

# THE MUSLIM STANDARD

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## DRASTIC CHANGES IN LIFE-STYLE NEEDED

FORTY THREE per cent of births in Trinidad and Tobago in 1973 were illegitimate according to the latest Report (Population and Vital Statistics 1973) from the Central Statistical Office. This is higher than the 1972 figure by 0.3%.

Other data show that out of 590,998 live births in the last twenty years (1954 - 1973), just over 260,000 were illegitimate—an average of about 44%. The average for the previous twenty years (1934 - 1953) was 61.4% illegitimate.

The figures point to a very, very disturbing situation. And what is even more disturbing is that the problem of illegitimacy as such is not generally recognised as a problem and all sections of the community from the leadership down contribute to it.

There have been some recent measures and proposals to deal with the situation but these mainly concern the manifestations of the problem. The call to end any discrimination against the illegitimate child and its mother, to grant maternity leave to unmarried mothers at work, and even to legalize common law unions—all show a desire to wish away the problem without tackling it from the root.

Contraceptives being offered by the Ministry of Health both to the married and the unmarried are meant to deal with population control and cannot affect the rate of illegitimacy. If anything, by encouraging promiscuity, government policy contributes to the problem.

We are at a stage where we just cannot continue to blame the immoral mess of the nation on historical factors—slavery etc.—and carry on with mindless ease destroying individual lives and the fabric of our society. For, illegitimacy does place heavy burdens on the illegitimate child and on his mother. It destroys families. It contributes to delinquency and crime and places undue stresses on national resources.

We need to reverse this disastrous trend and nothing short of a revolution in the life style of the nation would do the trick. Some of the things we would need to do are;

- emphasize marriage as the ONLY framework for sexual relationships;
- condemn altogether pre-marital and extra-marital relationships—from the apparently casual holding of hands, to kissing and cohabitation; fornication and adultery are crimes
- re-organise our social and educational institutions to minimize the indiscriminate mixing between the sexes. This would involve an end to such things as mixed secondary schools, some of the movies that are imported and Carnival as it is celebrated;
- revolutionise our dress (to cover, not expose bodies) and entertainment habits—from the type of music and songs we compose and listen to and the drinking sessions that are all too common;
- create (and this is most important of all) an awareness of life as a trust and a responsibility, in which we would resolve to do no injustice to our own souls and to others, including the generations as yet unborn.

**MORE  
THAN  
HALF**

**THE NATION**

**ILLEGITIMATE**

Year(s)	Live Births	Illegitimate	%
1934 - 1953	386,104	237,068	61.4
1954 - 1973	590,998	260,040	44.0
1971	26,116		41.7
1972	28,049		42.7
1973	26,231		43.0

Total Population 1973 - 1,061,850



## PLIGHT OF PHILIPPINO MUSLIMS

For some years now, attention has been focussed on the plight of over 3 million Philippino Muslims. Since 1971, Islamic countries and Islamic groups have discussed the matter at a high diplomatic level. Reflecting this concern was the resolution passed during the Sixth Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference held in Jeddah last July inviting the Philippines Government to negotiate with the Moro—local designation of Muslims—National Liberation Front (MNLF).

A committee comprising the foreign ministers (or their representatives) of Libya, Saudi Arabia, Senegal and Somalia submitted proposals for the establishment of self-government in the southern island of Mindanao, Basilan, Sulu and Palawan 'within the framework of national sovereignty of the Philippines.

The implementation of the resolution was entrusted to the committee which was asked to 'continue its task until complete agreement is reached between the MNLF and the government of Philippines'. What follow-up action the committee has been able to take is not known, but the response of the Philippine government was unambiguous—to ignore the resolution.

And what is more, President Marcos has once again launched a massive military operation over the Muslim islands, mobilizing all the fire power at his command, including the napalm bomb. The indiscriminate bombing of the Moro towns and villages has caused the loss of thousands of lives of innocent civilians and almost complete destruction of many Muslim areas. This policy of military terror coupled with covert efforts at bribery—in cash and in official positions and patronage—has brought its dividends in obtaining surrender of some important pro-MNLF members.

The plan to deny basic human rights to the Muslims started a long time ago. As early as 1965, government had encouraged the massive influx of non-Muslims into largely Muslim areas. Muslims owned the majority of land in Mindanao, Pelawan and Sulu but they now own only 17%. Non-Muslims easily obtained homestead grants whereas the majority of Muslims who lived and toiled on the land were refused ownership.

In the economic sector government

has encouraged agricultural and industrial enterprises in Mindanao. These extract economic and human wealth but seldom employ many Muslim workers. Many plants in the Muslim areas do not employ even a single Muslim.

Mr. Homer A. Jack, Secretary General of the World Conference of Religion and Peace in his article 'The Human Rights of the Muslims of the Philippines' (serialised in the London fortnightly—Impact) gave a table of casualties. The figures for 1971 show that at least 700 Muslims were massacred and many more injured or made homeless.'

He also reports:

'In some cases, the Philippine armed forces, with aeroplanes, were put into battle against the Muslims. There were allegations that napalm was used in 1974—and from American planes.' His investigations into these allegations led to the conclusion that 'it is clear that napalm has been dropped from planes of the Philippines military force'.

In spite of this, the Marcos government (with US support) has been still unable to 'pacify' the Muslim areas as resistance continues.

A sustained and meaningful support from the Muslim world and from the international community could help to bring about an early and peaceful settlement among the inhabitants of these Pacific islands. Much depends too on America's ambitions in the South East Asian geo-political imbroglio.

### INDIA: PRESS CONTROL

The Indian Government is to restructure the country's entire newspaper and news agency complex. Mrs. Gandhi told Urdu editors that it was the duty of India's newspapers to promote socialism and parliamentary democracy.

■ The Indian president promulgated an ordinance whereby a person can be further detained even after the expiry or revocation of an earlier order.

### ARAFAT'S PLEA TO WORLD CHURCHES

Yasir Arafat, in a message to the World Council of Churches meeting in Nairobi said that the Palestinian people had a historic responsibility to all believers to protect the holy land from the racist Zionist war-machine and from

## INTERNATIONAL SURVEY

violation and to restore the land of peace. He said: 'What we are resisting and fighting against are the racist Zionists and not Judaism which we consider one of the component parts of our nation's heritage in this area.'

■ Dr. Philip Potter, the general secretary of the World Council of Churches has reiterated his view that 'it is wrong to identify Zionism as racism'.

### JAPANESE CONGRESSMAN ACCEPTS ISLAM

Recent reports show that there has been a great deal of interest in Islam among the Japanese particularly the educated elite and the numbers of those returning to Islam has been quite significant. Among the latest to have declared acceptance of Islam, at the Islamic Cultural Centre in Tokyo, is Aitchi Tanaka, a member of the Japanese upper house and a retired police chief.

The Qur'an has recently been translated into Japanese.

### Islamic Economic Conference Next Month

The international conference of Islamic economists which was postponed last year because of the assassination of King Faysal, will now meet in Mecca from February 21 - 26.

The conference, the first of its kind, is being convened by the King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah and is expected to discuss fundamental and applied issues concerning the establishment of an Islamic Society.

The conference may result in the establishment of a research institute on Islamic economics as well as a permanent association of Islamic economists.

### ISLAMIC COUNCIL FOR SOUTH AFRICA

Representative Muslim organisations in South Africa meeting on 29 Nov. have decided to establish an Islamic Council of South Africa in order to co-ordinate the overall Islamic and community work in the country.

### CONFERENCE ON THE QUR'AN

The 17th Annual meeting of the constituent council of the Mecca-based World Muslim League met in November and considered among other matters the convening of a conference on the translation and exegesis of the Qur'an.

★ COMMUNISM ★ ★ SOVIET UNION ★ ★ CRIMEAN TURKS ★ ★ MALAYSIA ★

One of the most acclaimed Russian novelists of this century, Nobel Prize-winner Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn has been warning the peoples and governments of the West against the threat of Communism while revealing something of the sufferings of people under Soviet Communist rule. His novel 'The Gulag Archipelago' is a telling indictment against Soviet terror.

In a recent speech (see Reader's Digest, December 1975), Solzhenitsyn continues his warnings and his scathing criticism. He defines Communism as 'A crude attempt to explain society and the individual as if a surgeon were to perform his delicate operations with a meat axe. All that is subtle in human psychology and the structure of society is reduced to crude economic processes. This whole created being —man — is reduced to matter.'

'Communism,' he went on, 'has never concealed the fact that it rejects all absolute concepts of morality...Communism considers morality to be relative. Depending upon circumstances, an act including the killing of thousands, could be good or bad. It all depends upon class ideology, defined by a handful of people.'

## Problems in Atheistic Work

The survival and resurgence of the religious consciousness of the peoples inhabiting the world's most conditioned state, the USSR is a source of constant anxiety to the Soviet Establishment..

A Soviet local paper, the 'Sovetskaya Latviya' has recently expressed concern about the 'shortcomings in atheistic work' and 'the lack of planning and the lack of initiative on the part of the party organisations..

The paper suggested that something might be wrong with the communist education of the worker which does not rid him enough of his religious prejudices and that there was a need now to raise the level of this education.

It emphasised the need for a deepening and 'further strengthening of atheistic work', of carrying out atheistic propaganda 'systematically and regularly', and for the atheistic propaganda to have 'militant features and an aggressive spirit'.

## SOLZENITSYN'S WARNING

# THE SURGEON'S AXE

'It is considered rather awkward to use seriously words as "good" and "evil". But if we are deprived of these concepts, what will be left? We will decline to the status of animals.'

He continued: 'All of the communist parties upon achieving power, have become completely merciless. But at the stage before they achieve power, they adopt disguises. Sometimes we hear words such as "popular front" or "dialogue with Christianity". In the Soviet Union this dialogue was a simple matter: they used machine guns...'

He pleads to the rest of mankind, 'Do we have to wait until the knife is at our throat? Isn't it possible to assess the menace that threatens to swallow the whole world!

'A concentration of world evil, of

hatred for humanity is taking place, and it is fully determined to destroy your society. Must you wait until it comes with a crowbar to break through your borders?

'As long as in the Soviet Union and other communist countries there is no limit to the use of violence, how can you consider yourselves secure? You love freedom, but in our crowded world you have to pay a tax for freedom. You cannot love freedom just for yourselves and quietly agree to a situation where the majority of humanity is being subjected to violence and oppression.'

He concluded:

'In addition to the grave political situation in the world today, we are approaching a major turning point in history...at which the hierarchy of values to which we have always been dedicated is starting to waver and may collapse.

'These two crises—the political and spiritual—are occurring simultaneously. It is our generation that will have to confront them. Your leadership will have to bear a burden greater than ever before. Your leaders will need profound intuition, spiritual foresight and high qualities of mind and soul.

## Crimean Turks Hunger strike in Soviet Union

A Crimean Turk, Mustafa Demiroglu who is struggling for the return to their homes of Crimean Turks in exile is reported to be staging a hunger strike inside the Soviet Union. A statement issued in Ankara by the president of the Crimean National Centre said the health of Mustafa Demiroglu was deteriorating and called upon everyone to defend what is right.

The Crimean Turks, or what is left of them, are part of the more than 30 million Muslims in the Soviet Union. Their destruction as a people began under the Tsars and repression has continued under the Soviets.

(For background, see *Islam in the Soviet Union*, Pall Mall Press, London, 1967).

## COMMUNIST FACTIONALISM BUT NO LET UP IN TERROR

Factionalism among Malaysian Communists has continued to plague the movement. The pro-Chinese 'Voice of the Malayan Revolution' has accused the 'so-called' Marxist-Leninist faction of practising revisionism and reactionary idealism: their leaders were enemy agents

who bullied and exploited the masses in border areas under their control and even killed people. VOM further alleged that the revisionist faction openly fraternised with the 'enemy's police and soldiers.

Radio Moscow on the other hand, has blamed the Maoist agents in Malaysia of having stepped up their subversive activities. In fact, the Maoists did not stop even after the agreement was signed in 1974 on the normalisation of relations between Malaysia and China.

It is now 1976. We have just completed another year and each of us who has lived through it is a year older. Over the last two weeks, while many people were enjoying themselves at Christmas parties there may have been some who would have reminisced over their past achievements and setbacks of 1975.

Actually, this is an ideal period for one to ponder over various aspects of human existence. Many will recall an unpleasant 1975. Violence and bloodshed headed the list. Thousands of men, women and children were massacred in Lebanon, Angola, the Philippines, Eritrea (to name a few places) and many more were injured and made homeless. Right here in Trinidad alcohol and drug consumption contributed to the human slaughter on our highways.

Crime increased and the USA which claims to be the most civilised country in the world recorded an increase of 18%. The latest records show that in 1974 only, 20,000 persons were killed and US\$2.6 billion were stolen. In our own country security forces had a busy time protecting people and even 'Nuns' were robbed.

The gap between the 'have and have-nots' increased rapidly. The unemployment list mounted steadily to some 16% while money was wasted by governments and individuals on luxuries, even by those who cannot afford it.

The treasured institution of the family continued to be eroded. Children disobeyed parents and the latter cared less about their offsprings, and more girls mothered illegitimate children.

Indiscipline reared itself in our schools as was clearly demonstrated when a principal was beaten and hospitalised. Our educational advisers persisted in dividing our educational system into the religious and the secular thereby continuing to produce a spiritually and morally bankrupt population.

Drug addiction and venereal diseases continued and there were instances of teenage suicide. Pornography passed from hand to hand in schools and sisters economised on clothes by wearing little.

With all the problems and the crises, some old people wondered when the good old days would return—when there was supposed to be justice, equality and contentment. They worried about what the future holds for their grandchildren in this day of the 'survival of the fittest'.

Shouldn't we ponder over life in general and these problems in particular or should we continue to go through the same routine for 1976? We wake up in the morning, tidy ourselves, eat breakfast, work from eight to four, indulge in some recreation, look at television and—to put it simply—eat, drink and are merry. Aren't there more important goals in life? Don't we need to think over things?

It is indeed TIME FOR REFLECTION. Now is the time to ponder deeply over our achievements and setbacks of 1975, indeed of our past lives with a view to finding out if we achieved our aims and objectives. If we did we should also

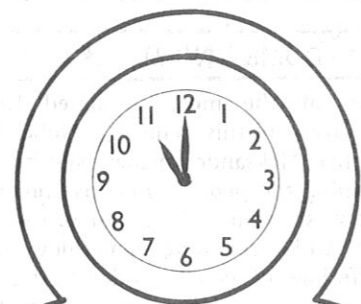
# REFLECTION

ask ourselves if they were the right ones. If we didn't, what prevented us? We may spend some extra time trying to find out if what we strove for was right or wrong. Hence this year we should strive to find out what caused all these problems. If we find the causes we may find the solutions. We shouldn't stop at anything but at the Truth. Only this will point the way.

When pondering we may ask ourselves some basic questions:

Why was I born?  
What is the purpose of my life on earth?  
Who or what brought me into existence?  
Who or what sustains me?  
To whom am I accountable?  
When I die what will happen to me?  
Is there some form of guidance that I may follow to fulfil my aim in life?  
Where can I acquire such guidance?

With objective analysis one may find the answers to these questions and possible solutions to problems confronting us as individuals, as a society, as a nation and as inhabitants of this earth.



## TIME FOR

- ★ *Why was I born?*
- ★ *What is the purpose of my life?*
- ★ *Who or what brought me into existence?*
- ★ *Who or what sustains me?*
- ★ *To whom am I accountable?*
- ★ *Is there some form of guidance that I may follow to fulfil my aim in life?*
- ★ *Where can I acquire such guidance?*

by Hashim Mohammed



# THE CAREFREE BUDGET

by Alyasa Abdullah

## REPERCUSSIONS

The proposed 2 billion dollar budget has been received with mixed reactions and comments. In the chambers there was warm applause, but from the general public, scepticism and to some extent indifference. Terms such as 'an election budget', 'a Christmas budget', a 'great tragedy' have been some of the labels applied to it. I prefer, however, to call it 'a carefree budget'.

## SELF RELIANCE AND NATIONHOOD

I thought that the wealth from our natural resources might have been earmarked for eradicating some of the existing social ills of the nation such as economic inequality, unemployment, for dealing with the educational crisis, cutting down on foreign political and economic dependence and establishing guidelines for building up an economy based on self-reliance, which is in fact a characteristic of political independence and nationhood.

## TRUST & RESPONSIBILITY

We as human beings, should realise that the natural resources of a nation are a trust from God. These God-given gifts carry with them the responsibility of proper distribution and effective utilisation, especially so far as the people in whose hands their dispensation lie. Failure to distribute according to what is just and equitable could mean to recognise some other authority than God.

The people of the country must realise also that effective utilisation and proper distribution can only take place when we have in power men of integrity, sound knowledge and incorruptible morals. Therefore, in order to ensure justice and equality, it is incumbent upon us, first and foremost, to put into power men with the above qualities. If, instead, immorality and corruption is the characteristic of authority then we can be sure that justice would not be attained, neither would progress be achieved.

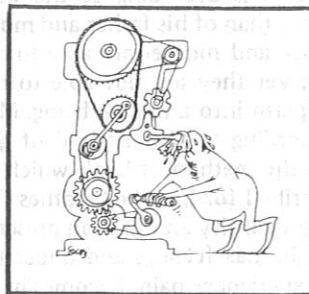
The people of Trinidad and Tobago should think how this large budget would be put into effect. For this we need to become a conscious and vigilant community which will be in a position to make accurate assessments.

## BUDGET PERSPECTIVES AND IMPLICATIONS

One important feature of the 1976

budget is the heavy programme of industrialisation—a programme in which there is added emphasis and reliance on foreign aid from 'International Lending Agencies', foreign technicians (expert, skilled, semi-skilled), foreign construction materials, foreign import commodities designed to put us in greater debt than we are at present and to bind our navelstrings securely to outside interests.

Government has also failed to establish and suggest measures which would protect us against the onslaught of uncontrolled industrialisation. Evils, such as unemployment, labour unrests, inflation, high crimes, and the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, the siphoning of the fruits of labour to multinational corporations—these are just some of the products of the type of industrialisation envisaged. In short, this programme of industrial expansion is tantamount to political and economic slavery. It is a programme which would benefit the neo-colonialists at the expense of the nation. This is what is called selling the nation cheap for it provides an open door to the multinationals to exploit the country's natural resources for their benefit and our disadvantage.



DEVELOPMENT IS A MACHINE TO WIPE SWEAT FROM THE FOREHEAD!

We all know that, potentially, the country is rich in resources, and this 2 billion dollar budget gives some indication of this. But we should not be deceived into thinking that the budget will create for us a life of bliss. For when we subtract from the budget massive foreign aid plus interest, together with outstanding loans and their compound interest, plus the cost of import construction materials, plus salaries for 'experts', plus local corruption and wastage and so on, the net result will be a great loss. Already in theory no surplus is predicted. And maybe, after all, we will realise that the budget is a midget and there will be little cause for applause and much cause for dismay.

The Government intends to create employment through the establishment of industries—industries which are capital intensive and not labour intensive. The problem of unemployment will not therefore be alleviated and problems for other sectors of the economy will be created. Capital intensive industries employ mainly machines and require specialist skills and high level technology which would come from abroad. Capital industries require land for building and strategic siting. This will place a strain on our land resources and agriculture and housing schemes for nationals will be affected. The transfer of technology in the manner envisaged would have serious effects not only on the economy, balance of payments, etc. but on the quality of life as a whole.

## THE NEGLECT OF AGRICULTURE

Special funds have been allocated for the intended diversification of agriculture. It would seem that these funds are insufficient to give the required boost to achieve a degree of self-sufficiency in food production. Not much encouragement has been given to the local farmer and to raising generally the status and importance of the agricultural sector generally.

A similar neglect has been meted out to other sectors of the economy, such as fishing, transport, Caribbean trade, education—just more schools, no vocational schools to prepare for industrialisation, no institutes for higher education, health, international policy—nothing positive just negative neutrality and non-interference—and the rest.

The budget as a whole lacks clarity of purpose and co-ordination between sectors. It lacks, in other words, a set of well-defined and clear-cut objectives for national development. The Minister of Finance has failed to establish a scale of priorities in which the real needs of the country are indicated, analysed and catered for.

The irony of it all is that he, with the usual audacity, at the end of his presentation says:

'Mr. Speaker, our 1976 Budget concentrates on Trinidad and Tobago, our people, their needs and aspirations.'



# The Universal Law

By Sayyid Qutb

Islam constructs its foundation of belief and action on the principle of total submission to God alone. Its beliefs, forms of worship and rules of life are uniformly an expression of this submission and are a practical interpretation of the declaration that there is no deity except God (Allah in Arabic). The details of life are derived from the practice of the Messenger of God—peace be on him—and are a practical consequence of the declaration that Muhammad is the Messenger of God.

Islam builds its entire structure in such a way that these two parts of the declaration determine its system and its characteristics. When Islam builds its structure in this manner, giving it a separate and unique position among all other systems known to man, then Islam actually becomes harmonious with the universal law, which is operative not only in human existence but throughout the whole universe as well.

According to the Islamic concept, the whole universe has been created by God. The universe came into existence when God willed it, and then He ordained certain natural laws which it follows and according to which all its various parts operate harmoniously:

*"When we wish to bring something into existence, We say to it, 'Be', and it is."*

*"And He created everything, and measured it in due proportion." (The Qur'an, 25:2).*

Behind this universe there is a Will which administers it, a Power which moves it, a Law which regulates it. This Power keeps a balance between the various parts of the universe and controls their motions; thus they neither collide with each other nor is there any disturbance in their system, nor do their regular motions come to a sudden stop, nor do they become disorganised. This will continue as long as the Divine will wishes it to continue. The whole universe is obedient to God's Will, His Power and His Dominion; it is not possible for it to disobey the Divine Will and its ordained law for a single moment. Due to this obedience and submission, the universe continues to go on in a harmonious fashion, and no destruction or dispersion

or disturbance can enter into it unless God will it.

*"Indeed, your Sustainer is God, Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods and then established Himself upon the throne of sovereignty. He causes the night to cover the day and the day to follow the night. The sun and the moon and the stars are controlled by His command. The creation and the command are for Him alone. Glorious is God, the Sustainer of the worlds." (7:54)..*

★ ★ ★

Man is a part of the universe; the laws which govern human nature are no different from the laws governing the universe. God is Creator of the universe as well as of man. Man's body is made of earthly material, yet God has bestowed upon him certain characteristics which make him more than the earth from which he is made; God provides him according to a measure. In his bodily functions man involuntarily follows the same laws of nature as other creatures. His creation is according to the will of God rather than of his father and mother. The father and mother are able to come together; yet they are not able to transform a sperm into a human being. Man is born according to the method of gestation and the method of birth which God has prescribed for him; he breathes God's air in the quantity and fashion prescribed by God; he has feelings and understanding; he experiences pain, becomes hungry and thirsty, eats and drinks—in short, he has to live according to the laws of God and he has no choice in the matter. In this respect there is no difference between him and other inanimate or animate objects of the universe. All unconditionally submit to the Will of God and to the laws of His creation.

He Who has created the universe and man, and Who made man obedient to the laws which also govern the universe has also prescribed a Shari'ah for his voluntary actions. If man follows this law, then his life is in harmony with his own nature. From this point of view, this Shari'ah is also a part of that universal law which governs the entire universe, including the physical and biological aspects of man.

Each word of God, whether it is an injunction or a prohibition, a promise or an admonition, a rule or guidance, is a part of the universal law and is as accurate and true as any of the laws known as the "laws of nature"—the Divinely-ordained laws for the universe—which we find to be operative every moment according to what God has prescribed for them from the dawn of creation.

Thus the Shari'ah which God has given to man to organise his life is also a universal law, as it is related to the general law of the universe and is harmonious with it. Thus obedience to the Shari'ah becomes a necessity for human beings so that their lives may become harmonious and in tune with the rest of the universe; not only this, but the only way in which harmony can be brought about between the physical laws which are operative in the biological life of a man and the moral laws which govern his voluntary actions is solely through obedience to the Shari'ah. Only in this way does man's personality, internal and external, become integrated.

Man cannot understand all the laws of the universe, nor can he comprehend the unity of this system; he cannot even understand the laws which govern his own person, from which he cannot deviate by a hair's breadth. Thus he is incapable of making laws for a system of life which can be in complete harmony with the universe or which can even harmonise his physical needs with his external behaviour. This capability belongs solely to the Creator of the universe and of man, Who not only controls the universe but also human affairs, and Who implements a uniform law according to His will.

Thus, obedience to the Shari'ah of God is necessary for the sake of this harmony, even more necessary than the establishment of the Islamic belief, as no individual or group of individuals can be truly Muslim until they wholly submit to God alone in the manner taught by the Messenger of God—peace be upon him—thus testifying by their actions that there is no deity except Allah and that Muhammad is God's Messenger.

## TOTAL HARMONY

Total harmony between human life



and the law of the universe is entirely beneficial for mankind, as this is the only guarantee against any kind of discord in life. Only in this state will they be at peace with themselves and at peace with the universe, being in accord with its laws and its movements. In the same way, they will have peace of mind, as their actions will agree with their true natural demands, with no conflict between the two. Indeed, the Shari'ah of God harmonises the external behaviour of man with his internal nature in an easy way. When a man makes peace with his own nature, peace and co-operation among individuals follow automatically, as they all live together under one system, which is a part of the general system of the universe.

Thus blessings fall on all mankind, as this way leads in an easy manner to the knowledge of the secrets of nature, its hidden forces and the treasures concealed in the expanses of the universe. Man uses these for the benefit of all mankind, under the guidance of the Shari'ah of God, without any conflict or competition.

In contrast to the Shari'ah of God are men's whims:

*Had the truth followed their opinions, the heavens and the earth and whosoever is in them would surely have been corrupted."*

(23:71).

From this we come to know that the truth is one and not many. It is the foundation of this religion, the heavens and earth are based upon it, all the affairs of this world and of the next are settled by it, man will be accountable to God on the basis of it, and those who deviate from the truth are punished by it, and people will be judged by God according to it. Truth is indivisible, and it is the name of that general law which God has ordained for all affairs; and everything in existence either follows it or is punished by it.

*"We have sent to you a Book which speaks about you; do you not then understand? Many a wicked town have We destroyed and have replaced them with other people. When they felt Our grasp, they started to run. (It was said to them), 'Do not run; return to the luxury that you exulted in and to your homes; maybe you shall be questioned'. They said: 'Woe upon us! We have been evil-doers'. So*

*they did not stop crying until We made them stubble, silent and still. We did not create the heavens and the earth and whatsoever is between them as a sport. Had We desired to take to Us a diversion, We should have taken it to Us from Ourselves, had We done so. Nay, but We held the truth against falsehood, and it prevails over it and behold! falsehood vanishes away. Then woe to you for what you ascribe (to God). To Him belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth, and those who are with Him do not become too proud to worship Him; neither do they grow weary of glorifying Him by night and by day and never failing."*

(21:10-20).

#### THE BEGINNING OF CONFLICT

Human nature in its depths has full cognisance of this truth. Man's form and body, and the organisation of the vast universe around him, reminds him that this universe is based on truth, and truth is its essence, and it is related to a central law which sustains it. Thus, there is no disturbance in it, no conflict between its parts; it does not move at random, nor does it depend on chance, nor is it devoid of an overall plan; neither is it a sport in the hands of human caprices, but runs smoothly on a precise, detailed and prescribed course. Conflict begins when man deviates from the truth which is hidden in the depths of his own nature, under the influence of his desires, and when he follows laws based on his own opinions instead of following God's commandments. Instead of submitting to his Sustainer with the rest of the universe, he rebels and revolts.

When this conflict between man and his own nature, and man and the universe, spreads to human groups, nations and races, then all the forces and resources of the universe are utilised not for the benefit of all mankind, but for its destruction and for violence against others.

It becomes clear from the above discussion that the purpose of the establishment of God's law on earth is not merely for the sake of the next world. This world and the next world are not two separate entities, but are stages complementary to each other. The law given by God not only harmonises these two stages but also harmonises human life with the general law of the universe.

Thus, when harmony between human life and the universe ensues, its results are not postponed for the next world but are operative even in this world. However, they will reach their perfection in the Hereafter.

This then, is the foundation of the Islamic concept of the universe and of human life as a part of this universe. By its very nature, this concept is different from all other concepts known to mankind. This is why this concept implies certain responsibilities and obligations which are not found in other concepts of life. According to this concept, obedience to the Shari'ah of God is actually a consequence of the need to harmonise human life with that law which is operative within man himself and in the rest of the universe. This need demands that the law which governs the social affairs of human beings should be in accordance with the general law of the universe; it demands that man submit to God alone, with the rest of the universe, and that no man should claim lordship over others.

A suggestion of this need for harmony which we have been talking about is found in the conversation between Abraham—peace be upon him—the father of the Muslim community, and Nimrod. This man was a tyrant and claimed absolute sovereignty over his subjects; yet he did not claim sovereignty over the heavens, the planets and stars. When the Prophet Abraham—peace be upon him—put forward the argument that He Who has authority over the universe is the only One to have authority over human beings too, he became speechless:

*"Have you considered the case of the man who argued with Abraham concerning his Sustainer, because God had given him rule over a country? When Abraham said: 'My Lord is He Who gives life and Who gives death,' he replied: 'I give life and I give death'. Abraham said: 'Indeed, God brings out the sun from the east. Then do you bring it out from the west. Then the unbeliever became speechless. And God does not guide the evil-doing people.'"*

(2:258)

*"Do they seek a religion other than the religion of God, while whatever is in the heavens and the earth submits to Him willingly and unwillingly, and will return to Him?"*

(3:83).



# THAT INSATIABLE HUNGER

"if you but knew it, you would see  
the hell you are in..."

ONE DAY —it was in September 1926 — Elsa\* and I found ourselves travelling in the Berlin subway. It was an upper-class compartment. My eye fell casually on a well dressed man opposite me, apparently a well-to-do businessman, with a beautiful brief-case on his knees and a large diamond ring on his hand. I thought idly how well the portly figure of this man fitted into the picture of prosperity which one encountered everywhere in Central Europe in those days: a prosperity the more prominent as it had come after years of inflation, when all economic life had been topsy-turvy and shabbiness of appearance the rule. Most of the people were now well dressed and well fed, and the man opposite me was therefore no exception. But when I looked at his face, I did not seem to be looking at a happy face. He appeared to be worried: and not merely worried but acutely unhappy, with eyes staring vacantly ahead and the corners of his mouth drawn in as if in pain—but not in bodily pain. Not wanting to be rude, I turned my eyes away and saw next to him a lady of some elegance. She also had a strangely unhappy expression on her face, as if contemplating or experiencing something that caused her pain; nevertheless, her mouth was fixed in the stiff semblance of a smile which, I was certain, must have been habitual. And then I began to look around at all the other faces in the compartment — faces belonging without exception to well-dressed, well-fed people: and in almost every one of them I could discern an expression of hidden suffering, so hidden that the owner of the face seemed to be quite unaware of it.

This was indeed strange. I had never before seen so many unhappy faces around me: or was it perhaps that I had never before looked for what was now so loudly speaking in them? The impression was so strong that I mentioned it to Elsa; and she too began to look around her with the careful eyes of a painter accustomed to study human features. Then she turned to me, astonished, and said: 'You are right. They all look as though they were suffering torments of hell...I wonder, do they know themselves what is going on in them?'

I knew that they did not — for otherwise they could not go on wasting their lives as they did,

\* The author's wife.

† The Qur'an, Chapter 102.

THE MUSLIM STANDARD, JANUARY 1976

without any faith in binding truths, without any goal beyond the desire to raise their own 'standard of living', without any hopes other than having more material amenities, more gadgets, and perhaps more power...

When we returned home, I happened to glance at my desk on which lay open a copy of the Koran I had been reading earlier. Mechanically, I picked the book up to put it away, but just as I was about to close it, my eye fell on the open page before me, and I read:

*You are obsessed by greed for more and more  
Until you go down to your graves.*

*Nay, but you will come to know!*

*Nay, but you will come to know!*

*Nay, if you but knew it with the knowledge of  
certainty,*

*You would indeed see the hell you are in.*

*In time, indeed, you shall see it with the eye of  
certainty:*

*And on that Day you will be asked what you  
have done with the boon of life.†*

For a moment I was speechless. I think the book shook in my hands. Then I handed it to Elsa. 'Read this. Is it not an answer to what we saw in the subway?'

It was an answer: an answer so decisive that all doubt was suddenly at an end. I knew now, beyond any doubt, that it was a God-inspired book I was holding in my hand: for although it had been placed before man over thirteen centuries ago, it clearly anticipated something that could have become true only in this complicated, mechanized, phantom-ridden age of ours.

At all times people had known greed: but at no time before had this greed outgrown a mere eagerness to acquire things and become an obsession that blurred the sight of everything else: an irresistible craving to get, to do, to contrive more and more—more today than yesterday, and more tomorrow than today: a demon riding on the necks of men and whipping their hearts forward toward goals that tauntingly glitter in the distance but dissolve into contemptible nothingness as soon as they are reached, always holding out the promise of new goals ahead — goals still more brilliant, more tempting as long as they lie on the horizon, and bound to wither into further nothingness as soon as they come within grasp: and that hunger, that insatiable hunger for ever new goals gnawing at man's soul: *Nay, if you but knew it you would see the hell you are in...*

This, I saw, was not the mere human wisdom of a man of a distant past in distant Arabia. However wise he may have been, such a man could not by himself have foreseen the torment so peculiar to this twentieth century. Out of the Koran spoke a voice greater than the voice of Muhammad...

From THE ROAD TO MECCA by Muhammad Asad, formerly Leopold Weiss, Dar al Andalus, Tangier, 1974, pp. 308-310.

The more you live, the more you see. A Dr. A.M. Markandaya, an 'inveterate user' of marijuana, recently wrote an article entitled, "The Elixir of Peace and Love" (Trinidad Guardian, 22 Nov 75) in which he stated:

carelessly upon that wall.

Yeah, Brother, that 'Old Mary' sure cures headaches. Would you believe that on 'a trip' I would be able to sit between two high-powered speakers going at full-blast with James Brown at his loudest,

## MARIJUANA: The Elixir of Peace and Love?

'It is a medical fact that marijuana can help to ease the discomfort of asthma. It also helps cure many nervous diseases, relieving headaches and anxiety and even inflammation, whether internal or external. Besides, it is a great relaxant, an intellectual stimulant and a teacher of the sublime as well as prosaic truths of life.' As he put it: 'Anyone who, like myself, is an inveterate user of this wonderful potion of nature can vouch that its general use can only benefit our society... don't let our innocent youth suffer...'

Brother, I can't let our youth suffer, so check this out. Having had the experience of 'tripping' for a three-year period, I know that staying away from 'weed' (and alcohol) is one of the ways to discontinue suffering. While in my ignorant state, the flare of a match, followed by the stench of burning 'weed', would send my blood racing. A daily diet of the 'tingling sensations' produced by this herb, so weakened my biological constitution that the resultant abundance of colds and my bass-like, rattling coughs were enough to scare away any attack of asthma which dared to approach my skinny, staggering, sleepy-eyed frame.

Brother Markandaya, let me tell you about nervous diseases. While on a 'trip', I would see things in so many different, unstable ways, that they became funny; they not only looked different, they felt different. I can recall once sitting on a concrete wall and 'building a head' as we say. After a while, I thought of soft things...and, would you believe that the wall became soft! It became so soft that I bounced up and down on it as if it was sponge. By the way, I was only about fourteen to eighteen feet off the ground. Had I fallen, I would have rolled about twenty feet downhill into a drain about six feet deep...and I wasn't even nervous! Normally, I would have had second thoughts about even sitting

Muhammad Sayyid and not even develop a headache? Man, that cacophony used to drive my mother to bed-sick to her stomach! As for anxiety, check this out. I had been unable to obtain employment for a rather lengthy period and I was restless. I smoked to keep my mind 'cool'. One night I thought of tackling the County Council for a job. Next day, being kinda tired of the old run-around, I built a 'sound little head' and took off. Man, I walked into C.C. headquarters as cool as a cucumber and asked for the bossman. When I spoke to him, he promised me a job the following week. Had he asked me to sign my name, I would not have been able to, I was that 'stoned'. And I wasn't even anxious about the job! At night, Markie, I wouldn't be anxious to go to sleep—I did not want to waste a 'good' head. You should know what I'm talking about. Boy, that sure played hell with my health (what little I had anyway).

You got me in a corner as far as the 'inflammation' is concerned, Brother. If by 'internal inflammation' you mean rage—heat produced by fiery temper—you are absolutely right. You know, whenever I became angry, I would feel to kill somebody by any means possible, that's how frustrated I was. But, being mindful of the circumstances, I would relieve my 'inflammation' by checking out the 'herbs-man'. After 'fixing my nut', I would sit on a corner and 'scope some

birds', you know what I mean. Man, that reefer would sure relieve some (with a capital S) of my 'inflammation'! As for the external, all I can say is: When you have 'weed' around and you are a 'smoker' most times you light a match, bet your bottom dollar, a joint is going to relieve that flame of some of its heat!

### HORRORS

About M.J., being a 'relaxant, intellectual stimulant and teacher of sublime truths' and all that, man, you right on course. I was able to reach into the caverns of my mind and pull out some of the dreaddest scenes for my painting sessions. I could use my intellect to shape the lamp-posts into needles and pins of which I would be in mortal dread. I could relax myself into thinking I was dead and get 'horrors' to convince myself that I was still alive! Check that out sometime. Check out the sublime truths (I don't know what the prosaic ones are) of being unable to tell fact from fantasy; of being unable to control your own limbs when you are falling; of knowing that a moving car is coming towards you, but being so fascinated by the light, reaching out to touch and hold some of it, only to be rudely brought to your senses by the blare of the horn; of finding out that one spoonful of rice contained so many grains that it was a very heavy meal. Check that out sometime.

Now, brother, look at the youth on your block, see the condition of those who smoke, talk with them and see if they would like to continue smoking for the rest of their lives. You will find, Doc, that every one of them would like to kick the habit and fulfil their dreams. You will find that it is frustration and resentment that motivates them, not love for the 'weed'. Don't you know that they normally graduate from MJ to MX to LSD to HEROIN to DEATH? Look at the increasing number of schizophrenic young men and women on the streets today and then THINK about the benefit to our society that marijuana is.

Look, Brother Markandaya, do we need to talk more about the inveterate use, or rather simply the use of Mary Jane to be able to tell why we should NOT legalise it nor use it?



## MUSLIM TEACHERS' SEMINAR

## NO END TO THE LESSONS

The Muslim Teachers' Conference convened by the Religious and Social Services Committee of the ASJA and held at the ASJA Girls' College in San Fernando on 5 December 1975 was indeed a historic one. Principals and teachers from the 15 ASJA and TIA primary and secondary schools participated as well as teachers from government colleges and institutions and also from the University of the West Indies. The Conference, described as the largest gathering of Muslim teachers in the West (about 200 participated) was considered by the ASJA and TIA leadership as a 'red-letter' day in the history of Muslims in Trinidad.

It was indeed remarkable that the Conference did take place and this was perhaps the most important thing about it. The theme of the seminar was 'The Role of the Muslim Teacher' but the formal part of the programme—the addresses and the papers delivered—really did not do justice to the theme.

The addresses were given by Shafick Rahman - President General of ASJA, Nur Ghany - President of TIA, Kamaluddin Mohammed - Minister of Health and Tiab Rahaman - Inspector of Schools. What might have been a useful contribution by Tiab Rahaman had to be cut short because of initial unexplained delay in starting the programme, the drawn out opening harangue by Shafick Rahaman and the ex tempore ramblings of Nur Ghany who spoke of 'Hitler being one of the greatest men of all times', some nonsense about how Arabs with their oil embargo challenged the might of the greatest country in the world and about the aim of education being to 'create good citizens and a better country'. One would hardly have thought from the content of his speech that he headed an organisation called the Strengthening of Islam Association—the Tackveeyatul Islamic Association.

Nur Ghany was followed by 'our dear brother' (according to the Convenor and Chairman of the Conference, Omar Mohammed of the ASJA RSSC) Kamaluddin Mohammed who made the useful suggestion that the gathering should develop into an annual get-together and pave the way for a Teachers Association. However, no opportunity was provided for clarification of some important statements—with potentially serious implications—which the Minister made.

The Minister expressed the hope that at the next gathering all 'twenty

Muslim schools' should be represented. The ASJA and the TIA schools number only 15 so this was obviously a call for the representation of the Trinidad Muslim League or 'Qadiani' schools. (Qadianis have recently been declared non-Muslims by the Muslim World League in Mecca and other bodies).

The Minister also made a brief reference to the aim of the government's policy to develop a 'national norm' in education. What this norm holds for denominational schools is not at all clear. But the Minister's implied criticism of Guyana's education policies could be taken as allaying some of the worst fears of religious bodies. He called on teachers to 'sacrifice a little' and ended with the curious warning to them, 'Don't hurry home and go and be prophets'.

A non-Muslim teacher's comment on this first part of the programme spoke of the 'excessive exhortation' and the 'too much dull sermonising' which 'dampened the spirit and initiative of participants' and also of the 'absurd use of flattery'.

The papers that were then presented, with the exception of one by Sheriff Mohammed (El Socorro Islamia) on the 'Social Life of a Muslim', were uninspiring. The subject matter of one paper—'The Child in Education with specific reference to Religious Education by Sheikh Abdul Wahid (Principal, Park Street Primary) was so ill-digested and confused that the author himself had to beg for an easy passage—which he got. One quote would illustrate the point: 'The Religious Education teacher,' wrote Sheikh Abdul Wahid, 'as a teacher in any other subject-area, say Social Studies, must be concerned also with curriculum methods and matter: there can be mime, drama, impromptu acting, role-playing, films, tape-recorders, video-tape machines, music and movement.'

The main paper presented was by ASJA missionary, Waffie Mohammed on 'The Role of the Muslim Teacher' but this really failed to get to grips with the subject. While there were some useful generalisations about the purpose of life and the need to create 'balanced personalities acknowledging the seriousness of life in the world and hoping for the best in the next', there was little attempt to analyse the problems which face teachers and which teachers pose, the type of training which they needed to fit them for their role and so on.

During question time on one paper, the secretaries of both the ASJA and TIA education boards, Yacoob Ali and Sham Mohammed respectively, came in for strong censure for promoting anti-Islamic culture through the production of Mastana Bahar TV shows and pageants.

It was in the Workshop sessions, where the participants really had the opportunity to participate, that some really useful work was done, in spite of the fact that only fifteen minutes were allotted for this and one group recommended that topics should have been researched beforehand. There were six groups and the topics considered were:

Developing a Religious syllabus for all Schools. Training programme for the Muslim Teacher, Religious Education in non-Muslim institutions, Preparation of Women for our society, the Use of the Media in spreading Islam and Maintaining an Islamic atmosphere on all social occasions. Some of the recommendations were:

On Common Syllabus for Schools

- the need for a competent committee to study existing syllabi before any totally new attempt is made;
- proposed syllabus should emphasize concepts and not merely rote learning;
- that any syllabus should be related to environment.

On Training Programme for Muslim Teachers

- that the ASJA RSSC should provide and constantly review literature to teachers;
- training seminars during vacation periods—should aim at creating better people;
- periodic meetings of subject teachers to identify problems in the teaching of particular subjects, the aim being to bring the teaching of all subjects within the framework of Islamic knowledge;
- that contact be maintained with other countries to benefit from current research on Islamic education;
- at all times, teachers should mirror the very highest standards of Islamic conduct in their individual lives.

On Religious Education in non-Muslim institutions

- that full use be made of the existing opportunities provided by law for teaching of religion to schools and that teachers in Muslim schools should assist;
- that youth camps should be held with guidance and training from qualified people;
- that Muslim youth groups should be formed in these institutions to read Qur'an and Hadith and organise other Islamic activities.

*Continued on p. 11.*



## SEMINAR ON EDUCATION

The first seminar for 1975-76 sponsored by the Trinidad & Tobago Muslim Youth Organisation which was to be held on Sunday 7 December is now carded for Sunday 4 January at the ASJA Girls' College, Park Street, San Fernando from 8.00 am to 4.30 pm.

The Theme of the Seminar is 'The Role of Education in the Islamization Process'. It is understood that apart from a feature address on the theme, the Seminar will place emphasis on the workshop sessions which will deal with four main areas:

1. Contemporary Trinidadian problems and challenges to the Islamic concept of education and its realisation;
2. The Role of the Muslim Intelligentsia—their responsibility and training.
3. The role of Mosques and the Family in education.
4. The Role of the T&TMYO in Education.

## ISLAMIC NEW YEAR

The Islamic Year of 1396 A.H. will begin on 2 January 1976. The day of 'Ashura' one of the important days of the Islamic calendar falls on 10 Muharram,

*Continued from p. 10*

### On Preparation of Women for Society

- that proper Islamic atmosphere at home should be emphasised—example of parents in observing Salat, Fasting and observance of Islamic duties;

- that education should be well-rounded and carried on to the highest level;

### On Maintaining an Islamic Atmosphere on all Social Occasions

- that a Muslim should identify himself as a Muslim on all occasions through behaviour, dress, mannerisms etc;

- that people in positions of influence would make sure that all occasions should reflect Islamic culture and that the far'ad (essentials) of Islam should not be overlooked at all;

- that circular providing for time off for Muslim teachers to attend Salat on Fridays should be sent to all schools ;
- that there was a need for literature providing clear-cut guidelines on Islamic social behaviour.

The Conference ended with a decision to form a Muslim Teachers Association and a committee with Omar Mohammed as Convenor was appointed to prepare the groundwork. Much now depends on the initiative and vision which this committee displays. Many teachers at the conference showed an enthusiasm and a commitment which can yield some very positive results and which made the exercise, in the end, a satisfying and, God willing, a worthwhile one.

the first month in the year. Fasting is highly recommended on 9 and 10 Muharram. (The 'Hosay' celebrations and the building of 'tazias' at this time are not Islamic).

Some important dates in 1396 are:

12 Rabi'al-Awwal (Prophet Muhammad's Birthday)	13 Mar 76
27 Rajab (Mi'raj)	24 Jul 76
15 Sha'baan	11 Aug 76
1 Ramadan	26 Aug 76
1 Shawwal (Eid-ul-Fitr)	25 Sept 76
10 Dhul Hijja (Eid-ul-Adha)	2 Dec 76

■ The above dates are all subject to the sighting of the moon.

## FOR WIDOWS' HOME

An Eid-ul-Adha dinner sponsored by the T&TMYO came off at ASJA Girls College, Tunapuna, on Saturday 20th December, 1975. The funds raised were in aid of the Widows' Home in Tunapuna which was established by the ASJA but has been suffering from neglect.

## FIRST EID-UL-ADHA IN GRENADA

The local Muslim Community in Grenada which is a new and growing one celebrated its first Eid-ul-Adha this year. There are also new Muslim communities in Dominica and other islands.

★ In Trinidad, Eid-ul-Adha was celebrated on Saturday 13 December 1975 instead of Sunday as was previously announced by the Anjuman Sunnatul Jamaat Association. This was done after news was received from the Muslim World Congress in Mecca. Previously the date has been fixed according to local sighting of the moon.

## EDUCATION RESEARCH

The Association of Muslim Social Scientists has decided to organise its activities on the basis of various disciplines.

One of the major fields is education and Dr. El Tigani Abu Gideiri has been appointed to activate this area, to promote Islamic education research and formulate an Islamic educational system.

## GRAND MOSQUE IN BRAZIL

Representatives of Islamic organizations and societies, and senior civil and military officers of Brazil attended the inaugural ceremony of the King Faisal Mosque which is considered to be the second grand mosque in Latin America. The mosque was built with the help of Saudi donations.

## CALL FOR UNITY IN RELIGIOUS CELEBRATIONS

At the Speech Day and Graduation Function of the Aranguez Islamic School held on 9 December 1975, Shamshudin Mohammed, Minister of Public Utilities, spoke on the role of denominational schools. He said:

'This is a Muslim denominational school and although this is a Muslim denominational school, there is a majority of Hindu children attending this school. Figures show that there are 279 Muslims, 285 Hindus, 81 Roman Catholics, 17 Anglicans and some others...

'The Hindu denominational school exists with a certain bias to the Hindu religion. Therefore one would expect that the Hindu denominational school will carry out its curriculum and religious period with that bias in favour of the Hindu religion.

'If it is a Muslim denominational school one would expect the school will seek to show the bias in favour of the religion of Islam.

'But what do we have in Trinidad and Tobago in many instances? The Hindu and the Muslim schools, in some respects, they tend to concentrate all their efforts and all their energies to celebrate Christmas and when Eid come and when Divali come, they do little, they pinching to do it.

'The ideal situation, if you celebrating Christmas in your Muslim school, you must also celebrate Divali. You must celebrate Christmas, you must celebrate Divali, you must celebrate Eid but if you choose to give prominence to your Muslim occasion nobody can quarrel with you. As far as the government school is concerned, (it) is duty bound to celebrate the national holidays—Eid, Divali and Christmas. If the government school fails to do its duty, it will not be performing its functions properly if it only seeks to celebrate Christmas and has nothing for Divali or Eid-ul-Fitr.'

He concluded: 'If I am invited by one of my Hindu friends to speak in a Hindu ceremonial function, am I going to talk about the Holy Qur'an, am I going to talk about Jesus? How would I do that? I must speak in terms of brotherhood. I must implore my Hindu friends to try and stick to their religion, to carry out their practices and their beliefs because what we lack in Trinidad and Tobago is a lack of morality in so many of us.

'If I am invited to a Christian function...do you expect me to go and preach about the Bhagawat or preach about the Holy Qur'an or mustn't I admonish my Christian friends that in our multi-racial, multi-religious community, well, look brothers and sisters, let us co-operate, let us show unity, let us show harmony.'

Mr. Mohammed is the secretary of the Education Board of the Strengthening of Islam Association—the Tackveeyatul Islam Association.



## THE SHIFTING SYSTEM

The cabinet-appointed committee, headed by Dr. Edward Moses, to look into the Junior Secondary School system is to be commended for its quick, painstaking and frank report which came out in 'total condemnation of the double shift system as an answer to solving the education needs of the country'.

The unsuitable placement of children, the inadequate staffing both in terms of quality and quantity, the non-existent or grossly neglected library services, the ill effects of children left unsupervised for long periods, curriculum malformation—were just some of the important problems highlighted and which, according to the report, contributed to the destruction of any possible hope for successful school education.

Some of the remedies proposed are realistic and humane:

- a system of zoning in allocating children to get rid of some of the acute hardship posed by long distances and transport difficulties;
- the upgrading of the level of teachers' qualifications to graduate level;
- a mobile library service (as an interim measure to adequate libraries in each school) with the assistance of the Central Library. This is the second report in weeks to call for better library services throughout the country and is an obvious priority area for any attempt to upgrade the consciousness and quality of life of the people as a whole.

Some of the other problems mentioned, for example, 'the ill-effects of children left unsupervised for long periods of times with the ensuing reports of delinquency, gambling and even promiscuity' cannot be solved by phasing out into a one-shift system. These problems already exist in the single-shift system and are even endemic in the adult population as a whole.

It may be said, therefore, that while some of the remedies are like much-needed plasters for individual sores, the whole system of education as such needs an urgent and thorough check-up and the people may have to swallow some rather bitter but beneficial pills. The check-up can begin by asking ourselves the simple but very fundamental question, What is the aim of education?

## WOMEN'S RIGHT TO DIGNITY

There are some positive and also some quite ill-conceived recommendations in the report of the National Commission on Women appointed by the government as part of International Women's Year which ends on December 31st. On the basis of this report, the Government intends to set up a Permanent Commission on the Status of Women. One of the Commission's recommendations - a positive one - separate taxation of working wives' income announced in the recent budget, has already been acted upon.

The repeated emphasis in the report on extending family planning facilities throughout the country, the pronouncements on illegitimacy, the call for the establishment of day-care centres for the children of working mothers and the ambiguous statements on abortion can be seen as working against the institution of marriage and the stability of family life. While we need to upgrade the status of women in our society where they would command more respect and dignity, it is not sufficient for our legal planners to import panaceas from the experience of industrialised countries which have turned into nightmares.

Among the positive points are: that adequate trained staff in all needed categories be made available to carry out a maternal and child health service programme which would include improvement of ante-natal, delivery and post-natal care; a well-rounded education for women and equal pay for equal work.

The Report needs detailed examination and Muslim bodies need to play a concerned and constructive role especially as some of the areas under review are likely to affect the Islamic Shariah.

(Incidentally, the reference in the Report to Muslims as an 'ethnic' group is unpardonable).

### MUSLIM NEW YEAR

The Muslim New Year has just begun. It is now 1396 years since the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) embarked upon the Hijrah or migration from Mecca to Madina, described as one of the greatest events in the history of mankind and symbolising the perpetual struggle between the forces of good and evil.

Muslims in other parts of the world are already making plans to mark 1400 A.H. Muslim bodies here should also be thinking along these lines.

In these times  
people must have standards

### THE BEST STANDARD

### THE MUSLIM STANDARD

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