

# THE MUSLIM STANDARD

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## WHAT DIVIDES THE MUSLIMS?

What Divides the Muslims? This question is as painful to answer as it is important to ask.

Everyone knows that Muslims are supposed to be an example of unity, cooperation, love and tolerance. The Qur'an compares them with an "iron-clad wall". It characterises the companions of the Prophet as loving, tolerant, kind and merciful to one another.

The Hadith describes the Muslims as part of one human body; whenever one particular part of it is afflicted with pain or injury the whole body lies in wakefulness and fever as a reaction to it.

Why in spite of all this, and in spite of the clear injunctions in the Qur'an to stand united and to hold fast to the rope of Allah, the Muslim ranks today are divided, riven and sundered by discord, disputes and internal fights? The answer if it is to be correct, impartial and really useful and beneficial, must be found in the pages of the Holy Qur'an and in the volumes of the Hadith - the record of the Prophet's words and deeds.

A close and careful study of these sources yields the conclusion that Muslim unity is contingent on two important factors, namely, proper Islamic knowledge and adequate fear of Allah. The Ayah (verse) of the Qur'an which exhorts the Muslims to be united begins by asking them to assiduously cultivate the fear of Allah. It says, "O those who believe, fear Allah the way He should be feared."

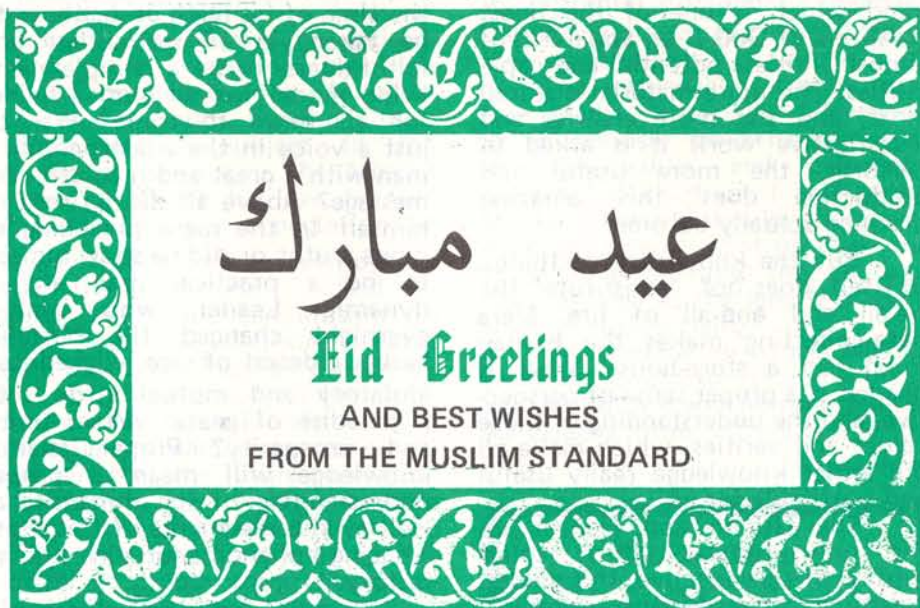
According to this Ayah (verse) mere lip-service to the concept of 'Godliness' is not considered to be sufficient, but we are clearly told to develop the utmost and maximum sense of responsibility and accountability before our Master,

Allah.

If we just pretend to fear Him but continue to do all those things which negate and belie this claim we are just being plain hypocrites. That is why the Qur'an admonishes us to fear Allah the way He should actually be feared.

This means that we have to constantly remind ourselves that Allah is watching not only over our actions but also over our innermost thoughts; not the

Divine retribution, in this way it is least likely that he will allow his evil tendencies, his baser motives and desires, his personal ambitions and frustrations to cloud his judgement and influence his actions to the extent of being continuously contrary to the Divine commands and to the dictates of common good. A man who fears Allah in adequate measure will always be willing to make reasonable accommodations and adjustments,



quietest whisper, in the darkest room can escape His notice; His police is ever alert and watchful, and above all, bribery, temptation, blackmail and intimidation cannot escape His notice.

Finally, when our guilt is proven and established, nothing whatsoever can save us from a terrible punishment, possible in this world itself, definite and certain in the dark hole of the grave, and forever in the prison-house of Hell.

Should a person fear God, and

and even suffer personal losses and disappointments in order to be on the right side of God's Law. He will actively and diligently pursue the course of Divine Pleasure no matter how difficult, inconvenient, costly and injurious to personal interests, the pursuit of such a course may happen to be.

The fear of Allah is thus one of the two most important and indispensable ingredients of Muslim

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## WHAT DIVIDES THE MUSLIMS?

Unity. Wherever and whenever this factor, referred to in the language of the Qur'an as 'Taqwa' is present, Muslim Unity will also be a tangible and real fact; and wherever this factor is absent the dream of Muslim Unity will remain void of fulfilment. History is testimony to the fact that Muslim societies displayed unity and cohesion in proportion to the Taqwa (Piety and Fear of God) which was present in the individual members of these societies.

But fear of God alone is not enough to lead us to our desired and cherished goal of Muslim Unity. The other most important thing which is required is proper knowledge of Islam.

The entire universe in which we live is Allah's creation and the knowledge of anything connected with this universe is of the keenest interest to a student of Islam. Islam believes that a person should acquire as comprehensive a knowledge of as wide a range of subjects as possible. The human mind which is one of the finest creations of God is an apparatus of almost limitless potential and capabilities. The more material is stored in it, and the more creative and investigative work it is asked to perform, the more useful and productive does this amazing machine actually become.

But the knowledge of things, in itself, does not constitute the be-all and end-all of life. Mere data-collecting makes the human mind just a store-house. What is needed is a proper sense of perspective, and the understanding of those values and verities, which make all our other knowledge really useful and profitable for us.

The Qur'an and Hadith are the only sources which could supply this perspective, this golden yardstick, this decisive criterion. That is why the Qur'an refers to itself as 'Al Furqan', which means the Criterion of right and wrong, true and untrue. Therefore if Muslim Unity is to become a reality, there should be a proper and adequate knowledge of the Qur'an and Hadith present in the community. A community which is not properly informed of the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, or is only barely conversant with

them can hardly be expected to be a united community.

Knowledge of the Qur'an and Hadith means a satisfactory grasp over major Islamic teachings, as well as a basic understanding and appreciation of the underlying spirit and nature of those teachings.

For example, it is not enough to repeat in a mechanical and parrot-like fashion the well-known formula: "God is One". It is also important to understand fully the implications of such an assertion, and their relevance, to one's own life.

Further, is the Qur'an just a book to be reverently recited on auspicious occasions, and put aside for the rest of one's life; or is it also necessary to know, understand and believe that this book was given by God to man as a comprehensive guide and solution for all his problems?

So also the Prophet. May Allah shower his blessings upon him forever and ever, - is he just to be respected, and paid homage to, at the time of his birth or death, or to be taken, in all seriousness and faithfulness, to be a complete and living model for all human beings for all times to come? Was he just a voice in the wilderness, or a man with a great and revolutionary message? Above all did he confine himself to the mere preaching of pious truths or did he show himself to be a practical man and a dynamic Leader who almost overnight changed the burning, barbaric desert of vice, wickedness, idolatry and mutual strife into a paradise of peace, virtue, unity and prosperity? Proper Islamic knowledge will mean a proper understanding of the dynamics as well as the mechanics of this most amazing phenomenon in human history.

Proper Islamic knowledge will also mean the realisation that we Muslims of today are not just purposeless floaters in the void of time but the rightful inheritors, successors, deputies, representatives and embodiments of the mission of our Prophet and the message of the Holy Qur'an.

Knowledge along these lines is a prerequisite for the proper fear of Allah which is called in the Qur'an by the name of 'Taqwa'.

Allah says, "Only those fear Allah who have proper knowledge" Together, Islamic knowledge and fear of Allah constitute the basis and the foundation for that wonderful and cherished edifice which we call MUSLIM UNITY.

So, in answer to that most unhappy, intriguing, annoying, and yet vital and inevitable question, 'What Divides The Muslims?', our answer is:

- a) lack of proper and adequate Islamic knowledge; and
- b) lack of proper and adequate fear of God among those of us who claim to be Muslims.

When we actively and seriously endeavour to acquire Islamic knowledge and to couple it with the proper fear of Allah we will find that the dream of Muslim Unity is not a mirage but a happy and living reality.

*by S.H. Saqqaf*

## So Said the Prophet

The Prophet was once asked as to who was the best Muslim, to which he replied: "One from whose tongue and hands Muslims are safe."

The best of all deeds is to love something (or someone) for the sake of Allah, and to dislike something (or someone) for His sake.

Avoid Jealousy, because Jealousy eats away virtues in the same way as fire devours the wood.

The best among you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it.

Allah does not look at your faces and your possessions, but rather, at your hearts (motives) and your deeds.

Man grows old, but two things in him remain young: Love of Wealth and Love of Life.

You cannot be a Believer unless your desires (likes and dislikes) become completely subservient to the Message I have brought.

The difference between a Believer and an Unbeliever is the wilful neglect of daily prayers.

One who has no trustworthiness has no Faith (Iman); and one who does not keep promises is not a religious person at all.

Seeking honest livelihood is one's most important duty after fulfilling obligations enjoined by God.

One who does not show gratefulness to people cannot be grateful to Allah.

## Role Of The Muslim Family

'The Muslim Family in North America' was the theme of the 16th Annual Convention of the Muslim Students Association (M.S.A.) of the U. S.A. and Canada held at the University of Indiana from May 26-29, 1978.

The four day convention was attended by over 1500 Muslims from all over North America. About forty overseas guests also attended from as far as China, Brunei, Pakistan, Italy and the Middle East. The Trinidad and Tobago Muslim Youth Organisation was also represented.

The theme of the convention was a very appropriate one because of the fact that the Muslim Family in North America, indeed the Western world, has two major roles to perform. Firstly, it has to withstand the various anti-Islamic forces that want to influence its social and cultural patterns and seek its downfall. Any downfall of the institution of the Muslim family would also mean an eventual de-stabilisation of the Muslim community. Secondly, it is required to prove by deed and word that an organised and peaceful society cannot be built on the ruins of broken homes and that Islamic family laws and principles are the only way to a happy, harmonious and progressive social life.

The theme was analysed under five major perspectives:

- a. Theoretical - Family in Islam - definitions, concepts and boundaries; role and social functions.
- b. Empirical - Situation reports on Muslim families in North America.
- c. Case studies.
- d. Issues and problems - Dilemma of Immigrant Muslim Families and of New Muslim Families. Also the Dilemma of Muslim Youth. Issues of Child Care were also discussed.
- e. Marriage and re-marriage; Divorce, Kinship and Inheritance.
- f. Future - Foundations of Muslim Families; Child Socialisation; Social Welfare and the Future Generation of Muslims.

Two interesting features of the convention were the 'Qur'anic Studies' held after Salaatul Fajr and the 'Fiqh Study Circles'. During the Qur'anic study sessions three

stimulating topics were discussed, viz - Lessons from the Seerah, the Character of the Believer and Imperatives of Brotherhood and Unity. At the Fiqh Study Circles, Islamic law pertaining to Salaah (Prayer), Siyam (Fasting), Zakaah, Hajj and Da'wah were expounded. Wide audience participation was encouraged.

Perhaps, the most important overseas guest was Dr. Hasan Al-Turabi, leader of the Islamic Charter Front, Sudan. His quiet assured gaze, with glistening eyes and an almost permanent smile, betrayed the plight that was his, during his recent long imprisonment. The title of his lecture was 'Islamic perspectives on the family'. He began by defining the Islamic Fiqh .... "There are three factors that go into the make-up of Islamic Laws. First, the political aspect of law - rules of conduct enacted by the sovereign and enforced by the might of the state. Second, the social aspect of law - rules of conduct enforced by the society. Third, rules observed by the Muslim conscience alone - found in the Qur'an and Sunnah, their enforcement is subject to the Muslim conscience. The Muslim sense of gratitude, his love, his fear of God, and his expectation of

Divine mercy help in compliance with these....' He closed by urging the American Muslims to make their contribution towards laws based on Muslim conscience and not those based on the state.

As a Muslim minority living in a hostile un-Islamic atmosphere, it was felt that the future generation of Muslims in North America requires the greatest attention. To this end, some of the major points emerging from the convention were:

1. The acceptance of a child by its parent - demonstrated through love and care on a stable, consistent and continuing basis.
2. The parents should instill in the child a sense of identity and pride as an individual and especially as a member of the Muslim community so that the child is able to cherish his own religious and cultural heritage, as a unique and invaluable possession.

3. The parents' life style should serve as an adequate model for the children to emulate. Since most values and attitudes are acquired by observing and copying the examples set by parents, it is essential that parents should (a) have a clear-cut understanding of the major values to be acquired by the children and (b) be exemplary models of their religious and cultural heritage.

4. The child should be introduced to his cultural and religious history and tradition as soon as he is able to understand and speak simple sentences (usually about three years old).

5. The child should be encouraged to attend the local Mosques or Islamic centres regularly.

6. Failure by children to abide by rules and religious strictures should not be used as a basis for condemnation or for creating feelings of shame and guilt, but as a basis for continual striving to achieve these goals.

7. Parental disciplinary practices should maximise rewards and minimise punishments.

8. The influence of communication media, especially television is enormously powerful in moulding the values and behaviour patterns of children (and adolescents). Parents should, therefore, exercise careful control over the types of programmes that children view, as well as the length of time spent in such activity.

9. The preparation of the Muslim child and youth to defend himself and his culture and heritage against all attacks from within and without.

*Gayaz Rajab*

### Public Address

**Topic: ISLAM, AFRICA & THE WORLD**

*by*

**Mallam S.P. Tayo**

*Muslim Missionary from Africa*

**Venue: Port-of-Spain; City Hall**

**Date: Sun 10th Sept. 1978**

**Time : 7.30 p.m.**

## AWAKENING In The Caribbean

Although the more universal character of Islam was being recognised in the West Indies and the Muslims had begun to emerge from many of the limitations and constrictions of the past century, they needed to work for unity and solidarity transcending ethnic and national boundaries.

This clarion call was given here today by Mr. Abdul Wahid Hamid, a former Director of the Islamic Trust of Trinidad and Tobago, while presenting a paper at the International Seminar on Muslim Communities in non-Muslim States organised at the Heathrow Hotel by the Islamic Council of Europe on behalf of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

Indeed, he said, there had been an increasing awareness of Islam, perhaps amounting to an awakening, in the Caribbean generally. In Trinidad, Guyana, Surinam, Barbados and Jamaica, Islam was slowly and sometimes painfully divesting itself of its "Indian" image with people from various ethnic groups mainly of African descent, but including others as well, "returning" to Islam. And the message was seeping into various other islands, he added.

Mr. Hamid also made some other suggestions for ensuring a better future of Islam in the West Indies. He emphasised the need for reforming and revitalising existing Muslim institutions—mosques, madrasas, primary and secondary schools - and the need for upholding Islamic practices both in relation to personal habits and decorum and to collective practices.

He strongly felt the need for the Muslim community to be "outward looking". In other words, there was a need for determining the basis of Muslim relations with the wider society. This question involved economic and social relationships as well as the nature and extent of participation in the political processes.

The Muslims also needed to address themselves to the human needs of their fellow men, to put the emphasis on people and not on projects as ends in themselves. The Muslim's role in eradicating promiscuity, drunkenness, poverty, illiteracy, among other social evils and promoting "clean living" on the other, had to be vigorously pursued. Muslims needed to be the leading sector for enlightened change in their respective communities and not the symbol of obscurantism and backwardness, he asserted.

Mr. Abdul Wahid Hamid, in his illuminating paper, also emphasised the need for developing new independent and autonomous Muslim institutions — a net-

work of libraries, bookshops, counselling service, training institutes — as a real alternative to state-run and other controlled enterprises. At the same time, he said it was necessary to bring to bear Islamic ideals and norms on the state-run institutions and processes. Alternative institutions need not mean expensive and imposing buildings.

He said by and large it was known what the region needed but the big problem was how to satisfy those needs. The question of strategy was perhaps even more crucial than that of resources.

Although there was no denying the fact that timely and judicious assistance could make the difference between the survival of a fledgling community and its consignment to oblivion, there was need ultimately to create as far as possible a spirit of reliance on indigenous resources.

Also obvious was the necessity for maintaining contact with the rest of the Muslim world for deriving inspiration, knowledge and expertise while at the same time contributing its share of the responsibilities wherever possible.

He opined that there was a dire need to gain a wider and deeper awareness of Islamic beliefs and behaviour in order to carry out both aspects of Islamic injunction — to accentuate the positive and eradicate the negative.

Tracing the historical background to the advent of Islam in the West Indies he said that as in North and South America, the first Muslims were slaves kidnapped by or sold to European slave traders and transported from West Africa to a "New World" of oppression and inhumanity. Millions of slaves were transported over a 300 — year period in what must be "one of the most barbarous and atrocious episodes in human history" he added.

The fact that many of these slaves were Muslims was beyond doubt. Many of them came from predominantly Muslim African "nations" such as the Mandingoes, the Fula, the Susu and the Hausa and there were indications that some of them were distinguished scholars of Islam.

Mr. Hamid dealt at some length with the persecution Muslims were subjected to and observed that the complete elimination of Islam among African slaves had been one of the major "achievements" of European colonialism and Christian missionaries. The process was a stark reminder that Muslim comm-

unities however educated can be totally submerged or eliminated. The events in Kampuchea, Cambodia, may be considered a modern parallel.

He said the "new awakening" that had been in evidence for the last twenty years or so but mainly in the last decade could be ascribed to the rise in the level of Islamic knowledge and awareness in the region due to the efforts of Muslim "missionaries" from the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. Notable among them were Br. Nazir Ahmed Simab who established the first Muslim primary school in Trinidad, Br. Abdul Aleem Siddiqui and Dr. Fazlur Rahman Ansari from Karachi.

Also helpful was the work of the Islamic Missionaries Guild of the Caribbean and South America which through the distinguished efforts of people like M.K. Hossein, Yusuf Mitchell and the assistance of local Muslim philanthropists spread the message of Islam through radio broadcasts, distribution and sale of literature, and the publication of a monthly paper "The Torch of Islam".

Mr. Hamid said that since 1975 the Islamic Trust of Trinidad and Tobago had been concerned with the problems of education and Da'wah, with upgrading the performance of Muslim institutions and organisations and with acting as a cementing force for the entire Muslim Ummah in the region.

Influences from North America had also helped. These had either been from West Indians who accepted Islam while residing or studying in the United States or Canada and returning to the West Indies or from North American organisations which had sought to assist Islamic activities in the Caribbean or established their own branches.

He noted that events in North America often had a deep and immediate effect on the islands of the Caribbean and in the case of "religious movements" the receptiveness of new trends from America was quite marked.

He emphasised that the problem associated with racial polarisation needed to be urgently tackled.

In the current situation, he said, the question of regional Muslim co-operation needed to be highlighted. The Islamic Missionaries Guild of the Caribbean and South America was the pace-setter in this field, and the efforts of those engaged in this nature need to be encouraged and supported.



# MUSLIM MINORITIES

## DECLARATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR

### ON "MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN NON-MUSLIM STATES."

#### WE THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SEMINAR

1. a. Affirming the commitment of Islam to the values of justice, human dignity, tolerance and the inalienable rights of man;

b. Aware of our sense of belonging to the Ummah which transcends geographical, racial and political boundaries;

c. Conscious of our Divinely ordained duty to struggle for the relief of the oppressed of mankind wherever they are;

d. Realising that at no time in history was there a greater need for concerted efforts, individual as well as institutional, in this direction:

#### YET AT THE SAME TIME:

2. a. Regretting the systematic denial of human and civil rights of Muslim communities in some Communist and non-Communist lands;

b. Condemning the recent brutal persecution of Muslims in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Philippines, Thailand, Burma and Cambodia;

c. Viewing with apprehension the inability of the government of India to prevent the widespread incidence of communal strife in the country;

d. Noting with deep anguish the continued violation of the sanctity and the rightful sovereignty of the city of Jerusalem and affirming our commitment to the restoration of the integrity of the Holy City as an integral part of the heritage of Islam:

#### RESOLVE TO:

1. a. Call upon all governments to take effective measures to enforce human rights within their jurisdictions, provide constitutional safeguards and establish socio-political institutions to ensure justice, freedom and equality for all irrespective of race, ethnic origin, religion or culture.

b. Urge all countries where Muslim communities reside to recognise their right to pursue the Islamic way of life and to provide them with the opportunity for the expression of their Islamic identity in all its manifestations.

c. Suggest to the government of India to repeal the provision in the Indian Constitution for a uniform civil code in order to guarantee the inviolability of Muslim Personal Laws.

#### URGE ALL MUSLIM STATES TO:

2. a. Extend full support, with due regard to sovereignty of states, to Muslim communities in non-Muslim states whenever their rights are threatened, or whenever they suffer from discrimination and persecution.

b. Assist Muslim communities in non-Muslim countries in preserving and strengthening their religious-cultural identity by establishing social institutions such as schools, hospitals and orphanages with a view to saving their future generations from alienation and cultural assimilation.

c. Offer scholarships, job-opportunities and training facilities in professional and technical fields to members of Muslim communities in non-Muslim states and arrange a programme of educational and cultural exchange.

d. Give preferential treatment in their immigration laws to Muslim individuals from non-Muslim countries, independent of the policy adopted towards the governments of such individuals.

e. Incorporate into their own educational systems provisions enabling students to be informed about various aspects of the life of Muslim minorities.

f. Aboveall, to speedily accomplish in their own jurisdiction the goal of transforming existing constitutional and legal structures which are a legacy of the colonial past into conformity with the Islamic Shariah.

#### URGE ALL MUSLIM COMMUNITIES TO:

3. a. Make efforts to preserve their Islamic identity, strengthen the fraternal bonds with the Ummah (World Community) and at the same time participate fully in the life of their societies of residence.

b. Make efforts to arrive at an accurate estimate of Muslim populations in their countries and to undertake in-depth sociological studies concerning various aspects of their life.

c. Be financially independent and self-reliant in funding their mosques, religious schools and other Islamic institutions.

#### WE THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SEMINAR FURTHER :

4. a. Call upon the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the Islamic Solidarity Fund and the Islamic Council of Europe to set up a permanent international commission with headquarters in London to monitor the conditions of Muslim minorities and whenever necessary take appropriate measures to deal with any situation of discrimination, injustice and denial of human and civil rights.

b. Urge the above organisations to establish an International Muslim University of Science and Technology that would enable Muslims from all parts of the world and particularly from Muslim communities in non-Muslim states to pursue advanced modern knowledge and research within the framework of Islamic belief and in consonance with the spirit of Islam.

#### FINALLY, WE THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SEMINAR :

1. a. Welcome the declaration by the Secretary General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference concerning the setting up of a 'Department of Muslim Communities in non-Muslim States' at the Secretariat General in Jeddah.

b. We note with satisfaction the offer made by the Chairman of the Islamic Solidarity Fund to extend financial cooperation to projects relating to Muslim minorities of the world, and hope that this support shall be available adequately and soon, in sha Allah.

The most fundamental teaching of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is faith in the unity of God. This is expressed in the primary Kalima of Islam as *La ilaha illallah* "There is no deity but Allah". It is the expression of this belief which differentiates a true Muslim from a *Kafir* (unbeliever), a *Mushrik* (one who associates others with God in His divinity), or a *Dahriya* (atheist). The acceptance or denial of this phrase produces a world of difference between man and man. The believers in it become one single community and those who do not believe in it form the opposite group. For the believers there is unhampered progress and resounding success in this world and in the hereafter, while failure and ignominy are the ultimate lot of those who refuse to believe in it.

But the difference which occurs between the believers and the unbelievers is not the result of mere chanting of a few words. Evidently the mere utterance of a phrase or two cannot bring about such a mighty difference. The real force lies in the conscious acceptance of this doctrine and its stipulations and complete adherence to it in practical life. Unless you know the real meaning of the phrase "*There is no deity but Allah*" and the bearing of its acceptance on human life, you cannot realise the real importance of this doctrine. It would never become effective unless these essentials are achieved. Mere repeating of the word 'food' cannot dull the edge of hunger; mere chanting of a medical prescription cannot heal a disease. In the same way if the Kalima is repeated without any understanding of its meanings and dictates, it cannot work the revolution which it is meant to bring about. The revolution in thought and life can occur only if a person grasps the full meaning of the doctrine, realises its significance, reposes true belief in it. If the real meaning of Tawheed is fully grasped, it should necessarily make us avoid, in belief as well as in action, every form and shade of disbelief, atheism, and polytheism.

#### The Meaning of the 'Kalima'

In the Arabic language the word *ilah* means 'one who is worshipped', i.e. a being which on account of its greatness and power be considered worthy to be worshipped: to be bowed to in humility and submission. Anything or any being possessing power too great to be comprehended by man is also called *ilah*. The conception *ilah* also includes the possession of infinite powers: powers that may astonish others. It also conveys the sense that others are dependent upon *ilah* and that he is not

dependent upon anyone else. The word *ilah* also carries a sense of concealment and mystery, that is, *ilah* would be a being unseen and unperceptible. The word *khuda* in Persian, *deva* in Hindi, and God in English bear, more or less, similar significance. Other languages of the world also contain words with a like sense.

The word Allah, on the other hand, is the essential personal name of God. *La ilaha illallah* would literally mean "There is no *ilah* other than the One Great Being known by the name Allah". It means that in the whole of the universe there is absolutely no being worthy to be worshipped other than Allah, that it is only to Him that heads should bow in submission and adoration, that He is the only Being possessing all powers, that all are in need of His favour, and that all are obliged to solicit His help. He is concealed from our senses, and our intellect fails to perceive what He is.

Having known the meanings of these words, let us now find out their real significance.

From the most ancient history of man as well as from the oldest relics of antiquity that we have been able to obtain, it appears that in every age man had recognised some deity or deities and had worshipped them. Even in the present age every nation on the face of the earth, from the most primitive to the most civilised, does believe in and worship some deity. It shows that the idea of having a deity and of worshipping him is ingrained in human nature. There is something within man's soul which forces him to do so.

But the question is: What that thing is and why man feels impelled to do so? The answer to this question can be discovered if we try to look into the position of man in this huge universe. A perusal of man and his nature from this viewpoint shows that he is not omnipotent. Neither he is self-sufficient and self-existing nor are his powers without limitations. In fact, he is weak, frail, needy, and destitute. He is dependent upon a multitude of forces and without their assistance he cannot make a headway. There are countless things necessary to maintain his existence, but all of them are not essentially and totally within his powers.

Sometimes they come to his possession in a simple and natural way, and at times he finds himself deprived of them. There are many important and valuable things which he endeavours to get, but sometimes he succeeds in getting them, while sometimes he does not, for it is not completely in his own power to

obtain them. There are many things injurious to him; accidents destroy all his life-work in a single moment; chances bring his hopes to a sudden end; disease, worries, or calamities, always threaten him and mar his way to happiness. He attempts to get rid of them, and success and failure both visit him in this quest. There are many things whose greatness and grandeur overawe him: mountains and rivers, gigantic animals and ferocious beasts. He experiences earthquakes, storms, and other natural calamities. He observes clouds over his head and sees them becoming thick and dark, with peals

## THE ONENESS

of thunder, flashes of lightning, and continuous fall of heavy rain. He sees the sun, the moon, and the stars in their constant motions. He reflects how great, powerful and grand these bodies are, and, in contrast to them how frail and insignificant he himself is. The vast phenomena, on the one hand, and the consciousness of his own frailty, on the other, impress him with a deep sense of his own weakness, humbleness, and helplessness. And it is quite natural that the preliminary idea of divinity coincides with this sense. He thinks of those hands which are wielding these great forces. The sense of their greatness makes him bow in humility. The sense of their powerfulness makes him seek their help. He tries to please them so that they may be beneficent to him, and he dreads them and tries to escape their wrath so that he may not be destroyed by them.

In the most primitive stage of ignorance, man thinks that the great objects of nature whose grandeur and glory are visible, and which appear to be injurious or beneficent to him, hold in themselves the real power and authority, and, therefore, they are divine. Thus he worships trees, animals, rivers, mountains, fire, rain, air, heavenly bodies, and numerous other objects. This is the worst form of ignorance.

When his ignorance dissipates to some extent and some glimmers of light and knowledge appear on his intellectual horizon, he comes to know that these great and powerful objects are in themselves quite helpless and dependent and are in no way better placed than man—

rather they are still more dependent and helpless.

After consideration his mind turns to the possibility of some great mysterious power of divine nature which controls the objects he sees and which may be the repositories of all authority.

These reflections give rise to belief in mysterious powers behind the natural phenomena, numberless gods are supposed to be governing various parts and aspects of nature such as air, light, water, etc., and some suggestive material forms or symbols are constructed to represent them. And he begins to worship

## SS OF GOD

those forms and symbols. This too is a form of ignorance, and reality remains hidden to the human eye even at this stage of intellectual and cultural pilgrimage.

As man progresses in knowledge and learning, and as he reflects on the fundamental problems of life, he finds an all-powerful law and all-encompassing control in the universe. What a complete regularity is observed in sunrise and sunset, in winds and rains, in the motions of stars and the changes of seasons! How in a wonderfully harmonious way countless different forces are working jointly, and what a highly potent and supremely Wise Law it is, according to which all the various causes in the universe are made to work together at an appointed time to produce an appointed event! Observing this uniformity, regularity and complete obedience to a firm law in all fields of Nature, even a polytheist finds himself obliged to believe that there must be a deity greater than all others, exercising supreme authority. For, if there were separate, independent deities, the whole machinery of the universe would be upset. He calls this greatest deity by different names, such as 'Allah', 'Permishwar', 'God' etc. But as the darkness of ignorance still persists, he continues worshipping minor deities along with the Supreme One. He imagines that the Divine Kingdom of God may not be different from earthly kingdoms. Just as a ruler has many ministers, trusted associates, governors, and other responsible officers, so the minor deities are like so many responsible officers under the Great God Who could not be

approached without pleasing and propitiating the officers under Him. So they must also be worshipped and appealed to for help, and should in no case be offended. Thus they are taken as agents through whom an approach can be made to the Great God.

The more a man increases in knowledge, the greater becomes his dissatisfaction with the multiplicity of deities. So the number of minor deities begins to decrease. More enlightened men bring each one of them under the searchlight of scrutiny and ultimately find that none of these man-made deities has any divine character; they themselves are creatures like man, rather more helpless. They are thus dropped out one by one until only one God remains. But the concept of one God still contains some remnants of the elements of ignorance. Some people imagine that He has a body as men have, and is settled in a particular place. Some believe that God came down to the earth in human form; others think that God after settling the affairs of the universe has retired and is now taking rest. Some believe that it is necessary to approach God through the media of saints and spirits, and nothing can be achieved without their intercession. Some imagine God to have a certain form or image, and they regard it necessary to keep that image before them for the purposes of worship. Such distorted notions of godhead have persisted and lingered, and many of them are prevalent among different people even in the present age.

*Tawheed* is the highest conception of godhead, the knowledge of which God has sent to mankind in all ages through His Prophets. It was this knowledge with which, in the beginning, Adam had been sent down to the earth; it was the same knowledge that had been revealed to Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus (God's blessings be upon them all). It was this very knowledge which Muhammad (God's blessings be upon him) brought to mankind. Man became guilty of *shirk* (idol-worship) and *kufur*, (disbelief) only because he turned away from the teachings of the Prophets and depended upon his own faulty reasoning, or biased interpretations. *Tawheed* dispels all the clouds of ignorance and illumines the horizon with the light of reality. Let us see what significant realities this concept of *Tawheed*—this little phrase: '*la ilaha illallah*'—points out: what truth it conveys and what beliefs it fosters. This we can grasp if we ponder over the following points:

First of all, we are faced with the question of the universe. We are face to face with a grand, limitless universe.

Man's mind fails to discern its beginning and visualise its end. It is moving on its chartered course from time immemorial and is continuing its journey in the vast vista of the future. Creatures beyond number have appeared in it—and go on appearing every day. The phenomena are so bewildering that a thinking mind finds itself aghast and wonderstruck. Man is unable to understand and grasp the reality by his unaided vision. He cannot believe that all this has appeared just by chance or accident.

The universe is not a fortuitous mass of matter. It is not a jumble of unco-ordinated objects. It is not a conglomeration of things chaotic and meaningless. All this cannot be without a Creator, a Designer, a Controller, a Governor. But who can create and control this majestic universe? Only He can do so. Who is all-powerful, all-wise, omnipotent, and omniscient; Who is all-knowing and all-seeing. He must have supreme authority over all that exists in the universe. He must possess limitless powers, must be the lord of the universe and all that it contains, must be free from every flaw and weakness and none may have the power to interfere with His work. Only such a Being can be the Creator, the Controller and the Governor of the universe.

Secondly, it is essential that all these divine attributes and powers must vest in One Being—it is virtually impossible for two or more personalities having all the powers and attributes equally to co-exist. They are bound to collide. Therefore, there must be one and only one supreme Being having control over all others. You cannot think of two governors for the same province or two supreme commanders of the same army. Similarly, the distribution of these powers among different deities, for instance, that one of them is all knowledge, the other all providence and still another life-giver—and each having independent domain in his own field—is also unthinkable. The universe is an indivisible whole and each one of such deities will be dependent upon others in the execution of his task. Lack of co-ordination is bound to occur. And if this happens, the world is destined to go to pieces.

These attributes are also untransferable. It is not possible that a certain attribute might be present in a certain deity at one time and at another time it be found in another deity. A divine being who is incapable of remaining alive himself cannot give life to others. The one who cannot protect his own divine power is definitely unsuited to govern the vast

*Continued on page 8*



limitless universe. Thus the greater you reflect upon the problem, the firmer would be your conviction that all these divine powers and attributes must exist in one and the same Being alone. Thus polytheism is a form of ignorance and cannot stand rational scrutiny. The facts of life and nature do not fit into that explanation. They automatically bring man to Reality, i.e. Tahweed (the Unity of God).

Now keeping in view this perfect conception of God, cast a glance at this universe. Exert yourself to the utmost and say if you find among all the objects that you see, among all the things that you perceive, among all that you can think, feel, or imagine, anyone possessing these attributes

Certainly none! For everything in the universe is created, is controlled and regulated, is mortal and transitory, its slightest movements are controlled by an inexorable law and it cannot deviate from that law. Their helpless condition proves that the attire of divinity cannot fit their body. They do not possess the slightest trace of divinity and have absolutely nothing to do with it

It is a travesty of truth to attribute to them the divine status. This is the meaning of 'La ilaha,' i.e. there is no God; no human and material object possesses the divine power and authority deserving worship and obedience.

Divinity does not vest in any material or human element of the universe, and that none of them possesses even the slightest trace of it. This very inquiry leads us to the conclusion that there is a Supreme Being, Who possesses the Divine attributes, Who is the Will behind all phenomena, the Creator of this grand universe, the Controller of its superb law, the Governor of its serene rhythm, the Administrator of all its workings: He is Allah, the Lord of the Universe and has none as associate in His Divinity. This is what "illallah" (but Allah) means

This knowledge is superior to all other kinds of knowledge and the greater you exert, the deeper will be your conviction that this is the starting-point of all knowledge. In every field of inquiry—may it be that of physics, chemistry, astronomy, geology, biology, zoology, economics, politics, sociology, or humanities, you will find that the deeper you probe, the clearer become the indications of the truth of La ilaha illallah, in every field of knowledge and inquiry. It is this concept which opens up the doors of inquiry and investigation and illumines the pathways of knowledge with the light of reality. And if you deny or disregard this reality,

## The First Woman Martyr

The struggle between truth and falsehood, light and darkness is a phenomenon both in the realm of nature and human life. Inasmuch as Islam is only another name for the eternal truth of man's need to submit to Allah, it inevitably meets resistance at the hands of the evil forces of the world. This is true today; it was true at the inception of Islam. Therefore, those who accepted its call at the inception were bound to run afoul of the establishment. It is precisely at that point that Muslims had to stand up and fight untruth even at the risk of loss of life. And they indeed did. One such example was that of Syeda Sumayya who, after embracing Islam, fought untruth till the very last of her breath. She is the first woman martyr in the history of Islam.

Born a slave, Sumayya lived like a slave. She had no idea what freedom meant or what it felt like. She lived to obey and serve her master. But Sumayya was not only a slave, she was a woman also, two facts which condemned her to a life of perpetual servitude. Living to please her master, she never realized that her unquestioning obedience to him was actually an affirmation that she herself was less than a human being.

Sumayya was given in marriage to a vagrant from Yemen. His name was Yasar. The marriage favored to be a very significant event in her life. For Yasar, although a Yemeni, stayed on in Mecca where he had come in search of his missing brother.

It was at about this time that Muhammad, peace be upon him, was called upon by Allah to preach His word to all Mankind and to give the good tidings that both men and women will be judged by their deeds, and not by the riches they possessed or by the race to which they belonged.

Among the first who heard this message were Sumayya and Yasar and, in due course, they accepted Islam. Sumayya thus became the second Muslim woman, the first being Khadija.

Trained in the Islamic way of life Sumayya was ready to face the whole world with courage and integrity. Furthermore as a Muslima she was determined to fight

untruth in every form and shape.

Meanwhile, the Quraysh, still refusing to see the right, had embarked upon a campaign to squelch Islam in its very infancy. They harassed and tortured all those who showed any inclination to accept Islam. At first their leader, Abu Jahl was friendly to Sumayya and Yasar. He tried to wean them away from their new way of thought and belief. But he failed in this.

Abu Jahl was especially mad at Sumayya. Here was a slave and for that matter, for him, a mere woman. How dare she defy him and follow Muhammad? Frustration turning into anger, he had Sumayya and her family tortured in all conceivable varieties of cruelty. But Sumayya remained steadfast, refusing to deny that Allah was One and only One and that Muhammad was His last prophet.

The torture of Sumayya continued—dragged over the burning sand and pierced with the pointed tips of javelins, she began to lose consciousness. La ilaha ilallah... on her lips, she died the first Muslima Martyr of the World of Islam.

Sumayya is no more there; but her example is there to inspire every Muslim and every Muslima. She lives in our thoughts today because she refused to make compromises with untruth.

—Sr. Shahin Takatabai

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you will find that at every step, you meet disillusionment, for the denial of this primary truth robs everything in the universe of its real meaning and true significance. The universe becomes meaningless and the vistas of progress get blurred and confused.

Source: Towards Understanding Islam,  
Abul A'la Maududi



Brother Hisham Badran, a Jordanian now residing in Toronto, Canada, visited Trinidad and Tobago recently to conduct a Muslim Youth Camp. The following is an interview with him concerning his visit.

*Q. Br, Badran, you have recently conducted an eight-day Muslim Youth Camp at Balandra, Trinidad. As the Camp Director and as an international camper for twenty-nine years, what are your impressions of the last camp?*

*A. The camp was organised in a very short time. The facilities at the camp-site were inadequate. It was difficult for the campers to cope with them but it was not impossible, in fact, it is a part of the training to face these difficulties and solve them. Many people who were not informed about the camp blamed the Camp Committee but it was not to be blamed because everything was done in a very short time. In three days about one hundred and fifty campers were registered. In Canada and the United States, campers need to be informed over six months ahead of the camp in order to participate. Also the camp is reserved about eleven months before the time comes. This is the major difference between camps abroad and camps here.*

*Q. We understand that plans are afoot for another Muslim Youth Camp sometime in the near future. Do you wish to inform us about it and can you tell us about your involvement in future camps in Trinidad?*

*A. Insha Allah the next camp will be held within the last ten days of December at Chaguaramas. We are trying to accommodate 300 to 350 campers. I am optimistic about the next camp because we have an organized camp committee with fourteen sub-committees. The members of these committees have all been trained in the past so they know what to do. Also, the campers have at least three and a half months to be equipped and ready for the camp. I hope that the next camp will be better than all the other camps. Also, before the camp there will be a training session for staff members and counsellors for about four to six days. This would enable the staff and counsellors to conduct the camp properly and to take care of those campers who are coming for the first time.*

*Q. Do you envisage any changes in future camps?*

*A. Yes, but not if camps were held every five years. I remember the last camp at Balandra was held in 1972 and the one after that in 1977/1978, which was about five to six years after.*

## CHALLENGE TO YOUTH

The campers who were there in 1972 almost forgot what camping is. They never came back. Some of them got married and some of them came but they did not follow the camping system. For the future I think we have to keep in touch with campers to ensure continuity in training. I suggest, if possible, to hold two camps a year to train campers so that they do not forget what they have learnt.

*Q. How effective is the camp in creating an Islamic awareness in the minds of the Youths?*

*A. I say that it is the most effective way. I tried training youths in mosques, schools, clubs and by giving them lectures at different places. They listen, but they forget within a few days. In the camp they listen and practise. They put everything into action. Psychologists say that one usually remembers twenty percent of what he hears, thirty percent of what he sees but ninety percent of what he does. That's why in the camp we emphasize action more than anything else. Our slogan at the end of the last day of the camp was 'take the camp with you' which means that you should take the system, the attitude and the behaviour of the camp wherever you go. The camp does not stop at the end of the last day but it goes to the schools, and streets, and the mosques. Wherever campers go they feel that the spirit of the camp is with them and many continue to fulfil what they had started at the camp.*

*Q. In general, what do you see as the role of the Muslim Youth in Trinidad and Tobago?*

*A. It is a big burden, and a responsibility that they should carry. However, if you don't have a follow-up committee after the camp, if you don't have some leaders who understand what the camp is, all efforts would evaporate.*

The youth has a major role to play in Trinidad; in the Muslim world; in the whole world. Many leaders whether Muslims or non-Muslims in the past and in this contemporary world concentrated their efforts on the youth. If you train the youth from now you would have a very constructive generation within twenty to thirty years. Insha Allah.

The role of the youth in Trinidad is very important and very significant but we cannot depend on hope alone. We have to work towards our goal in order that our youth carry the responsibility as it should be carried.

*Q. From your visits to several mosques in Trinidad and Tobago, what are your*

*impressions of the local Muslim Community?*

*A. I have to say two things about that.*

When you go to the Mosque — any Mosque in Trinidad, like in any Mosque in the world, you find that only a quarter of the Mosque is occupied. Of that quarter the majority is old people and I see the youth in the minority.

Besides that, the sad thing I have seen is that the last line is always occupied by children and young teenagers. After visiting twenty-six Mosques in Trinidad I noticed that the young boys were always at the back and most of them were not praying. The majority of them was kicking one another, laughing, and throwing their hats here and there. No doubt the first saff (line) should be for men, the second saff for boys and the third saff for women, that was at the time of the prophet when everybody knew how to pray and everybody was trained to behave properly.

I suggest that boys be placed between the men in the first saff for a few days but not for always. When we train them and they know how to behave then we put them at the back.

I saw a Mosque, a big Mosque, where I counted ninety-five children praying at the back. Their ages ranged from seven to fifteen years, which means that those who were fifteen were praying for seven to eight years but they still didn't know how to pray. Whose fault is it? For seven to eight years they were neglected in the back.

It is improper for adults, to pray in the first saff putting their heads in the sand as the ostrich does. They shouldn't be selfish. They have to think about those behind them. Train the boys, and after they are trained and know how to pray, then put them in the back.

*Q. In general, how can some of the problems you have seen be alleviated?*

- A.*
- 1) Teach youth, without neglecting the adults, but the main emphasis should be on the youth.
  - 2) Avoid controversy and discussing minor things.
  - 3) Emphasize Fard (obligatory) more than Sunnah and Nafl (optional).
  - 4) Tolerate one another when we do optional things in Prayer. If I pray covering my head or bare-headed, whether I pray putting my hands across my stomach or leaving

## The Remembrance Of God

Imam Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah summarises in his book *Zad al-Maad* the guidance of Muhammad (peace be upon him) concerning the remembrance of Allah; "The Prophet, peace be on him, was the most perfect man in the remembrance of Allah, glorified be He. Indeed whatever he spoke was in the line of such remembrance. His commands, prohibitions, legislations; his communication concerning the Lord and His attributes, judgements, actions, promises and threats were all part of this remembrance. So were his praise and glorifications of the Lord, his prayers to Him, his fears and hopes of Him as well as his quietness and silence. So he was conscious of Allah at all times and in every state.

"When he wakes up he says, 'Praise be to Allah Who has given us life after He had caused us to die. To Him we shall be resurrected'. Aishah said that the Prophet used to say when he woke up at night, 'Allah is the greatest', and would repeat it ten times. Then he would repeat ten times the statement, 'There is no god but Allah' and pray, 'My Lord, I seek refuge with You from the strictures of this life and those of the day of Resurrection,' ten times. Then he would start his Salaah. Aishah also said that when the Prophet used to wake up at night for his devotion he would say, 'There is no god but You, my Lord. Praised be You. I beseech You to forgive my sins and appeal to You for mercy. My Lord, enrich my knowledge and cause not my heart to go astray after You have granted me Your guidance. Grant me Your mercy, for You are the best Giver.' (transmitted by Abu Dawud). "And the Messenger has conveyed to us that whoever gets up at night and says, 'There is no god but Allah alone; He has no partner; to Him belongs the Sovereignty and praise; He is able to do everything; All grace is His; Glorified be He; There is no deity but Allah; Allah is the greatest; No power can operate without His permission; He is the Great, the Supreme,' and after this says, 'My Lord, forgive me' or any other prayer he

will be answered. Should he have ablutions and offer prayer, it will be accepted."

Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, related that when he woke up at night to worship he used to say, 'My God, the Lord of Jibril, Mikhael and Israfeel, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, Who knows what is hidden and what is open. You judge amongst Your servants concerning what they dispute about. Guide me, with Your own will, to the right when they dispute, for You guide whoever You will to the path which is the straightest.'

After offering witr, the Messenger, peace be on him, used to repeat three times, "Glorified be Allah, the Holy One." When he went out of his house he would say, "In the name of Allah, I depend on Allah. My Lord, I appeal to You to guard me against going astray or causing anyone to go astray, and against any slip, and being unjust to anyone or being victim to any injustice by others, and against acting ignorantly, or being ignorantly done by."

The Messenger, peace be on him, said, "Whenever any of you come to the mosque, let him pray and ask peace for the Prophet and say, 'My Lord, open to me the doors of Your mercy.' When he leaves the mosque let him say, 'My Lord I pray You to give me out of Your grace.' It is also related that when the Prophet entered the mosque he would ask peace for Muhammad (himself) and his household, then he would say, 'My Lord, forgive my sins and open the doors of Your grace.'" After offering the dawn prayers, the Messenger used to stay at his praying place until sunrise, utilising his time in the remembrance of Allah, glorified be He. In the morning he would say, "Our Lord, we have come to this morning by Your will, and we also come to our evening by Your will. We live and die by Your will. And unto You is the Resurrection." He used to say also, "We have come to this morning and the sovereignty belongs to Allah, praised be He; There is no god but Allah alone; He has no partner, to Him belong all the universe and all praise; He is the Almighty, Able to do what He wills. My Lord I pray to You to give the good of this day and the good of the days to come. I seek refuge with You against the evil of this day and the days to come. My Lord, I seek Your refuge against the laziness and the evils of old age, and against suffering in hell and suffering in the grave." In the evening he would say the same prayer substituting evening for morning (Muslim)

Once Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, said to the Messenger, "Teach me some prayers to say in the morning and in the evening." The Messenger told me to say the following prayer, "My Lord, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, the Knower of what is perceptible and imperceptible, the Lord and Possessor of all, I state that there is no god but You. I seek your refuge against doing myself any harm or causing harm to any Muslim." The Messenger told Abu Bakr to say this prayer in the morning, evening and on going to bed.

When the Messenger, peace be on him, had a new garment, he would mention its name (whether a shirt, a gown or a turban) and say, "My Lord, praise be to You. You have given me this. I beg You to give me its good and the good it was made for. And I pray to You to rid me of its evil it was made for."

The Messenger, peace be on him, is reported to have been in the habit of saying the following prayer when he returned home, "Praise be to Allah Who has given me this shelter and what is sufficient for me; and praise be to Allah Who has given me food and drink, and praise be to Allah Who has given me much (of His generosity). I beg You to extend Your protection to me against hell."

It is confirmed in the two authentic books of the Messenger's Traditions that when he entered the toilet he used to say, "My Lord, I pray You to rid me of evil things." When he left he used to say when leaving the toilet, "Praise be to Allah Who has ridden me of harm and given me good health."

(Ibn Majah).

It is also confirmed that he once put his hand in the water container and said to his companions, "Have ablutions in the name of Allah." When he saw the new moon he used to say, "My Lord, let it come to use with security and faith, safety and submission to You. New moon, Allah is my Lord and Your Lord." (Transmitted by al-Tirmidhi).

When he started eating, he used to say, "In the name of Allah." He also said, "When any of you eats let him mention the name of Allah. If he forgets to do so let him say (when he remembers), 'In the name of Allah, at the beginning and at the end.'"

Thus was the entire life of the Messenger of Allah. In its minute details it was conditioned by this Divine instruction which he received at the very first moment of his message. This instruction helped his concept of faith to be established on the true and genuine basis

them at my side, whether I make Tarawih 8, 20 or 36 raka'ah as the Prophet did, all are fine.

I should not really emphasize that everybody should pray the way I do, especially when it comes to Sunnah and Nafl. We have to tolerate all these things and to be occupied always, by fulfilling the Fard. If every Muslim fulfils his Fard we would be in good shape.



## Need To Consult

One would have thought that, as a result of the resignation of the members of the Nur-e-Islam Mosque Board headed by Health Minister Kamaluddin Mohammed, the Imam and Trustees of the Mosque would have begun consulting the members of the Jamaat (congregation) in order to appoint committed Muslims from among them to administer the affairs of the mosque. Unfortunately the Imam and some of the Trustees have joined forces with a few selected brothers in administering the very important affairs of the Muslims of the Jamaat and, as a result, have deliberately disregarded the cherished Islamic principle of Mutual Consultation.

"Those who hearken to their Lord, and establish regular prayer; who conduct their affairs by Mutual Consultation; who spend out of what We bestow on them for sustenance." Qur'an 42: 38.

This shabby and un-Islamic treatment meted out towards the members of the Jamaat and favouritism shown towards a few selected brothers by the Imam and Trustees have left the Jamaat in disarray and the situation, as it stands now, have unearthed many important and unanswered questions.

Couldn't the Trustees dismiss the Mosque Board which they appointed without consulting the Jamaat? Was it imperative that members of the Jamaat be made to sign a petition asking the Trustees to dismiss the Mosque Board?

Can the Imam, Trustees and a few specially selected brothers continue to dictate and treat with contempt a Jamaat whose members signed to remove the members of the Mosque Board?

Who are the people appointed to collect Zakaah, Sadqatul Fitr and other funds? Can we be sure that these funds are properly accounted for and a detailed report given to the Jamaat?

We shouldn't think that the Jamaat consists of these few people only whose secret maneuverings have resulted in an uneasy calm and discrimination.

One finds it extremely difficult to imagine these conditions existing in a place where certain brothers pound their chests and boast of Islamic Education being given. This is a farce and everyone knows that the defeatist type of limited knowledge being imparted to Muslims can in no way prepare them to help guide the Community.

Over the years, Muslims in this country were deprived of proper Islamic Education in the Mosques because many of the Muslim leaders feared that their positions of leadership would be threatened if Muslims were educated.

The Nur-e-Islam Mosque members have been denied the type of education that would have really made them vibrant and progressive.

One wonders that if the Imam is unavailable for some reason or the other who will be appointed and what criterion will be used in appointing someone to replace him.

The time has come when Muslims, not only from the Nur-e-Islam Mosque, but throughout the Country, stop behaving like ostriches and fight the ignorance, indifference and all the un-Islamic activities that are being carried on against them. They should not allow anyone to use Islam as a front and deprive them of their basic Islamic rights.

It is imperative that Imams, in Consultation with the Muslims in their Jamaats, make every effort in solving the problems that beset them, for on the Day of Judgement, they will be questioned as to how they handled their flock. We pray that the Almighty Allah, in His infinite Wisdom and Mercy, guide and forgive us.

## Ahmadiyya Propaganda

In the July 1978 issue of THE CALL, Journal of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-i-Islam, Trinidad & Tobago Incorporated, and Guyana, there appeared an interview with S.P. Tayo entitled "Questions by brother Muhammad Amin answered." This interview carried several favourable comments on the Ahmadiyya Movement and its founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. The contents of that article came as a complete surprise to the acquaintances of Mallam Tayo as they had been made to understand that he had severed all connections with Ahmadiyyism.

Only when Mallam Tayo was approached about the article did the truth emerge. It turned out that in July 1978 Mallam Tayo and the local Ahmadiyya missionary were discussing the contents of the former's pamphlet "Emergence of the Ahmadiyya Movement in West Africa" in which the Ahmadiyya Movement was exposed as a non-Muslim organisation. After the Ahmadiyya missionary failed to convince Tayo to change his views on Ahmadiyyism, he left with a threat to make use of one of Mallam Tayo's old articles which was in his possession since 1972.

The missionary carried out his threat the result of which was the afore-mentioned article which appeared in the July issue of The Call. This incident illustrates quite clearly the

## COMMENT

treacherous activities of the Ahmadiyya Movement in trying to discredit Mallam Tayo and Muslims in general. All Muslims must be aware of this menace in our society and should try their utmost to wipe it out. "It is He Who has sent His Apostle with Guidance and the Religion of Truth, that he may proclaim it over all religions, even though the Pagans may detest (it)" (Qur'an 61:7).

## Conference Decisions

The 12th Annual Conference of the Islamic Missionaries Guild of the Caribbean and South America (I.M.G.) was held at Chaguaramas from July 23 - 30, 1978. The conference was attended by seven delegates from the region. Guest Speaker was Dr. Ahmad Totonji representing the World Assembly of Muslim Youth.

The major decisions taken at the Conference were:

- To intensify efforts for the release of a parcel of land by Government for the construction of an Islamic Cultural Centre.
- To establish a permanent Islamic Secretariat in Port of Spain, Trinidad, to serve the Caribbean and South America.
- To delegate responsibility of administering the Secretariat to nine members of the Board of Directors who are Nationals of Trinidad and Tobago, and to assign to each of them a specific port-folio on a regional basis.
- To re-activate the Temporary Centre at Mucurapo Road, Port of Spain, for use as a temporary Secretariat and to provide essential staff, office equipment and facilities.
- To import Islamic books and supplies for sale and distribution in the entire region.
- To provide the Universities in the region and active Islamic groups with essential Islamic books and literature.
- To establish a Muslim Marriage Bureau and Baitul Maal.

The I.M.G. has recently restructured its Board of Directors consisting of thirteen members - nine local Directors and four foreign. Of the nine local Directors, four are from the present I.M.G.; four from the Islamic Workers Council (I.W.C.) and one independent.

The I.W.C. which was formed after a split in the Anjuman Sunnat-ul-Jam'at Association (ASJA) has decided to affiliate itself with the I.M.G. The latter was also formed as an independent organisation by former members of ASJA some years ago. Ibrahim Ali Mohammed, Chairman of the I.W.C. has been appointed as President - General of the I.M.G.



# ARISE O PEOPLE!

My first allegiance to a nation is to that of Islam, which is universal and is based on faith, not on geographical boundaries. And my first allegiance to a race is to the human race because like all human beings I came from the same one source and my roots are in the earth. Any special feeling to one's own race should not be allowed to cloud the real issue, and the real issue is righteousness. The Creator and Supreme Judge does not look to our country, or the texture of our hair, or the colour of our skins, or our social status; but He looks at our deeds. He knows the contents of our hearts and our most secret thoughts. These have no country, colour or race. Rather they are either righteous or evil.

Most people of Trinidad are denied the widest realms of consciousness because they limit themselves as human beings to a narrow view of existence in which they use very little of their potential as human beings. This is partly due to a deliberate, worldwide and organised conspiracy to deny humanity the chance to exploit their true potential. Its agents operate in very subtle ways that can only be perceived by the keenest of minds and overcome by the strongest of hearts and it is partly due to the disinclination of the people to struggle, to be serious and to stand up for truth and justice. When you get right down to it, power is in the hands of the people and nothing can be imposed on the people unless they allow it. If they don't want something imposed on them they could fight it to victory or death if necessary. For example, if the people don't want alcohol manufactured on a national scale they could stop it. If the people don't want illicit sex practised so rampant in the society they could stop it. Well, why don't we the people stop it? Should the people love these things? Everyone hopes to win the lottery but how many are the men who go home crawling like worms to hungry families after having lost their salary. And of course 'a beer is a Carib'. The same alcohol which puts man against man, drivers in graves and wheelchairs, and human beings without control of their faculties etc. And the man who can't seduce a 'chick' in the fete when the weekend comes, 'ain't heavy at all' but the same 'heavy' man who gets the 'chick' pregnant crosses to the other side of the road with his head bent

down when he sees her coming. Are these things good for the people to love then? No! Well, why don't we the people stop all the evils in the society?

Maybe its because the majority of people have been persuaded or have persuaded themselves to strive to develop 'happy go lucky' personalities that like wine, sex and songs, Christmas, Carnival and Cricket etc. To adopt a way of life that lacks discipline and direction; To sway through life like leaves in the strong wind, with no goal but to look forward to the next holiday full of lust for getting as much pleasure as possible out of the next few seconds of life, before death comes and ends it all, because "when you dead you done". For the majority of the people, slavery has never really ceased. The physical chains have been replaced by more subtle ones.

If a human being tries to eat, drink and have sex as much as he can he'll meet with vanity. This will place him lower than the level of animals. This obviously is not the purpose of existence of the human being. He should deal with these things in moderation and this calls for self-discipline. To be successful, a man has to have control over his faculties. He has to struggle against himself until he is captain of his boat. If he allows a successful mutiny on board then he'll sink to the position of being at the beck and call of his own desires. Then he is far from the position in which he was created. Human beings are created in the highest of statures, then they are reduced

to the lowest of the low when they don't believe in their Creator and do righteousness. This is the call of Islam. This is the call of the Prophets. This is the call of Revelation. It is a call to belief and to virtue. A call to man to take up his true goal in life — to attain the pleasure of his Creator and final salvation in the hereafter — by worshipping Him in every sphere of human activity. A call to man to take up the struggle of this life on earth — the trial ground to be righteous in the face of the temptation to do evil. It is a call to those people who intend to be serious and disciplined in accordance with that perfect and natural law which the Creator has prescribed for man to live by; the law for human beings like you and I and not Superhumans nor fantastic inventions like 'the Son of God'. It is a system of life that is without hardship for those who are humble and sincere because it is natural.

And if this is the basis of our love and of brotherhood then we the people can stop any evil. Furthermore we can establish righteousness in the land. But there is no progress in life without struggle. And the first and greatest struggle is for the conquest of the self. That's where the people must start — with themselves.

*"Allah does not change the condition of a people until they first change that which is within themselves".*  
Qur'an (13:11)

Muhammad Luqman Abdul Latif

## KNOW YOUR ARABIC

### READING AND WRITING THE SCRIPT

Organised by The Islamic Missionaries Guild and The Islamic Workers Council in collaboration with The Islamic Trust

DAYS : Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays. TIME : 7 pm — 9 pm.

VENUES : Montrose Masjid :— September 11 — October 20.

Tacarigua — Five Rivers Muslim School (Tentative) Sept 11 — Oct 20

Real Street Masjid — Oct 30 — Dec 8

Arima Masjid — Oct 30 — Dec 8

The course fee is \$5.00 which includes texts and learning aids.

### ARABIC LANGUAGE COURSE

Organised by the  
ISLAMIC TRUST

DURATION : 6 months COMMENCEMENT : Friday Sept. 15

TIME : 7 pm — 9 pm

VENUE : The Islamic Trust, Pundit Street, El Socorro Road, San Juan.