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Dear Farrakhan

May I say how very impressed I was by your speeches — or rather your performances — during your brief visit to Trinidad last month. Others of course have paid tribute to your oratorical skill and your persuasiveness. These you used to good effect in making breakthroughs where others may have come up against uncomprehending walls and it is possible that Trinidad may not be the same again after you have passed through.

You have 'blown the minds' of many brothers and sisters and set them thinking about the purpose of life and the necessity of struggle—to cast off the numerous shackles that bind brains in these erstwhile colonial states and to obtain true freedom and dignity; you have also set them thinking about the importance of Time and the need to analyse things.

Your hopes that Trinidad would

someday become famous for something more noble and less degrading than Carnival and that people would cease behaving on the plane of animals (procreating like dogs being one pertinent example which you mentioned) are hopes that anyone concerned with the fabric of our society would unhesitatingly share.

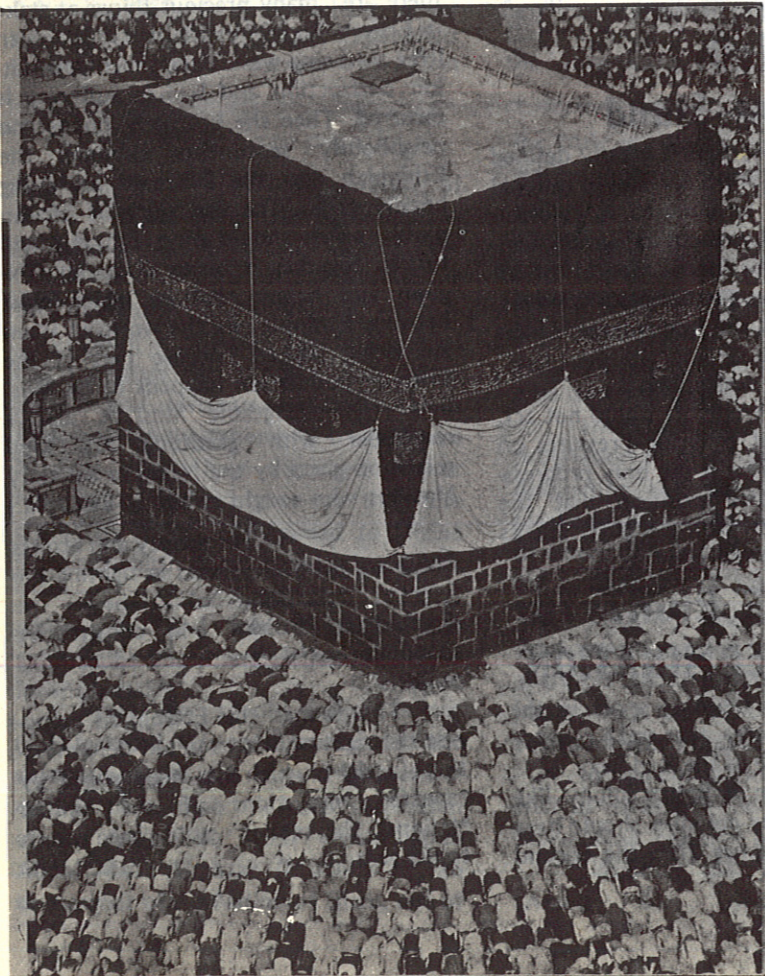
You have obviously corrected (to a point at least) the course of the lives of many brothers and sisters and it would be necessary that some further direction be given, otherwise many would simply drift back to the old forms, the frustrating ways and the dead habits—as evidenced by the calypso anti-climax of your UWI speech.

You have also jolted some sections of the existing Muslim community into realizing that they had taken several backward steps in the presentation of the Islamic message and although your words were not primarily addressed to them, a useful spin-off may well be a growing Islamic consciousness in this country which is still largely indifferent or even hostile to Islam.

I would like to convey to you also that there exist many nagging feelings of uneasiness among brothers concerned about the thrust and the impact of what you have been saying as it relates to the purity and authenticity of the Islamic message.

They do recognise, for example, that the 'Nation of Islam' which you represent has made some remarkable changes since the death of Elijah Muhammad, its founder. The idea, for example, that God was a man who came in person to Elijah Muhammad has given way to belief in the Eternal Creator. Your superb commentary on the first verse of the Qur'an —All Praise is due to God, the Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds—was an eloquent testimony of this change. Also, where before the 'Nation of Islam' had adopted only certain of the 'moral' teachings of Islam which had the revolu-

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The
Greatest
Gathering
of
Mankind

see
pages
8 and 9

ZIONISM IS RACISM

THE MUSLIM STANDARD, DECEMBER 1975

INTERNATIONAL SURVEY

America Threatens Retribution

Top bracket American diplomats expressed their anger and fury against the United Nations General Assembly's recent declaration that 'Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination'.

United States UN ambassador, Daniel Moynihan said: 'The United States rises to declare before the General Assembly of the United Nations and before the world that it does not acknowledge, it will not abide by, it will never acquiesce in this infamous act.' The UN Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim, deplored the danger that 'we may lose the future through discord and confrontation'. And US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, said that the resolution was highly irresponsible and (added) to the tension, to the rifts and to the distrust' in the world.

Many pro-Zionist Americans felt that America should suspend contributions to the UN or withdraw from it but President Ford while deploring the UN decision said that the United States would not consider withdrawing. Last year Congress barred further funds

for UNESCO because of anti-Israel action.

Recently, Third World countries have gained the majority in the UN and the US sees this change as a serious threat to their status as the number-one decision maker.

The Americans are now pinning their hopes on the oratory of their new chief delegate Daniel Moynihan—himself a Zionist—who has described the new Third World challenge as fundamentally ideological and must be met head-on with an eloquent ideological defence of western democracy. (This is a clear indication of the connection between 'western democracy' and imperialism and Zionism). The idea is to fight rhetoric with rhetoric, and in the process to deflate the importance of the UN assembly through scorn and disdain.

Moynihan went on to threaten retribution to Third World ambassadors for their support of the resolution and the question can now be asked: How far is America prepared to tolerate the new developments among the Third World countries? What form will the 'retribution' take? Would she be prepared to use force or will sanity prevail?

CARIB GOVTS LAMBASTED

For Reactionary And Indecent Stand

In a blistering attack, (see Trinidad Guardian, 2.12.75) Dr. Selwyn Cudjoe a Trinidadian and an Associate Professor at Ohio University Centre for Afro-American Studies—condemned Caribbean Governments for their 'reactionary' and 'indecent' stand on the Zionist issue and called on the peoples of the area to 'bring pressure' on their governments to adopt a 'progressive and principled' position.

The well-researched and rigorously-argued article stated:

'Zionism is racist, it is colonial and perforce expansionist. Therefore, it constitutes an intolerable and repulsive ideological position that is detrimental to peace in the world. It must be equated with South African apartheid...

'The Caribbean countries that opposed the issue of Zionism were the Bahamas Barbados, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The countries that abstained were Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica.

'How the Caribbean countries could

abstain or oppose such a clearly defined resolution is beyond the realm of rational analysis, for to be opposed to colonialism, racism and territorial expansion, conditions that have been the lot of all Caribbean peoples for the past 400 years, is indeed against the best interest of the Caribbean people.

Dr. Cudjoe concluded.

'If the governments would not act, the people ought to bring pressures on them to do so. This is the only progressive and principled position that the Caribbean peoples, with the governments acting on their behalf, can take.'

ERITREA'S RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

One of the bleeding spots in the world today is Eritrea, that small country on the western side of the Red Sea.

Eritrea, as an ex-Italian colony, like all other African ex-colonies, should have achieved independence after the Second

World War. But power politics and imperialistic designs made Ethiopia disregard the United Nations resolutions and proceed to annex Eritrea and treat it as an Ethiopian province. Under the later Emperor Haile Selassie (with active encouragement from the United States for strategic reasons) a policy of repression was followed; a foreign language and foreign culture was imposed on a great portion of the Eritrean population.

After the fall of Haile Selassie, it was thought that the wise policy of Gen. Aman Andom with regard to Eritrea might prevail, but since his assassination a harsh policy of confrontation has been applied by the military rulers of Ethiopia, perpetuating misery and bloodshed.

Now, one person who has participated in the UN sessions dealing with the disposal of the ex-Italian colonies, Dr. Fadhel Jamali (former Prime Minister of Iraq) has called for an urgent solution to the problem of Eritrea and 'the achievement of peace on the basis of free self-determination and harmony between Ethiopia and Eritrea'.

This call is being made because there are 'many precious things at stake in Eritrea. To begin with, precious human lives are being wasted and much devastation, destruction and human suffering is incurred. Then the brotherly bonds and neighbourly sentiments between the Ethiopian and the Eritreans are being heavily taxed. The fine spirit of African unity, which should bind Ethiopia and Eritrea together is being shattered. The good and happy relations which exist between Ethiopia and the world of Islam are being shaken because part of the Eritrean population happens to be Muslims. (Knowledgeable Muslims always remember with gratitude the kind reception given by the Negus to the early Muslims who sought refuge in Ethiopia.)

The money and efforts which are being expended in fighting the Eritrean revolution could better be directed to fruitful and constructive economic, social, health and educational projects'

The sooner the Ethiopians recognise the right of Eritrea to self-determination (a right which has been urged by repeated resolutions of the United Nations) the sooner would peace return to the area.

MARX THROUGH THE SCREAMS

The position and the treatment of Muslims in socialist or communist countries have more often than not tended to show up the darker and the more fanatical face of socialism. The effacement of Islam in Albania, the annihilation of the Crim Tartars, the systematic and intensive persecution of Muslims in the Soviet Union and in China, the current repressions in Somalia, are just a few examples of a policy of repression—indeed of genocide directed against Muslims in socialist countries.

Often these repressions are carried on by traditionally anti-Muslim forces, as in Russia and China. In other cases, they are carried on by converted 'Muslim' socialists who adopt some of the more callous and hair-raising methods of their mentors in carrying out their policies and objectives of revolutionary wars of liberation.

One such revolutionary war has for some years now been waged by the Communist Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf (PFLOAG) under the leadership of one Ahmad Al Ghassani who took over the nationalist movement from the Muslim Dhofar Liberation Front under Musallim bin Nufl. These developments took place after the withdrawal of the British from Aden in 1967. In the resulting power vacuum, Russian and Chinese imperialists moved in to provide Marxism with a firm

base in the Arabian peninsula from which to spread its wings.

The story of the struggle for power which ensued between some of the British backed Sultans in the Gulf area and the Marxist insurgents has recently been told by Ranulph Fiennes, a troop commander in the Sultan of Oman's Forces in his book 'Where Soldiers Fear to Tread'. The book documents several operations against the 'adoo' (the Marxist enemy) and describes the life of the Dhofari people. It also deals with the aims and methods of so-called revolutionary and liberation movements. Here are three quotes to illustrate these methods:

'Young men ... came back from abroad. They came as strangers to their families and tribes to preach the Anti-God. Many of the older folk tried to stir the communities against these new

doctrines but this ceased when two especially vociferous old sheikhs of the Eastern Mahra had their eyes burnt out in public. The ceremony had been conducted with a fire-heated pocket knife by a nephew of one of the two sheikhs. The nephew had but recently returned from Iraq. After the operation on his uncle and the other patriarch, neither of whom died for several days, he had made the words of Karl Marx heard above their screams'

'Five old folks from a mountain village close by Shahayt had been caught praying in the open...The local 'Idaara' had summoned a number of villagers from the locality and held a public trial to show that they were just. All five old men were found guilty and held down over red hot coals until their backs were raw and blistered. Then they were beaten and taken to the Dahaq cliff at Darbat... one by one they were thrown over the edge at hourly intervals.'

'People who had acknowledged their Muslim beliefs in public were punished in several ways before being finished off. The soles of their feet were burned away, red-hot coals were applied to their faces, backs and genitals.'

The Idaara are special elimination squads whose job is to kill enemies of the revolution. They have an unhealthy resemblance to the Nazi SS or to the Russian KGB which fathered them.

Continued from page 1

tionary effect of eliminating a variety of social evils and giving the black man in America a new pride and dignity, the Nation has now gone further by adopting the five pillars of Islam.

There is however the feeling that the 'transition' that is taking place is too painful and tortuous and moreover is frequently at the expense of truth. Where Muslims would have expected a clear repudiation (for instance of the false claims by Elijah Muhammad to Divine Messengership), there have only been attempts at 're-interpretation' — thus adding to and not dispelling the confusion, the ambiguities and the inconsistencies.

Truth, one should realise, is not manufactured. It is not a process—like the development of the human form from embryo to manhood. It is this realization of the nature of Truth which makes Abdul Malik Shabazz (Malcolm X), an ex-member of the Nation of Islam, one of

the truly great men of our times. There was no sophistry in him. He always said it like it is.

As he himself testifies, he always tried "to accept the reality of life as new experiences and new knowledge unfolds" and that he always "kept an open mind" which was necessary for "every form of intelligent search for truth".

There is one aspect of the 'Nation's' progression to truth which is profoundly disquieting—the decided emphasis on blackness now with the stated objective of emerging fully at some later stage into the universality of the Islamic message. This present emphasis on separate development can be seen as a form of apartheid which could have disastrous implications for the future of the Muslim community in Trinidad and elsewhere.

In this connection, we could all do well to remember the saying of Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him, that.

'Whoever calls towards 'asabiyah' (Arabic for tribalism racialism,

nationalism) and whoever fights for 'asabiyah is not one of us.'

Let us not therefore revere the noble Bilal, the Companion of the Prophet (may God be pleased with him) for his blackness. He was persecuted and he suffered and he was later honoured not for his blackness but for something far greater his unshakeable belief in the ONE GOD and for his unswerving attachment to Truth.

There are some other matters which I would have liked to discuss with you—like the regimentation within the Nation of Islam and its implications, your interpretation of certain Christian doctrines, some historical facts relating to the life of the Prophet, and so on.

But these must be left for another time...

May God guide us all to the path that is straight and give us the good of this world and the good of the Hereafter.

*Yours sincerely,
Abdul Wahid Hamid.*

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS



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SANTA IS COMING YOU BETTER WATCH OUT!

by Muhammad Sayyid

Have you seen that fat, white bearded, pot-bellied, mythical figure dressed in a red suit with white fur collar and hem, tall black boots, broad black belt, white gloves and tall, red hat anywhere around? The one with the red nose and drunken-looking cheeks who brings presents of toys for kids, and drunkenness, indigestion, debt and the repossession for their parents in his big bag. Have you seen Santa Claus?

When his picture is pulled out of the closet, dusted off and put up on the showcases and the prices of goods go up, know that Christmas is near. At this time you are bombarded with advertisements throughout the towns and villages, in the newspapers, on the television sets and on walls. No matter where you turn, the advertisements remind you to get new curtains to replace your perfectly good ones, get a new stove—on ready credit—to replace the one, already paid for, which has been cooking your food so well for months. Supermarkets and groceries suddenly develop crippling shortages in essential food items, but offer 'attractive bargains' in whiskey, rum and other 'wonderful' liquors. Stand-offish furniture shop owners suddenly become super friendly, actually falling over themselves to help you select expensive furniture suites even though you are T.B.T.T.O.C. (Totally Broke to Thief or Cry). They only want a down payment and the most exorbitant installments you've ever heard, if you only listen. Loudspeakers in every store and parlour blare out the 'new low, low prices' of items which were even lower at the 'old high prices'. Every business place is attractively decorated to catch the eyes of the victims of this vicious, diabolical con game—YOU, Mr. and Mrs. John Public.

It is indeed marvellous to see the manner in which drab, dirty old houses and their surroundings are transformed into bright airy mansions fit for kings and queens—for a short while at least. There is

sudden haste by the citizenry to secure gallons of paint, dozens of brushes, endless curtains and brand new furniture complete with extra fittings. The soaring food bills go unnoticed during this period since nobody wants to pass up the 'wonderful' bargains offered at the shops and supermarkets. Swine -legs (and their vermin) at just \$2.30 a pound, rum, biscuits by the tins and boxes, nuts, apples, grapes...anything at all edible, are must-haves for scrunting home-makers. Eggs, in great demand by frantic housewives, become scarce, and those visible are suddenly very valuable on the stock market. Hire-purchase radios continue to screech the sickening reminders: "Only x more shopping days to Christmas" while confused and flustered wives and mothers (and drunken husbands) toil away—dusting furniture, painting walls, sweeping floors, even remote corners where the past year's dust has gathered, scrubbing, baking, making new curtains, toiling, toiling, toiling...

At this time of year 'fresh-water Spaniards' pull out their old guitars and quattros and go mopping from house to house, their unintelligible bawling just adding to the already raucous din. On the 25 December, the confusion intensifies and sickness reaches its peak. Although the preceding week is a continuous orgy of eating, drinking and general stuffing, on this day—Christmas Day—grossly distended stomachs are called upon to perform remarkable feats of gluttony. Foods of every description are gobbled up by children and adults alike, most of whom are drunk to the point of being moronic even before sunrise. Neighbours visit each other's gaily decorated houses in a show of friendship, showering greetings of peace and happiness left and right. Housewives still prepare meals from their overflowing food-baskets only to see the laboriously-eaten meals puked up all over their pretty table-cloths. The piles of damaged crockery left by gangs of maurading 'serenaders' are enough to impoverish the metaphorical Joneses, much less the average scrunting family. And in the background, the strains of

Jingle-Bells' and 'White Christmas' continuously flow, lending a false sense of peace to a chaotic situation. Such is this day of nativity.

At midnight the drunk and the not-so-drunk who feel inclined to, normally don their 'pretty threads' and go to (rarely visited) church. There they examine other visitors in the hope of finding long-lost comrades who may wish to 'paint the town red' with parang after services. And the priest, year after year, drones on about the Nativity, the virtues of Christmas and so on. In the shadows of the church young boys and girls would sneak 'draws' on 'joints' and consume hidden beer and rum in alarming proportions while the choir raises its voice in praise and thankfulness —'Peace and Goodwill to All Men...'

It is only after the storm that the damage can be totalled; so too with the after-effects of this one day. Only after the hangovers, indigestion, the pukings and the departure of the final ravager (Jan. 6) do the home-owners realise their predicaments. The rent-collector presents his bill with a 'Happy New Year' smile; the repossession appears with his van to remind Mr. and Mrs. John Public that the first instalment on their hire-purchase furniture is now due...endless horrors.

And Santa smiles a hearty smile from the roof of the store, the reindeer prance in the false snow as Mr. and Mrs. John Public crank their befogged minds slowly into gear. Dr. Moses and his people at A.A. prepare for the influx of newcomers at St. Ann's; at CMC, the doctor piles up the needles he will use in his increased work schedule, a twelve-year old drains an empty rum -bottle in an effort to quench his new-found thirst... and Santa smiles, "Merry Christmas!"

"Merry Christmas!"—perhaps only the cool and calculating businessman, busily counting your money, knows the meaning.

Is this necessary for a 'religious' celebration, to commemorate the birth of Prophet Jesus, peace be upon him?

Worship (Arabic: Ibadah), according to Islam, is a means for the purification of man's soul and his practical life.

The basis of worship is the fact that human beings are creatures and thus servants of God, their Creator and their Lord, to Whom they are destined to return. Thus, man's turning towards God in total reverence, and in the spirit of devotion and humble submission, is termed ibadah.

Islam's conception of worship is related to its fundamental view that the true foundations of good life are soundness of belief and thinking, purity of soul, and righteousness of action.

Islam considers every virtuous action which has been sincerely performed and with the view to carry out the commands of God and in order to seek His Pleasure, to be acts of worship for which man will be rewarded. Even those worldly actions which satisfy man's needs and yield sensuous pleasure become acts of worship provided they are performed with true religious motives."

Through belief in the oneness of God, who is invested with all the attributes of perfection, Islam seeks to purge human intellect of idolatry in all its forms and to liberate it from the bonds of perverted ideas, superstitions and fancies. In fact, polytheism and idolatry, which are opposed by Islam, degrade man to a level which is incompatible with his dignity. In its concern to eradicate idolatry Islam takes notice even of the imperceptible forms of idolatry. One of the manifestations of this concern is that Islam does not permit the performance of ritual worship (salah) in front of a tomb, nor does it permit man to swear in the name of anyone except God. When Caliph 'Umar saw that people had begun to sanctify the tree beneath which the Companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had pledged to lay down their lives in the way of God, he feared that its sanctification might corrupt the beliefs of the people. 'Umar therefore had it cut down! By destroying everything which might blur the distinction between the creature and the

Creator, Islam brings man out of the darkness of superstitions and ignorance to the full daylight of realities.

The characteristic features of worship in Islam may be stated as follows:

First of all, Islam has liberated worship from the bondage of intermediaries between man and his Creator. Islam seeks to create a direct link between man and his Lord, thus rendering the intercession of intermediaries unnecessary. There is no priesthood in Islam. The Prophet, showing that all human beings stand on a footing of complete equality before God, once said to his daughter:

"O Fatimah daughter of Muhammad! I shall be of no help to you before God."

Secondly, Islam has liberated worship from confinement to specific places. Islam regards every place—whether it is one's dwelling place, the back of an animal, the board of a vessel on the surface of the sea, or a mosque specifically built for worship as pure enough for the performance of worship. Wherever a man might be he can turn towards his Lord in prayer and in devotion. The noble Prophet has expressed this idea beautifully:

The (whole of the) earth has been rendered for me a mosque pure and clean."

Thirdly, Islam has also considerably widened the scope of worship. In Islam, worship is not confined to specified prayers and litanies which are to be performed on particular occasions. Rather, Islam considers every virtuous action which has been sincerely performed and with the view to carry out the ordinances of God and in order to seek His Pleasure, to be acts of worship for which man will be rewarded. Eating and drinking, sleeping and the enjoyment of innocent recreation—even those worldly actions which satisfy man's physical needs and yield sensuous pleasure—become acts of worship provided they are performed with true religious motives. It is also an act of worship to try to strengthen one's body by providing it with its due of nourishment and sleep by making it undertake exertion as well as giving it rest and recreation so as to enable it to shoulder the responsibilities which have been placed on him by God. In fact, if one does all that with the above-mentioned intention, one's action would be in harmony with the following saying of the

WORSHIP IN ISLAM

noble Prophet (peace be upon him):

"A believer who possesses strength is better and dearer to God than a believer who is weak."

Islam, unlike other religions, does not anathematise the gratification of man's instinctive bodily appetites. Islam does not even consider abstention from the satisfaction of these desires to be an act of greater piety and virtue than satisfying them. Islam wants man to enjoy the pleasures and good things of life provided he does not transgress the limits of legitimacy or the rights of others nor trample upon moral excellence nor injure the larger interests of the society. God says in the Qur'an.

"Seek the abode of the Hereafter in that which God has given you and neglect not your portion of the world."

Now, when a person knows that even his enjoyments and pleasures can become acts of worship merely by virtue of purity of intention and motive, it becomes easy for him to render obedience to God continually and to direct all his attention to seeking Divine pleasure. For he knows well that this devotion to God does not necessarily mean abandonment of worldly life, nor a life of misery and wretchedness. The

The intention to do good alone does not mark off the true men of faith from the rest...Otherwise even those who are in fact opposed to religion could claim to be the devoutest of all worshippers!

noble Prophet has said that (even) 'when a person affectionately puts a piece of food in the mouth of his wife, in

order to strengthen the bonds of matrimonial love, he is rewarded for it'

Muslim jurists and scholars have therefore proclaimed that good intention changes acts of habit into acts of worship. Good intentions create a world of difference in human life. It is owing to the absence of good intention that there are people who eat and drink and satisfy their animal desires and while so doing they simply live on the same plane as the animals do. On the contrary, there are also people who are, apparently, similar to the afore-mentioned people in so far as they also satisfy their desires and enjoy the pleasures of life. But, thanks to the noble intention which motivates their actions, even their physical self-fulfilment becomes an act of worship for which they merit reward. The reason is that the motive behind all their actions is to live in compliance with the will of God. The sublimity of their motive becomes manifest in their conduct in day-to-day life for they consistently distinguish between good and bad, right and wrong in all their dealings and transactions.

It is not righteousness
That ye turn your faces
Towards East or West,
But it is righteousness
To Believe in God
And the Last Day,
And the Angels,
And the Book
And the Messengers,
To spend of your substance,
Out of love for Him,
For your kin,
For orphans,
For the needy,
For the wayfarer
For those who ask,
And for the ransom of slaves
To be steadfast in prayer,
And practise regular charity,
To fulfil the contracts
Which ye have made,
And to be firm and patient,
In pain (or suffering)
And adversity,
And throughout
All periods of panic.
Such are the people
Of Truth, the God-fearing.
(The Qur'an, 2 : 177)

The real purpose of Islam in declaring that worship embraces the total life of man is to reform human life, to develop in man an attitude of dignified patience and fortitude in the face of hardships and difficulties and create in him the urge to strive for the prevalence of good and the extirpation of evil:-

God has said in the Qur'an:

"Those who disbelieve, take their comfort in this life and eat even as the cattle eat, and the Fire is their habitation." (47 12).

The wide jurisdiction of worship in Islam i.e. its incorporation of all acts which are performed with the intention of complying with the will of God, including indulgence in legitimate pleasures is sometimes utilized as a pretext to support the erroneous view that the obligatory aspects of 'ibadah such as prayers, fasting, zakat and pilgrimage can be dispensed with, or that they are not very important.

The truth, however, is quite contrary to this. In Islam, they are the chief means for strengthening man's attachment to God. Thus absolutely misconceived is the view of those who are given to laxity in religious matters with regard to the obligatory acts of worship, and imagine that true faith does not consist of salah (Prayer) and sawm (Fasting), that the basis of true faith is merely purity of heart, goodness of intention, and soundness of conduct. This is deliberate misrepresentation of Islamic teachings, and seems to be motivated by the desire to cling on to lazy habits of life.

The intention to do good alone does not mark off the true men of faith from the rest. Religion, after all has an external aspect in the same way as it has an internal aspect. Otherwise, everyone, even those who are in fact opposed to religion, could claim to be the devoutest of all worshippers! The Prayer, and all other prescribed forms of worship for that matter, serve to distinguish the ones who do really have faith and wish sincerely to serve God from those who are content with lip-service. So important indeed is prayer that the Prophet has said:

"Salah (prayer) is the pillar of the Islamic religion and whosoever abandons it, demolishes the religion itself."

The real purpose of Islam in declaring that worship embraces the total life of man is to make religious faith play a practical and effective role in reforming human life, in developing in man an attitude of dignified patience and fortitude in the face of hardships and difficulties, and in creating in him the urge to strive for the prevalence of good and the extirpation of evil.

All this makes it amply evident that Islam, the standard-bearer of the above-mentioned concepts and ideals is opposed to those defeatist philosophies which can broadly be described as asceticism. Asceticism is based on world-renunciation, on resignation from the resources of life, on withdrawal from the life of action and struggle, on sheer stagnation and decadence. These things have nothing to do with Islam. Rather they are the symbols of defeatism and escape from the struggle of life. For life requires strength, material resources and active habits. The role of Islam in the struggle of life is a positive one. It is through this attitude that Islam ensures the channelling of man's powers and resources in such a manner as to lead eventually to general good. The Islamic system of worship is a means to ensure this soundness of orientation.

"Umar, the son of Khattab, was the saintliest of people. But when he said something he made himself heard, when he walked, he walked fast, and when he beat his beating caused pain."

An event may be narrated here in order to illustrate the Islamic attitude on the question under discussion, and to disabuse minds of wrong notions of spiritual life. It is reported that 'Aishah, the wife of the Prophet, once saw a person walking with his body stooped down and his back bent with weakness, appearing as if he were not fully alive, attracting thereby the glances of passers-by. She enquired about him and was informed that he was a saintly person. Aishah denounced this kind of saintliness and said: 'Umar, the son of Khattab was the saintliest of people. But when he said something he made himself heard, when he walked, he walked fast, and when he beat, his beating caused pain.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE GREATEST

THE HAJJ

More than a million Muslims now perform the Hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca each year. The powerful emotions experienced during this great act of worship are described in the accounts that follow.

AHMAD KAMAL (Soviet Union)

Makkah is not a place. It is the Beginning, the Present, and Forever, and whoever enters Makkah feels this and is shaken.

Most pilgrims come here gratefully to discharge a duty owed to God. But ever since the beginning men have come to the Ka'bah to seek refuge with God, bodily refuge from harm at a foe's hand, or sanctuary where the confused heart can find a way and the wounded soul be healed. Today, again, there are pilgrims for whom Makkah and the holy places are a haven after savage trials and relentless persecution—pilgrims escaped from Muslim lands under foreign, atheistic rule. Countless devout Muslims trapped in nations now Soviet, forbidden by the Communists to worship God or perform the Pilgrimage, have perished attempting to cross closed frontiers and come here. A few thousands, survivors, have made Jeddah and Makkah their house of exile, taking some solace from their nearness to the holy places...

Before—and again one day, God willing—pilgrims came from Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, from Poland and the Caucasus and Crimea, from Turkistan and Kazan and Siberia, from China, and from all the other lands where today, Pilgrimage is banned. Some of these peoples, like the Crimeans, have been annihilated and never will be seen in Makkah again, the others dwell in slavery ..

And now the eyes of the pilgrim will behold the Holy Ka'bah. Master the emotions. This is an hour for awareness and conscious reverence. This is one of the great experiences of life...

The soul-shaken pilgrim entering

the Sanctuary of Makkah and for the first time beholding the Holy Ka'bah knows a humility and an exaltation which are but a prologue for Arafat. Here, by the mountain, the pilgrim will pass what should be spiritually and intellectually, the noblest hours of life. The tents of the Faithful will cover the undulating valley as far as the eye can see. This immense congregation with the sacred mountain at its center is the heart of Islam. This is the day of true brotherhood,...

We are promised that in these hours by Arafat God will send down His forgiveness and mercy to those who are deserving and they will feel HIS presence.

This is the day of brotherhood and heartbreak—heartbreak that we have not yet learned to cling to this solidarity where we dwell and labor in valleys and on mountains far from Arafat.

This is the day of promise: the guarantee of what Islam shall be when Muslims everywhere achieve the oneness today known only at Arafat.

From THE SACRED JOURNEY by Ahmad Kamal, London 1964.

MICHAEL JANSEN (U.S.A.)



I have deep roots in America. Some of my father's forbears migrated to the Virginia Colony in 1609, and on my mother's side are ancestors who fought with Washington and Lincoln and a great-grandfather who was a Pony Express rider. Until I was 16, I myself had had an

upbringing generally regarded as typically American, Midwestern, middle class and Protestant. I grew up in Bay City, Michigan, belonged to the Episcopal Church, went to Sunday School and sang in the church choir.

At 16 however, I discovered the Koran. The first chapter read:

"All praise is due to God, the Lord of the Worlds, the Beneficent, the Merciful, the Master of the Day of Requital, Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help; Guide us on the Right Path, the Path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favor, not of those on whom wrath is brought down, nor of those who go astray."

These words, simple and direct, so impressed me that I immediately set out to memorize them. Indeed they drew me into Islam, an example perhaps of Prophet Muhammad's assertion that everyone is born a Muslim and made a Jew or a Christian by his parents.

From that time forward I charted my life in the direction of Mecca...

Before I had embarked on the Pilgrimage its rituals seemed to me just so many curious exercises. But as I participated in the events of the Pilgrimage, the meaning of these rites unfolded, my understanding of Islam was deepened and I learned more fully what it meant to be a Muslim. Indeed, this is why God had commanded Muhammad to issue the call for the Pilgrimage "That they (the pilgrims) may witness things that are of benefit to them..." (The Qur'an 22 : 28)

(For example, towards the end of the Hajj when the time of making the Sacrifice came), I began to feel uneasy. Since I have not completely outgrown the tender-heartedness I had known as a child I had balked at the idea of the Sacrifice long before being confronted with it and now the time had come to do it. What was I to do? As a girl I had cared for lost dogs or stray cats, adopting any fledgling that had fallen from its nest, splinting a bird's broken leg with a matchstick and feeding injured butterflies on sugar syrup. But a companion had been adamant. "You must do the Sacrifice..."

Back at our building at Mina I turned to the Koran. I found that the Sacrifice has many meanings: it com-

GATHERING OF MANKIND

memorates Abraham's offering of his son's life and God's rejection of this sacrifice in exchange for Abraham's submission to God's will, it marks the end of idolatry among the Arabs: it is an offering of thanksgiving to the God of Creation, Who has been so benevolent to mankind, and it teaches the well-to-do to share their blessings to "eat thereof (the Sacrifice) and feed the beggar and suppliant" (22:36).

As I pondered what I had read, a great weight was lifted from my conscience. I suddenly saw that the Sacrifice UPHOLDS the sacredness of life that it, in fact, constitutes a pledge by the pilgrim that he will slay for sustenance only. And where I had felt reluctance before I now felt eagerness to fulfil ALL the requirements of my Pilgrimage...

From ARAMCO WORLD MAGAZINE, November-December 1974.

MALCOLM X (U.S.A.)

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

You may be shocked by these words coming from me. But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and experienced, has forced me to re-arrange much of my thought-patterns previously held, and to toss aside some of my previous conclusions. This was not too difficult for me. Despite my firm convictions, I have been always a man who tries to face facts, and to accept the reality of life as new experience and new knowledge unfolds it. I have always kept an open mind, which is necessary to the flexibility that must go hand in hand with every form of intelligent search for truth.

During the past eleven days here in the Muslim world, I have eaten from the same plate, drunk from the same glass, and slept in the same bed (or on the same rug)—while praying to the same God

with fellow Muslims, whose eyes were the bluest of the blue, whose hair was the blondest of blond, and whose skin was the whitest of white. And in the words and in the actions and in the deeds of the 'white' Muslims, I felt the same sincerity that I felt among the black African Muslims of Nigeria, Sudan and Ghana.

We were TRULY all the same—brothers...

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all the Worlds.

From THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF
MALCOLM X, New York, 1964.

MUHAMMAD ASAD (Austria)



"...hidden from my eyes in the midst of this lifeless wilderness of valleys and hills, lies the plain of Arafat, on which all the pilgrims who come to Mecca assemble on one day of the year as a reminder of that Last Assembly, when man will have to answer to his Creator for all he has done in life. How often have I stood there myself, bareheaded, in the white pilgrim garb, among a multitude of white-garbed, bareheaded pilgrims from three continents our faces turned toward the Jabal ar-Rahma—the Mount of Mercy — which rises out of the vast plain: standing and waiting through the noon, through the after-noon, reflecting upon that inescapable Day, 'when you will be exposed to view, and no secret of yours will remain concealed'...

As I stand on the hillcrest and gaze down toward the invisible Plain of Arafat, the moonlit blueness of the landscape before me, so dead a moment ago, suddenly comes to life with the currents

of all the human lives that have passed through it and is filled with the eerie voices of the millions of men and women who have walked or ridden between Mecca and Arafat in over thirteen hundred pilgrimages for over thirteen hundred years. Their voices and the steps of their animals reawaken and resound anew, I see them walking and riding and assembling—all those myriads of white-garbed pilgrims of thirteen hundred years; I hear the sounds of their passed-away days, the wings of faith which have drawn them together to this land of rocks and sand and seeming deadness beat again with the warmth of life over the arc of centuries, and the mighty wingbeat draws me into its orbit and draws my own passed-away days into the present, and once again I am riding over the plain—riding in a thundering gallop over the plain, amidst thousands and thousands of ihram-clad beduins, returning from Arafat to Mecca—a tiny particle of that roaring, earth-shaking irresistible wave of countless galloping dromedaries and men...

We ride on, rushing, flying over the plain, and to me it seems that we are flying with the wind, abandoned to a happiness that knows neither end nor limit....and the wind shouts a wild paean of joy into my ears. 'Never again, never again; never again will you be a stranger!'

My brethren on the right and my brethren on the left, all of them unknown to me but none a stranger: in the tumultuous joy of our chase, we are one body in pursuit of one goal. Wide is the world before us, and in our hearts glimmers a spark of the flame that burned in the hearts of the Prophet's Companions. They know, my brethren on the right and my brethren on the left, that they have fallen short of what was expected of them, and that in the flight of centuries their hearts have grown small and yet, the promise of fulfilment has not been taken from them...from us...

Someone in the surging host abandons his tribal cry for a cry of faith: 'We are the brethren of him who gives himself up to God!'—and another joins in: 'ALLAHU AKBAR!'—'God is the Greatest!—God alone is Great!'

From THE ROAD TO MECCA, 2nd. ed., London, 1974. 1st. ed. 1954

Thirty three years ago, on December 10 1942, at Waterloo Road in Arouca—thousands of miles away from his birthplace in Lahore—Nazir Ahmad Simab died. He was exactly 52 years old. He was buried at the far southwestern corner of the El Socorro Muslim cemetery in San Juan. His funeral was attended by thousands of Muslims from all over the island—a testimony to the high esteem in which he was held and to the great and pioneering contribution he made to the Muslim community in Trinidad.

Although he spent only five years in the country (from June 1935 to August 1937 and from March 1939 to his death in 1942) his work stands out perhaps more prominently than that of any single individual in the history of Muslims in Trinidad. Even now there is much that can be gained from a study of the character and the achievements of Nazir Ahmad Simab, achievements which seem all the more impressive bearing in mind the conditions under which he worked. His selflessness, his dedication and hard work, his uncompromising attachment to the Qur'an and the Sunnah and his breadth of vision are qualities which we need urgently and desperately to attain.

SELFLESSNESS

Nazir Ahmad was a teacher and a writer in the Punjab where he lived with his wife and five children. "I was well happy at my home," he recalled, "drawing a handsome salary." He was a member of an association called the Anjuman Khuddam-i-Islam—the Servants of Islam Association. Recommended by this body, without his even asking, he came to Trinidad under the auspices of the Anjuman Sunnat wal Jamaat to do missionary work without even discussing pay and maintenance arrangements!

For almost five months after his arrival in Trinidad he was not paid and he had to send for money from India to defray his personal expenses. The Anjuman acknowledged its deficiency in an appeal (15 April 1937) which spoke of "the great inconvenience and material loss to himself, loss of 22 years service, pension and finance, which loss we are afraid the Muslims in Trinidad will not be able to make good".

In spite of these hardships in the first period of his stay, Nazir

NAZIR AHMAD SIMAB

"His selflessness, his dedication and hard work, his uncompromising attachment to the Qur'an and the Sunnah and his breadth of vision are qualities which we need urgently and desperately to attain."



10 Dec 1890 — 10 Dec 1942

against the wishes of his family, decided to return to Trinidad to continue the work he had started 'in the path of God'—fi sabilillah. It is painful to recall that during this second period he was accused of hatching a "scheme to disorganise the community, and forming a third party for the sake of Dal Rotee". He replied to these charges by saying, "May the curse of God be upon the liars" and "requesting the Muslims to say AMEEN". He went on to make a plea for "drastic reformation" of the Anjuman. The details of these events show the great integrity of the man and how incorruptible he was in his dealings with others.

HARD WORK

Nazir Ahmad's efforts as a missionary were concentrated on teaching and writing. His students speak of his "great energy and his enterprising efforts". He lectured throughout the island. He held large classes, to which students cycled for miles to attend, at San Juan, Charlieville, Bank Village, Debe, Arouca and San Fernando. He taught Arabic, Urdu and Qur'anic exegesis.

During the second period of his stay, Nazir Ahmad started a weekly publication in English and Urdu which he wrote himself and distributed free of cost. The publication contained the weekly Friday sermon and a Children's Page dealing with Islamic advices and Islamic history.

He had to raise funds for most of his projects and was even instrumental in setting up a dry goods store in Arouca.

UNCOMPROMISING BUT GENIAL

Nazir Ahmad's knowledge of the

Qur'an and the Hadith was very profound and so was his knowledge of Islamic history. He was a vigorous pamphleteer and many were the occasions on which he took a fearless and courageous stand when he felt that the foundations of Islam and Islamic principles were being compromised.

For example he spoke out against the Anjuman Sunnat wal Jamaat for presenting 48 copies of an Urdu translation of the Qur'an to the Imams of the country with instruction to use it for their congregations. He commented on this as follows:

"The translation in question teaches that (a) to call the prophets Bashar (or human being) is Kufr, (b) that the Holy Prophet Muhammad was only in outward appearance a human being, (c) that the Holy Prophet is Omnipresent and Omniscient, (d) that the sins of all the past, present and future Muslims have already been forgiven for the sake of the Holy Prophet, and (e) that the Holy Prophet knows all the Unseen of the past, present and the future and God taught him all the Unseen and (f) that to invoke the dead saints and prophets for help is lawful, the dead hear our prayers and help us. These teachings are nothing but KUFR and SHIRK... When these things were objected to, they (the Anjuman) began to defend FALSEHOOD... "and thus they are endeavouring to disorganise the solidarity of the community, but to fool the Muslims they lay charges against me..."

It was over this issue that he came into sharp conflict with Haji Ruknuddin Sahib, the Qazi of Trinidad. On this issue he was accused of being a Wahhabi and of "making mischief in the community".

Characteristically, he also "raised his voice" against the unlawful trade of selling pork "which was being carried on by one of the prominent officials of the Anjuman Sunnat wal Jamaat" during his first stay. The Anjuman in a "fit of fury" dispensed with his services.

Another example of his uncompromising stand was his efforts to have Captain Daniel, Deputy Director of Education in the Colony and author of the West Indian History book to have a statement alleging that Islam was spread by the sword deleted. In this he succeeded.

In spite of his uncompromising stand, Nazir Ahmad was known to Muslims and others at large for his 'genial countenance and affability, his outstanding trait'.

BREADTH OF VISION

Nazir Ahmad saw the pressing need for education in the Colony. This is where he made his most significant contribution. With "almost superhuman efforts" he established in January 1942 the first Islamia School in the territory, at San Juan. It was the first non-Christian denominational school to gain government recognition.

He saw also the necessity of introducing English as the medium of instruction not only in Trinidad but in the other British-held territories. To this end he started writing a series of books—the Highroads of Islam—but this task remained uncompleted although the Urdu version is still extant. He was also the first to deliver khutbas in English in the territory.

He also saw the need to present Islam to the non-Muslims by personal example and by organised efforts. If this aspect of his work was acted upon, the present Muslim community would probably not have been the introverted one it is today.

Many of the attitudes which Nazir Ahmad fought against, or was the victim of, unhappily still persist. Much of the work, particularly in the field of education, which he started has not developed along the lines he intended and devoted his life for thousands of miles from his home and family.

There is much that can be learnt from his example and from his total and uncompromising commitment to Islam.

May God bless and reward him!

LETTERS

ADVICE AND BEST WISHES FROM BROOKLYN

Thank you for the copy of THE MUSLIM STANDARD now being published in Trinidad and we wish you the best of success.

The Qadiani have been officially declared non-Muslim by Pakistan and the Muslim World League. The Black Muslims (Nation of Islam) are now claiming to follow the true teachings of Islam under the leadership of Wallace Muhammad... Allah is the Knower and in time we could only judge this according to their actions.

The attitudes of racism that exist among some of our brothers are well known by those of us who are of African descent living here in the West. That is why we must act like a single body and support the efforts of each other until we can contribute to the TOTAL unity of Muslims. We must hate such foolishness in our heart, or speak out against it if we have the power, and the best Islam is to stop it and prevent it with our hands.

At any rate, brother, we must not let the un-Islamic culture affect us in the same way it affects others, nor should we submit to the ignorance that we have left behind to embrace true Islam, or we are in the same boat as them. The Qur'an must be used to oppose all forms of ignorance and evil. The Sunnah of Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the example for our daily activity so that justice and truth will prevail. We must attempt to express the principles of the religion even if it goes against the wrongdoing politicians or Muslim leaders.

Give all the brothers our greeting of peace and let them know that we are very much with them in spirit.

Haji Muhammad,
Ya-Sin Mosque,
52 Herkimer Place,
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11216, USA.

AN APPRECIATION

I shall like to embrace this opportunity to commend you on the production of THE MUSLIM STANDARD, which I believe is a magazine, unparalleled in Trinidad as far as the subject of Islam is concerned.

Having read your second issue, I

feel you ought to be commended for giving Islam its rightful place as that of a world-wide and multi-racial fraternity rather than being limited to just East Indians.

Another outstanding remark I noted as an inter-religious student, is the question of polytheism being an absolute violation of God's law...

Suresh Madoo,
(Non-sectarian Christian),
San Juan.

TAKE A SIDE!

I think that I will agree with you that Mr. Kamaluddin Mohammed should be removed from positions of responsibility in the Muslim community. How on the face of this earth does he want to bring Islam and Hinduism as one when the principles of Islam are so different from Hinduism. Our God is One and Islam is our faith. Well, Mr. Kamal better take one side and leave a side. If he wants to introduce Islam to the Hindus—no big thing. But I for one not going to sideup with no Hinduism. Muslims should encourage one another to follow the laws of the Qur'an.

Hassina Juman,
San Fernando.

ANTI-EDUCATION?

In your analysis of Mr. Kamaluddin Mohammed's Bhagawat speech, one significant aspect was overlooked—his attitude to education. While he seemed to be making the valid point that formal education does not necessarily lead to a recognition of God, I got the impression that he was distinctly anti-education as such and that he was making a rigid distinction between secular and religious a distinction that does not exist in Islam. Perhaps he may not have been talking about Islam, but it does appear that his position, to say the least, is ambiguous.

H. Ibrahim,
San Juan.

APOLOGY

We regret that, because of lack of space, our NEWS ROUND-UP feature has had to be left out. It will appear in the next issue, in shaa Allah.

NONE FOR THE ROAD

Motorists beware! Traffic police are cracking down on 'smooth tyre defaulters'. This warning was given by the Traffic Chief Assistant Commissioner, Russel Toppin. He continued, 'If your vehicle is not in good shape, leave it at home'.

Is this the real reason for the annual Christmas slaughter on our roads? Why is it then that there are few deaths during the rest of the year (minus fete days) when motorists also use smooth tyres.

Can anyone doubt that the reason for so many accidents on public holidays and especially during the Christmas season is not due to defective vehicles but to the use of alcohol. Why is it that the authorities fail to pin-point the cause of the problem? Is it because the government collects a sizeable income from alcohol production and sales or is it because the Assistant Commissioner also takes 'one for the road'?

Maybe he will change his warning and say, 'If your head is not in good shape stay at home.' Or may be he could go a bit further and launch a NO DRINK CAMPAIGN!

DIFFERENT STROKES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS

Recently the Government placed a ban on two musclemen who visited South Africa in a sporting capacity because they defied its ruling on the question of South Africa's apartheid policy. Cabinet even wants us to know that Trinidad & Tobago actively supported the UN resolution condemning apartheid in southern Africa and calling for the application of human rights and fundamental freedom to all people.

Cabinet may recall that Gary Sobers, once ostracised on account of his Rhodesian tour, was given asylum by our own Eric on the grounds that 'sport and politics do not mix'. They may also recall that Clive Nunez and his companion was ostracised for visiting Cuba because of this country's then Cuban policy. Our own PM and Company was not even criticised far less ostracised, for visiting

Cuba and hugging Castro in true-red Comrade fashion, or their sojourn in the Soviet Communist bloc and Red China. Once the writings of Mao meant death to its possessor here in this country, yet no-one lifted a finger against the national newspapers which carried full page speeches from Mao at the time.

Meanwhile the Government continues to fraternise with and to be tied to the apron strings of the USA which denies fundamental human rights and civil liberties to 30 million coloured peoples within its borders. This country also commits acts of aggression and terrorism against other nations through out the world (cf. the current revelations on the CIA), while crying foul because Zionism has been recognised, at last, as racism. Our policy makers seem to be unable to pass a ruling on this foul philosophy which is responsible (with massive US aid) for the crushed and mutilated bodies of countless Palestinians, yet they do not hesitate to put the screws on puny men for flexing their muscles on a stage..

By all means, ostracise South Africa but let us have the politics and diplomacy of conviction, not of convenience and fashion.

HISTORIC CONFERENCE

The Muslim Teachers' Conference held on 5 December at the ASJA Girls' College in San Fernando was an historic one from which some positive results are likely to follow.

It was described as being the largest gathering of Muslim teachers in the West. Some of the recommendations relating to curriculum programming, teacher training and Islamic behaviour in general point to the great amount of work and responsibility which rests on Muslim teachers, many of whom have so far displayed the imitative genius of colonised minds rather than a transforming and creative zeal based on Islam.

The decision to set up a Muslim Teachers Association could go a long way in ensuring some fruitful outcome of the Conference.

(Full report in next issue, in sha Allah).

In these times
people must have standards

THE BEST STANDARD

THE MUSLIM STANDARD

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