universities fostered scientific and artistic development to which the West is permanently indebted. The fruits of Islamic architecture, engineering, medicine, calligraphy, music, philosophy and poetry have enriched the world's cultural heritage.

The scope of the festival is immense. It is an attempt to put the whole culture of Islam into perspective. Major institutions and cultural organisations including the Arts Council of Great Britain, the British Museum the Islamic Council of Europe—have joined with the Festival Trust to put on this event. There will be a wide-ranging exhibition programme, and publishing film, and education programmes which would be conducted in museums and halls in London, academic institutions and schools, and the BBC and television networks throughout the world.

### EXHIBITIONS

**The Qur'an.** An unsurpassed display of copies of the Qur'an from the 3rd AH/9th CE showing the exquisite calligraphic and illuminative art of the Muslims from Andalusia to India. Also a priceless collection of rare manuscripts.

**The Arts of Islam.** Five galleries in London will display the richness and diversity of Islamic art and its essential principles. Carpets, manuscripts, ceramics, textiles, glass and precious objets d'art from more than thirty countries—from Canada to the USSR—are being brought together in a unique collection.

### Science & Technology of Islam.

At the Science Museum in London, the technologies of wind and water, theoretical mathematics, surgery, navigation, astronomy and many other aspects of the thinking and practical applications of sciences explored within the unity of Islam. Other exhibitions will deal with Islamic metalwork, Music and Musical

Instruments, Islamic Painting in India, Hausa Embroidery and Carpets of Central Persia.

### FILMS

A major programme of documentary film-making will cover six main subject areas of the World of Islam—a general description of the character of Islamic civilisation, its structure, traditional attitudes and way of life, learning and science, literature, music and the spiritual life; the visual arts—chiefly calligraphy, architecture and associated arts, the traditional Muslim city; and the commercial and economic structure of the Muslim world and the advent of the modern world.

If the festival does realize its aspirations, it would partly be because of the support of Muslim countries who have contributed generally and the many talented people who have been planning for the past few years. But the festival is very much the brainchild of one man — Paul Keeler — a Londoner who passionately sees the need for the Westerner to get a correct and enlightened view of the Muslim world. Why? Because he feels that,

"Muslim civilization, because of its intrinsic nature, its traditional strength and its living force, has a part in the future of our planet which no other civilization could play. It is a particular role and certainly the meeting of the Muslim world and the modern West is a meeting which should be nourished and which should take place on the highest level. If encouraged in the correct way it could lead to a revival of the moral and spiritual life of the West and give a new confidence to the Muslim world making it effective on every level of modern society and civilisation."

Trinidadians could start thinking of a trip to London in the spring of 1976 and join the million or so people from all over the world who are expected to attend the Festival.



In a well known authentic Hadith, the Prophet Muhammad — peace be upon him — says that Islam is built on five pillars:

1. The declaration that there is no god except Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.
2. The performance of Prayer (Salah).
3. The distribution of Zakah.
4. The fast of Ramadan (Sawm).
5. The performance of the Pilgrimage (Haji).

The first pillar of Islam can be considered as the plinth on which the other pillars stand. La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad Rasul Allah is a short phrase in the original Arabic and yet within its two parts is contained the whole basis of Islam: the Unity of Allah and the example of his Messenger. This simple declaration before witnesses is all that is required for a person to join the community of Muslims. Rejection of the unity of Allah is an error. It is an error which is spoken of as unforgivable by Allah who is frequently known by His attributes: the Forgiving, the Merciful. It is therefore, absolutely essential for any person who wishes to have an idea of basic Islamic thought, that this principle of unity is properly understood and the effect that it has on every aspect of Muslim life truly appreciated. There is no concept of trinity or dualism in Islam. Allah is One alone. It is from this belief in unity that much of the revolutionary social aspect of Islam stems.

### NO FALSE DIVISIONS

An extension of the unity of the Creator is the reciprocal, the unity of the creation. It must be obvious that in Islamic thought there can only be two principal forms: the Creator and the created.

The unity of Muslims follows in logical sequence to the essential fact of the unity of the Creator. For the Muslims are but an integral part in that vast and complex but indivisible creation.

There is a hadith of the Messenger of Allah — peace be upon him — that the Muslims are as a wall, one part supporting another. The Muslims are all one body. If the eye is injured, the whole body suffers, or if the foot is injured, the whole body suffers. Had this saying alone been kept in mind by the Muslims, the Muslim nation would not today have degenerated into a corpse, viciously dismembered by

international vultures. There is no place in Islam for false divisions into nations or racial groups. Such ideas are negated forever in the Prophet's saying:

'He is not of us who sides with his tribe in aggression, and he is not of us who calls others to help him in tyranny, and he is not of us who dies while assisting his tribe in injustice.'

Others have laid claim to brotherhood and to those fine sounding words — Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. This, when restricted to materialist or economic terms is not merely impossible, being contrary to human nature, but is ridiculous. Unity of creation by no means implies that each part of the creation is of equal economic or social value.

'Are those who have no knowledge equal to those who have knowledge?'

### A NEW PERSPECTIVE

By making the responsibility for a fellow-Muslim morally as well as, where necessary, legally binding, Islam overcomes in the simplest possible manner the great problem of the distribution of wealth without creating the barriers of class hatred and envy. On this aspect of Islam three pertinent sayings of the Prophet may be quoted. The first is mainly moral and it is up to the public opinion of the Muslim community to ensure its implementation.

'He is not true Muslim who eats his fill, and leaves his neighbour hungry.'

The second deals with the distribution of wealth:

'A tax must be taken from the rich and distributed among the poor.'

The third sets the tone for employer-employee relationships.

'Pay the worker his due before his sweat dries.'

The brotherhood and unity among Muslims which is the aim of these statutes and guidelines are further strengthened by the Islamic laws of inheritance. Also, there is a total ban on interest combined with bans on gambling, speculation, and monopoly all aimed at preventing the exploitation of man by man. It now begins to appear that the problems which capitalists, socialists, communists and numerous other cranks have wasted time, effort and only Allah knows how many lives to solve without success, were all solved permanently 1,400 years ago with the revelation of a way of life perfectly suited to men of all ages and in all places.

### THE VITAL KEY

The second pillar or principle of

# SOCIAL REVOLUTION THROUGH ISLAM

Islam is prayer. After the belief in the Unity of Allah, prayer is of foremost importance in Islam. Islam is, among other things, a social order, a way of life, and all its principles aim at the production of the most suitable community for Man.

Prayer is a vital key to the creation and maintenance of an Islamic and ideal society. Every Muslim is judged as successful only in the performance of his duties as a Muslim. As a reminder of this most vitally important fact, Salah or prayer is instituted not annually or weekly or even daily, but five times each day and every day. The memory of man is notoriously short but not even he should be able to forget this five times daily lesson. Every day of his life, a Muslim must answer the call to prayer and stand beside his brothers, regardless of colour, regardless of race, regardless of wealth or poverty. No matter whether that Muslim is a king or labourer, he must take his position shoulder to shoulder behind a leader, not appointed by the ruler, and not claiming some special relationship with Allah, but accepted by the Muslims present on account of his superior knowledge and piety alone. Such are the criteria of leadership. It must be apparent that only this kind of attitude to the natural differences between man and man can overcome and finally destroy the triple evils of class, race, and nationalism destroy them as they were destroyed in the glorious early years of Islam.

### THE PRACTICE OF JUSTICE

The third pillar of Islam is the distribution of Zakah.

Zakah in fact is a legally instituted tax which every Muslim has to pay on the capital which remains in his possession during a year. Zakah is not paid up grudgingly or given in condescending



charity. Zakah in fact comes from the word meaning 'to purify' and is sometimes referred to as the 'purifying tax' — a tax which is given as a duty and worship. The motives in giving and the manner of distributing Zakah underline the harmonious relationship between 'spirit and 'matter' which exist in Islam.

There is in addition the voluntary sharing of wealth on a personal level which is termed sadaqah. This is an option — as distinct from the compulsory Zakah — which is encouraged by a healthy public opinion. The content of numerous Qur'anic verses aims at the moulding of such a magnanimous Muslim public opinion. Allah frequently addresses Muslims as "O you who believe and do good deeds". Belief is never mentioned without its complement, the call to do good.

Money and goods collected as Zakah were distributed among those in need in the Muslim community. A portion of it was used to maintain the orphans, the insane and even other deserving categories like travellers who were considered the direct responsibility of the community. What is this we see then? A form of welfare state instituted by Islam some 1,400 years ago!

This active concern of the believers for doing good is contrasted in the Qur'an with the niggardliness of those who make a show of religion:

"Have you seen him who makes a lie of religion?

That is the one who repels the orphan

And does not urge the feeding of the needy.

Oh woe to worshippers

Who are heedless of their prayers,  
Who wish to be seen

Yet refuse small kindnesses."

#### **PRACTICAL SOLIDARITY**

The fourth pillar of Islam is the institution of a month of fasting. This fast consists of abstaining from food, drink and any kind of sustenance between dawn and sunset during the Muslim month of Ramadan. It is obligatory on all adult Muslims physically capable of completing it without harm to their health.

It is important to understand the context in which the fast is meant to be carried out. Apart from the personal spiritual and even the physical advantages, this fast is an annual reminder to those who eat their fill daily of what the pangs of hunger and thirst really feel like. At the end of a day of fasting even the President

would give thanks to Allah for a simple glass of water, as much as his poorest subject.



#### **Fasting aims at**

creating the attitude of mind in Muslims where it becomes not merely a duty to help their less fortunate brothers, but a pleasure, not merely the personal righteous satisfaction of giving, but the deliberate seeking of the pleasure of Allah who has promised to reward the generous. This reward is not only to be expected in the life to come but also here and now in the destruction of the false barriers of wealth, class, and race, and the construction of a society in which, without totalitarian authority, a real and achievable working brotherhood of man is created. Such attitudes of mind can never be created through the authority of a mere man. The end in part may be achieved by totalitarian rule, but the means of achievement becomes the very destroying mechanism of such a system when the people rebel against the lack of freedom imposed on them by a man or group of individuals identical to themselves with no claim to infallibility. Only Allah through the means presented in Islam can achieve these ends by the best of all possible means.

#### **EQUALITY AND UNITY**

The fifth and last pillar of Islam is the performance of the pilgrimage to Mecca. This is obligatory on all Muslims once during their life time provided it is within their financial capability. Hajj is another example of how Islam combines the spiritual and physical or social needs of man in perfect harmony of unity which reflects the very unity of the Lord of all the worlds, Allah. In the pilgrimage the Muslim makes his will and goes as if to his death having settled all his worldly business paid up all his debts and freed himself from earthly cares. Life with all its

pleasures and pursuits, divides mankind, making men rivals and enemies. Death truly makes all men brothers. It is the awful (in the true sense of the word) reminder, filled with awe and the fear of Allah, that is permanently before all of us. No man can afford to forget that all are brothers in the sight of Allah and that our pride, ambition, wealth and power will all crumble to the insignificant dust of nothingness when we reach that last boundary. Any Muslim who has performed the pilgrimage to Mecca will leave you in no doubt of the intense spiritual atmosphere and the experience created by hundreds of thousands of dedicated Muslims for whom this is the very pinnacle of their faith and the final total physical embodiment of their belief. But what social revolution is this supposed to bring about?

The words of the late Malcolm X, Abdul Malik Al-Shabbazz (may Allah be merciful to him) in the context bear due testimony in as eloquent and as genuine a manner as possible to the potential and actual revolutionary impact of the Hajj. The strength of his words derives from the overwhelming reality of the momentous experience of the transformation of self which he underwent. On this account, they are not likely to become tedious, they are more likely to remain always an inspiration for those with eyes to see and ears to hear. Of the pilgrimage he wrote

"There were tens of thousands of pilgrims from all over the world. They were of all colours, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual, displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experience in America had led me to believe never could exist between the white and the non-white

His words portray better than any words of mine ever could, the social revolution which the pilgrimage helped to bring about in this man whose earlier creed and principles could almost be summed up as 'the black man must destroy the white man or be destroyed by him'. So this was the effect of pilgrimage — where kings, peasants, nobles, workmen, rich, poor, black and white all wear the same simple rough clothing, perform the same ceremonies in the same way, equal as all mankind are in the hour of death — on Abdul Malik al-Shabbazz, a man whom Allah was pleased to guide.

An abridged version of an article by Yahya Tagir published in THE MUSLIM, London, Feb. 1971.



On 13 October, 1975, Mr. Kamaluddin Mohammed, Chairman of the Nur-e-Islam Mosque Board, together with members of his family went to a Bhagawat less than a stone's throw from the Nur-e-Islam Mosque. He was invited to speak and did so for just over half an hour.

The speech is an important one and would almost certainly make social, religious and political history in Trinidad. It is for this reason that a complete transcript of it (with the exception of a Hindi bayan and its translation) is being published as a document in a supplement of this paper—so that there can be no question of its being quoted out of context.

The speech deserves careful, dispassionate analysis because of the view of religion it propounded, because of its bearing on the nature and future of the Muslim community and because of the position which Kamal (as he is commonly known) occupies in this community.

The speech began with an appreciation of the work of the officiating Pundit Hardat and his brother in these words: "...it is not often one would find that the Almighty has blessed in a house two brothers who have become pundits whose Bhagawat and whose Ramine and whose lectures Hindus and non-Hindus as well from all parts of the country go to listen to their words of wisdom".

Kamal then went on to deal with the coming of the indentured Indians to Trinidad asserting that "the Hindus and the Muslims came together as one people". This may in some cases be historically correct but it does obscure the fact that there was, to say the least, strained feelings between Hindus and Muslims from their earliest stay here. This can be well illustrated by the fact that the Hindus called the Muslims 'Madingas' in a derisive manner—thereby underlining the fact that the 'Indian' Muslims had more in common with the 'African' Muslims from the Mandingo tribes of West Africa who were brought here as slaves but who suffered cultural genocide at the hands of European colonizers and Christian missionaries. Hindus still call Muslims 'Madinga'—an indication that faith and religion are still often stronger than any ethnic tie. To appeal therefore to a common Indian racial and cultural

## ISLAM NO INDIAN RELIGION! -but Kamal appeals to Indian sentiment and propagates Hinduism?

affinity is not only historically invalid but serves to restrict the role and universality of the Islamic message.

The cultural link that Kamal has been striving to forge with the Hindus on the basis of a common Indian culture (he is often described as the father of Indian culture in Trinidad) has been one of the major drawbacks in presenting a proper image of Islam to the nation as a whole. Islam in Trinidad is still commonly regarded as an 'Indian' religion when it is of course not confined to any ethnic group, but is a universal 'ideological' system.

To emphasise his projection of Hindu-Muslim affinity, Kamal went on to make the startling assertion that the Hindu and Muslim religions "are very closely linked with each other". Where this closeness lies, only Kamal alone would know.

Even more startling and genuinely shocking, is that Kamal went on to recommend a book called *HINDU PRAYERS AND MEDITATION*. He read out part of the introduction to the book which describes God as "our Divine Father. He is also our Cosmic Mother..." On page 59 of the book, 'Cosmic Mother' is seen to refer to the goddess Latchmi who is the 'Divine Play' of the Lord and 'his better half'.

(In his 'Divali' message two years ago, Sham Mohammed, Vice-Chairman of the Nur-e-Islam Mosque Board and Secretary of the T.I.A. Education Board, prayed: "May the peace and blessings of Shree Lakshmi Mata be upon all my Hindu friends and our country".)

Some of the chapters in the book Kamal recommended are: "Prayer to the Sun (Supreme Light), Prayer to Lord Vishnu, Prayer to the Supreme Lord (to



*Kamal: "Our miseries will disappear" with Hindu prayers.*

that Supreme One who is embodied forth in Brahma (Creator), in Varuna (the Lord of the Waters), in Indra (the Lord of the Heavens), in Rudra (the Re-absorber of the Universe) and Maruts (Lord of the Winds), that one whom all 'divine beings' praise with hymns."

Kamal not merely mentions it, but recommends this book of polytheism in strong, unmistakeable and unequivocal terms, claiming: "The (the prayers in the book) are divinely inspired and seek the bestowal of worldly prosperity as well as spiritual enlightenment. If our hearts go with them, our miseries will disappear... The book is in very simple language which I strongly recommend..."

Identifying himself completely with Hindu aspirations, Kamal goes on to ask: 'How many of our children would be



"There may also be those who would regard this discussion as being an attack on Hinduism and Hindus. This certainly is not intended for Islam is tolerant of other peoples' right to follow a religion to the extent that a Muslim is supposed to come to aid of a non-Muslim if he is being oppressed... To respect others' right to hold a belief does not in any way mean that we should mix up or compromise Islamic teachings with theirs."

qualified to become pundits in the not too distant future?" and ends by advising his audience: "Follow the holy teachings of the Bhagawat Gita and the Ramine. Follow the great saints like Tulsi Dass and follow the life of Sri Krishna and follow all of them and you will find in them virtues that will make you good citizens."

And what is still more surprising and stunning is that he put the Qur'an and the Ramine on the same level when he recounted the story of the "atheist" who "don't believe in Qur'an or Hadith or Mouloud or Ramine or nothing". For a Muslim to put the Qur'an thus on a par with the Ramine is unthinkable and is surely to deny the Truth of the Qur'an as the Revelation of God destined to supercede all religion. It is, to say the least, putting up a barrier against conveying the message of the Qur'an and Islam to all peoples which the Muslim—especially one at the head of the community—is supposed to do.

What is the significance of Kamal's Bhagawat speech for the Muslims in Trinidad?

Perhaps there may be some who would regard any attempt to deal with this question as impertinent and regard the whole matter as the private concern of Kamal. Certainly he may go to any Bhagawats or functions he likes or chooses to go to. But clearly this one is a matter for the Muslim public to be deeply concerned about and for bodies like the Nur-e-Islam Board of Trustees and the Islamic Advisory Council to take a definite stand on. (One ASJA Imam has on more than one occasion said that not to wear a hat in prayer "is bordering on Kufr (disbelief)". What would this Imam then have to say on Kamal's Bhagawat speech?

There may also be those who would regard this discussion of the issue as being an attack on Hinduism and Hindus. This

certainly is not intended for Islam is tolerant of other peoples right to follow a religion to the extent that a Muslim is supposed to come to the aid of a non-Muslim if he is being oppressed or any injustice is committed against him. To respect others' right to hold a belief does not in any way mean that we should mix up or compromise Islamic teachings with theirs

Having said this, the mix-up of Islam and Hinduism and the identification of Islam with Indianism is not something that can be encouraged.

But not even those who are concerned with—or even disgusted by—the mix-up of Islam and Hinduism which is characteristic of Indian programmes or celebrations of Eid and Divali in which both Hindus and Muslims participate and jointly patronize (Kamal and the Indian High Commissioner are the patrons for this year's Divali celebrations)—not even they could ever have imagined that Kamal would have gone to this extent to identify himself with the Indian community and propagate Hinduism in the manner in which he has done.

In propagating and advocating the practice of polytheism, Kamal has done violence to the mainstay of the Islamic faith—the Shahadah itself—the belief that there is no god but Allah. Polytheism (Arabic: shirk) is recognised in the Qur'an as the unforgivable sin. Islam remains the religion of uncompromising monotheism.

The statements that Kamal has made call into question the very basis of his position as a Muslim. His standing in the Muslim community should also therefore be called into question and he (together with his brother Sham Mohammed who has made similar statements) may be required to relinquish all positions of trust and authority in the Muslim community.

## THE MAN ..... OR THE MESSAGE?

*Muhammad Balewa*

In a radio interview on the night of Eid-ul-Fitr (7 October), Mrs. Muriel Donawa McDavidson was asked why had Islam taken on the image of an Indian religion in Trinidad.

Replying that this was unfortunately so, she proposed as a means of getting rid of this image that there was an urgent need for a Muslim missionary of the African race. She indicated that she would use her influence through the Islamic Missionaries Guild to make this possible in the near future.

One may well ask, 'Do Muslims need to have the right colour or the right concept of Islam before they are listened to?'

The role of any missionary (and every Muslim is supposed to be a missionary) is basically that of a teacher who is blessed with guidance and knowledge—knowledge of the Qur'an and the example of Muhammad, peace be upon him. When anyone is in search of knowledge, he or she should not ask what is the colour of the teacher's skin, but what is he teaching.

What we can and should do is:

### LEARN ISLAM

regardless of the colour of the teacher or his country of origin;

### PRACTISE ISLAM

by trying to make sure that our sayings and doings in private and in public are Islamic and aimed at seeking the pleasure of God.

### PROJECT ISLAM

by inviting people—our families, friends, co-workers and others—to follow the Islamic way of life showing its superiority by kind words, good advice and upright conduct.

"And who is better in speech than he who invites to (the path of) God and does good deeds and says, 'Surely, I am one of the Muslims (those who submit to God).'"

—The Qur'an.



# LETTERS

## ISLAM A LIBERATING FORCE

Dear Brother Editor.

Glorified be God and may He reward you and those responsible for publishing such an informative paper which should be of immense benefit to both Muslims and others.

The Muslims have at last been able to come upon for the first time in this country a truly Islamic paper published locally. All the articles in the MUSLIM STANDARD were well researched and educative especially the article on Islam a Liberating Force. This gave in a nutshell some very important aspects of the Mission of Muhammad, peace be upon him. The Prophet of Islam. This article should be read and studied by all who genuinely want to know and put into practice the teachings of the Prophet.

*Abdul Aziz Muhammad,  
El Dorado, Tunapuna.*

## DIETARY DOUBTS

It was somewhat revolting to learn that I have been lavishly consuming cheese containing swine enzymes for years.

I have heard many people expressing their doubts and fears about other products. I am sure that if the public is made aware of objectionable items it would appreciate it.

The editor may consider giving further guidance on things such as marshmallow jello, biscuits both local and foreign made, margarine butter, bread and cakes made by large bakeries etc.

A systematic effort should be made by the government and the Commission of Standards to have companies properly label and describe their products, listing all ingredients in detail.

*Khalid Hassan,  
Diego Martin.*

## THE PAPER WITH A DIFFERENCE

One is accustomed to being presented yearly, with a stereotyped publication on Eid days. I was pleasantly surprised however to come across the Muslim Standard which had a different appearance and content altogether.

Traditionally, newspapers and Muslim booklets treated Islam in such a manner that they did not relate with the existing communities and solutions to their various problems.

The articles dealing with education, squandering public funds, legalising adultery and morality and the family were handled objectively. The problems were analysed, causes pointed out and solutions recommended.

It is most noteworthy to find some people in our society who are not afraid to express their views concerning the injustice of some people in the existing system.

Too many people feel that one should struggle for peace and tranquility rather than enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. As a result the weak compromises with the strong, the right with the wrong and injustice prevails. I feel that peace and unity should be built but

they can only be built on the foundations of the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

One other article needs special mention — 'Islam A Liberating Force.' This seems to be the most important article in the newspaper. I would recommend that we all read it again and encourage others who have not read it as yet to do so.

*H. Mohammed,  
San Juan.*

## A BIGGER STANDARD

May I say how very impressed I was by the first issue of the Muslim Standard. Many factors contributed to the favourable impression.

The paper saw fit to discuss "day to day" topics and even criticize when necessary. This I feel is a step in the right direction because we should not allow ourselves to become complacent but instead to stand firm and present the Islamic viewpoint.

The article 'Islam — a Liberating Force' really set me thinking. It made me more conscious of the life of Prophet Muhammad. It brought out to me new dimensions about the struggle he had to undergo to establish Islam.

One recommendation — I feel there should be an increase in the number of pages in the coming issues.

May God guide all concerned with the paper  
*Muhammad Abdul Hafeez,  
Tunapuna.*

## TROUBLE MAKERS?

Today in Trinidad and Tobago citizens are plagued by countless evils which, if allowed to continue, will lead us to total ruin. Some of these evils are fraud, prostitution, un-employment, illegitimacy, sub-standard wages and power struggles. These evils have taken such deep roots in our country that even some of our Muslims have fallen prey to them. Very often when we read the daily newspapers we see people with Muslim names being charged and found guilty of fraud, prostitution and many more immoral activities.

These evils have been able to penetrate and wreak havoc among our Muslims as a result of lack of Islamic knowledge or as a result of ignorance and indifference to Islamic Principles and practices. Another very important contributing factor to the decay of the Muslims is as a result of Muslim Leaders saying that the Muslim Community in Trinidad is 'intact' and even the best in the world! This only encourages complacency and laziness and gives the green light to activities which can be un-Islamic and detrimental to the community and future Muslims.

Our Muslim leadership, instead of encouraging and bolstering Islamic Education, often give the impression of trying to prevent the spread of Islamic Education by denouncing and ridiculing those who attempt to project and practise Islam according to Qur'an and Sunnah. They are deemed trouble makers, accused of changing Islam and lies are heaped on them. The Muslim community can only go forward on the basis of knowledge and not on blind imitation. Remember, according to a saying of the Prophet peace be on him 'One scholar is harder on

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the devil than one thousand ignorant worshippers.' Muslims should not be allowed to be fooled by leaders who are power mad for the man who fights for power does not deserve it.

*Osman Ali,  
San Juan.*

In these times  
people must have standards

THE BEST STANDARD  
THE MUSLIM STANDARD

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- o Projecting Muslim standards of thought and conduct as the solution to problems.
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# NEWS ROUND-UP

## NATIONAL TEACHERS' CONFERENCE

The Chairman of ASJA'S Religious and Social Services Committee, Omar Mohammed, is initiating a conference for all Muslim teachers.

A preparatory meeting of teachers was held at the ASJA Boys' College, San Fernando on 15 October. The following schools were represented:

El Socorro Islamia, Aranjuez Islamia, Charlieville Muslim, Park Street Muslim, Lengua Islamia, Rio Claro Muslim, ASJA Boys College, ASJA Girls College.

The general aim of the meeting was stated to be 'the furtherance of Islam and the education of our children'. Discussions at first centred on a common syllabus of Islamic studies for schools and sustained and concerted efforts on a national basis.

As a first step, the meeting decided to hold a Seminar on 5 December 1975 at the ASJA Girls' College, the theme of the seminar being **THE ROLE OF THE MUSLIM TEACHER**. Papers will be presented and there will be various discussion groups in the whole-day programme.

## T&TMYO SEMINAR

The third and final seminar for 1975 sponsored by the Trinidad & Tobago Muslim Youth Organisation will be held on Sunday, 7 December at the ASJA Girls' College, San Fernando.

The theme will be **ISLAMIZATION THROUGH EDUCATION**.

The theme of the first two seminars was 'The Survival of Islam and Muslims in the Caribbean'

A T&TMYO weekend training programme scheduled to take place at the School Mosque in San Fernando had to be shifted elsewhere because of official ASJA disapproval. The programme eventually took place at the Tunapuna Mosque on 1-3 November.

## COURSE IN 'ISLAMIC THEOLOGY'

Brother Waffie Mohammed of Rio Claro who has recently returned to Trinidad after studying in Pakistan has begun conducting courses in 'Islamic Theology' at

various centres throughout the island.

The course is expected to last for twelve months. Classes will be for one hour and those beginning at 6.30 pm will be held at Rio Claro Mosque on Mondays, at Masahood Junction Mosque on Tuesdays, at ASJA Girls' College, Tunapuna on Wednesdays, at the Islamic Centre, Princes Town on Thursdays and at the ASJA Girls' College, San Fernando on Fridays. A day class will be held at Masjid-ul-Ansari in Montrose beginning at 3.00 pm.

The courses are open to all adult Muslims, males and females. The introductory lessons so far deal with the sources of Islam.

Brother Waffie has been nominated by the ASJA to the Islamic Advisory Council of Trinidad & Tobago.

## MUSLIM MINORITY SURVEY

The World Muslim Congress with its headquarters in Karachi has launched a survey on the non-sovereign Muslim communities of the world.

As a first step, the chairman of the Muslim Minorities Committee of the Congress, Mr. M. A. Raschid, a former minister of education of Burma, has issued a detailed questionnaire designed to collect information on the number and situation of the various Muslim minority communities, so as to prepare a consolidated report for the Islamic Secretariat which will be considered at the next meeting of the Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference, due to be held in Istanbul in May or June, 1976.

The questionnaire may be obtained from the World Muslim Congress, P.O. Box 5030, Karachi 2, Pakistan.

## BARBADOS APPEAL

The Barbados Muslim community has appealed for financial assistance in the setting up of a school and ancillary institutions. Imam Razack Ali, in making the appeal on behalf of the Barbados Muslims, said that in the past they contributed generously to projects in Trinidad.

Donations could still be made through Imam Razack Ali.

## LOW LEVEL OF ISLAMIC KNOWLEDGE

'American Muslims are generally young with a good educational background but a low level of Islamic Knowledge.'

The finding, based on a survey on the Muslim educational situation conducted in September, 1973, in North America is reported by Dr. E. A. Abu Gideiri in the June issue of **THE MUSLIM SCIENTIST**, published by the Association of Muslim Scientists and Engineers in North America.

90.5% of those questioned however said 'they were interested in learning more about Islam'. The basic problem identified in the survey is the inadequacy of the Islamic educational facilities in the region. Dr. Abugideiri notes that Islamic education facilities in North America are generally confined to Oriental or Near Eastern studies at the universities or colleges. But these were unsatisfactory: 'the nature of Islam taught...is very obscure (and) very few teach authentic Islam'.

Dr. Abugideiri therefore suggests establishing an institute in North America to meet the educational and research needs of the Muslim community.

## EGYPTIAN AID TO CURACAO

Egypt is to present a library of 500 Islamic books to the Muslim community of Curacao. Egypt has also offered the community two scholarships for study in the Egyptian universities. Cairo will as well send an Imam to the island to teach Islam and the Arabic language.

## JEWISH CONCERN

In the London Jewish publication, 'Patterns of Prejudice' articles on the various Muslim communities in Europe, the United States of America and, of late, the Caribbean reflect their concern for the increase in population and rate of progress of these minorities.

In a recent survey, it was stated 'the increasing influence of Arabs outside their own countries makes the presence of Muslims in the various countries a subject of interest and importance', particularly in the 'political sense', hence the reason for the survey on the number and policies of the Muslims'.



## A LEADING ROLE FOR IMAMS

ASJA Imams met on 3 November to discuss standardizing the format of socio-religious functions like moulouds, Qur'an 'Khwanees', weddings, etc.

The meeting of imams to discuss common problems involving their work and the welfare of the Muslim community is certainly something commendable.

In future meetings, however, other and perhaps more important questions need to be considered. For example:

How to make mosques function as living centres of the community's educational, cultural and social life;

How to create, educate or reform Muslim public opinion by making the Friday 'khutbah' more inspiring and topical and making it deal with relevant social issues,

The improvement of training facilities for imams—training in the message and methodology of Islam in general and such things as the effective use of communication techniques in particular.

Participation in inter-religious functions and services on television and radio programmes which sometimes (indeed more often than not) give the effect of compromising the integrity of Islamic beliefs and principles,

Some of the above suggestions are contained in the resolutions of the Conference on the Role of the Mosques which was held in Makkah Mukarramah at the end of September.

Serious thought should be given to finding ways and means of implementing the recommendations of that Conference and ASJA Imams can play a leading and redeeming role in this.

## CULTURAL CALLALOO

'I testify that none deserves worship but Allah—the One who is alone and has no partner; I also testify that Muhammad is His Messenger.'

This is the declaration of a Muslim. To him, Divali, with its worship of gods and goddesses, is

an indication of, not the triumph of light over Darkness but the triumph of ignorance over Truth.

As such, how can one who is conscious of being a Muslim not only send 'warmest greetings and felicitations to our brothers and sisters of the Hindu faith' but also refer to the occasion as 'sacred'. This was done by the PRO of the Trinidad & Tobago Muslim Youth Association and even more eminent persons in the 'Muslim' community.

Can the Muslim community afford to be indifferent to this negation of the kalimah? Isn't this carrying the slogan "Every creed and race find an equal place" just too far?

It should be possible to maintain a high degree of tolerance for others while at the same time not compromising the integrity and the basic principles and teachings of Islam—steering away from any religious and cultural callaloo.



WORLD OF ISLAM FESTIVAL, See page 5.

## YES—MEN!

"Trinidad and Tobago is too prone to patronage and we must have people prepared to stand up for what they think is right regardless of the consequences."

That must surely be the statement of the year, indeed of the decade—coming as it did from Mr. Richard Toby, ex-commissioner of Inland Revenue, fiscal adviser to the Government.

Contrast that with the statement made recently by a Government Minister that the MUSLIM STANDARD had dared to criticise the Prime Minister! Who, after all, is the Prime Minister? One could just imagine what sort of events Cabinet meetings are!

## NOISY POLLUTION

Undoubtedly, one of the major curses that hangs over Trinidadian society is the curse of noise. Besides the yelping of dogs and the braying of asses, there is endless noise from radios turned on for the world to hear and assisted by the latest in hi-fi equipment which pursues you even in remote and out of the way places where you might hope to gain a treasured moment of tranquility and peace.

One is never free from the boggling beat of hysterical soul music or the loud rantings of so-called classical Indian drumming and singing. From before six in the morning to past midnight, the same incessant noise, noise, noise. From death announcements, cinema advertisements, weddings and soul parties at weekends—noise, noise, noise. From tape decks in taxis on at full blast, women washing their dirty linen in public, wind-ball matches on the streets and bacchanal at rum-shops—endless noise.

What is sad and unfortunate is that much of this noise passes for culture, a culture moreover of which the nation is proud. If anyone, for example, does not appreciate a day-long musical diet from Henry Tulum Dindyal (already dead) at his loudest best or a nightly pounding from the Wildfire he would not be described as being a 'cultured' Trinidadian, for the essence of this culture seems to be a mindless addiction to noise—poignantly exemplified to me by a poor old man walking down a street in a jaunty fashion singing loudly 'Coming down the track, coming down the track, s-o-u-l t-r-a-a-i-nnn'. Really, it was as if he was going round the bend!

The aggressive brashness which prevails, rather than being a sign of cultural attainment, is instead an indication of cultural under-development.

What seems to me certain is that the noise (and it is not culture) is a form of pollution in our society that needs to be combated, not merely to get rid of headaches and hangovers but in order to create (in our homes especially) an atmosphere where there is some peace and tranquillity, where there is the opportunity for reflection and the pursuit of learning and devotion to God. Such an atmosphere would help us to create a richer, a more caring, sensitive and creative society.

And be moderate in thy pace and lower thy voice, for the harshest of sounds without doubt is the braying of the ass.'

—The Qur'an.