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MARXISM: AN ANALYSIS

Perhaps the fundamental issue of our time which in turn gives rise to many complex issues is the legal economic conflict between the individual, his rights and authority on the one hand, and the community, its right and authority on the other. Though the problem of the relationship between the individual and the community is not new, its implications in our generation are highly important.

The conflict in our generation has produced an almost complete polarity of two international conflicting ideologies. Politically, and economically the conflict goes on in the name of the individual and his freedom on the one side, and the name of the working proletariat on the other. In their zeal and dedication, the supporters and opponents of each ideology employ glowing mottos that often dim the fundamental issues of the struggle.

SOCIALISM

Reduced to its bare essentials, the Socialist Camp in concentrating its effort on the welfare of the community, disregarded the individual and dismissed his separate existence. In the process, the individual was deprived of most of his rights, the dignity and fruits of his toil. In providing the individual with labour, nourishment and clothes, the Socialist Camp appropriated his political and social rights, infringed on his privacy and individual freedom, and curbed his creative ability, in fear of possible conflict with the welfare of the community.

The Camp that is referred to as the free world is so over-zealous in its defense of the individual's 'freedom' rights and dignity that it overlooks the acts of some individuals in exercising such rights in a way that jeopardizes the community and the interests of other individuals. This camp places the individual on the

same level as the community, and in concentrating on providing with his political rights, it sometimes neglects his economic interests and does not provide him with nourishment and clothing as is the case in the Socialist Camp.

CAPITALISM

I think, the responsibility of this great gap lies mainly though not entirely, with Marx. He lived in a period of unrestrained Capitalism when exploitation and misery were the lot of the working classes. Capitalism at the start has rendered considerable services to humanity. Increase in production, improvement in the means of communication, exploitation of national resources on a large scale, etc, can be counted in this respect. But such a glorious picture does not last long.

Gradually, this development led to the amassing of wealth in the hands of the capitalist owners and to a relative diminution of the properties owned by the working class. This enabled the capitalist owners to use workmen in considerably stepping up the production of various commodities but the wages paid to workmen were too low to ensure decent life, because the employers took all the profits and spent them leading a life of luxury and corruption. In this way it created great ups and downs in the society and brought about a great cleavage between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. The hired worker was at the mercy of the capitalist. He had very little bargaining power against the employer, for, he could not afford to keep in waiting the only commodity he has to offer, i.e. his labour. Thus the capitalist became all important and all powerful.

LEGACIES

Low wages, insanitary dwellings, insecurity of women and children are all

the legacies of capitalism. Jacob Bronovsky in his book, "The commonsense of Science" gives a very striking picture of how the capitalists exploited the women and children of that age. Women were employed in mines at low wages; children were recruited to the mills and factories and they were put to work under appalling conditions; young boys, because of their poverty, had to take up the dangerous work of cleaning chimneys. These kinds of injustices, over-labour and under payment were going on for centuries. "He was impressed by the appalling cruelty of the industrial system as it existed in England a hundred years ago, which he came to know thoroughly through Engles and the reports of Royal Commission. He saw that the system was likely to develop from free competition towards monopoly, and that its injustice must produce a movement of revolt in the proletariat.

He wanted to put an end to this exploitation of labour and he wished to see that all these cruelties and ill-treatments are ended. During his time, capitalism was in its ugliest form and it was his humanitarianism and concern for social justice which inspired his later works. "He held that, in a thoroughly industrialized community, the alternative to private capitalism is state ownership of land and capital." Here argument will not do; he has to theorize his views. Borrowing the theory of dialectics from Hegel, he philosophised his views.

Dialectical materialism is the philosophical basis of marxism. It is a combination of Hegel's dialectic method with a materialist philosophy. Like Hegel, he thought that the world develops according to a dialectical formula. "Dialectic to the ancient Greek Philosophers meant a kind of dialogue or conversation, as used particularly by Socrates, in which philosophical disputes were resolved by

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a series of successive contradictions: a thesis is put forward and the opposing side holds its contradiction or anti-thesis until in the course of argument, a synthesis is reached in which the conflicting ideas are resolved."

Though he agrees with the dialectical theory of Hegel, he totally disagrees with him as to the motive force of this development. "Hegel believed in a mystical entity called 'Spirit' which causes human history to develop according to the stages of the dialectic as set forth in Hegel's 'Logic'...Marx's dialectic has none of this quality except a certain inevitableness. For Marx, matter, not 'spirit' is the driving force while to Hegel, as to the Greeks, the conflict was in the field of ideas. So Marx and Engels "turned Hegel upside down"; accepted his dialectic, but rejected his belief that ideas are the motive force of social development. On the contrary they said, ideas are determined by social and economic changes as a result of materialistic forces. Adopting this theory of dialectics, he has given a unique interpretation to history which is most strikingly his own. Historical materialism, as it is called, purports to show that class struggle was the basis of the social development. He went on to write: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."

CONFLICT

"Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guildmaster and journeyman, in a word oppressor and the oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an interrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

The inexorable dialectic determines that feudalism is displaced by capitalism and capitalism by creating a proletariat (its anti-thesis) inevitably leads to socialism and a classless society which is the highest point of social development. But this transition from capitalism to communism cannot be brought about peacefully. According to Marx, "force is the midwife of every old societies which is pregnant with a new one."

THIRD DEGREE

He, therefore, calls for arms and entails a programme of third degree methods, fraudulent means and use of force and violence for the achievement of its objects

This view has created great hatred

AFGHANISTAN

A BLOODY CHANGE

The following statement has been issued from the Secretariat General of the Muslim World League (Rabita) in Mecca (Saudi Arabia) about the situation in Afghanistan:

The Revolutionary Military Regime in Afghanistan is reported to be indiscriminately killing leading Muslim scholars and Imams (religious leaders) in Afghanistan. The Afghan Radio and the Afghan press have also confirmed that some leading Muslim scholars and Imams have been killed in the recent coup. Shaikh Gul Mohammad, the Imam and Khateeb of the Grand Mosque of Kabul, and a member of the World Supreme Council of the Masjid in Mecca strongly condemn this horrible crime and calls upon the Muslims of the world and all international humanitarian organizations

to protest against this heinous crime. The Secretariat-General also calls upon the Revolutionary Regime in Afghanistan to stop this inhuman carnage of the scholars and Islamic personalities. The Secretariat-General also urges upon all its members to strongly protest against these crimes perpetrated by the Revolutionary Regime against the Afghan people and especially against their religious leaders.

Communist order establishes itself through immoral and inhuman deeds by destroying religious leaders, scholars and thinkers. We strongly condemn this act of the Revolutionary Communist Regime in Afghanistan and call upon all countries of the world not to recognise the new regime and refuse to co-operate with them till they stop their crime against humanity.

* * * * *

The bloody emergence of an unmistakably pro-Soviet regime in Afghanistan was not entirely unexpected.

Political tension had been rife for some months now as the new and large cadre of army officers and other technocrats trained in the Soviet Union became increasingly impatient with the regime of Sardar Mohammed Daud Khan. But whenever the horror of military coups and repression is visited on a people, no

amount of premonition can reduce the deep sense of pain and anguish. As yet the pain and anguish show no signs of subsiding quickly. As the new regime tightens its grip on the country and proclaims that life is back to normal in Afghanistan, there are reports that some Afghan tribes are still determined on resistance. And if the new regime continues to follow the pattern of the communist regimes in Ethiopia or Cambodia, one can expect life in this landlocked but strategic country to be dominated by terror.

In a cynical way Daud Khan can be said to have sown many of the seeds of his own destruction. His rule was characterised by attempts at economic development, political and religious repression and walking an international tightrope between the Soviet Union, the United States and even China to gain economic and military benefits.

The former Republic of Afghanistan is now styled the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. Deliberately the words 'socialist' or 'communist' have not been used to describe the state. Instead the first pronouncement said that 'the internal policy of the Military Revolutionary Council of the National Armed Forces of Afghanistan is based on the foundation of the sacred religion of Islam and the ensuring of democracy, freedom, security of the individual, and the progress and flourishing of our beloved

in the minds of the working proletariat and the capitalists towards each other, which in its turn paved the way for a state of strife dividing the world into two hostile camps standing for annihilation of the other. The working proletariat thinks of the capitalists as their great exploiters and so the greatest enemies and call for the world unity of them for the extermination of the capitalists. This point of view has brought our world on the verge of the third world war, threatening the world peace at any moment.

Here, we have to make out of how a wrong and baseless interpretation of history has changed our world of human-beings into the world of merciless beasts, and how it has put an end to the possible peaceful co-existence of humanity.

by K. C. Saleem

homeland. It is now a dreary fact that many who assume power through coup d' etats or perpetuate their rule through dictatorship seek legitimacy and the confidence of the people by professing allegiance to Islam. The above declaration is in fact reminiscent of the initial statement made by Daud Khan when he assumed power in 1973 that his purpose was 'to bring the Afghan government back to the principles of Islam and save the nation from economic disaster'.

According to the new regime, the rule of Daud Khan was a period of unmitigated disaster for Afghanistan. His regime was 'decadent and corrupt, repressive and autocratic; it created expensive espionage units in order to invade the lives and liberties of everyone and trampled underfoot all the political and professional rights of the toiling workers of Afghanistan who are the real owners of all the riches of the country'. The rhetoric here is decidedly leftist and there are indications that the new regime will not allow itself to be outdone as far as repression is concerned. Reports as yet unconfirmed put the number of those killed in the coup between 5,000 and 10,000. Daud's large family has been almost totally eliminated. Intensive fighting is reported to be continuing within the country's 110,000 army between leftist and loyalist elements. A number of prominent religious leaders have also been assassinated. In Ghazni, the head of the Jami'at Ahl-i-Hadith, Maulana Gul Muhammad Shah Afghani, was reported shot dead because he issued a fatwah against communism.

It will be tragic if Afghanistan continues to witness the excesses of communist rule. But the signs are ominous.

The new political complexion of Afghanistan could have far-reaching effects in the regions of South Asia and the Middle East. Traditionally Afghanistan has served as the buffer for which it was created between Russia in the north and western and other interests in the south. To the extent that the coup was Soviet inspired and assisted, it must arouse a great deal of anxiety among Afghanistan's neighbours, particularly Pakistan and Iran. There are reports that Soviet intelligence officers and military personnel actively participated in the coup piloting Mig-21 bombers used against Daud's national guard. There are about 4,000 Russian 'advisors' in Afghanistan most of them with the army and air force. The events in Afghanistan might well be a further illustration of a more aggressive Soviet policy in the Indian Ocean region coming after successes in the Horn of Africa.

As against this, the new Afghan regime has said that in international relations it will continue to pursue the policy of non-alignment but this could be as meaningless as the 'non-alignment' of Cuba. In fact it is already being said that the new Afghanistan might be Russia's Cuba in Asia.

There has however been a noticeably low-key reaction to the coup in the West and this could indicate that the policies of the superpowers are not necessarily on a collision course in the area. It is certain though that the coup would perpetuate divisions and instability not only in Afghanistan but in the entire region while serving to undermine the overwhelmingly, Muslim character of the area.

(Courtesy: 'Impact' Vol. 8:9)

Harrowing Tales

Several thousand more Burmese Muslim nationals crossed into Bangladesh after being pushed out of Burma by armed personnel, according to Dacca radio. The Burmese refugees have now reached around 200,000. The evictees told harrowing tales of loot, arson, rape and forced eviction. They were evicted from their ancestral homes in Buthidang and Maungdaw sub-divisions in Burma where they have been living for generations. Bangladesh is reported to have sealed off its border with Burma after the influx of refugees.

The Propagation of Atheism

The first forum for 'planning scientific research in the study of religion' since the founding of new China was held recently in Peking.

In a speech delivered at the forum, Chou Yang, adviser of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, pointed out: In studying religion, it is necessary resolutely to safeguard Marxist atheism and adopt a clear-cut stand. Efforts must be made to study conscientiously the history of world religions with a Marxist view and write in detail the history of Buddhism, the history of Christianity and the history of Islam with correct views and abundant reference materials. To write works of scientific value, it is also necessary to do a great deal of work in compiling reference materials and translate and explain with footnotes all kinds of classical religious documents.

The forum discussed plans for the popularization and propagation of atheism.

INTERNATIONAL SURVEY

Restoring The Dignity of Islam

The joint communique issued by Libya and Guinea at the end of the visit of President Sekou Toure to Libya on 23 April contained the following statement:

In the Islamic field, the two sides observe with deep regret that many peoples describe Islam as being backward and contravening science... The two sides, who are determined to work to restore the dignity of Islam, stress that the faith of Islam is an international and progressive fact which is based on moral and spiritual values which call for the respect of man and for the continuous development of communities; Islam also calls for peace, freedom and solidarity in relations between the peoples. The Qur'an emphatically calls for increasing social justice and the brotherhood of man and for respect for the principles of democracy; it forbids man to do wrong unto his brother. The two sides believe that if countries were guided in their legislation by the humane teachings of the Qur'an, they would be able to honour social and historic values and the rights of the individual and the community, a matter which basically contradicts the philosophical principle of imperialism and old and neocolonialism, as well as exploiting capitalism. The two sides stress their resolution to support and back the Muslim peoples in the political and economic fields in order to enable these peoples to play their role in the group of the Third World, in the service of mankind.

ANNOUNCING

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BANKING

INTEREST or PROFIT

Two gentlemen have recently raised questions about the interest that is paid by bankers and post offices on the money deposited with them. The gentlemen are in doubt whether the interest paid by the banks and the post offices is really prohibited.

It is satisfying that both the gentlemen do not have doubts about usury or interest *per se* being strictly prohibited in Islam. The point they want to be satisfied upon is whether the amount that is paid back by the banks and the post offices over and above actual deposits is really interest or not.

DOUBT

There is doubt about it because "the money deposited is employed in different types of business managed by the banks or post offices and a portion of the profit is paid to the depositors."

Also, there is doubt about the usurious nature of the extra amount paid back to a depositor because the practice of depositing the surplus amounts in a bank or post office has become very common and the deposit so made "earns interest automatically without any demand under the ruling of the bank". The first question is "whether it comes into the category of usury as described in Qur'an or its nature is something else." The second question is "what should be the utility of such amount earned through the banks."

It is no doubt true that the banking habit has very much developed and is even on the increase. So much so that in many cases to have a bank account is not only convenient but inevitable also. There are several business establishments who pay salaries to their employees through cheques only. The salaries of many are also paid through banks. There are certain regulations of the Income Tax department which make it compulsory that all amounts beyond a certain limit should necessarily be paid by businessmen through cheques only.

However, an evil does not become acceptable simply because it has become very common. Similarly what has been prohibited by God cannot become permissible simply by virtue of the fact that the particular activity has become very prevalent.

Let us first examine the nature of the amount that one gets back from the bank in excess to the amount deposited. If according to Islamic law it comes within the definition of interest, the taking of it and utilising it for one's own requirements is certainly prohibited. But if it does not fall within the category of usury or interest according to Shar'iah, it can equally certainly be accepted and utilised.

While it is true that what the banks and post offices pay by way of interest is a part of the profit they earn by investing the depositors' moneys in profit earning ventures, it in itself is not sufficient to change the character of it from interest to permissible profit. Because deposits in banks and post offices are fundamentally different from a voluntary investment in business. The main distinguishing feature between a bank deposit and business investment is that in the case of a business investment the investor accepts the liability to share the loss also along with his entitlement to take a share in the profit. If the business earns profit the investor takes his share of the profit at an agreed rate and if there is loss in business the investor shares the loss also. On the other hand, in the case of deposits in the banks or post offices, the depositor gets only the 'profit' at a certain rate without any agreement to share the loss also if there be any.

MANNER

Irrespective of the manner in which the banks invest the money and earn profits, this is usury, according to Islamic law and prohibited. Leaving aside the banks and post offices even if investment is made in an absolutely clean and permissible straight forward business, but on the terms that irrespective of the profit or loss which the business may result in, the investor will receive profits only at a pre-agreed rate, such a contract would not be valid under the Islamic law and the amount so received will fall in the category of interest or usury which is prohibited. Unless one agrees to share the loss also, his investment in any business with a stipulated rate of profit only, irrespective of loss, will amount to usurious activity which will be sinful and not permitted in Islam.

Partnership between capital and labour is permissible in Islam. That which is commonly called 'sleeping partnership' is also permissible in Islam. It means that one person will provide the capital for running the business and another person will provide the labour and run the business. In that case if the business yields profit it will be shared by both i.e. the 'sleeping partner' and the 'working partner' at a stipulated rate (normally fifty fifty). If there is loss it will either be borne wholly by the 'sleeping partner', i.e. who provided the capital or will be shared by the 'working partner' depending on the terms of the agreement between them.

PARTNERSHIP

Islam accepts partnership as a legitimate business activity - either active partnership or sleeping partnership - the terms and conditions of which are left wholly at the discretion and free choice of the contracting parties. The only condition imposed by Islam being that the partnership should be in loss also as well as in profits. This is because the element of exploitation is thereby eliminated which is the essence of all usurious activities and which Islam is very anxious to finish off.

Thus it will be seen that the ingredient of partnership, as envisaged by Islam, is lacking in the case of depositor and the banker and therefore the 'profit' given by the banks and post offices is not profit according to Islam but interest which is prohibited. The question of compulsion or free-will is irrelevant as also the question of the profit-earning investments that the banks and post offices make with the amounts of their depositors.

Then we come to the question of the nature of investments that the banks and post offices make out of the amounts deposited with them. It should be understood that a very substantial portion of the amount deposited with the banks is employed by them in only interest bearing activities. They advance loans to businessmen, to common people against security, and charge interest from them at a rate higher than they pay to their depositors. They also purchase interest-bearing securities and bonds and thus

earn profit through interest. There is hardly any investment activity by the banks and post offices which does not fetch interest. Therefore, the profits that the banks or the post offices earn are all through usurious or interest-bearing investments and a portion of the same they make over to the depositor.

Of course there are certain activities such as clearing the cheques and drafts and other similar services through which the banks earn some income. But the ratio of such income against the income the banks earn through interest-bearing investments is negligible; proverbially speaking it is in the proportion of a drop of water against an ocean. Therefore, any 'profit' that the banks or post offices pay, i.e. the amount which the depositors receive from the banks and post-offices in excess to the amount actually deposited by them, is in fact interest according to Islamic law, by whatever name it may otherwise be called.

This much about the nature of the amount that is paid by banks and post offices as 'profits'. Now we take up the next part of the question as to what should be done with the amount of interest that a depositor gets 'automatically'.

CONTRACT

In fact it is not paid automatically but under a specific contract. The banks and post offices invite deposits with the declared offer of giving a specified rate of interest over the deposits. In legal terminology it can be said that the banks and the post offices make offer to pay a specified rate of interest to the depositors and when any person makes a deposit it amounts to an acceptance by him of the terms offered by the bank and thereby with the offer and acceptance the contract is completed as between the depositor and the bank. The offer as well as the acceptance is voluntary. Hence the first thing to do for a Muslim who wants to avoid involving himself in usurious transactions is not to deposit his money in the banks or post offices.

However, as I have myself stated above, banking has become very common, very convenient and in some cases inevitable. Thereby, it is not possible for some to avoid having accounts in banks or post offices. These institutions also are the only means of promoting the savings habit which is very desirable. Therefore, it will be impractical to suggest that Muslims should totally avoid banking. Then there are two solutions to the problem. One that a Muslim depositor

should not receive the amount in excess to the deposit, which will be interest. There is no law which compels one to take the amount. A depositor can very well leave it untouched with the bank.

The other course open to a Muslim depositor is that he may take the excess amount (interest) from the bank or post office and without utilising a single cent out of it for his own self, should forthwith spend the whole of it for a charitable purpose, to the needy, etc. But in that case he has to be very clear on two points viz., the amount of interest so given away must not be adjusted against any Sadaqat-e-Wajiba, i.e. prescribed charity or against the Zakat which is a compulsory form of worship. And that he should not expect any reward from Allah for the charitable

donations

REASON

The reason being that all Sadqat-e-Wajiba or Zakat is to be paid out of one's own money whereas the amount received by way of interest does not at all, under Islam, belong to the person concerned as he is forbidden by Allah to take it. The same reason holds good for the proposition that he should not expect any reward for having given away the amount in charity to which he is entitled only if he gives it out of his own money.

Finally, the ultimate solution to the problem lies with the development of independent economic institutions based on the Shar'iah (Islamic Law). But, this is a topic for another article.

(Adapted from 'Radiance' Delhi, Vol. 13, No 30)

IN THE SHADE OF THE QUR'AN

THE SUDDEN CALAMITY

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

The one that knocks out! What is the one that knocks out? And what will convey to you what the one that knocks out is? A day wherein mankind will be like thickly scattered moths, And the mountains will become as carded wool. Then as for him whose scales are heavy, He will live a life of satisfaction. But as for him whose scales are light, An abyss will be his mother. And what will convey to you what she is? A raging fire!

Al-Qari'ah or the one that knocks out is the Resurrection. In other places in the Qur'an it is named as the Overwhelming One, the Deafening Shout, the Stunning Reality and the Befalling Calamity. The term Al-Qari'ah suggests the shade of hitting and knocking hard. It hits the hearts with its horrors.

This whole surah deals with the One that knocks out, its essence, what takes place in it and what it ends up to. Thus the surah portrays one of the scenes of the Resurrection.

The scene portrayed here is that of horror with direct effect on man and mountains. In the shades of this scene men are seen to be small and dwarfish in spite of their great number. For, they are like 'thickly scattered moths'; they fly here and there, having no power or weight, experiencing the dilemma and perplexity of moths which rush unconsciously to destruction without any aim or purpose. Besides, mountains which used to be firm

and solidly based seem to be like carded wool carried away by winds, so that even fine breeze can carry it carelessly. Thus it is in harmony with this image that the Day of Resurrection is described as the One that knocks out. The shades suggested by the expression and the rhythm of all its sounds are in consonance with the effects of the One that knocks out, on men and mountains both. It inspires the hearts and stimulates the feelings, preparing both for what the scene of reckoning and rewarding will end up with.

The one that knocks out! What is the one that knocks out? And what will convey to you what the one that knocks out is?"

This surah starts with the single word 'Al-Qari'ah' which stands for 'the one that knocks out.' It is thrown alone like a shot without any further information or any predicate or adjective. As such it creates with its shades and rhythm a feeling of resounding awe. The word is immediately followed by a question suggesting something alarming. "What is the one that knocks out?" It is that dreadful and formidable thing which arouses curiosity and questioning. Then comes the answer in the form of a cryptic question aimed at leaving the matter vague: "And what will convey to you what the one that knocks out is?" It is too great to be comprehended or visualised. Then follows the answer which states what takes place in it

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Man has been endowed with countless powers and faculties and Providence has been very bountiful to him in this respect. He possesses intellect and wisdom, will and volition, faculties of sight, speech, taste, touch, and hearing, powers of hand and feet, passions of love, fear, and anger, and so on. All these are of extreme use to him and none of them is unnecessary or superfluous. These faculties have been bestowed upon him because he needs them badly. They are indispensable to him. His very life and success depend upon the proper use of these powers for the fulfilment of his needs and requirements. These God-given powers are meant for his service and unless they are used in full measure life cannot become worth living.

God has also provided man with all those means and resources which were provided to put his natural faculties to function and to achieve the fulfilment of his needs. The human body has been so made that it has become man's greatest instrument in his struggle for the fulfilment of his life-goal. Then there is the world in which man lives. His environment and surroundings contain resources of every description: resources which he uses as means for the achievement of his ends. Nature and all that belongs to it have been harnessed for him and he can make every conceivable use of them. And there are other men of his own kind, so that they may co-operate with each other in the reconstruction of a better and prosperous life.

Now, reflect a little deeply over this phenomenon. These powers and resources have been conferred upon you so that they may be used for the good of others. They have been created for your good and are not meant to harm and destroy you. Their function is to enrich with good and virtue and not to throw it into jeopardy. Thus, the proper use of these powers is that which makes them beneficial to you; and even if there be some harm, it must not exceed the unavoidable minimum. That alone would amount to the proper utilisation of these powers. Every other use which results in waste or destruction would be wrong, unreasonable, and uncalled for. For instance, if you do something that causes you

harm or injury, that would be a mistake pure and simple. Or if your actions harm others and make you a nuisance to them, that would be a sheer folly and an utter misuse of God-given powers. Or if you waste the resources, spoil them for nothing or destroy them, that too would be a gross mistake. Such activities would be flagrantly unreasonable, for it is the human reason which suggests that destruction and injury must be avoided and the path of gain and profit be pursued. And if any harm be courted, it must be only in such cases where it is just unavoidable and where it is bound to yield a greater benefit. Any deviation from this would be evidently a wrong course.

Keeping this basic consideration in view, when we look to the human-folk, we find that there are two kinds of people: first, those who knowingly misuse their powers and resources and through this misuse waste the resources, injure their own vital interests, and cause harm to the other people; and, secondly, those who are sincere and earnest but err because of ignorance. Those who intentionally misuse their powers are wicked and evil-mongers and deserve the powerful club of law for their control and reform. Those who err because of ignorance need proper knowledge and guidance so that they see the Right Path and make the best use of their powers and resources. And the code of behaviour—the Shari'ah—which God has revealed to man fulfils this very need.

The fundamental principle of the Law is that man has the right, and in some cases it is his bounden duty, to fulfil all his genuine needs and desires and make every conceivable effort to promote his interests and achieve success and happiness—but (and it is an important 'but') he should do all this in such a way that not only the interests of other people are not jeopardised and no harm is caused to their strivings towards the fulfilment of their rights and duties, but there should be all possible social cohesion, mutual assistance, and co-operation among human beings in the achievement of their objectives. In respect of those things in which good and evil, gain and loss are inextricably mixed up, and tenet of this law is to choose little harm for the sake of greater

benefit and sacrifice a little benefit for avoiding a greater harm. This is the basic approach of the Shari'ah.

Now we know that man's knowledge is limited. Every man in every age does not, by himself, know what is good and what is evil, what is beneficial and what is harmful to him. That is why God has spared man of the risks of trial and error and revealed to him the Law which is the right and complete code of life for the entire human race.

THE WAY

THE SHARI'AH: RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

The scheme of life which Islam envisages consists of a set of rights and obligations and every human being, everyone who accepts this religion, is enjoined to live up to them. Broadly speaking, the law of Islam imposes four kinds of rights and obligations upon every man, viz. (i) the rights of God which every man is obliged to fulfil, (ii) his own rights upon his own self, (iii) the rights of other people over him, and (iv) the rights of those powers and resources which God has placed in his service and has empowered him to use for his benefit. These rights and obligations constitute the cornerstone of Islam and it is the bounden duty of every true Muslim to understand them and obey them earnestly and carefully. The Shari'ah clearly discusses each and every kind of right and deals with it in detail. It also throws light on the ways and means through which the obligations can be discharged—so that all of them may be simultaneously implemented and none of them gets violated or trampled underfoot.

THE RIGHTS OF GOD

First of all we must study the grounds on which Islam bases the relationship of man to his Creator. The most primary and foremost right of God is that man should have faith in Him alone. He

should acknowledge his authority and associate none with Him. This is epitomised in the Kalima: La ilaha illallah (there is no god but Allah)

The second right of God on us is to accept whole-heartedly and follow His guidance (Hidayat)—the code He has revealed for man—and to seek His pleasure with all the biddings of the mind and soul. We fulfil the dictates of this right by reposing belief in God's Prophet and by accepting his guidance and leadership.

ISLAMIC OF LIFE

The third right of God on us is that we should obey Him honestly and unreservedly. We fulfil the needs of this right by following God's Law as contained in the teachings of the Last Prophet Muhammad found in the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

The fourth right of God on us is to worship Him. This is rendered by offering of prayers and other forms of worship.

These rights precede all other rights and as such they are discharged even at the cost of some sacrifice of other rights and duties. For instance, in offering prayers and keeping fasts one has to sacrifice many of one's personal rights.

THE RIGHTS OF THE SELF

The fact is that man is more cruel and unjust to himself than to any other being. On the face of it, it may seem very astonishing: How can a man be unjust to himself, particularly when we find that he loves himself most? How can he be his own enemy? It seems to be quite unintelligible. But deeper reflection would show that it contains a large grain of truth.

The greatest weakness of man is that when he feels a strong desire to do something which may harm him, he, instead of resisting it, succumbs to it, and in its gratification knowingly causes great harm to himself. There is a

person who gets to drinking: he becomes mad after it and carries it on at the cost of money, health, reputation, and everything that he has. Another person is so fond of eating that in his eating cruises he spoils his health and endangers his life. Another person becomes a slave of his sexual appetites and ruins himself in over-indulgence. Still another gets enamoured of spiritual elevations: he suppresses his genuine desires, refuses to fulfil his physical needs and requirements, controls his appetite, does away with clothes, leaves the home and retires into mountains and jungles. He believes that the world is not meant for him and abhors it in all its forms and manifestations. These are a few of the instances of man's tendency to go to the extremes and get lost in any one field. One comes across a number of such instances of maladjustment and disequilibrium in one's everyday life.

Islam stands for human welfare and its avowed objective is to establish poise and balance in life. That is why the Shari'ah clearly declares that your own self also has certain rights upon you. A fundamental principle of it is: "There are rights upon you of your own person"

The Shari'ah forbids the use of all those things which are injurious to man's physical, mental or moral existence. e.g. It forbids the consumption of blood, intoxicating drugs, flesh of pig, beasts of prey, and poisonous and unclean animals, and the carcass; for all these have undesirable effects upon the physical, moral, intellectual, and spiritual life of man. While forbidding these things, Islam enjoins upon man the use of all clean, healthy, and useful things and asks him not to deprive his body of clean food, for man's body too has a right upon him. The law of Islam forbids nudity and orders man to use decent and dignified dress. It exhorts him to work for a living and strongly disapproves of one's remaining idle and jobless. The spirit of the Shari'ah is that man should use for his comfort and welfare the powers God has bestowed upon him and the resources that He has spread in the earth and the heavens.

Islam does not believe in the suppression of the sexual desires; it enjoins man to control and re-

gulate it and seek its fulfilment in marriage. It forbids him to resort to self-persecution and total self-denial and permits him, nay, bids him, to enjoy the rightful comforts and pleasures of life and remain pious and steadfast in the midst of life and its problems.

The road to success lies in following the Divine Law in the midst of life's complexities, and not outside it.

Islam totally forbids suicide and impresses upon man that life belongs to God. It is like a trust which God has bestowed upon you for a certain period of time so that you may make the best use of it.

This is how Islam instils in the mind of man that his own person, his own self, possesses certain rights and it is his obligation to discharge them as best as he can, in the ways that have been suggested by the Shari'ah. This is how he can be true to his own self.

THE RIGHTS OF OTHER PEOPLE

On the one hand the Shari'ah has enjoined man to fulfil his personal rights and be just to his own self, and on the other hand, it has asked him to seek their fulfilment in such a way that the rights of other people are not violated. The Shari'ah has tried to strike a balance in the rights of the individual and the rights of the society, so that no conflict may arise between the two and all must co-operate in establishing the law of God.

Islam has strongly forbidden the telling of a lie in every form and shape, for it sullies the liar, causes harm to other people, and becomes a source of menace to society. It has totally forbidden theft, robbery, bribery, forgery, cheating, interest, usury, for whatever man gains by these means is really obtained by causing loss and injury to others. Backbiting, tale-bearing, slandering, and calumny have been forbidden. Gambling, lottery, speculation, and all games of chance have been prohibited for in all of them one gains at the cost of thousands of other losing people. All those forms of exploitative commerce have been prohibited in which one party alone is to be the loser. Monopoly, hoarding, black-marketing, holding of land from

cultivation, and all other forms of individual and social aggrandizement have been prohibited. Murder, blood-spilling, and spreading of mischief, disorder and destruction have been made crimes, for no one has a right to take away the life or property of other people merely for his personal gain or gratification. Adultery, fornication, and unnatural sexual indulgence have been strictly prohibited for they not only vitiate the morality and impair the health of the perpetrator of these crimes but also spread corruption and immorality in society, cause diseases, ruin public health, degenerate the health and morals of the coming generations, upset the relations between man and man and cut asunder the very fabric of cultural and social structure of the community. Islam wants to eliminate, root and branch such abominable crimes.

All these limits and restrictions have been imposed by the law of Islam to prevent a person from encroaching upon the rights of others. The law of Islam so regulates life that the welfare of one and all may be achieved. But for the attainment of human welfare and cultural advancement, some negative restrictions alone are not sufficient. In a really peaceful and prosperous society people should not only not violate the rights of others and injure their interests but should positively co-operate with each other and establish such mutual relations and social institutions that contribute towards the welfare of all the establishment of an ideal human society

THE RIGHTS OF ALL CREATURES

Now we come to the last kind of rights. God has honoured man with authority over His countless creatures. Everything has been harnessed for him. He has been endowed with the power to subdue them and make them serve his objectives. This superior position gives man an authority over them and he enjoys the right to use them wisely. But that does not mean that God has given him unbridled liberty. Islam says that all the creation has certain rights upon

man. They are: he should not waste them on fruitless ventures nor should he unnecessarily hurt them or harm them. When he uses them for his service he should cause them the least possible harm, and should employ the best and the least injurious methods of using them.

The law of Islam embodies many injunctions about these rights. For instance, we are allowed to slaughter animals for food and have been forbidden to kill them merely for fun or sport and deprive them of their lives without necessity. To slaughter them, the method of Zabah (slaughtering) has been fixed, the best possible method of obtaining meat from the animals. Islam allows the killing of dangerous and venomous animals and of beasts of prey only because it values man's life more than theirs. But here too it does not allow their killing by resort to prolonged painful methods.

Regarding the beasts of burden and animals used for riding and transport, Islam distinctly forbids man to keep them hungry, to take hard and intolerable work from them and to beat them cruelly. To catch birds and imprison them in cages without any special purpose is considered abominable. Islam does not approve even of the useless cutting of trees and bushes. Man can use their fruits and other produce, but he has no right to destroy them. Vegetables, after all, possess life, but Islam does not allow the waste of even lifeless things; so much so that it disapproves of the wasteful flow of too much water. Its avowed purpose is to avoid waste in every conceivable form and to make the best use of all resources—living and lifeless.

(Adapted from: Towards Understanding Islam by Abul A'la Maududi)

The Sudden Calamity (Continued from page 5)

and refrains from stating its essence. For it is, as has just been mentioned, beyond comprehension and vision. *"A day when mankind will be like thickly-scattered moths, and the mountains will become like carded wool."*

This is the first scene of 'the one that knocks out—a scene that leaves the hearts panic-stricken and makes the limbs tremble with fear. The listener feels that everything he clings to in this world is flying all around him like dust. Then comes the end for all mankind:

"Then, as for him whose scales are heavy, he will live a life of satisfaction. But as for him whose scales are light, a bottomless pit shall be his mother. And what will convey to you what she is? A raging fire!" It is useful for us to consider the 'scales' and their being heavy or light. This means that there are standards which Allah credits with being valuable and others that are valueless. This is the general meaning of the statement and this is what Allah wants to convey, but surely He knows best what He means. Anyway to indulge in sophisticated logical and linguistic arguments about the meaning of these terms is in itself a departure from the Quranic spirit. It is indeed a waste of time motivated by the lack of being truly interested in the Qur'an and in Islam.

"As for him whose scales are heavy," according to Allah's measures and His evaluation, *"He will live a life of satisfaction"*. Allah makes this statement and imparts to man's feelings the shade of content and satisfaction which are the most genuine happiness.

But as for him whose scales are light," according to the same measures of Allah and His revelation, *"An abyss will be his mother"*. It is to his mother that a child turns for help and protection. But such people with light scales can turn and resort only to an abyss! The expression is distinctly elegant with unique ordering. It has also a shade of obscurity preparing the way for subsequent clarification which adds to the depth of the intended effect: *"And what will convey to you what she is?"* It is again the cryptic, terrifying question used in the Qur'an and emphasises that it is beyond comprehension and vision. Then comes the answer as the closing note: *"Raging fire"*. So this is the mother of the one whose scales are light. This is the mother to whom he turns for help and protection and for the security and comfort. But what does he find with such a mother? — The abyss and the raging fire.

It is a sudden shock rendered by the expression to represent the hard reality.

—Adapted from Fi Zilal Al Qur'an by Sayyid Qutb.

COMMUNITY MOSQUE COMPLEX: CHANGING SCENES

A grand opening of the Caribbean Regional Headquarters of the Islamic Party (Trinidad) was held on Sunday 4 th. June 1978. The Headquarters, known as the Community Mosque Complex, is situated at 123 Eastern Main Road, Laventille. It was described as a house acquired for Allah - God of the people and the Creator of all - to be used as a key institution in the struggle to establish righteousness and truth in Trinidad and the Caribbean and in organising, educating and liberating the minds and hearts of the people from ideas and practices of institutions which go against the well-being of the people.

The Complex comprises three floors and an annex. On one floor is a basement part of which is being used as a Mosque. The Mosque will be for all religious observances and to fulfil the spiritual needs of the community. This basement also encloses the library stressing the need to acquire knowledge which is compulsory in Islam. Next, a school is housed in the annex for there exists a great necessity to train children to be God-fearing adults. The Community Mosque Academy is to serve that need. On the ground floor is an auditorium for not everyone can be trained within the walls of a school. It calls people to Islam by preaching and teaching, establishing proper lectures and as such train those adults who want to learn about Truth.

The book-shop is the next part of the institute— all within the framework of educating, of freeing the mind because one cannot free the body until one frees the mind. The upper floor is a residence for a few families of the Islamic Party. This part of it may come as a slight surprise to a lot of people. Why are there people living at the Community Mosque Complex? The Creator has said that the Believers are providers and protectors of one another and the Islamic Party intends to live by that code. These families are experiencing together the sharing of work, the sharing of responsibilities, the sharing of intentions, the sharing of prayer and the sharing of education.

The Community Mosque Complex also provides counselling for those people who may need it. Also, there are departments of Community Welfare Affairs and Publications.

In the opening remarks, the secretary of the Islamic Party, Br. Kwesi Atiba said, "The Community Mosque Complex is an institution which is here to guide and to set an example to the people. We recognise that mankind is going astray from its Lord and the further he moves away, the more he is enslaved. Man enslaves Man physically and by godless ideologies; Man enslaves women and

women enslave themselves by their vanity.

We know that Islam is a total way of life and Islam is here to give freedom to Mankind. We have a duty to show Mankind the right path, to put them on the path to Allah and guide them on the path of Allah. How can we do this? Mankind will not be guided by mere words, speeches or aimless prattle but will be guided mostly by the examples of dedicated people, people dedicated to the cause, people dedicated to live a life in accordance with the rules of Islam. The brothers and sisters of the Islamic Party have undertaken that duty. The duty to guide by example, the duty to call by work, the duty to live up to what we associate with the tenets of the plan. We intend to be the light shining. The Community Mosque will be the house of God, the house of truth, the house of good example."

The Wazir (local leader) of the Islamic Party, Br. Fareed Abdul-Jabbar in his address gave a brief history of the formation of this branch of the Islamic Party. He stated that this Complex represented only a further step in the in-going struggle of the Islamic Party to establish a practical and workable institute in the life of the people for the sole purpose of pleasing the Lord of the people, the King of the people, the Master of the people. It is not an institution that dropped from the clouds, nor was it brought to Laventille by some corbeau from the La Basse. Rather sixteen months ago a man arrived in Trinidad on a fact finding mission, a mission to increase his contact with the oppressed. As a result of this mission in February '77 thirteen brothers set themselves the task of practically implementing God's system of life after realising the following :- 1. The differences of race, the differences of class and the differences of country of origin are all factors that are incidental to man's nature; 2. The basic problem affecting all the people whether in America, whether in the Caribbean, whether in Africa or Toco or Manzanilla all come from the same root cause - the worship of other gods besides Allah; and 3. The root cause for this confusion, this ignorance in the lives of the people is a diabolical scheme that is united in its purpose and international in its goal.

The Amir (leader) of the Islamic Party, Muzaffaharuddin Hamid, who has been in Trinidad for nine weeks, felt that there is no need for publicity to establish institutions for these come through the development of the potential of the workers, the demands on the character, the disciplining of the individual, and the organising of the workers. He emphasised that the call of Islam is the call of the front line of the people. The 'Islamic People's Movement International' is that movement which not only solves the problems of faith but also solves the problems in the social, economic and political fields in the lives of the people. The prophets of God, namely Adam and many between him and Moses, between Moses and Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon them) were not only the greatest revolutionists but were practically involved in establishing God's system of life on the face of the earth.

Real revolution calls for a few things. First of all, it calls for a change in the individual's outlook and a drastic change from sub-interest to the collective interest of all of God's people with special strings for the oppressed.

He added that there is no doubt that God alone requires people to control their own affairs; on the other hand, God alone has made it clear that they should co-operate in a communal sense, in a community sense and follow it in an organised manner. This is essentially Jama'at organisation, communal organisation, into a way by which all the talents, all the energies, all the resources of the people can be utilised for their own benefit and not for the benefit of those who oppress people. Islam offers severe basic fundamental principles for all people who desire to organise, plan, direct, lead and establish a totally oriented system of life.

Finally, he ended with a call for all brothers and sisters to come forward and establish a relationship on the following principles - principles on which the Islamic Party has been established:— Jama'at collective intention, living, work, education, worship, economics, and struggle. The Jama'at collective system is a call for the people to come forward and clarify what they want for themselves in persurance of the teachings and example of the final prophet, Muhammad (peace be upon him), the servant of Allah - the Creator and Master of mankind.

WITH CHILDREN IN MIND

STORY OF IBRAHIM

Continued from Issue No. 30:- Story of Ibrahim.

DID IBRAHIM LEAVE FOR PALESTINE

Of course he did. He told all his followers who believed in God and His religion to get ready to move to the new area. A short while after, they all prepared a long, long caravan. Ibrahim, his family, and his followers put all their belongings on top of the animals and they happily left the area of Mesopotamia. They wanted to go towards Palestine. It was a hard journey, going through the dry sandy desert, with the sun so bright and hot, and the sand storms so troublesome. The caravan went on slowly but surely and it took them several months before they could reach beautiful Palestine. You see, they didn't have cars or airplanes in those days and it used to take so long to travel by camel. It was a very tiring long journey, but Ibrahim and the people with him were happy to do it and leave behind the evil of southern Mesopotamia.

WHAT DID THEY DO IN THIS NEW LAND?

As soon as they reached the new land, Prophet Ibrahim and his wife Sara started to preach and teach about God and the religion of God to the new people in the area. It is not an easy job to do that as you know, let alone doing it to some strangers who speak with a different accent. Prophet Ibrahim travelled a great deal, along with Sara who was so good to him, taking good care of him and being such a nice wife and companion. They visited a good many new towns and villages although they were becoming old. Their travels took them to Egypt and they saw new faces and new places over there.

Over in Egypt, Ibrahim did not lose a moment's rest without getting in touch with the people and teaching them about God and God's message. Nothing seemed to discourage Ibrahim, and his will was as strong as ever.

Over in Egypt too, the Prophet got married to a second wife, called Haajer (Hager). In those days it was not unusual to have more than one wife.

Sometime later, Haajer announced happy news that she was expecting a baby. They waited anxiously for nine months, when Haajer gave birth to a beautiful baby. They called the baby Isma'eel (Ishmael) and this was the first baby Ibrahim had, since he had no babies so far through his first wife Sara.

However, not long afterwards, God gave the orders to Ibrahim the Prophet to take his wife Haajer and Isma'eel to a place called Mecca in Arabia.

IT WAS A LONG, LONG JOURNEY

It took many weeks, and it was a hard long journey. There was sand everywhere, hills and valleys of it, and you could hardly see any trees, and there was little rain. On the backs of a few camels, Prophet Ibrahim, Haajer his wife and Isma'eel her son were slowly but surely travelling, along with a few other travellers. They could see black tents here and there, where some people were spending their time. The skies were so clear and full of bright sparkling stars.

Finally, Prophet Ibrahim and his wife and child did arrive to the spot, which is called Mecca. It was a hilly area, without any trees, hot and sandy. They set their tents and they looked around but there were no birds, no plants, no people and nothing seemed to be there except for the sand which was everywhere, rocky hills here and there, and the wind blowing.

WHAT HAPPENED THEN?

Baby Isma'eel was only a few months old, a pretty baby, who was nursing at the time. He began to cry because he was so thirsty. Mother Haajer started to look for water, but alas there was no water anywhere. She started to worry, then became desperate. She ran seven times back and forth from a hill called Safa to another hill called Marwa. She was looking desperately for water, she looked left and right, here and there, but there was no water anywhere.

On the seventh time, however, as she came back to her crying thirsty baby, she saw to her delight and surprise some water gushing nearby. With a happy face and a sigh of relief, she drank and gave water to her baby, now that her prayer had been answered by Almighty God. The water still comes out of the same area until now, although many thousands of years have passed by. It is called the Zam-Zam well. When we are lucky enough to do our pilgrimage in Mecca, we will take a sip of that water which has been provided for all people and we will drink from it as did Prophet Ibrahim, Prophet Isma'eel and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them).

Many people from around came

to the area where Prophet Ibrahim and his family had just settled and a new town was built. The town is called Mecca, and later it became the birth place of Islam.

WHAT DID PROPHET IBRAHIM DO AFTERWARDS?

Prophet Ibrahim, as you know, is a man with a bundle of energy. He would not stay in a place long, and he had a sacred message from Almighty God. He went back to Palestine to join his first wife, the beloved Sara. It was quite a difference between the dry hot sandy area of Mecca and the green pastures and fields of Palestine, where the rain is plentiful and it is nice and cool. Not too long after being with his wife Sara, Prophet Ibrahim had something special happen to him.

WHAT WAS IT?

It was three guests who came to greet him and say hello. They were neat and clean as if travel had not made them dusty or tired. Prophet Ibrahim soon found out that the three nice looking men were angels sent by God, in the form of men. They came to give him special, happy news while on their way to help Ibrahim's nephew, Prophet Loot (Lut) in his ordeal with the people around.

The glad news was that Sara, Prophet Ibrahim's wife was going to have a baby. It was hard for anyone to believe it, because Sara was so old and old ladies cannot have babies. But the three angels said that it was the Will of Almighty Allah and this was His wish. Prophet Ibrahim never questioned that, knowing how Almighty God was able to do whatever He wished to do.

Time passed by and sure enough, Sara the old lady did get pregnant. Nine months later she gave birth to a beautiful baby boy and they gave him the name of Ishaq (Issac).

FEW YEARS LATER

A few years later, Prophet Ibrahim travelled again, this time down south to see his second wife Haajer and the baby Isma'eel. He saw that Isma'eel had become a nice looking young boy, who was very good. Ibrahim the Prophet, of course never lost a chance in talking to the people around about God and the religion of God wherever he was, be it in Palestine, Mecca, or Egypt. He had a

good many people who believed in his grand message and they became good people. The teachings of God were written on special tablets and they were followed well by those people. Unfortunately those tablets did get lost with time and there is no trace of them anymore.

But back to Prophet Ibrahim, he was waiting for his child Isma'eel to become a young lad before he would tell him about a special dream that he had before.

WHAT WAS THE DREAM ABOUT?

When prophets of God dream about something, their dream is true and something special. Their dreams are not like yours or mine, something to be taken lightly and then to be forgotten.

The special dream of Prophet Ibrahim was about his son Isma'eel. He dreamt that Almighty God had ordered him to sacrifice his own son Isma'eel! Just imagine! Prophet Ibrahim had no hesitation to do what he was ordered to do, but Isma'eel was very young at the time, so he had to wait until the boy grew older. This is something very, very hard for any man to do, but when you have to wait for so long and think about it, it becomes much harder on the person. This was the case with Prophet Ibrahim and the temptation of not doing what he was supposed to do was certainly there. But Prophet Ibrahim had a solid faith in God and his life was all dedicated to the service of God. So he waited and waited until Isma'eel became a nice looking young lad, a teenager, before his father broke the news.

DID HE SACRIFICE HIM?

Isma'eel had heard a great deal about God and the religion of God, from his father Prophet Ibrahim. He had heard so much about where his father had been and how he had talked so often to the people everywhere about God's religion and how so many, many people had become true believers.

Then one day, Prophet Ibrahim told his son Isma'eel about the dream. To his great surprise, Ibrahim saw that his son Isma'eel had no objections whatsoever and that he was willing to be sacrificed because God had willed it. Isma'eel said "If that was the Will of the Almighty, so be it. I offer myself happily." This was a hard decision for a young man to take and it was a moment of great faith in God by both men at a heavy price of sacrificing a son!

BUT DID HE DO IT?

The two of them walked side by side, a young lad full of life, and an old man full of wisdom and determination. Their purpose was to carry out the orders of the Lord.

Slowly they walked, with a sharp butcher knife that the old shakey Ibrahim had in his hand. Many a thought must have crossed the mind of each of them and they must have wondered as to why Almighty God in His glory wanted such a thing to happen. They finally reached a special area outside the town of Mecca. Isma'eel looked at his father lovingly and obediently must have appreciated the heavy feeling his father Prophet Ibrahim was having. Prophet Ibrahim, on the other hand, took a long look at young Isma'eel, and he must have had the memories of how they came to Mecca when Isma'eel was such a baby, and how he became thirsty and how his mother had rushed from one hill to the other looking for water.

Anyway they could wait no longer. The time had come. With an understanding look, Isma'eel the young man did bend over on a nearby large stone, and his father was standing by him shaking with emotion, and the big shiny butcher knife was in his hand. Ibrahim's muscles were all tense. It was a moment of action, an action that was very hard to do.

Ibrahim raised the knife shakily and the knife went up and up in the air. But just before it could fall down swiftly on the neck of Isma'eel, the two of them could hear a clear loud commanding voice from nearby. It somehow stopped them from what they were going to do, and their hearts began to beat even more violently.

WHAT DID THE VOICE SAY?

Loud and clear it said, "Stop, O Ibrahim, you have already fulfilled the command of the dream." It was a voice from God the Almighty, ordering Ibrahim not to sacrifice his own son Isma'eel, because he had already intended to do so and had gone through all the heartache of doing so over the past few years.

The voice also said to sacrifice a ram that was provided nearby. They looked around, now that Isma'eel was standing up. The moment of suspense was over. Sure enough, they saw a ram (male sheep) nearby. Prophet Ibrahim then slaughtered the ram instead of his son and both father and son were happy and grateful.

From that time until today, human sacrifice has stopped. Instead, we as Muslims, sacrifice a sheep or the like and give some of the meat to the poor, and that is during the Eid-ul-Adha.

So, as it turned out, God wanted to stop the terrible human sacrifice as it used to be done in the old days, since such a thing was and is so bad to do. Instead, God would like us to sacrifice a sheep or something similar to feed the hungry and the poor.

As you see, Prophet Ibrahim lived a long, long life and his life was full of so many happenings, and he travelled so much. But above all, his faith in Allah was solid indeed, and he never missed a moment's rest in calling for the message of God and gaining thousands upon thousands of believers. Thus the world became a much better world while those people practised the Law of the Almighty.

I would like to tell you also, that Prophet Ibrahim and his son Isma'eel who also became a Prophet later on, both did build the Ka'aba. The Ka'aba is the place where we the Muslims go to do our pilgrimage every year. As he was building the Ka'aba Ibrahim used to pray to the Almighty to bless that special house of God, and to bless the people who devoted themselves to God.

Source: *Stories of some of the Prophets,*

By A.S. Hashim, M.D.

An Inspiration To My Soul

Maynard Hill,
Castries,
St Lucia.
7-5-78.

Dear Sir,

I am writing you these few lines to let you know how pleased and interested I am after reading a copy of the *Muslim Standard* (August - September 1976). Although it was outdated, its content was only truth. I borrowed this copy from a brother and every line was an inspiration to my soul. That is my reason for writing for more information to become a subscriber and also information for a beginner in the Muslim faith. I am thanking you in advance for a favourable reply.

Yours truly,
Gonzague Mc Lawrence.

COMMENT

Is It Happening To You?

It is quite evident that the situation in our nation is one for deep concern. In every facet of its activity one is confronted with incompetence, disregard and a 'don't care' attitude. The recent description of Parliament as a 'farce' by a leading newspaper shows one side of the problem. The other factor is the attitude of the people. This attitude has been growing into a frenzy with all the anomalies and contradictions existing in the system. There is an underlying fear for change. The result of which is a selfish and self-centred individual and society. The question is: "When and where will the present situation end?"

Imagine awaking in the morning and not being able to get a proper bath—no water; when you arrive at work after endless traffic jam—no parking space; you go to the super-market to buy basic foodstuff like rice, butter, sugar, cooking oil, baby food etc..... you have to beg someone in the storeroom at the back and if you are lucky and will pay twice the price, you might receive some, if not—all done. On finishing work you re-enter the traffic jam and head for home to face a wife and kids. She has some good news—she had gone to the grocery and was sold a little rice and butter. Then the bad news—the landlord dropped in and left a note saying that he will be forced to raise the rent from next month.

Probably all these things may not have happened to you as yet. But let's face it, these are the 'in things' these days. Is it any wonder, therefore that the people are 'freaking out' so easily, that they are becoming more frustrated daily? Need we mention the recent finding of eight naked people living in the forest, this being not the first of such reports. Also the continued attraction of the youth to the Rastafari cult and its associated ganja 'vibes' and smutty 'reggae' tunes. Are there any moves to bring a halt to this downward trend?

Recently the Attorney General has been 'pushing down our throats' (jokingly or otherwise) new legislation in an attempt presumably to make the roads and airports safer. Talk about an Integrity Commission has long been voiced. The Anti-Corruption drive continues to be driven away. The Ombudsman is going through his paces but the flowering is

long in coming. Regular raids against guerrillas and drug pushers by the police and helped by army personnel continue with further signs of police control symbolised by their motto 'To Protect and Serve'. Amidst all this the prattle for Human Rights has shown its head in its cry for a Human Rights Commission. Also the placing of millions of Petro dollars in foreign banks as security for the starving 'man in the street' in the name of higher economics is the depth of concern.

Tell me my brother and sister, do you think that these agencies are really helping us to get out of the morass that we find ourselves?

Even our Health service, judging by the peoples' outcry and outrage at the condition of our hospitals, is one of the worst in the country. But what is note-worthy is the reaction of the Minister of Health (now Chairman of World Health Organisation) when explanations were demanded on the deplorable state of the hospitals. The strategy of not commenting on it and blaming the sources of information for incorrect information serves to show the wide gap that exists between the Government and the people. A further example of the lack of concern for the welfare of the people can be seen with the proposed establishment of the \$50 million 'Horse Racing Complex' in Caroni. Although there have been talk about a boost for employment in the area for over 2,000 people and 'pressure' groups protesting and emphasising the need for housing developments, etc., the crux of the problem does not lie here. The problem is one which stems from an exploitative mentality, one that promulgates gambling as a pastime of the people. The amount of hard-earned cash swindled from the masses gives a vivid picture of the mentality and structuring of our society.

The present system, sad to say, lacks ideals!

The corruption which is eating the country cannot be stopped by man-made laws. We need to lift ourselves up and out by helping one another. What is even more important is that we should treat the laws of Almighty God with priority.

Divine laws given to us must be pro-

mulgated far ahead of man-made laws because they satisfy our natural instincts and urges. We need to become conscious of the tremendous seriousness of human life and to bring forth moral earnestness in our actions. Our courage must be strengthened; Our patience must be exhibited and our determination for a better life must be prefaced by our principles.

Let us intensify our efforts in pursuing a system of life where the dictates of God take first place; where the harmonising of truth and justice, love and selflessness, beauty and wisdom, patience and discipline is our ideal, our goal in life. It is time that mankind deal with some righteousness!

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