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DO YOU KNOW WHAT IS ISLAM?

Khomeini Speaks

Khomeini is now a household name. The declaration of an Islamic State in Iran has provoked many questions in the Caribbean and not least of these is — Can a system that worked well 1400 years ago, be viable in this 20 th. century?

Khomeini himself answers the questions — pages 5 & 9

Grenada Coup

The Grenada coup has caused near panic in the governments of the English speaking Caribbean. The people of Grenada have overthrown a tyrant, but will their new leadership solve the problems? — pages 4 & 10.

Who Says Islamic Law Is Barbaric?

Islam imposes preventive punishments which may appear cruel when viewed superficially. But Islam does not execute such punishments unless the crime is unjustifiable.

A TRIP WITH FAROOQ

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AMERICAN IMPERIALISM

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WAKE UP AND SEEK KNOWLEDGE Page 11

Ever since the oil crisis of 1973, the Middle East countries have been brought into focus by the western news media. Inevitably, the spotlight sometimes falls on the way-of-life of the great majority of people in that area — Islam and those who follow it — Muslims.

The Islamic Festival put on in England in 1976 gave some impetus to the re-awakening of the West's consciousness to Islam.

Western writers — from the comic strip writer to the orientalists', the literary equivalent of the Christian crusaders against Islam — have always seized every opportunity to distort and misinterpret Islam. So that when King Khalid's niece and her lover were executed for committing adultery, they gleefully 'went-to-town' on it.

The institution of certain Islamic laws in Pakistan and the revolution in Iran where an Islamic Republic has been declared have caused a 'stir' in the West and one can detect an element of fear in the reactions. The Western media writers have therefore been goaded into more serious and increased action against Islam and Muslims. One can see such statements as 'An Islamic State? What! Are we going back to the dark ages?'; 'You mean to say Muslims are cutting off people's hands in this modern age? 'These laws are barbaric.' etc.

In the West, and indeed in all countries where colonial powers held sway (which includes some Muslim countries) the public has been fed distorted versions of what Islam is — through text books and the mass media. It is no accident that the average person's idea of what life is like in a Muslim country is that everybody lives in tents, the masses live in poverty, the chief (sheik) has a big colourful tent with lots of food and near naked women around him, available to every beck and call, and that every thing that the chief says is law. And of course, the main occupation is feuding and whenever the 'holy man' wants he can fly off on a carpet.

Basic Realities

What really is Islam? — And, Who are Muslims?

In order to answer these questions properly we must go back to some basics. Think about the universe — how much order and harmony there is in it. The earth rotates around the sun year after year, century after century, without changing its course and without changing speed. The earth itself revolves about an axis in a particular direction and at a particular speed. We never see the sun rising from the West nor do we see the earth revolving backwards. When we plant a mango seed we expect to get a particular tree having a particular type of leaves and bearing a particular type of fruit. We don't ever expect to see it bearing oranges. We don't ever find a cow giving birth to a goat or see a horse having horns, or a donkey having a leg with paws. Similarly with human beings there is a particular way in which they are born and in which the body functions.

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These things show that there is order and consistency in the universe. And order and consistency cannot be products of chance — the products of chance are chaos and inconsistency. Order and consistency are the products of planning, execution, and maintenance with some objective in mind. And somebody or something is responsible for creating and maintaining the universe. That somebody or something is called by some people and by Muslims 'Allah'.

Now, if we ponder a little further we will observe that there are not only order and consistency but there is harmony i.e. the various parts of the creation work together in such a way as to achieve a particular objective. For example, the sun shines for certain hours in the daily cycle, so that the plants can grow, water can be evaporated to fall as rain again, man and animals are able to do things which cannot be accomplished in darkness etc. When the plants grow, man and animal get food, and the waste product from them goes back to fertilize the soil. This is just one example of how creation works. We can see therefore that everything is dependent on another. Nothing is independent except the Creator. So we can see great harmony in the universe, and this is vital because there would be chaos and destruction without it.

Not only that, but for such harmony and order to exist, there must be only one person or thing that is responsible for creating and maintaining the universe because if there were more than one there would certainly be conflict. Further, the purpose for the existence of the universe must be one. For if there were more than one purpose, the various parts of the universe would be working at cross purposes and chaos would result.

We also see that everything exists according to the way that the Creator has directed it to exist. In other words, it obeys what the Creator has directed it to do. More than that, it has to obey — it has no choice. The only thing that has freedom of choice in certain matters is Man. But every man has to obey the laws that the Creator has made for him, e.g. — the laws governing the body functions such as the beating of the heart, the operation of the stomach, the liver, etc. — in other words, Man's involuntary self. However in Man's voluntary actions, he has freedom of choice. And he has been given this freedom by the Creator to test him — whether he will direct his voluntary actions to conform to the way the Creator

has directed him or whether he will rebel and do his 'own thing'.

Now, if Man submits himself to live in the way that the Creator has directed, then, Man's total self (voluntary and involuntary) harmonizes with the rest of creation and he is able to develop his faculties to higher levels; in other words, he becomes a better human being. And of course, better individual human beings taken together, make up a better human society.

That Way (System) of life that Allah (God) has directed us to live by is called Islam and a person who submits himself to live in that Way is called a Muslim.

THE PROPHETS

Now the Islamic Way of Life has been given to Mankind ever since the first human beings, Adam and Hawwa (Eve) came upon the Earth. Adam and Hawwa lived the Islamic Way but the succeeding generations gradually strayed from the Way because personal opinions and traditions, etc. got mixed up in it. So that Allah sent Prophets from time to time to bring the people back to the correct and pure Way. Every time a prophet came many people would return to the right Way and after the prophet left they eventually strayed again. Because people had spread to various parts of the world, Allah sent Prophets into those parts, each part receiving at least one prophet inviting the people to the pure Islamic Way of Life.

But all the peoples strayed from the Way, until Allah sent His final Prophet whose mission has been to invite all Mankind back to the pure Islamic Way. This prophet is Muhammad (peace be upon him). Allah has made it clear that Muhammad is His final Messenger to Mankind. His final message has been recorded in the Qur'an which is protected by Allah Himself from any corruption until the end of the world. Previous revealed scriptures have been tampered with so that in the versions we have in these times we cannot tell the true from the false portions.

Not only that, but the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been the perfect exemplar — showing in detail the Way for human beings to live. There are detailed and authentic records of the sayings and actions of Muhammad. These contain matters relating not only to the individual, but also to the organisation and functioning of the state.

THE WHOLISTIC SYSTEM

It is important for us to under-

stand that the Prophets were commissioned by Allah not only to teach the people to believe in Him, to pray and to avoid certain moral evils. The mission of each Prophet was to change the society (both the individual in it and its structure) so that good will be liked and upheld and evil will be disliked and suppressed. In other words the Prophets not only sought to change the individuals but also the political system, the economic system and the social structure, to conform to the injunctions of Allah. In this way conditions within the society make it easier for the individual to be good.

We in the Caribbean, as indeed in other parts of the world, know that corruption is the norm of society rather than the exception; that those who are supposed to be the upholders of the Law are themselves the breakers of the Law while there exists groups of people completely out of the reach of the Law. The mass media project crime and immorality in the name of freedom of the press while some advertisements glamorise activities and goods that have an adverse affect on the physical, moral and social life of the society. It is under such conditions that the life of the individual and the society degenerates rather than improves.

ARTICLES OF FAITH

The basic articles of faith in Islam

are :

- (1) The belief in the Oneness of Allah — the Creator, Sustainer and Sovereign of the universe. He is alone. He does not have a split personality nor does anyone or thing share in His divinity or sovereignty. He has no parents or children. He is independent and all else depends on Him. He is omnipresent and omnipotent. He is all-knowing and all-wise. And the final outcome of all matters rests with Him. Allah alone is to be worshipped.
- (2) The belief in Angels — the invisible beings created by Allah to carry out certain functions for Him. For example, Angel Gabriel conveyed revelations from Allah to the Prophets. Of course, there are many Angels, but Allah has not disclosed the names or functions of all of them.

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- (3) The belief in all the books of revelation from Allah to the various Prophets. Of course, the only book that has remained unadulterated is the Quran.
- (4) The belief in all the Prophets. There have been thousands of Prophets throughout the ages. However only twenty-five are actually mentioned in the Quran. Islam teaches that a Prophet has no divinity. He is a human being chosen by Allah to teach the people how to live in accordance with Allah's commands and to set the example. No human being or other created thing is to be worshipped.
- (5) The belief in the Day of Resurrection and Judgement. When the world comes to an end, all then alive would die. Then all human beings who have lived throughout the ages, will be raised to life. And each individual will be judged by Allah according to his deeds during his lifetime. Those who are judged to have been good, will have an eternal life of bliss, and those who have been judged to have been bad will be punished. Those who have rejected belief in the Oneness of Allah and in the Prophets will receive eternal punishment.
- (6) The belief in Pre-measurement. Allah created all things (including Mankind) to exist and function according to certain laws. Mankind, however, has been given the freedom of action — to obey or to disobey the commands of Allah. Whatever a person chooses to do, things will happen in accordance with the laws set by Allah.

THE MUSLIMS

Prophet Muhammad (u.w.b.p.) succeeded in establishing a society in which the laws of Allah were implemented and good prevailed. This continued under the Caliphs (elected leaders) and the state stretched over a great part of the then known world.

However, when the monarchical system was foisted on the people, the leaders of the Islamic State gradually

lost the true objective of Islam and became too concerned with power and possessions. This led to neglect in implementation and upholding Allah's laws. The Muslims lost the spirit of Islam and became apathetic and developed an inferiority complex, in the face of the West's advances in science and technology.

The decline of the Muslims and break-up of the Islamic state into several separate countries have been due in no small way to the efforts of the Colonial Powers who continue to have influence on the governments in many Muslim countries through the leaders, most of whom were Western educated and now look to the West for guidance. The masses however by and large have maintained the Islamic practices especially at the level of the individual.

The individual Muslim has lost those qualities that speak of, through and through, submission to the Will of Allah with knowledge and commitment to work towards the Islamic objectives: qualities such as humility and strength, courage and determination, patience and perseverance, piety and dynamism etc. These used to be part of an Islamic character. This is because he has lost sight of the earthly objective to establish Islam in himself, to teach it to others and to strive in company with others to establish it in the society. These objectives are vital in achieving the overall objective of pleasing Allah.

Since Prophet Muhammed (u.w.b.p.), is the final messenger of Allah, the duty of carrying the message of Islam to all people over the earth falls on the shoulders of the Muslims. But Muslims have forgotten what Allah said in the Quran.

*"It is He who has sent His Apostle with Guidance,
And the true way of life,
That he may proclaim it over all religion
Even though the Pagans may,
detest it.*

(Quran : Ch. 61 Verse 9)

*"Thus have we made of you
An Ummah (community) justly balanced
That you might be witnesses over
the nations,
And the apostle a witness,
over yourselves.*

(Quran : Ch. 2 Verse 143)

Praise Allah, over the recent times the world wide Islamic Movement to revive and to establish the true objectives of Islam, has been gaining ground. Events in Iran bear testimony to this.

Islam is the system of life that Allah wants Mankind to live by so that they may be successful both in this world and the hereafter.

Allah says in the Quran:

*So they seek for other than
the religion of Allah?
While all creatures in the heavens,
and the earth,
Have willingly or unwillingly
bowed to His Will?
And to Him shall they all,
be brought back.*

(Quran : Ch. 3 Verse 83)

Anecdotes

by Sheikh Sadi

THE JUST AND THE UNJUST

An unjust King asked a wise man, "What is more rewarding than prayer?" "For you," the wise man answered, "the best kind of worship is to sleep till the middle of the day, so that for that period at least, your subjects will be spared your injustices."

SLEEP versus WAKEFULNESS

Once when I saw a tyrant sleeping till the middle of the day, I said to my friend, "It is good that mischief is not rampant for the time being. But, I thought, a person whose sleep is better than his wakefulness, is it not better that he be dead than alive?"

THANKING THE ABUSER

Once a wicked fellow abused and insulted a good and pious man. The pious man said patiently: "Whatever you have said about me is far less than what I really am, because you do not know my vices and shortcomings as much as I know them myself. Hence let me thank you and pray Allah to forgive me and reward you."

INTRODUCTION: Since an Islamic Republic has been declared in Iran, people have become curious as to what form it will take? What are its objectives? How would a law and a constitution that was revealed 1400 years ago function in 20th century Iran? Here Khomeini shares his views on these questions.

It is obvious that the Shari'ah (Islamic Law) was meant to be applied not just during the time of Prophet Muhammad, but the need for the Shari'ah is perpetual. Islam is free from constraints of time and space. It is an eternal and universal religion. Its implementation and discipline are also eternal and universal. If there is anything which was halal (lawful) during the time of the blessed Prophet, then it shall remain so until the end of our world. If there is anything which was haram (prohibited) in his time, then it shall remain so till the Day of Judgement. To suspend the limit (i.e. Hadd) imposed by Islam, to disregard its instructions and directives, to give up the injunctions on Qassas (punishment), the Dayt (blood money) or to withhold payment of the monetary dues prescribed by Islam or to abdicate from the duty of defending the Islamic Community and lands are not permissible. To hold that Islam was revealed for a particular period of time is against the fundamental objectives of Islam.

The Islamic state bears no resemblance to any existing system of government. The Islamic state is neither autocratic nor does it make its head the repository of all powers so as to let him play with the life and property of the people. The Islamic state is free of all despotism. It is a constitutional state but not in the modern sense where the constitution is interpreted by parliament or public representative bodies. The Islamic state is a constitutional state in the sense that those charged with running it are bound by the rules and conditions laid down by the Qur'an and Sunnah. The right to legislate is the prerogative of God. No one here has or can have the absolute or unconditional power to make laws, nor can anyone issue an ordinance which has no sanction in Divine guidance.

Obedience to the Qur'an and Sunnah makes the discharge of the state's responsibilities very easy. In other forms of government when the majority passes a bill, the government has to take recourse to various devices and pressures in order to obtain obedience of the enactment, but in Islam people obey the law by their own volition.

The Islamic government is a government of law. Here God alone is the

Paramount Authority. He is the legislator..... All people including the blessed Prophet, his caliphs and everyone is bound by the injunctions revealed through revelation or those laid down by God in the Quran or those issued by the blessed Prophet himself..... The authority enjoyed by the blessed Prophet or by the right type of rulers after him is an authority delegated by God..... Thus in Islam there is no place for the obedience of one's wishes or unbridled opinion. On the contrary the blessed Prophet, all the Imams and masses, all of them are the followers of the will of God and observers of His Shari'ah (Law).

The Islamic government is free from all such appellations as kingdom, empire etc. Islam does not permit the state to tamper with the life and property of the people. That is why we do not find such things in an Islamic ruler as are commonly found in other rulers and monarchs of the world. For example grand palaces, an army of pages and servants, the glitter and glamour of the court and an heir apparent to the crown (are not to be found in Islam.) The Islamic system is free of all these superfluities which take away more than half the wealth of the country. Although he was also the head of state the blessed Prophet had a very simple life-style... I am not sure if the fuqara (hermits) of today can lead as simple a life as that of Imam Ali. It is reported that when he received two shirts, he gave one shirt, the better one, to his slave Qanbar.

At the root of the many social ills of today is the corruption of the ruling family. If the royal court did not squander or the royal family did not plunder, the country's budget could have never run into deficit and incurred the British and American debts and the indignities that go with them. Have our oil deposits depleted or the mineral wealth hidden under the earth exhausted itself? We possess everything, and but for the court's squanderings and its unlimited stealing of public money, we would not have had to extend our hands before anyone.

It is historically proved that Colonialism has cut down the (Islamic) homeland into several pieces and split Muslims

Khomeini speaks

WHAT IS AN ISLAMIC STATE ?

into various nations. The colonial powers strove very hard to break up the strong and united Ottoman state. The Russians, the British and their allies joined hands to fight against the Ottoman state. Eventually they split and shared among themselves this united Muslim state. Now there is only one way to unite the Islamic nation, liberate the occupied Muslim territories, get rid of the stooges of colonial power, and establish a true Islamic state.

There are two important requirements of leadership in Islam: the knowledge of Islamic law and ability to do justice. If there is a person who is a privy to the secrets of nature or an expert in other subjects but ignorant about fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) then in spite of all his academic and scientific skills, he would not be considered eligible for Khilafah... From the very beginning until today it has been an accepted principle among Muslims that the ruler or Caliph should be one who, in addition to having correct belief and good character, has the ability to do justice. It is also the dictate of common sense particularly when we know that the Islamic state is another word for the actualisation of Islamic laws rather than that of the whims and wishes of people. A person who is not well-versed in Islamic law cannot deserve to head an Islamic government..... A ruler who has to enforce the Divine limits (Hudood,) give people their rights, keep trust of the public treasury and honestly organise revenue and expenditure, such a person must not be a despot. God says that His promise (of support) is not meant for the despots.

Since the death of the blessed Prophet, the Muslim scholars have been unanimous in their view that the ruler of the Muslims and their leader is one who excels (in human) qualities, is knowledgeable about Islamic laws and rules, is just in applying the laws and is not deterred by any criticism or opposition in the matter of implementing the religion of God.

If we believe that those rules and laws which an Islamic state is founded have a permanent validity and that the Shari'ah does not approve of anarchy and

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Grenada Coup: PANIC IN THE CARIBBEAN

Ever since the coup in Grenada by Bishop and his supporters on 13th March last there have been numerous statements, comments and views expressed throughout the Caribbean.

There have been reactions running the full gamut — from panic to calm objectivity. What might, at first sight, seem surprising is that the panic came from several English-speaking Caribbean governments — the former British colonies. This panic is evident from the proposed course of action, that came out of the ministers' conference of several Caribbean governments, urgently called and held in Barbados.

In short, the course of action sought to legalize the Bishop regime was by using devious provisions in the Grenada constitution.

This recommendation coming out of the conference, besides being puerile, indicates a 'head-in-the-sand' attitude in the face of the de facto realities of the situation.

This attitude by the Caribbean governments can be due to two main reasons. Firstly, an obsession that constitutionality and non-violence are the only means of redress. This lays bare the depth to which the indoctrination by the colonial master has been able to permeate the minds of the subjects — to the extent that the very individuals who have been supposedly educating the Caribbean people on the evils of the 'colonial mentality' have themselves displayed the same mentality when they are put to the test.

Secondly, the fear that they, like Gairy, might lose their positions of power by force — thus admitting to themselves and the public that they have gained and/or maintained power through fraudulent elections, corruption, intimidations, etc.

The leaders of any society who have reached leadership positions through lawful means and who strive earnestly to discharge their duty towards the people, would have no fear of being removed by force, backed by popular support.

That there exist regimes in the Caribbean who are open to similar action as has been taken against Gairy, is evidenced by the appearance in Georgetown, Guyana, a few days after the coup in Grenada, of posters that read,
 "The Shah gone,"
 Gairy gone,
 Who next?"

It is clear that the cause for panic by the Caribbean governments is not the fact that the Bishop regime has socialist leanings. For, we know at least two other governments in the English-speaking Caribbean who have socialist policies, namely, Guyana and Jamaica. Indeed, these two governments were party to the recommended course of action mentioned earlier on.

In the English-speaking Caribbean we have been accustomed to the traditional 'western' concept of what is a democratic government i.e. one elected through secret ballot. But secret ballot by itself does not guarantee a democratic government for there can be gerrymandering of the constituency boundaries or deliberate irregularities to favour one party or candidate. And this can result in persons who do not have the majority support of the people, gaining power.

In any political entity, democracy exists when the affairs of the society are governed directly by the people themselves or by their representatives. It has nothing to do with the method by which the representatives are selected and placed in authority. The Bishop government is therefore democratic if it has the support of the majority of the people of Grenada — and from all reports this appears to be so.

In any society, the leaders have duties towards the people — individually and collectively and conversely, the people individually and collectively have duties towards the leaders.

Some of the duties of the leaders are:-

1. To set an example by word and deed.
2. To keep close to the people so that they know them and their needs.
3. Deal justly and impartially with the people.
4. Not to place a great burden on the people by creating hardship in obtaining the essentials of life.
5. To see that the correct balance is maintained between individual and collective rights.
6. To consult the people fully before exacting important laws and regulations.
7. Generally, to do all that is necessary to ensure the proper development of the physical, moral, and spiritual aspects of

the individuals and the society.

The duties of the people are:-

1. To obey all lawful and just orders of the leaders.
2. To cooperate fully with the leaders in executing their tasks.
3. To correct the leaders, when they go wrong.
4. To remove the leaders when they insist in going wrong.

In case of Grenada therefore, where Gairy has been, from reports, a tyrant, the people not only had a right, but indeed it was their duty to rise up and free themselves from such tyranny. Whether they have chosen the right leaders and the right ideology this time, is quite another question.

In connection with oppression, Allah (Almighty God) says in the Quran:

*"And why should you not fight, in the cause of Allah,
 And of those who being weak, are ill-treated (and oppressed),
 Men, women, and children whose cry is,
 'Our Lord! rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors;
 And raise for us from You, one who will protect;
 And raise for us from You, one who will help!*

*Those who believe, fight in the cause of Allah,
 And those who reject faith, fight in the cause of evil:
 So fight you against the friends of Satan:
 feeble indeed is the cunning of Satan."*
 (Chapter 4, Verse 75-76)

People in the Caribbean, as indeed people all over the world, are in search of a system of life which will bring peace, security and satisfaction of their basic needs.

It must be clear to anyone who thinks and reflects on this problem, that such a system must be based on truth and justice. But then, what is truth? Surely, true knowledge on how mankind must live comes from God.

Most people believe in God (i.e. a being who created and is in control of the whole universe). But many people's idea of God's sphere of control and concern is that it is limited to once-a-week church going, to forgive you when you ask Him, to bless you when you get married, and to receive your soul when you die.

Is God not concerned with other

(Continued on page 10)

INTRODUCTION: This article on Islam and Islamic Criminal Law is written in reply to two articles — 'These laws are barbaric' and 'Some Muslims are truly ignorant' by Trevor Smith and published in the local Sunday Punch newspapers.

Praise be to God, who created man and favoured him with intellect, reason, and freedom. However, instead of thanking God for the bounties He has showered on man by making use of such blessings, a large number of people allow 'wish and desire' to be their main source of human activity and motivation and as a result such reason is misleading and the rational approach is beclouded.

Recently on the 18th of February 1979, Trevor Smith's feelings towards Islam and Islamic Criminal Law were published in the Sunday Punch, a local weekly newspaper. "Barbaric! That is the only word to describe the new laws which have been imposed in Pakistan, by that country's leader General Zia Ul Haq recently. "One week after that on the 25th of February, 1979, Trevor Smith proclaimed in the Sunday Punch, "Some Muslims are truly ignorant." He also wrote "Today I have another word to use — FOOLS".

I would not spend a lifetime explaining to people like Trevor Smith the true meaning of the Creator's Laws, but would rather spend a few hours in taking a rational approach towards the articles written by him and published in the Sunday Punch.

In this day and age when the criminal is looked upon as a victim of society and it is maintained that he is entitled to medical treatment rather than punishment it is not surprising that 'Barbaric' is echoed throughout the country or throughout the world when Islamic Law is being discussed.

Crime is often regarded as an individual aggression against the community. That is why the concept of crime and punishment is closely connected with a nation's concept of the individual - community relationship.

Individualistic countries - such as the capitalistic western states - go too far in sanctifying the individual. Such countries straighten the state's rights to restrict the freedom of the individual. This attitude is reflected in their conception of crime and punishment. They sympathise with criminals and treat them kindly because they claim that they are victims of cor-

rupted circumstances, psychological complexes and nervous disorders which they could not overcome. Therefore such states are inclined to reduce penalties until - especially in moral offences - they are no longer regarded as punishment.

At this stage psycho-analysis comes in to justify or explain away the crime. It was noted that Freud was the champion of the historical change which regarded a criminal as the victim of the sexual complexes resulting from the repression of the sexual instincts by society, religion, morality and tradition. Later, all schools of psycho-analysis followed Freud's example, but many of them did not agree with him that sexual energy was the centre of life. All such schools regard a criminal as a passive creature who is the victim of general and personal circumstances amidst which he was brought up. They believe in what is called 'psychological determinism', that is to say, a man has no freedom of will or action with respect to the psychological energy which acts according to a predetermined manner.

On the other hand, communist countries maintain that the community is a sacred entity against which the individual must not rebel. Therefore such states inflict great penalties including death and torture on individuals who rebel against the state. Communism refers offences to economic rather than psychological considerations - as Freud and other psychologists did. Communism holds that a society which suffers from economic disorder cannot foster virtues. Therefore criminals should not be punished. But can the communists explain why crimes are committed, why prisons and courts are still in use in Russia where the economy is governed by the theory of absolute equality?

There is no doubt that both individualistic and communist conceptions are partly true. It is true that circumstances surrounding an individual have a great effect on his constitution and that the subconscious complex may sometimes lead to crime. But man is not a completely passive being in confronting such circumstances. The psycho-analysts commit this mistake: they concentrate on the dynamic energy in man but they ignore the controlling energy which is quite inherent in the human system. The energy which enables a child to control his secretive glands and avoid wetting his bed after a certain age is the same energy which can control his emotions and actions so that he may not continuously give in to his unruly passions and sudden whims.

On the other hand, economic conditions do have some effects on the feelings and actions of individuals. It is true that hunger, by breeding irrationality and hatred, may lead to crime or moral corruption. But to say that only the economic factor influences the human conduct is a half truth. It is seen by the facts of life in the Soviet Union, which claims to have wiped out hunger and poverty.

Who Say Law Is

By Inti

Islam has a unique theory which combines the best of both worlds : the communist as well as the individualistic theories.

On studying a crime Islam takes into account two considerations at the same time; the viewpoint of the criminal and that of the community against which aggression took place. In light of such considerations Islam prescribes fair punishment which is in accordance with the dictates of sound logic and wise reasoning and which must not be affected by delinquent theories and national or individual whims.

Islam imposes preventive punishments which may appear cruel if viewed superficially or without proper consideration. But Islam does not execute such punishments unless it ascertains that the crime was not justifiable or that the criminal was not acting under any obligation.

Islam prescribes that a thief's hand should be cut, but such punishment is never inflicted where there is the slightest doubt that the thief was impelled to crime by hunger.

Islam prescribes that both adulterer and adulteress should be stoned but it does not inflict such punishment unless they are married persons upon conclusive evidence by four eye-witnesses, i.e. when two married persons flagrantly commit such a heinous crime. It is to be mentioned that Islam took similar precaution with respect to all the punishments it has prescribed.

If we study the policy adopted by Islam in prescribing punishment we shall see that Islam tries in the first place to purify society from circumstances that may lead to crime. After taking such precaution Islam prescribes a punishment preventive and just which may be inflicted upon persons who have no reasonable justification for their crimes. Also when the state is unable to preclude circumstances which may lead to crime or when

Islamic Barbaric?

Ali Bakr

there is some doubt regarding the crime, the punishment will not be inflicted and the ruler will set the criminal free or he may inflict on him a light punishment (beating or imprisonment) in proportion to his extent of responsibility for the crime.

Islam strives by various means to preclude circumstances that may lead to crime. It strives to ensure a fair distribution of wealth. It even managed to wipe out all poverty in the regime of Omar bin Abdul Aziz. The Islamic State is responsible for the support of every citizen, regardless of his religion, race, language, colour or social status. The state is also responsible for decent work for all citizens. When work is not available or if an individual is incapable of working, aid will be given to him from the Public Treasury.

Islam recognises the strength and importunity of sex, but it tries to satisfy the sexual instinct through legal means i.e. marriage. Therefore Islam advocates early marriages and provides aid from the Public Treasury for those who wish to get married yet cannot afford to do so. On the other hand, Islam purifies society from temptations which excite the passions. It also prescribes lofty and noble ideals which exhaust excessive vitality and direct it into the service of public interest. In this manner, Islam eradicates all motives that lead to crime.

Before prescribing punishment,

Islam tries in the first place to wipe out all circumstances and motives that may lead to crime. But even after a crime is committed Islam tries to waive the execution if there is any doubt about it. I ask. Could any other system match the justice of Islam? Where is the barbarism in Islam?

Having not studied the reality of the Islamic concept of crime and punishment Trevor Smith considers the punishments prescribed by Islam as 'Barbaric'. He imagines that such punishments - like the European Civil punishments - will be inflicted every day. He fancies that the Islamic society indulges in daily executions of flogging, hand-cutting and stoning. But the fact is that such deterrent punishments have been executed very rarely. The fact that the punishment for theft had been executed only six (6) times throughout a period of four hundred years is a clear evidence that such punishment was primarily meant to prevent crime.

Trevor Smith imagines that such punishments have no practical significance and calls on Muslim Leaders to denounce such punishments. However, these punishments were prescribed in order to frighten those individuals who have no reasonable motive for crime yet feel a strong desire for committing crimes. However strong their motives may be, the punishment will surely make them think twice before committing any crime. It is true that some young men may suffer from sexual regression. But so long as the community works for the public good and cares for all its members, the community is entitled to full security with respect to persons and property.

On the other hand, those people who tend to commit crimes for no clear reasons are not left to continue. Islam tries all possible means to treat and restore them to normality.

So far I have only dealt with the concept of Islam as being barbaric as charged by Trevor Smith. There are many other issues Trevor touched in which I would like to discuss in detail. Mr. Smith wrote that he could spend a lifetime teaching people like Brother Yusuf Mitchell the true meaning of the Creator's Laws. But I am sorry to say that if I were to judge from his articles, I sincerely advise Mr. Smith to spend some time learning the law before he attempts to teach it to anyone.

In reference to Brother Mitchell's words - "Muslims are not ashamed of the laws of their Creator, nor of anyone who

exposes their laws" - Mr. Smith said - 'I applaud any Muslim who thinks this way'. Here Mr. Smith contradicts himself. It is very clear that in no way he was praising General Zia Al Haq for enforcing Islamic Law in a Muslim country. He rather called the Muslims - Barbaric, Fools, Ignorant, etc. etc.

In his article he accused General Zia Al Haq of misinterpreting the Islamic Law. For the information of Mr. Smith the laws enforced by General Zia Al Haq in Pakistan are quite in accordance with the Quran and the tradition of Prophet Muhammed (upon whom be peace) and are in no way a misinterpretation of Islamic Law. It is because of such you would not find any Muslim scholar or even the normal Muslim joining with anyone and shouting 'Barbaric' at the top of his voice. Tell me Mr. Smith in what way was the Islamic Law misinterpreted? Any student of comparative religion would tell Mr. Smith that the Quran and the Testaments don't mix and as such they cannot be taken as a whole. The people (Catholic, Christians, etc.) who accept the authenticity of the Testaments and believe in them do not accept or acknowledge the prophethood of Muhammed (u.w.b.p.) and the divine origin of the Quran. The Muslims on the other hand accept the Quran as being of divine origin and recognize the prophethood of the other prophets and believe in them and their missions but do not accept the authenticity of the Testaments. Therefore the statement made by Mr Smith shows how little he knows about the major religions of the world or he is trying to propagate a new religion.

In his first article Mr. Smith called on all civilised people in this country to shout out against Islamic Law as he did, and he went further to abuse all those Muslims who believe in Islam and confer them with such titles as - BARBARIC, FOOLS, IGNORANT, MISINTERPRETERS, etc.

I say to Mr. Smith - If believing in one God, and all the Prophets sent by God and accepting the Quran as the Words of God and establishing regular prayers, and fasting and distribution of wealth and struggling to remove from society, crime, theft, adultery, rape, gambling, alcohol, and corruption while striving to instill in the hearts of people love, compassion, co-operation, piety, sacrifice, and goodness, if this is what Mr. Smith calls barbarism, ignorance and foolishness, then I tell him that nine hundred million Muslims who exist on the face of this earth, prefer to be 'ignorant' rather than to be 'civilised'.

"Where you going to attend Jumu'ah (Friday Prayer) today Akhiy (My brother)?" asked Abdul-Matiin.

"I'm finishing this bag, then heading for a masjid in the country," replied Farooq. Ever since he was through with Fajr prayer - before sunrise - his soul yearned for a change today.

"Today is 'boxing day', you know," noted Abdul-Matiin. "Plenty drunk people on the road. Plenty accidents and thing". 'Allah is the Decider of all events,' said Farooq. "Four years ago I was on the 'brink of a pit of fire' and Allah saved me and led me through changes till I eventually embraced Islam. You were lucky to be born of Muslim parents."

I had my share of Jahiliyyah (Ignorance) too, you know. If I didn't return to Islam by the Mercy of Allah and seek knowledge I'd be heading for the fire too. It's true that in my home I was safe from the influences of things like alcohol, swine, gambling and fornication, but the education wasn't right man. It didn't save me from these things later on when I had a choice. Muslims are in plenty ignorance. They have christmas trees at home and buy 'stocks' for them and their Christian friends. The best gift we can give to Christians for christmas is to invite them to the right path and to tell them the truth about that pagan festival. The best way to appreciate the birth and message of Prophet Jesus (peace be on him) is to practise what he taught but they do the opposite and then claim he will save them."

"Many Muslims do the same thing in a form," said Farooq. "They celebrate the birth of the prophet with functions and speeches all over the place and sing praises of him but they don't put into practice what he taught. Muslims are so absorbed in this ignorant environment. They join hands with unbelievers and polytheists in inter-religious organisations and talk about their Hindu brothers and their sister religions of Christianity and Judaism which also come from Father Abraham. But Abraham was not a Jew nor a Christian. He was a righteous man who worshipped the One God and associated no partners with Him."

Same thing with Moses. He didn't preach Judaism. Same thing with Jesus. He didn't preach Christianity. These doctrines are all man-made. They can't be called sisters of Islam which is the perfect way of life prescribed for man by Allah — Subhaanallah (Allah is pure and free from all defects.)"

"Are you staying in town for Jumu'ah?" he asked. "I have to do that," replied Abdul-Matiin. "I promised a sister this sandals for Jumu'ah so I will finish it off Inshaa-Allah (if Allah wills)." then close the shop and prepare for Jumu'ah. "Alhamdu-Lillaah (All praise is due to Allah)" Said Farooq as he polished the bag and began to plan mentally. He was pleasantly looking forward to his intended motions.

* * * * *

In the village, he dropped at the junction and began to walk in, having been told that the masjid was about a quarter mile inside. He had already walked about a quarter mile without any sign of that outstanding green and white building he sought, when he came upon the smell of marijuana. He looked for its source and soon saw a small open shed a little way off from the road, slightly concealed from view. He walked up to the 'block' intending to inquire as to where the masjid was. As he looked at the six men and one woman either sitting or standing there, high, the image of himself on the block years before, flashed through his mind. At that time, he had not yet returned to

Islam. There's no ideology on the block. People only come together there because of the herbs — itself being one of Allah's creation. The exploiter, the exploited, the parasite, the industrious, the prejudiced, the pleasure-seeker, the seeker after truth, the arrogant, the humble. All coexist in the mass of frustration and confusion that is 'the block'.

"You want something man?" The question came from the 'pusher', a man in his thirties wearing a beret whose bulge was indicative of his 'rasta' hairstyle. "I don't smoke," answered Farooq, and immediately he was scrutinized suspiciously. "I just come to ask for directions to the masjid," he continued. "Masjid!" asked a youth, "what is a masjid?" Farooq had deliberately used the Arabic word. "You may know it by the name mosque," he began to explain. "That's the Muslim church," interrupted someone on the bench. "You pass it already, man. Go back up and turn left. I'm a Muslim too," he added. Farooq turned his attention to the slim young man in his twenties of Indian descent and greeted him saying "As-salaamu 'Alaikum (Peace be with you)" The young man replied, "Salaam." He doesn't even know to reply to a greeting, noted Farooq. "If you're a Muslim, then what are you doing here?" he asked. "Taking a smoke," was the calm reply. The block roared with laughter. All except the pusher and the woman who remained still, looking at Farooq. "What's your name?" he asked. "Razack," came the reply. Farooq winced at the distortion. "Don't you go to Jumu'ah?" he asked. "I stop going to church years now," boasted Razack. "It was a church to you, that's why you stopped. But there's no church in Islam man." "So what is the mosque then?" inquired another youth, "Its plenty different to a church," explained Farooq. "There are no idols in it, no images, no statues, no pictures of people. That's because Muslims worship one God, Allah who has no partners. There is no being like Him. He sustains everything and is Himself not sustained by anyone. He has always lived and will never be subject to slumber, sleep or death. What's more He never takes on a body of flesh and He has no son." With that he had captured the interest of almost everyone. He continued, "Then there are no furniture inside the praying-area to make division amongst the people into groups or classes. Rich, poor, black, white, African, Indian, intellectual, unlearned, all stand together and prostrate together, touching the ground with their fore-heads in submission to the One God. The distinction between people in Islam is by righteousness. The praying area has to be clear. All shoes are left outside. Islam emphasizes humility and cleanliness. There are pipes just outside the praying area to enable the Muslims to wash themselves in the prescribed way to prepare for the prayer. There's no bell or horn to call the Muslims to prayer but a muadhdhin (one who calls to prayer) who calls the Adhaan (prayer-call). And the method of prayer doesn't include hand-clapping, loud singing, organ, piano or hand music."

The masjid is not a place for prayer only either. It is the nerve centre of a truly Islamic community with several social and political activities, an educational institution, a training centre, etc. Islam is the balanced way. It harmonizes the spiritual and the material in life. So you see how different a masjid is from a church?"

"True," said Razack. The pusher remarked: "I - man not joining no religious denomination. All them religion is the same thing. All of them foolin. Them don know about Jah. I and my God is inside," and he beat his chest with the palm of his hand. Farooq con-

Short Story

A TRIP WITH FAROOQ

When a man does not worship God, he winds up worshipping himself, his work, his money or his woman.

tinued, as if talking to the youth, "When a man doesn't worship the one true God he winds up worshipping His creation. He worships himself or part of himself - for example his hair, or the work of his hands or his money or his woman. Imagine, in today's world people still worship stones and trees. They may not bow down physically to the stones and trees. But stones make buildings and the buildings so pre-occupy their minds that the same stones become their God. And people smoke leaves from trees and they become so attached to smoking that the trees become their god."

* * * * *

The pusher got up. He took off his beret. He shook his locks in the air and walked around. Farooq was unmoved. He kept looking at the youth and continued, "Some people again, by their dominating influence on other people set up themselves as gods and exploit those who worship them. Islam is no religion, man. It is the way of life prescribed by the creator for man to live by. It lays down that God is One and that it is the right of the Creator ALONE to define a system of life for mankind. He nourishes us and sustains us and gives us life and causes us to die and will give us life again on the Day of Resurrection. Does man have any say in the operation of the universe? Can he make the Sun rise or set? Does man have any say as to when he will die or what happens to him after his death? Only the Creator can reveal to man the knowledge He revealed to His prophets whom He chose. If a man promotes his own system of life whether for himself alone or others as well, he is practically setting up himself as a god besides the Creator and it will not be accepted from him. He will be punished in the life hereafter." The pusher said, "You see this hereafter thing. I want mines here yes. Heaven and hell is right here," and he pointed to the earth. He put on his cassette player loudly with its reggae music and said, "I man a forward." Two others followed him. He looked back to the woman and asked her if she was coming. She said, "Later," and then they went out of sight. She turned to Farooq and asked, "What Islam teaches about Jesus Christ?" "He was a great prophet who instructed the children of Israel to worship the One God. He received a book

(Continued on page 9)

of Revelation from the Creator called the Injeel in Arabic. He performed great miracles by permission of the Creator and he never told the people that he was God or the Son of God. That is a tremendous falsehood spread by the Devil using false prophets." "But the Scripture says so. Don't you believe the Bible is the word of God?" she asked. "No," said Farooq emphatically. "We believe in all the books revealed to the prophets, for example the Taurah (Law revealed to Moses), the 'Zabur' (Psalms) revealed to David and the Injeel (Gospel revealed to Jesus). But we know that these books do not exist today in their original form. Muhammad came after Jesus and the book revealed to him, the Qur'an has not lost and will never lose its original purity. Not a word of the original Arabic text has been changed. The Creator Himself, has promised to protect it. People learn it by heart from cover to cover. It confirms the former scriptures bringing the same message of the Oneness of God and perfected the guidance of the prophets, a message valid for all peoples till the end of time.

"But Jesus said -I am the way, the truth and the light, no man cometh unto the father but by me," she protested. "The wicked had a hand in those records of what Jesus said," replied Farooq. "The choice of those four gospels to represent the traditions about Jesus was made at the Council of Nicea in the year 325 of the Christian era and the Trinity was declared the official religion. This falsehood had started with the innovations into the message of Jesus by Paul who ascribed partners to the Creator and abolished the Law which Moses brought and which Jesus practised, in order to accommodate the pagan people who he was trying to convert to his brand of religion. Christian Sects today think they follow Jesus and have broken away from Rome. In fact, once they use that bible they are all together in following the Pauline Church which attempted to destroy all the other gospels along with all the true followers of the Way taught by Jesus. But righteousness will always prevail. Even today, there still exists the Gospel of Barnabas. Barnabas was a disciple who was very close to Jesus throughout his mission. This Gospel can give you a better idea of what Jesus taught. Even between the falsehood in the Bible, the truth of his teachings is plain for those who have eyes to see and hearts to understand truth. And he, like many other prophets fore-told the coming of Muhammad, the comforter with the Spirit of truth who will lead humanity to all truth. The Spirit of truth, the angel Gabriel doesn't come to any and every body, only to prophets. He is the angel of Revelation. He brought the revelation of the Qur'an from Allah to Muhammad. Muhammad is the final prophet, the exemplar to mankind until the end of the world. The Qur'an is the book for all ages. Don't have blind faith. Check out his teachings and his life and you decide. If you are true, you will accept that he is the man to follow."

"So you don't believe Jesus die on the cross for your sins?" she asked. "Sister, if you believe that, then the herbs are doing nothing for your head, better you don't smoke. Does that sound reasonable to you? It wasn't Jesus who died on the cross. He's not dead yet. What's more, you and I have to stand the consequences of our own actions on the Day of Reckoning. The message Jesus brought was highly revolutionary and a very serious one, not the type of joke and pastime people have in his name today with a hotch-potch of idolatrous rituals. He will come back to earth before the Day of Judgement to live and die, not to stay up in the sky and judge as some people fantasise but to walk on the earth,

a Muslim. He will kill the swine, break the cross and destroy all the falsehood disguised behind his name and the world will know that God is ONE." Razack asked: "So you really believe in this Day of Judgement business?" Farooq said: "As sure as you are that tonight will follow today you can be sure that the Day of Judgement will come. And that is the truth." He looked at his watch. "I have to go now," he said. "Insha Allah, I'll pass back." Then he exhorted Razack "You must go to Jumu'ah. If you knew how important it is you'll be first to attend. And read man! If you don't have knowledge you won't be able to get along in the world. You should be able to tell them all that I have said."

"The rap was heavy man," said Razack. "I go check it out. We have books home Qur'an and thing. Come I'll drop you by the mosque. My uncle is the Imam." "Well your uncle can't save you on the Day of Judgement. Get up off the block and stop dreaming." He gave them two of the magazines he had with him to read and circulate. In response to the sister's request to read the Gospel of Barnabas and also the Qur'an, he told them of the library and the shop in town where they could check him out or 'Abdul-Matiin. He said 'Astaghfirullah' (I ask forgiveness of Allah) and to them, "Hadaakallah (May Allah guide you to the right path)" and then hastened off with quick steps with Razack trying to keep up with him.

by M. Luqman.

KHOMEINI SPEAKS

lawlessness then it clearly follows that to establish an Islamic government is obligatory upon usIslam also demands from us that we do justice with the oppressed and prevent the oppressor from doing injustice to people. All these things cannot be achieved unless we establish strong social institutions and these institutions are funded by public treasury.

About the public treasury I have already stated that it would include receipt from Khums, Zakat, Kharaj and Jaziya etc.

Both Shari'ah and common sense prove that what was obligatory in the time of the blessed Prophet is still obligatory.

If the present Muslim rulers apply the laws of Islam, give up all their differences and enmities and unite to face their adversaries, then in that case a few zionists and British and American agents would dare not achieve those victories (over Muslims) which they are achieving at present..... All the shame and debacle of today is the natural result of the fact that Muslims have defaulted from the duty of establishing Good Government and the application of the laws given by God.

Both the Shari'ah and common sense dictate that we do not let the existing governments persist in their (wrong) ways.....They have suspended the Shari'ah of God. For this reason it is the duty of all the Muslims of the world, wherever they may happen to be, to arise for Islamic revolution.

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American Imperialism

Surprised by the unprecedented revolt in Iran against dethroned Shah's anti-Islamic policies, the Carter Administration of the U.S. has ordered a worldwide study of what it calls "Islamic Fundamentalism".

One of the basic postulates of the Western thinkers has been that Islam is the prime cause of backwardness of the Muslims. During its two centuries of colonial rule over Asia and Africa the

GRENADA COUP

things also? Certainly, God has not only created the whole universe but sustains everything and has complete control over all events and things. So God is concerned about what happens in your home, in your work-place and in the public areas. He is concerned about what goes on in government, in business, in social activities, in education etc. He is concerned with the total life of the individual and the society. With all these areas of concern, would God then only give us through the Prophets certain rites of worship, tell us to do good and believe in Him? No! He would give us guidelines for all aspects of our life, both as individuals and as a society. And He has! He has given us laws on how the society must be run, guidelines on how to form the government and how to govern; guidelines on how to conduct business; guidelines on how the employer must relate to the employee and vice versa; how to relate to our family, to our friends, to all the rest of humanity; and how to relate to the rest of living and non-living parts of creation etc.

Where are these guidelines to be found? God sent these guidelines through the Prophets. But through the ages these guidelines got lost or corrupted except for the final and complete set of guidelines sent through the final Prophet, Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) and recorded in the Quran.

It is a fact of history that the Quran is the only revealed book that has remained in its original form without changes and distortions. This bears out that Allah (God) speaks the truth — for he says in the Quran that He will be the Protector of the Quran until the end of the world.

The only hope for us is to seek after truth and when we find it, to struggle to establish it in our lives and in the society.

Judeo Christian combine has continuously tried to destroy the Islamic heritage. Now we are told that Islam is not only the cause of backwardness but is against modernization. Some of the Westernized Muslims have also been harping this tune.

Happily the tide is turning in favour of Islamic renaissance. Many educated Muslim elites are discovering the moral and intellectual bankruptcy of the industrialised world. The former colonial powers having lost their dominion over most of Africa and Asia, have been peddling this fad of 'modernisation' which aims at destroying the moral and spiritual traditions of these so-called less developed countries. It is a form of neocolonialism. The Iranian case is a good example of this sinister trick of American imperialism.

Consequently, American interest in Islamic renaissance has ominous implication for the Muslim world. Her interest in Islam is not to understand it but to find new techniques of destroying it. A few honest Western Orientalists admit that the West has greatly underestimated the viability of Islam as an alternative ideology to socialism, democracy and communism. Some others argue that Islam, being a new faith (compared to Judaism and Christianity) has yet to run its full course.

If past experience is an indication for future, it is doubly dangerous for all Muslims. In the hey day of Nixon-Golda Meir collaboration against the Arabs, the C.I.A. and F.B.I. and the Zionist agents harassed the Arabs residing in the U.S.A. and the West. Even Americans of Arab descent were shadowed by the F.B.I. and the notorious Jewish terror organisation called Bonai Brith and the World Zionist Organisation. The treatment of Black Americans who embraced Islam is a shameful chapter of American history. The American people are being bombarded with anti-Muslim propaganda. Neither America nor the Soviet Union wishes to see Iran's brave experiment with a third alternative to the so-called 'modernisation' succeed. Ayatollah Khomeini has not really invented a new system or ideology. He has been only channelling the awakened consciousness of his people to the Islamic heritage to liberate themselves from a corrupt and oppressive regime.

Interesting phenomenon

The number of women alcoholics in the USSR is rapidly increasing according to the Moscow paper 'Literaturnaya Gazeta'. The paper said that alcoholism among women prior to the Revolution was limited to prostitutes, washerwomen and beggars. Today these categories no longer exist, but drinking does. The majority of women alcoholics today are unskilled workers, service workers and surprisingly, housewives. Widows accounted for over 40 per cent of patients at sobering-up stations and the ration of male to female was 1:10.

Lt General Sergei Kreilov head of the academy at the USSR ministry of internal affairs said that the most common crimes in the Soviet Union were street brawls and theft of people's personal property, and very frequently the root of such thefts can be traced to an abuse of alcoholic beverages.

In another report about alcoholism in Russia it was stated that drunkenness caused not only quarrels in the family but also perpetrated heinous crimes. Drunkenness was directly linked with embezzlement and corruption and every other crime was committed by a drunkard. The report implied a lesser degree of drunkenness in the Muslim areas of Central Asia which in turn was responsible for lesser crimes in these regions.

South Africa: Iran break

The South African consul-general in Iran has returned to South Africa following the Iranian decision to break diplomatic relations with South Africa, because Iran did not approve of racial discrimination. The state controlled Iranian National Oil Company has a 17 per cent share in the South African Natref Refinery at Sasolberg, and in accordance with a 1970 agreement, Iran was to supply the refinery with crude oil for 20 years. Iranian decision to sever relations with South Africa has been widely welcomed in Africa.

LETTERS AND COMMENT

caught and 'the big fish' being merely frightened away — presumably to hunt in new, more lucrative grounds. All of a sudden, we don't hear much about the anti-corruption drive.

The Islamic Trust wishes to apologise to the general public for the late publication of The Muslim Standard

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD

Nineteen seventy-nine has been designated as 'International Year of the Child'. The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), in outlining the principles concerning the rights of the child, seems to be primarily concerned with the material and social aspects in the life of the child. Rights such as nutrition, care, recreation, relief, secular education, housing etc. have been considered, but such rights concerning the spiritual and moral development of the child have been excluded.

It is unrealistic to expect to secure the rights of the child without attempting, at the same time, to improve the condition of the rest of the population. While considering the rights of the child it is imperative to bear in mind the responsibilities that he must carry when he attains an age of understanding and discernment between right and wrong. This article offers ideas and suggestions concerning some of the rights and responsibilities of the child.

RIGHT TO LIFE

Once a child is conceived it has the right to be born. Of course, this excludes cases where the life of the mother is threatened or her health may be severely impaired. Many parents, through abortion, deprive their child of the right to be born. Perhaps this is because they fear poverty, not realising that God is the real Provider and Sustainer.

Nations involved in the UNICEF programme should avoid supporting widespread abortion because this, in fact, deprives the child of the basic right to be born.

RIGHT TO LEGITIMACY

Every child is entitled to live with his rightful parents. In permissive societies where males and females freely intermingle and fornication and adultery are prevalent, many children are born without

knowledge of or support from their fathers. Therefore, in seeking to fulfil the rights of the child, moral education of the society, as a whole, should be emphasised.

RIGHT TO SOCIALIZATION

Every child is born in a state of purity (sinlessness) and it is his right that in the process of his social training he develops an attitude of obedience to what is right. His education and training should ensure :

- i. that he knows his Creator—that God is his Sustainer and Master and no human being like himself is God.
- ii. that he is created in a state of purity — with no original sin and he is not responsible for the sins of others.
- iii. that all human beings came from Adam and Eve — the human race is one and he is a member of it regardless of ethnic origin or nationality.
- iv. that God gave him Divine Guidance and it is his right to follow it if he pleases.
- v. and on attaining the age of reason, he will be held responsible for his deeds and will be answerable to God on the Day of Judgement.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHILD

It is his responsibility to obey anyone when he is commanded to do good, disobey anyone when he is commanded to do evil, and care for his parents in their times of need (sickness, old age etc.).

Considerable attention is focussed on the child and while it is good to do so, it is necessary to consider the rights of the people, in general, all over the world, because if they are neglected or trampled upon, automatically the child will be deprived of his rights. For the longest while the Eritreans, Palestinians, Philipinos, South Africans,

Rhodesians and Brazilians, to name a few, have been oppressed including their young and cherished ones. Therefore, for the United Nations, including the United States of America and Russia, to talk about the rights of the child, and at the same time support oppressive forces in these countries because of differences in faith or race, seems hypocritical.

Existing ideologies in many countries today, namely, Communism, Socialism, Capitalism, and Materialism, which either negates the existence of God or attempts to limit His control, are not geared to fulfil the rights of people and more so, the rights of the child.

There is a dire need for people to search for an alternative ideology or way of life which would define the role and responsibility of each member of the society. We in Trinidad and Tobago and in the Caribbean should begin this search now. We can fulfil the rights of the child only when the society is a guided society, a society based on truth and justice.

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