

# THE MUSLIM STANDARD

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The Islamic view of Jesus is that he was a man and one of the prophets or messengers of God. God who is the Creator, the Sovereign and the Lord sent His messengers to guide mankind. According to Islam, man's position in the universe is that he is a subject of God, but he is given some delegated power and relative freedom to choose between right and wrong. He can choose to follow God's guidance or to reject it. If he follows the course of piety and Godliness (God's guidance), which he is free to choose, he will succeed in this world and

colossal misfortune in the life to come. The messengers were raised in all epoch and in all lands and in all nations and they numbered hundreds of thousands. Islam was not the religion of Muhammad alone. It was the religion of all the messengers—Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, peace be upon them. But subsequently followers improvised different religions such as, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism etc.

Jesus (peace be upon him) taught the same religion which had been presented by Moses and other prophets (peace be

exclusively belongs to God, and all social and moral systems should be built entirely on it. God is both spiritual and legal sovereign.

2. Being representative of the same paramount power, a prophet must be obeyed unconditionally.

3. God alone is entitled to prescribe laws and regulations for making things lawful or unlawful, pure and impure and consequently *all laws imposed by others both in the spiritual and the mundane sphere must be abolished*. It is a pity that

## THE MISSION OF JESUS

**The ultimate aim of all the messengers, including Jesus, has been to challenge the existing establishments and man-made systems of exploitation to establish the will of God on earth, so that the system of life revealed by God can be implemented.**

in the next. But if he chooses to follow another course, of Godlessness and evil which he is equally free to follow, his life will be one of corruption and destructive frustration in this world and he will meet

upon them) before him. This fact is supported even by the existing gospel, eg., according to the gospel of Matthew, Jesus declared in the sermon on the mountain, "think not that I am come to destroy the law of the prophets, I am not come to destroy but to fulfil" Matthew 5:17. One of the Pharisees who was a lawyer asked Jesus, "which is the greatest commandment in the law." He replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment and second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the laws and the prophets." Matthew 22: 37-40.

On another occasion Jesus said to his disciples, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses seat, all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not go after their works for they say and do not." Matthew 23:2-3.

This shows that like all other prophets, Jesus (peace be upon him) also based his teachings on the following three fundamentals:-

1. The supreme authority to which mankind should submit and surrender

the existing Gospels do not present the mission of Jesus as it has been presented in the Qur'an.

The Qur'an says, Jesus said, "I have come to confirm those teachings and guidance of the Torah which are intact in my time. Lo I have come with a clear sign from your Lord. So fear God and obey me. Indeed God is my Lord and your Lord, therefore worship Him alone and that is the straight way."

Al Imran: 50

All the three basic teachings mentioned above are found scattered at various places in three books. For instance the fact that Jesus believed exclusively that God alone must be worshipped, is clear from the following. "Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and Him alone shalt thou serve."

Matthew 4:10.

Not only did he teach this but he made it the ultimate aim of all his activities, and strove to make the people of the earth to submit to the revealed law of God, just as the whole universe submits to His physical law. "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Matthew 6:10.

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The fact that Jesus considered himself a prophet and the representative of the kingdom of Heaven, and that he always invited the people to follow him in that capacity alone, is supported by a number of his sayings. When he started his mission in his native city, Nazareth, the people of his own town and his own kinsfolk rose against him and according to an agreed tradition in Matthew, Mark, and Luke he said, "No prophet is accepted in his own country." And when his enemies were conspiring in Jerusalem to kill him and the people advised him to go somewhere else, he replied, "it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."

Luke 13:33.

On another occasion he said: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart ...my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30.

## ONENESS OF GOD

The Oneness of God which messengers, including Jesus, preached leads to oneness of mankind. This liberates mankind from all the bondage and servitude of man to man. Oneness of God also leads to the realization that the same concept of pleasing God should prevail in spiritual and the operational field. The oneness of God also leads one to realize that it is a sign of ignorance to divide life into mundane and spiritual. Islam does not accept conflict or even separation between the mundane and the spiritual. Oneness of God also leads to the understanding that it is ignorant to divide life into the here and hereafter. Life is a continuum, one end of which is this world and the other end is the hereafter. Death is not a terminating point according to the Islamic teachings, but a transition from one phase to another. The belief in Oneness of God and its implication gives rise to change not only in religion but also in socio-economic and political premises and attitudes. So the teachings of the messengers or the concept of religion and God which they, including Jesus were putting forward, not only had an impact on a metaphysical faith, worship and supplication to God, but it also denied all legal sovereignty except that of God. This led to the idea of oneness of mankind. The whole teaching had a powerful potential for destructing the whole socio-economic fabric of society and, consequently, re-

structuring a new pattern based on the Oneness of God, oneness of mankind and oneness of life.

The Islamic message of the prophets propounded its own social system and philosophy. It provided a new motivation for art and literature. It provided a new basis of morality. It provided a new basis for the structure of the personality of both individual and society. It provided its own politico-economic structure based on social justice and equality of man. The message was a well-knit and complete whole. The messengers saw life from a universal standpoint and possessed a comprehensive system for managing all worldly affairs and reforming humanity at large. So they had to launch a struggle to seize power. For unless one possesses necessary power and authority to enforce the program the proposed system cannot possibly take root in the world of reality. In absence of power it cannot even stay for long even as speculation and theory.

*The messengers came to break the shackles of subservience to any power, imaginary or actual, except that of God. The revolution they brought was not like the so-called revolutions where exploitation of mankind, as an end, remains, while the means change. The French and the Soviet revolution brought some benefits to mankind. All these revolutions abolished some injustices, but brought about many other socio-economic and political injustices. By contrast the Prophet's message involved re-structuring of the human self and society on a new pattern, and total shift in the power-balance. Thus the ultimate aim of all the messengers, including Jesus, has been to challenge the existing establishments and man-made systems of exploitation to establish the will of God on earth, so that the system of life revealed by God can be implemented.* The messengers could very well permit people to be unbelievers ("There is no compulsion in religion") but they could never agree, and rightfully so, that unbelief should remain, in authority and wield power for its own ends. With this object before them all the prophets endeavoured to bring about social, cultural and political revolution, and the re-structuring of the socio-political system on their own pattern in their respective age. Some of them were able to prepare the ground, as Prophet Abraham did, others succeeded in practically carrying the revolutionary movements to its natural goal, culminating in the establishment of rule of God, or the Islamic State, on earth. In this latter category are prophets Joseph, Moses and Muhammad (peace be upon them).

Jesus' mission is the best example of

the early stage of Islamic revolution in an organized state as he did in the Roman Empire. He invited the people of Palestine to establish the rule of God. One of the teachers of religion who was standing there listening to the discussion realized that Jesus had answered well. So he asked, "Of all the commandments which is the most important?" Jesus replied. "The one that says, Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one God. And you must love him with all your heart and soul and mind and strength."

Mark 12:28-30.

"Jesus replied, 'We must worship God, and Him alone. So is it written in the scriptures.'"

Luke 4:8.

"Pray along these lines: 'Our Father in heaven, we honour your holy name. We ask you that your kingdom will come now. May your will be done here on earth, just as it is in heaven.'"

Matthew 6:9-10.

In the last passage Jesus clarified the purpose of his mission. The passage's contents contradict the misunderstanding that Kingdom of God meant only Spiritual Kingdom. The passage clearly means that God's law or legal regulations revealed through Jesus should be followed by the people in the same way as His physical laws are being followed in the universe. Jesus was preparing people for the Islamic revolution which requires a multi-dimensional struggle.

"I am sending you out as sheep among wolves. Be therefore, as wary as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware! For you will be arrested and tried and whipped in the synagogues. Yes, and you must stand trial before governors and kings for my sake. This will give you the opportunity to tell them about me, to witness to the world."

Matthew 10:16-18.

"Anyone who wants to be my follower must love me far more than he does his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers, or sisters—yes, more than his own life—otherwise he cannot be my disciple.

And no one can be my disciple who does not carry his own cross and follow me. But do not begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of building without first getting estimates and then checking to see if he has enough money to pay the bills? Otherwise he might complete only the foundation before running out of funds. And then how every one would laugh. See the fellow there? they would mock. He started that building and ran out of money before it was finished! Or what king would ever dream of going to war without first sitting down with his counsellors and discussing if his army



of 10,000 is strong enough to defeat the 20,000 men who are marching against him?

If the decision is negative, then while the enemy troops are still far away, he will send a truce team to discuss terms of peace. So no one can become my disciple unless he first sits down and counts his blessings—and then renounces them all for me."

The whole passage clearly shows that Jesus was not preaching a religion or giving some esoteric spiritual messages. He has before him the objects of demolition and reconstruction of a socio-economic and political system. There was a natural fear of conflict and war, with Romans, Jewish authority, scribes, pharisees and all those with vested interests. So he warned that the work he is going to do is dangerous and only those people should associate with him who have the courage to take the risk and make sacrifices. He said, "When you pray try to understand what God wants from you. It is much more important than what you want from God." (Dead Sea Scroll, page 128).

There has been a perpetuation of the misunderstanding that Jesus preached asceticism. Actually when a revolutionary movement begins it has to educate and teach the people patience, forbearance and confidence in God. In an organized state all the means and resources for livelihood are in the hands of the state. In an organized state a movement for total change cannot take root unless the people love its ideals more than their property and their life itself, where the people are ready to forbear all calamities, sacrifice their gains and accept the injuries, both financially and psychologically. Armed struggle is a late stage: even a moral stance against the system and the establishment invites oppression and suffering. Only those people can stay in this struggle who have patience. Their endurance and self-control is such that after being slapped on one cheek they are ready to offer the other cheek. They are not preoccupied with bread and butter only. The establishment, which controls the means of livelihood can starve weak people into submission. Hence only those can stay in the Islamic movement who do not care for physical causes (circumstantial and environmental) and care only for God.

"Come to me and I will give you rest—all of you who work so hard beneath a heavy yoke. Wear my yoke—for it fits perfectly—and let me teach you, for I am gentle and humble, and you shall find rest for your souls; for I give you only a light burden." Matthew 11:28-30.

This is indeed an excellent manifesto for the kingdom of God or the Islamic state. The bondage of human rule and kingdom over human beings is heavy and oppressive. Breaking the yoke of human beings and taking the yoke of God gives relief and liberation.

"In this world the kings and great men order their slaves around, and the slaves have no choice but to like it. But among you, the one who serves you best will be your leader. Out in the world the master sits at the table and is served by his servants. But not here. *For I am your servant.*" Luke 22:25-27.

The religious people who have taken the line of least resistance and lost the original spirit of Islam are more interested in following their own desires than in sacrificing and fulfilling the *deen*—the rule of God. They are not interested in breaking man-made rules and yokes. These religious people have always collaborated and compromised with the exploitative system by ensnaring people in rituals and the outer forms of religious life. Thus they maintain their identity and esteem among the masses. When Jesus started his prophetic mission which demanded the reconstruction of individual and collective life on a new pattern, these religious people, as part of the old system, made more difficulties for him than Roman Imperialists.

"Then the Pharisees met together to try to think of some way to trap Jesus into saying something for which they could arrest him. They decided to send some of their men along with the Herodians to ask him this question: 'Sir, we know you are very honest and teach the truth regardless of the consequences, without fear or favour. Now tell us, is it right to pay taxes to the Roman government or not?' But Jesus saw what they were after. 'You hypocrites!' he exclaimed, 'Who are you trying to fool with your trick questions? Here, show me a coin.' And they handed him a penny.

"Whose picture is stamped on it?" He asked them. "And whose name is this beneath the picture?"

"Caesar's," they replied.

"Well, then," he said, "give it to Caesar if it is his, and give God everything that belongs to God." Matthew 22: 15-21.

The above story shows that pharisees or religious leaders of that time who had compromised with the establishment and the system played a trick. In order to make this movement meet its doom at the very beginning they wanted to provoke a confrontation with Roman power. And thus the movement would have been crushed before it took root.

Hence in front of informers from the Roman authorities a question was put to Christ: Should Caesar be paid taxes or not. Jesus replied in a very intelligent way. He did not say that Caesar should not be given taxes, because the Islamic movement had not reached a stage where practical wisdom would allow this line of action. So he replied carefully and meaningfully that Caesar's picture and his name should be given to Caesar and gold, which God has made, should be spent in the service of God. Unfortunately this sharp and intelligent reply was interpreted by subsequent generations who went astray to mean that "give Caesar Caesar's due, and God God's due." God should be worshipped and the man-made exploitative system should be obeyed!

When religious people compromise with a system in which man, individually or collectively, becomes a law-giver or legislator, in which people are exploited in the name of religion, race or colour, there can be no justice. They thus contribute to oppression and exploitation, and thus provide cause for the apt allegation that "Religion is the opium of the masses."

When the Pharisees did not succeed in their plan they conspired, and bribed one of the disciples of Jesus that Jesus may be arrested at a time when there was no fear of mass revolt. This conspiracy was successful and Judas got Jesus arrested.

"Then the entire council took Jesus to Pilate, the governor. They began at once accusing him. 'This fellow has been leading our people to ruin by telling them not to pay their taxes to the Roman government and by claiming he is our Messiah-king.' Then Pilate called together the chief priest and other Jewish leaders and announced his verdict. 'You brought this man to me accusing him of leading a revolt against the Roman government. I have examined him thoroughly and find him innocent..... But they shouted louder and louder for Jesus' death.' Luke 23: 1-23.

Thus the mission of Jesus was terminated by people who claimed to be successors and followers of Moses. Rather Jesus and his disciples were the real successors of Moses. The entire period of mission of Jesus is believed to be 1½ to 3 years. In this short time he performed a tremendous task.

His mission was subsequently carried on and completed by Muhammad, Peace be upon him, whom God raised in Arabia.

Adapted from 'Al-Ittihad'  
July 1976

Brother Dawood Pule formerly Rev. David Barney Lewis Pule minister of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zion for the past twenty years has become a Muslim.

Brother Dawood Pule has been an ordained minister and priest for the past twenty-five years — 15 years in Sharpeville and 10 years in Pretoria. Brother Dawood made the following statement:

"The spirit of Islamic brotherhood drew me like a magnet towards Islam. I could not believe my eyes when I saw black, white and brown people eating together, praying together, discussing together and behaving as if the next day was going to be the end of the world.

I have always been doubtful about Christianity — its present day teachings are very contradictory and confusing. I just could not convince myself about the belief in the trinity — I always felt that there should be only one God. There is unfortunately a lot of disunity among the Christians. One Church hates the other and each Church tries to grab converts from the other Churches and reconvert them to their Churches — even though the poor fellow was already a Christian. This seemed very illogical to me.

#### ISLAM BELIEVES IN ONE GOD ONLY

I was very happy to learn that Muslims believe in one God — Allah the Creator of the universe and that He had no partners. I also learnt that Islam accepts all the Prophets of God, including Jesus, as the messengers of God and treats them all equally with respect.

#### IMPRESSED WITH ISLAM

What impressed me most about Islam was that there was no discrimination at all in the Mosques. People of all colours prayed shoulder to shoulder, bowing to the one Creator, — Allah, and in all the Mosques there was complete unity and everyone prayed the same way, not like the different Churches. I loved the cleanliness in Islam. Muslims never tire of washing themselves it seems. The system of Zakaat (poor-due) in Islam is tremendously important in fighting poverty



and human sufferings. The Muslims of course are very hospitable and once you are a Muslim you are treated like a brother.

#### QUR'AN IS INSPIRING AND DYNAMIC

I found the Qur'an — the book of Islam very inspiring and dynamic and straightforward not like the Bible full of contradictions and confusions.

#### MUHAMMAD A MERCY TO MANKIND

Prophet Muhammad was a real Mercy to mankind. Anyone who reads his life will surely be inspired by a man who gave so much and asked for nothing in return. His courage, kindness, tolerance, sacrifice, honesty, truthfulness, mercy and forgiveness will forever be a source of inspiration to me.

#### ISLAM PROHIBITS NUDITY, GAMBLING AND ALCOHOL

Islam does not allow nudity or exposure of a woman's body — besides her hands and face in public. It is therefore very heartwarming to see Muslim ladies always dressed modestly and decently and carrying on with dignity — not mingling with the menfolk — and commanding the respect they deserve — not like today's modern women who mingle freely with men and strutting about in shameless, semi-nude costumes like cheap street women.

Islam very rightly prohibits gambling for I am only too aware as a former priest to know what alcohol and gambling do to my people. Families have to stay without basic food and clothing because the breadwinner was influenced to gamble or drink his wages away.

Muslims are not allowed to drink. They should count their blessings for that; because today alcohol is the No. 1 soul destroyer amongst Black people, it is well known that:

(a) Alcohol is the root of all evil (b) The love of liquor shuts the gates of mercy. (c) The love of liquor destroys the best feelings of man. (d) The love of liquor is responsible for fatherless children and widows. (e) The love of liquor is the cause of degradation and answerable to innumerable hardships and the destruction of mind, body and soul, and also to violence, rape and unimaginable crimes.

And although the Bible says: "woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him and maketh him drunk, that thou mayest look on their nakedness." After preaching this Sermon from the Bible the Christian Government builds more places for brewing liquor and grants more licenses to bottle stores, so that more people may get drunk and destroy themselves.

These are some of the hypocritical practices that have led me away from Christianity and have made me realise that Christianity has failed to create a pure nation and is definitely not the right religion for my people. Because of the genuineness and practicability of Islam I found it my duty to embrace it. It insists on separation of good from evil, of right from wrong. It brings religion down from the clouds and fixes it upon solid earth as a world compelling power. It does not confine nature within artificial bounds. It does not prescribe any ritual as essential to salvation.

My sincere advice to Muslims is that they should make greater efforts to spread the beautiful message of Islam to the Black people, for Islam will appeal to them tremendously, for Islam is a simple, yet dynamic way of life, without superstitions, contradictions and hypocrisy. There is also no discrimination in Islam and it teaches its followers to live a pure, clean and righteous life. It respects the dignity of man, gives equal rights to women and asks them to dress decently and modestly and to live a high moral life.

Muslims should not hide this beautiful message, and neither should they themselves neglect the beautiful teachings of the Qur'an, — which is undoubtedly a powerful Book — and can make the Muslims the leaders of the world, if they follow it properly.

My humble appeal is that Muslims should strive harder to propagate Islam, in every possible way.



The new Islamic year 1398 began on 11th December. It is almost 14 centuries that Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, was commanded by God to make Hijrah from Makkah to Medinah. It is significant that the Islamic callender begins with this event and not with the date of Muhammad's birth or death, the date of the first revelation of the Qur'an or the date on which he conquered Makkah.

Muhammad, peace be upon him, had disseminated the message of Islam in Makkah for thirteen years — during which time he expounded the bedrock of Islam — the Kalima — *La ilaha illa-llah Muhammadur Rasulullah* — There is no deity but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. This means that there is no one to be worshipped or obeyed but Allah and this is to be carried out according to the teachings and example of Muhammad, peace be upon him. At the end of the Makkan period there was no longer any positive response to the message of Islam there. At the same time, there were some people from another town, Medinah, who accepted Islam. They were willing to accept God as their Sovereign and Muhammad as their leader. They invited Muhammad to Medinah and on the command from God, he and his companions departed for their new homeland.

The object of the Hijrah was to establish Islam as a way of life — as a new social order and ideology; to establish it as a social, cultural, economical and political system. As God is One, His guidance is one and this had to be demonstrated in reality. Life divided into 'Secular' and 'Religious' was abandoned and replaced with a system based on 'Unity' — Islam.

The leaders, laymen, businessmen, etc. all acknowledged one law, the law of God. There was one leader, Muhammad, who was the imam, head of state, army general, etc.

It was also necessary to prove that Islam was a universal religion. Although the Sahabah (companions of the Prophet) had proven that they were of unquestionable character, God wished to rid them finally of any feelings of racialism, the identification of man on the basis of blood, and regionalism — the identification of man on the basis of territory. These two idols were yet to be smashed and then only could the universal role of the Prophet and his companions be fully demonstrated.

The Hijrah proved that there was only one relationship — the ideological relationship, the universal relationship, the relationship of consciousness of faith and belief which Islam gave. With

## FOR THE PLEASURE OF GOD

the Hijrah, people were asked to leave their hearths and homes, their kith and kin, their dear and near ones, their parents, their children. There is the example of a person with his wife and single daughter. They had settled themselves on the camel's back to move to Medinah, and then men from one tribe came and would not allow her to go. People from another tribe came and said that the daughter belonged to their tribe and although she might be his progeny, they would not allow her to be taken away. And the man replied that they could take both of them if they so wanted, but he had to fulfil the will of Allah. This is the vindication of the principle of tearing asunder the idols of blood relations and racialism. The place they were asked to leave was not only their birthplace, but the first place for the worship of God that was built under the sun. It was this place that they were being asked to leave, and leave only for the sake of a principle, for the religion, to please the will of Allah.

Another important aspect of Hijrah is that it is not merely an event of historical significance, but one which has a spiritual and social meaning as well. One finds that in the last analysis, the Hijrah is a kind of a process of identification. There is the discovery of the divine in human existence at the individual level as well as on the social and historical plane. In Hijrah, not only does one refuse to be associated with any evil concepts but one is positively identified with the will of Allah. That is why the Prophet, when asked by the Sahabah which was the best Hijrah, replied that the best Hijrah is the Hijrah away from that which displeases the Lord. Thus when remaining in Makkah, the first place of worship under the sun, involved displeasure of Allah, Makkah was to be abandoned. The historical event then is motivated by a concept, the concept of man's identification with God's will, the submission of all personal wishes (*hawa*) to the guidance (*huda*) of Allah. Acceptance of the *huda* and identification with God becomes a Hijrah. Each one of us, who in any given situation refuses to follow that which displeases Allah, perform an act of Hijrah. A hijrah from God's displeasure to God's

pleasure. This is the principle of identification, the concept which emerges from the idea of hijrah.

This sort of identification takes place at a highly individual level, the level of man's spiritual and mental existence. Hijrah is primarily a mental concept, a highly individual concept, where one abandons that which displeases Allah and accepts and adopts that which pleases Allah. This is the root, the essence, the life of Hijrah. If a place forces one to live in sin, in disobedience to God, it has to be left. Take the example of economic life. If because of economic associations, one is forced to adopt something which displeases Allah, that something has to be abandoned. According to the Qur'an this is hijrah, and there are many verses where it is so described. Questions like these are put: Then why don't they migrate? Why don't they perform the hijrah? Isn't God's earth vast and wide? For those who perform the hijrah for Allah's sake, it has been promised that they would find God's earth bountiful; they will find treasures of material well-being, of economic resources waiting for them. Hijrah is here undertaken for economic motives as well. In Qur'anic accounts, it has been stated that angels would ask some people why they carried on a particular type of existence. And they would reply that they were living under persecutors, because of whose tyranny they were forced into a wrong way of life. The angels would then ask whether God's earth was not wide enough for them to move. Hijrah in this case is tied up with an existing political situation, with migrating from a place of persecution and tyranny for the purpose of identification with the Divine will. And this occurs again and again in the Qur'an.

In this new year, what can we learn from the Hijrah? Let us remember that the best Hijrah is the Hijrah away from that which displeases God. We ask ourselves how many 'false gods' do we still cling to? Those based on race, pride, position, egotism, greed, family tradition, immorality etc. Let us make Hijrah away from them. Let us replace them with the desire to obey God by acknowledging His sovereignty in all aspects of our lives, Insha-Allah.



Let us further consider the Muslim woman's role as a wife. God says about marital relationship:

*"And among His signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may live in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts). Verily in that are signs for those who reflect." Qur'an (30:21).*

We note that the word 'love' or affection (Mawaddah) is used here in describing the mutual feeling between husband and wife, although the concept of romantic love which is current in the West is nowhere mentioned or considered as a requisite for marriage in Islam. The love which is referred to here as something which God has placed between the hearts of husband and wife is that sense of fellow-feeling, of community, of loyalty of those who have decided to share their lives, to build a home and rear a family together; the sense of commitment to one another and to the relationship, the capacity to forgive and tolerate one another's weaknesses and to respect one another's strengths, and to make the effort to build a stable and harmonious relationship, increasing as they live together year after year, sharing both the important and the commonplace experiences of their life. The wife's role is to create and maintain a peaceful, cheerful home which will be a haven for her husband to return to after his day's work and his efforts in the cause of Islam, not only for eating and sharing the bed with her, but also for sharing the cares, the joys, the small and great events the births, the deaths, the growing of children and the couple's growing old of their common life. His wife bears the major part of the work and responsibility of the household, of the children in their formative years. She is its chief in domestic concerns, while her husband earns the livelihood for the family and, with her assistance and taking into consideration her opinions and feelings, makes the major decisions. She respects and looks up to him not simply because he is her husband, but because he is a sound Muslim husband, whose opinions and actions have their base in Islam, in *taqwa* (God consciousness) and in striving to please God, and he respects her for the same reasons.

Her role as *Mother* is an extension of her role as wife as God ordained it, for as the sexual relationship is basic to marriage, it is natural that it should in most cases soon be productive of children. God describes the relationship of husband and wife during pregnancy in very moving words:

*"It is He Who created you from a single person, and made his mate of like nature in order that he might dwell with her in peace. When they are united, she bears a light burden and carries it about (unnoticed). When she grows heavy, they both pray to God their Lord, (saying): 'If Thou give us a goodly child, we vow that we shall be grateful.'" Qur'an (7:189);*

During pregnancy, the child is a part of her very being. When it comes into the world, she knows that it has been torn away from the intimacy of the womb and attempts to cushion its entrance into the world by keeping it very close to herself, by feeding it from herself, by being all-in-all to it. As the child grows, it is the mother who administers to its needs, who caresses and makes things good again when there are hurts and frustrations, and who provides the shelter of endless love and compassion which are the food of his spirit. It is also the mother who guides, trains and directs the little newcomer into the ways of socialized human life so that by the time he is a toddler he is recognised as a member of the family in his behaviour as well as in outward appearance, for she realises that as he is very new in the world, he depends on others for information about everything, and that if she does not teach him, other influences will.

As the young mind expands, questions, wonders and turns over and over what it observes and experiences, it is the mother who lays the foundation for the conception of the universe and of life, who introduces the idea - for which the mind of the child is now ready of the Creator of all this marvellous world, of all living things, and of his own wonderful body. Thus, in the years of growing up, it is the mother who attempts to guide, to direct, to discipline, in new ways as the occasion requires, trying to mould the young individual into the pattern laid down by God Himself, always working toward the goal of a true, sound adult Muslim man or woman.

The Muslim girl is not only sister to her siblings; she is also a sister to other Muslims, male and female. As she grows into a woman, and even after she reaches adult status, her aim is to act as a sister should to her Muslim brothers and to her Muslim sisters. This means that she will not behave, speak, look or dress in ways which arouse sexual interest in her

brothers, nor will she inure nor undermine the marital relationships of her Muslim sisters with their husbands. To these sisters she will be bound by ties of love and sincerity, helping them in times of difficulty, sharing their joys, and feeling that bond of heart which only Islam can create among them, and to her brothers-in-Islam she will be kind and helpful, speaking words which are good and pure, and always being careful to

## ROLE OF WOMAN

This article is the second  
'Role Of Women In Society'

maintain the limits which God has enjoined.

### HER RESPONSIBILITY TO THE SOCIETY

The Muslim woman's duty does not end with her household and family. The woman who has knowledge, experience, intelligence and creativity, has a duty, when these primary obligations are met, to contribute to the society at large. This does not mean that she must get a job and work outside her home, or that anything can or should come before her obligation to provide a good home for her husband and sound training for her children, to be available when they need her, and to nourish their spirits with that maternal love and care which are the best of all influences. But when these duties are fulfilled, if she has time, interest, education or skills which can be useful to Islam or to the society, she may contribute them. Obviously, she must do this in a way which is compatible with the dignity and respect which a Muslim woman should command, in jobs which cannot degrade her womanhood and which do not require behaviour which compromises her.

What are some of the ways in which Muslim women can contribute to the society today? First of all as teachers, both in schools, colleges and universities, for women who have been successful in rearing children are often the best qualified to teach the children of others; besides this, as counsellors, as doctors or nurses, as social workers, as writers and lecturers, and in some other selected positions. If she has a skill which can be utilised at home, so much the better, for many diverse skills and abilities are needed today in Islamic work and other



areas of constructive contributions to society.

### DEVELOPING AN ISLAMIC PERSONALITY

The development of an Islamic personality among Muslim women, is basic and essential not only for our own selves as individuals both for this world and for the Hereafter, but also for the future of the entire Muslim world, for it is unrealistic to hope that future generations of Muslims will be prepared to

## IN SOCIETY

and final part based on the  
By Zeba Siddiqui.

take over leadership and carry on the work of Allah if Muslim women remain as we see the majority of them today. But what is this 'Islamic Personality'?

Defining the term, as I understand it, is that personality in which *taqwa* - the consciousness, love and fear of God and the desire to please Him - predominates and which wages an unremitting jihad against those elements within the self which are at variance with this primary goal, as well as against those elements in human society which do not conform to this goal. We cannot define as an Islamic personality one who simply prays and fasts, or even one who in addition pays *Zakat* and has gone for *Haji*; these are necessary for the Islamic personality but not sufficient. The Islamic personality is one who believes absolutely that God exists, that one has responsibility to Him and will have to give an account to Him in the Hereafter, who implicitly obeys God's orders as set forth in Qur'an and the Sunnah of Muhammad, peace be upon him, and who spends his time, energy, resources and talents in His way, working always to mould himself into the pattern which God has given us in the blessed example of Muhammad, peace be upon him.

I believe that the first element in building an Islamic personality is sincerity - the deep desire and determination to become truly Islamic with the help of Allah. Without this sincerity all our efforts will be half-hearted and without power and direction. And how can we acquire this sincerity? It comes about as a result of the conviction that God's way is the only way we want for our individual lives, that all other ways - man-made ways and systems - are false and lacking in meaning and truth, and

feeling with total conviction that nothing less than the way of God, the Lord of the universe and of men, can satisfy us or have meaning for us.

With this deep conviction and with this sincere desire, we will be motivated to make the effort to become truly Islamic, the first step of which is to truly understand the deep meaning of Islam, the real significance of "*La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad-ur-Rasul-ulla*." To be sure, many of us have been saying this all our lives since we were old enough to repeat it after our mother, and the rest of us have known it since we first learned about Islam, but have we indeed grasped its true meaning? "*La illaha illa Allah*" - there is no deity except God - frees the heart of man from servitude and submission to any other ilahs - deities - which we may have erected within it: other people, their opinions, material things, money, our own personal desires, blind belief in science or psychology as the ultimate truth, acceptance of man-made doctrines and isms - and bring us into submission to God alone. We thus voluntarily and consciously reject other deities - other objects of reverence, worship, authority or claimants to the ultimate truth - and come into the worship, under the authority of, and into submission to the Lord of men rather than to men or the creations of men themselves. Muhammad, peace be upon him, said that if we take one step toward God He will come ten steps toward us. To grasp and firmly believe in the true meaning of "*La ilaha illa Allah*" is, that one step, and after we have taken that step we will, with God's help, be able to take many, many, more in order to become the true Muslims we desire to be.

### MOTIVATING OTHER WOMEN

Thus, like any effort at regeneration, at revival, at assuming consciously and voluntarily the responsibilities for which we were created, we must start with ourselves. But let us assume that we have taken this step. After that, how can we communicate this message to others, how can we reach out to other women who are not Muslims and how can we motivate our sisters in Islam to search out the truth which many of them have accepted at face value without ever thinking about it or even practising it, and confirm it within their own hearts?

As to reaching non-Muslims, each of us can reach out to those who are receptive and who want information about Islam. We may not succeed in convincing them of its truth, but at least

we can see to it that they have understood its message in its correct form without the usual distortions so glibly accepted in the West. And in order to motivate other Muslim women to come to a clearer understanding of Islam, to develop Islamic personalities, and to accept with total commitment the great responsibility which God has given us, with all the rewards He has promised those who obey Him in the Hereafter, each of us must first be an example which will inspire others.

Beyond this, this effort can best be made by means of Muslim women's groups. This means gathering any Muslim women who will come, regardless of whether they are practising Muslims or not, and meeting at least once or preferably twice a month. At first many of the women, who will usually be a mixed group in terms of Islamic interest and knowledge, may not be very responsive to anything directly 'Islamic', but sooner or later many of them will probably request programmes which increase their Islamic knowledge and identity.

From this beginning, it is a matter of building on the positive feelings for Islam which some women in the group will have, and if necessary starting with elementary instructions in the basic teachings of Islam. There must be at least one woman, and if possible several, who can give direction to the group in an unobtrusive fashion while encouraging as much participation from its members as possible. The serious programmes can be interspersed with other types of programmes, cultural matters, talks about various Muslim countries, customs, celebrations or even an occasional purely social meeting so that the women who are not so much interested in Islamic content are not lost to the group. Little by little a feeling of community, of closeness, will develop, and on these positive feelings much can be built. When the effort gains momentum, meetings with other groups of women in the same area may be arranged, and finally, possibly camps or conferences of Muslim women on a regional or national level.

We pray that Allah will bless our efforts in His cause and increase their effectiveness until Muslim women have become, as He intended to be, a mighty and irresistible force for right and truth in the world.

(Courtesy-Al-Itthihad)



# The Islamic Principle of Mutual Consultation

*"And those who answer the call of their Lord and establish worship, and whose affairs are a matter of counsel, and who spend of what We have bestowed on them."* Ayah No. 38 Surah 42 Al-Shura (Counsel)

God here and in the preceeding two verses recounts the qualities of believers. They believe in their Lord and put their trust in Him. They shun the worst of sins and indecencies and when they are angered, they forgive. They are always at the beck and call of their Lord; and they establish worship and do justice to the concept of worship in Islam. Moreover, they run their affairs by mutual consultation and spend in the way of God of what they have been bestowed.

Mutual consultation is one of the best qualities of the Faithful (*Mo'min*). It is ordained by God in Ayah 159 of Surah Al Imran. On this basis consultation among Muslims is an important pillar of the beautiful and elaborate building of the Islamic way of life. To do any collective work without prior mutual consultation is not only a way of the ignorant but is also a clear defiance of the regulation laid down by God. The great importance given to the whole process of consultation is based upon three reasons:-

Firstly, it is very unfair to decide alone a matter concernig two or more people. In collective matters nobody has a right to do according to one's sweet will. All the people concerned with the matter should be consulted, and if it is concerned with a very large number of persons then their representatives should be sounded for considered opinion.

Secondly, if a man tries to act autocratically or arbitrarily, either he wants to usurp the right of others or he considers himself superior to others whom he holds in contempt. From moral point of view both these attitudes are bad and reprehensible. However, even a trace of these wrong attitudes cannot be found in the Faithful (*Mo'min*), who is neither selfish so as to take unfair advantage of others, nor is proud and self-

conceited so as to believe himself a paragon of intelligence and knowledge.

Thirdly, it is a concern of great responsibility to take decisions on matters relating to the rights and interests of others. Anyone, who is conscious of God and His inevitable Judgement, cannot dare to bear the burden of such responsibility all alone. Such reckless acts are done by only those people who are devoid of fear of God and are without care of the hereafter. A God-fearing person with conscious awareness of the Day of Judgement will necessarily try to consult all the people or their trusted representatives concerned with a collective matter in coming to a decision and line of action so that a just and impartial decision is made and if ever a mistake is made the burden of responsibility does not fall on one person alone.

These are the three reasons about which if one ponders, one can well understand why mutual consultation is a necessary requirement of the type of morality taught by Islam to man, and why violation of it is such an immoral and unethical act that Islam can never allow it. Islamic way of life requires that the principle of consultation should be applicable to every small or big collective affair. In the affairs of the household husband and wife should consult each other before doing anything, and when the children attain the age of puberty their opinion should also be taken into account. If the affairs of the whole family are being dealt with, then counsel should be taken with every sane adult member of the family.

If the affairs are of relatives, a clan, a tribe, a whole village, or an entire town or city and it is not possible to take counsel with everybody, then the decisions should be taken by an assembly of trusted representatives of the

people, who are selected or elected according to an agreed method and set procedure. If the affairs belong to a whole nation then the national head should be appointed after knowing the opinion of all. The head in turn should run the affairs of the country with the help of such counsellors who command the confidence of the nation. Such a leader should remain at the helm of the affairs of the nation until the time set by the nation and no longer. No honest person can ever desire to try to become the head of a nation or to continue to be the head by coercion or forceful means, nor he can use deceitful ways and means in order to appoint himself as the principal authority of the nation by using force and then demanding approval from the people by means of a coerced obedience, nor he can use crafty tactics, so that the people instead of choosing of their free will persons of their liking should select those who would vote and wait for him and support his wrong policies. Such desires and actions are only present in a person whose intentions are bad and corrupt.

To present a false appearance of "and whose affairs are a matter of counsel," and to make its basic requirements practically ineffective can only be the motives of a person who is unscrupulous enough to try to deceive God and the general public despite the fact that neither God can be misled nor the public can be so blind that a person openly commits an act of daylight banditry and it continues to believe sincerely that he is not committing robbery with violence but is serving the public. This rule of "and whose affairs are a matter of counsel" by its very nature demands five things for its fulfilment.

Firstly, those people, whose rights and interests are involved, should have full freedom of expression and should be kept informed about how their af-



fairs are being run. They should have also the full right to object and to protest if they see any deficiency, negligence or error in the proper discharge of the duties of leadership pertaining to their affairs. Still if they find no improvement in the performance of such duties they should be able to change their leaders appropriately. To order the collective affairs of the people after stifling their voice, fettering their hands and feet and keeping them in the dark is a clear-cut dishonesty and nobody can agree that it is an implementation of "and whose affairs are a matter of counsel."

Secondly, the person selected for shouldering the responsibility of managing the collective affairs should be appointed with the express approval of the people. This approval should be freely given without let or hindrance. It should not be obtained with coercion, intimidation, bribery, temptation, intrigue, deceit or trickery. The real and rightful leader of a nation is not the one who imposes himself upon it by every possible artifice, but who is chosen by the people of their free will.

Thirdly, the advisers of the head of the nation should also have full confidence of the people and should prove worthy of it. It is very obvious that the people cannot trust men who gain representative places through pressure, monetary temptation, falsehood and skill in trickery.

Fourthly, the people who give their counsel or considered opinion should do so according to their knowledge and conscience in full freedom. If it is not so and the counsellors give their opinion under duress or according to parochial and sectional interests against the dictates of their knowledge and conscientious beliefs, then this is manifest dishonesty and treachery and not any compliance with "and whose affairs are a matter of counsel".

Fifthly, the collective advice or decision arrived at by the principle of unanimity or majority should be accepted without reservation, because if one clique is free to follow its whims in spite of listening to the consultative assembly then the process of consultation becomes meaningless and null and void. Allah ordains that their affairs are run by mutual consultation, but does not say that they are consulted in their affairs. Thus this commandment

is not to put into practice by merely consulting one another but it is very essential that the actual affairs be conducted according to the decisions reached unanimously or by the majority at the end of the process of consultation.

With the above explanation of the Islamic principle of consultation (*Shura*) this basic fact should also be kept in full view that 'shura' is not the last word, nor the absolute authority in running the affairs of Muslims, but it is definitely limited within the confines of the 'Deen' of Islam, the code of life of Islam which has been decreed and codified by Allah himself. It is dependent upon the fundamental principle that in whatever matter there is difference of opinion be-

tween the Muslims they should refer to His Book, the Holy Qur'an, and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet. According to this basic principle Muslims can consult each other about matters in the *Shariah* regarding the correct meaning of a particular clause and correct observance of it in order to fulfil its purpose; but they cannot confer together with the purpose of replacing or altering in any manner the ruling or decision of God and His Prophet by their own conclusions.

(Gleanings from *Tafheemul-Qur'an*,  
by Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi.)

Courtesy: Al-Islam Vol. 1 No. 1

## Lessons From Hadith

Sayyidina Ali (May Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah said, "A time would soon be coming when nothing would remain except the name of Islam, nothing would survive except the mere words of the Qur'an, and the mosques outwardly would appear well frequented but would be devoid of true guidance. The imams of mosques would be the worst creatures under the sun so that discord and strife would originate from them and would rebound upon them."

In this sacred Hadith a period is described in which the spirit of Islam would disappear and only its name would remain. The name of Islam, the mere words of the Qur'an, and the lines of worshippers in mosques would be very evident; and the ulema would retain their religious offices. People would often shout, "Long live Islam," There would be competitions of recitations of the Qur'an. Millions would be spent on decoration of mosques, and mosques would be well staffed with employees. There would be thousands of Ulema, preachers, 'muftis' and kadis; but everyone of them would be devoid of the spirit of Islam.

There would be a skeleton without mind and soul. Mosques would not remain places of peace and centres of guidance and righteousness. Ulema would abandon the role of a 'da'i', i.e., an inviter to Truth, and a 'muballigh', i.e. a preacher to disseminate the teachings of Islam; but, instead, they would engage themselves in repelling people from the religion of Islam and creating contempt for it.

The words of the Qur'an would be recited in many elegant ways and melodious tones, but none would give attention to their meanings and their demands for observance. In the mosque people would be busy in worldly affairs. The conception of dhikr and ibadah (worship in an Islamic sense) would disappear along with the respect and deference for mosques. Ulema would themselves instigate and encourage disunity and discord among Muslims. In consequence the blazing disharmony caused by them would engulf them and their mutual discord would eventually destroy them. In the light of this Hadith a faint picture of modern times is brought into focus.

### THINK FOR A MOMENT

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Whether Today — | have you recited any portion of the Holy Qur'an?                                   |
| —               | have you attended any Qur'an Class?  |
| —               | have you listened to the Qur'an and its translation?                               |
| —               | have you studied any book or even an article about the Qur'an?                     |
| —               | have you discussed any topic of the Qur'an with anyone?                            |
| —               | have you told anything in the Qur'an to your household, particularly the children? |



## LETTERS & COMMENT

### ROOTS IN THE BAHAMAS

#### A Brief History of the Bahamas.

The Bahamas is an Archipelago of 700 islands stretching from the South-east Coast of Florida (U.S.A.) to the North-west Coast of Cuba. With approximately 200,000 people living in the Bahamas, Nassau, the capital, is the hub of all activities in the Bahamas.

The discovery of the Bahamas in 1492 by Columbus on his first voyage, eventually led to the annihilation of the local Arawak population and the later importation of African Labourers for domestic work. After 300 years of Colonial rule, the Bahamas was granted independence on July 10, 1973.

Today, the population is made up of 85% of the descendants of African slaves, who follow the Christian Doctrine and control the government.

#### Economy.

The lack of natural resources has resulted in the Bahamas being developed as one of the leading tourist resort in the western hemisphere. 75% of the Gross National Product is derived from the tourist trade.

#### Introduction of Islam.

Islam was probably introduced to the Bahamas about ten years ago, by a few misguided brothers who did more to create distortion and misconception in the minds of the people than to teach the principles of Islam. It was not until the last four years that a spark of Islamic activities was ignited by converts returning from schools in the United States. However, this spark has yet to be converted into an authentic Islamic movement. The Muslim population stands less than a dozen and is in need of tremendous assistance.

#### JAMAAT-UL-ISLAM

Jamaat-ul-Islam, the Islamic Movement in the Bahamas, is a band of brothers striving to raise the banner of *La illaha illa Allah Muhammad-ur-Rasool-Allah*, (S.A.W.) in this decadent society, and wish your assistance. We recommend the following suggestions:

1. The sending of large quantities of Islamic materials for Da'wah, and study purposes; with special emphasis on Qur'ans.

2. The awarding of a scholarship to one of our members to study Islam.
3. The inviting of a representative to attend training programmes for Imams or conferences dealing with Da'wah and other significant topics.
4. The sending of an Islamic teacher to help with proper dissemination of Islamic information. If such assistance is granted, the Islamic Movement, Insha-Allah, will be a force to reckon with, in the near future.

Insha-Allah we wish to establish contacts with progressive Islamic Governments, Organizations, Publishing Houses, Newspapers, etc. in order to build faith and joining together in the mutual teaching of truth --- Islam.

*"And spend of your substance  
In the cause of God,  
And make not your own hands  
Contribute to (your) destruction;  
But do good;  
For God Loveth those  
Who do good."*

*Qur'an: 2-195.*

Your Brother in Islam  
Khalil Abdul Al-Khabir Khalfani

Chairman: Jamaat-ul-Islam  
P.O. Box N 7628  
Nassau, Bahamas.

### Naming or Framing!

The Editor,

*I am a new arrival in your country. I found your address from your September issue, which I found to be very well written. With reference to items 5 and 7 on page 1 of this issue, I would like to draw your attention to another deplorable practice prevalent in Trinidad I am referring to the wide use of non-Muslim (mostly Christian) names given to Muslim children. Even Muslim names have been distorted.*

*To say 'what is in a name' is a dangerous assumption. Muslims of Spain, after 800 years of rule, disappeared when forced to adopt Christian names, in addition to other repressive measures.*

*Today this is happening in Russia and China. Muslims in those countries are being forced to change their Muslim names. An attempt to obliterate their identity in a couple of generations is planned.*

*But those Muslims have no choice. Case of free and tolerant Trinidad can best be compared to Canada and U.S.A. where early Arab immigrants have already lost their identity (with few exceptions) within two or three generations.*

*Please encourage your readers to stop this practice, and appeal to re-name their children. It is never too late.*

*Yours in Islam,*

*Javed Iqbal.*

#### NOTE

Your observations are quite correct. It is hoped, Insha-Allah, to write a full-length article on the proper naming of children and publish it in another issue.

### Is He The Same?

When the term God is used, does it convey the same meaning to everybody? In particular is the God of the Muslims, Christians and Hindus the same? It would seem that since God is spelt with a capital 'G', it should automatically mean the same thing to all. To illustrate a point, let us look at God as conceived by Muslims (who is usually called by the Arabic name, Allah). Allah, the supreme Being tells us in His Qur'an that gambling and all games of chance are strictly forbidden. This very Allah, Our Creator, our Nourisher, also tells us that usury, in any form, is not to be practised. These are but two examples of the types of injunctions that emanate from Allah. Consequently anyone or any community that acknowledges the supremacy of Allah, will not then practise gambling or usury. One would also expect that the converse statement — that anyone who practises gambling and usury does not acknowledge the supremacy of Allah —



also holds. In Trinidad it is well-known that gambling in the form of the National Lottery is 'legal' and so is the practice of the taking of interest. How can one then interpret the Divali message of the acting President of Trinidad and Tobago when he stated that our young nation was "founded on principles that acknowledge the supremacy of God?"

Allah is One Indivisible Being, He has no partner, no children and no parents. In view of these characteristics of Allah it is again astonishing to read that the P.R.O of A.S.J.A. makes mention of a "Goddess" in his Divali message. This term is foreign in Islam and has no meaning whatever for a Muslim and one might legitimately ask about the implication for a Muslim of the use of the term "Goddess".

These two points should make one ponder about the kinds of relationships that should exist among different religious groups and the extent to which one can fraternise without compromising one's own belief. One should take cognisance of the fact that those who believe in the supremacy of Allah form one group and those who do not, form a completely different group and that there is not much in common between these two groups.

## Al-Hadith

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of  
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## Muslim Youth Camp

Plans have been finalised and preparations are on the way for the holding of a Youth Camp in Trinidad.

The camp is sponsored by the Muslim World League, and under the joint management of the Islamic Missionaries Guild and the Anjuman Sunnatu-l Jama'at Association.

It is hoped that this joint venture will lead to meaningful unity and co-operation among Muslims in Trinidad. The camp is to be conducted by the world renowned Camp Director Br. His-ham Badran, who successfully conducted here a similar camp four years ago. He will be assisted by senior members of the Muslim Community.

The camp will be held at the Government Youth Camp, Tucker Valley, Chaguaramas from December 24th 1977, to January 1st 1978.

The camp is open to Muslims from all youth groups in the region aged 10 years and over. Enrolment fee is \$30.00 per person with a \$5.00 reduction for each member from the same household.

All interested persons are requested to enrol as early as possible and note that the camp begins at 1 p.m. on Saturday 24th. Participants are expected to bring along their individual needs — sheets, pillows, towels, soft shoes, sweater, notebook, pen and a copy of the Qur'an.

Immediately after this camp, it is intended to hold a similar one in Guyana Insha-Allah, and Br. Badran is also expected to conduct it.

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The information relating to the prohibition of alcohol in Islam is to be obtained directly from the words of God found in the Qur'an, as well as the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. The prohibition of alcoholic beverages is mentioned three times in the Qur'an on different occasions. The last verse makes the prohibition of alcohol categorical.

In the chapter of "The Table Spread," God says:

*"You who believe: Intoxicants and gambling, idols, and raffles, are only the filthy work of Satan, turn aside from them so that you may prosper. Satan only wants to stir up enmity and jealousy among you by means of intoxicants and gambling, and to hinder you from remembering God, and from praying: So will you not then abstain?" (5:90-91).*

As to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, there are many, including the following:

- (1) Concerning the matter of intoxication, it was reported by 'Aisha, the Prophet's wife, that Muhammad, said "Any type of alcohol is forbidden."
- (2) Concerning the quantity needed for intoxication, it was reported by Jabir, a follower of the Prophet, that Muhammad said: "If a large amount of anything should cause intoxication, then a small amount of it is prohibited."
- (3) Concerning the prayers and repentance, it was reported by 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar, a companion of the Prophet and a son of the second Caliph, that the Prophet Muhammad said: "If anyone drinks any alcoholic beverages, God will not accept his prayers for forty days; but if he repents, God will forgive him."

This is the festive Christmas season. Many offices, schools, groups, etc., make it a habit of holding Christmas parties. This means, to the average Trinidadian, "fete, rum, fornication and bacchanal."

There are many Muslims working in places where 'fete' is part of the routine. What should be their attitude towards these parties? As there are no local Christmas 'fetes' minus alcohol and its attendant evils, this article is published for us to reflect and react.

## DON'T TOUCH IT!

- (4) Concerning entrance to Paradise on the Day of Judgement, Prophet Muhammad, said: "There are three persons to whom God has forbidden Paradise: One who is addicted to alcoholic beverages, an undutiful son, and a cuckold who connives in his women-folk's adultery."

From this authentic information, it is clear that alcoholic beverages in all their kinds and forms are unlawful for Mankind to drink or deal with. This includes all types of wines, liquors, fermented beverages, pure alcohol and the like.

As far as the reasons of prohibition of alcohol are concerned, there are many reasons why alcoholic beverages have been prohibited in Islam. The following are among the reasons which Muslims believe in:

- (1) Alcohol is considered to be an abomination.

- (2) Alcohol is part of Satan's handiwork.
- (3) Drinking alcohol generates enmity and hatred among people.
- (4) Alcohol prevents people from remembering God.
- (5) It prevents and/or delays Muslims from performing their five daily prayers. Even if they pray they will not understand the meaning and significance of what they are doing and saying.
- (6) Those who drink alcohol are considered by Islam to be similar to those who worship idols which is also totally prohibited in Islam.
- (7) Those who drink alcohol will be denied Paradise.
- (8) When a person drinks alcohol he is not considered to be a believer during the period of drinking.
- (9) Alcohol is the mother of evils in society.
- (10) Muslims believe that the prophets of God did not taste alcoholic beverages and that alcohol was prohibited in the original scriptures of the divinely revealed religions.
- (11) Alcoholic beverages have some benefits, but sin and harm resulting from their consumption are far greater than their benefits.
- (12) Alcohol brings God's curse down on those who drink it, produce, sell or deal with it, and those who participate in drinking parties.
- (13) Alcohol is responsible for a large number of road accidents.
- (14) Alcohol is the cause of many broken families.

For the above reasons, people should not touch alcoholic beverages and try their best to shun those parties where alcohol is served, so as to please God.