

"O mankind, surely we have created you from male and female, and made you tribes and families that you may know one another"

[Quran 49:11]

PROGRESSIVE ISLAM

A monthly publication dedicated to the promotion of knowledge concerning
Islam and modern thought.

Editor: Hussein Alatas, Cand (B.A.)
Address: Keizersgracht 402¹ Amsterdam - Holland

VOL. I, no. 4 - 5

RABI AL-AWWAL
RABI AL-THANI 1374 A.H.

NOVEMBER
DECEMBER 1954 A.D.

EDUCATION IN ISLAMIC SOCIETY



The nature and function of education has been one of the most vital concerns of every society. Through education, taken in the widest sense of the word, one generation transfers to the succeeding one, its social values, its pattern of culture, its legacy of knowledge, its ideals, its problems, in short, whatever is in the possession of a certain society in a definite context of time and place.

Apart from this, education has the important task of moulding the individual in accordance with the pattern set upon him by his society and culture.

Education is thus a means by which individuals could be trained to strive for the attainment of certain ideals and desires presented to him by his total conception of life. It also includes the training to adjust oneself to the problems one has to face in life. Taken in its widest sense, education could be regarded as the method of learning how to live in the best possible way.

This mode of viewing education, which we call the pragmatic conception of education, has been continuously emphasized by the wellknown American thinker John Dewey. Thus whoever neglected education is the same as not willing to know how to live. This means that those people do not desire to learn how to realize their ideals in the concrete life situations of man in the course of his historical development. Such a neglect towards education amounts to nothing less than sabotaging the success of one's own ideals.

For a Muslim who is conscious of the necessity of education, not to say to hamper it, even to remain silent about it, is a cardinal sin against his own faith and community. Let us now try to know something more about education and the present general conditions of the Muslims everywhere. The more if we realize that these conditions are not by far such that they make us feel happy and content.

EDUCATIONAL BACKWARDNESS OF THE MUSLIMS: Everywhere we find the people of Islam sunk in backwardness and cultural stagnation. There are usually several factors that contribute to the backwardness of a society. One is the system of belief of that particular society. Another is the weakness or corruption of its elites, that is the dominating minority. Yet another is natural or historical disasters experienced by the society at a certain period of its existence. For our purpose, let us accept these factors as starting points, for to pursue endlessly the links in the chain of causality would carry us too far from our main objective, i.e. to understand the present situation of the Muslim people. All the factors we had mentioned contributed to the general backwardness of the Muslims but one. That is his religion! Whatever is the condition of the Muslims, it is never due to Islam but to the very neglect of it. Thus for the Muslim, the problem is not to change his faith but to discover why that very faith which could give him the maximum possibility of development had been neglected, at least in the last decades, when the opportunity for him to assimilate the existing store of knowledge in the world was open to him.

That the backwardness of present Muslim society is by no means due to Islam could easily be verified by the history of the Islamic peoples. In the Middle Ages, when Europe was sunk in igno-

rance, the Muslims in Spain and the Near East kept up the torch of learning. As Mosheim rightly observed, whatever learning the people of Europe have about science from the 10th century onward were derived from the Muslim universities of Spain. Sir William Cecil Dampier, the historian of science, made the following remarks in connection with the Arabic language and the role the Arab Muslims played in the revival of learning in Europe: "The current language of scientific literature was Arabic, and translations from the Arabic, even of Greek authors, were highly valued. The Arabic-speaking races and the Jews living among them had at this time a real interest in science, and it was by contact with Muhammadan countries that medieval Europe passed from its earlier outlook to a more rational habit of mind."¹ (History of science, p.91, Cambridge 1942). The famous German historian of materialism, F. A. Lange pointed out that the Arabs were the founders of modern science. Whatmore, as Lange showed, the Islamic religion gave the greatest scope for the development of science amongst the monotheistic religions. The Muslim contribution to the birth and development of modern science cannot be denied. But unfortunately this very community who had shed the lustre of knowledge at a time when Europe was in her age of darkness, had itself fallen into this state of affairs. We do not belong to those group of Muslims who dream of the past. We mention this fact only to prove that the religion of Islam when it was at the height of its political supremacy, was, not to say against learning, but was responsible for its initiation.

The pages of the Quran are lined with persuasions to strive for knowledge. The Prophet Muhammad said that the Muslims ought to acquire knowledge even if they had to travel from Arabia to China. We shall not fill this page of the editorial with other numerous proofs of our claim that the backwardness of the present Muslims is not brought about by their religion, and that if they were to rise now and struggle along the path pointed by their prophet, Muhammad son of Abdullah, they would again be well on the way towards a better condition of existence. Those who say that Islam offers the Muslim no possibility for higher development, do not know what they are talking about.

We had mentioned above two other factors contributing to the backwardness of the present Muslim society. They are the corruption of their ruling minority and a historical disaster experienced by the Muslims. I shall first deal briefly with the latter.

In 1258, Bagdad, and thereby the Khilafat of the Banu Abbas, fell to the hands of the Tartars. Not only were several towns sacked and devastated, the books of learning thrown into the flames, but also the putting to the sword the best minds that Islam could then produce. Several thousands of people were killed including a large number of scholars. Islam has until now never recovered from this very lamentable loss. This is one of those factors that contribute to the general backwardness of the Muslims now.

Another factor is the corruption of the leading group. We are talking corruption in its wider connotation which includes neglect of the people's education. For some reasons or other, the dominant minority in Muslim society neglected the education of the common people. There are

of course objective difficulties to educate huge multitudes of human beings. But at any rate, before they have tried what they could do, we shall not be convinced that they are really interested in uplifting the condition of the people. How unlike the Prophet of Islam who tried to wipe out illiteracy with all the handicap that he met. How unlike the pious and venerable Imams who spent their times in devotion and teaching. If the candle of faith does not light the heart of a Muslim, his whole vision shall be blurred by the cravings of his own passions. One can explain the neglect of the dominant minority to this or that interest, to this or that influence, to this or that fear, but the fact remains that whatever happens, that person reacted in a way which is most receptive to his character. That the dominant minority in Muslim society is corrupt (with some exceptions) could only be explained by the fact that they were already in possession of corrupt character structures. Their negligent guidance in turn affected Muslim society as a whole.

It is for this reason that the most urgent problem for the world of Islam to-day is the formation of new elites who are very learned in the Holy Quran, the Hadiths, the Sunnah of the Prophet, the Shariat, and last but not least, in the affairs of modern science and philosophy.

And this great change can only be affected by means of education! To educate people does not mean only to instill knowledge but more still to develop their character. To possess knowledge without character, is, as Maulana Rumi would say, to let a donkey carry a load of books. It is now high time that we are led by men who carry wisdom in their heads and love for mankind in their hearts! Whatever be the claims of Muslim leaders or government officials, if those claims are not substantiated by action, they are to be regarded as detrimental to the welfare of Islam and the Muslim community. He who is a hypocrite to the utterance of his own lips, cannot be entrusted to the leadership of a community who has a historical mission to perform!

ISLAMIC EDUCATION: We have touched upon the necessity of forming a new elite by means of education. We shall now briefly discuss the nature of that education. For the Muslims it is of course logical that his education should be Islamic. To believe in a faith without believing in educating oneself in that direction is meaningless and contradictory.

Islamic education shall aim at a harmonious formation of the human personality. This education shall not only strive for the harmony of thought and action, instinct and reason, feelings and emotion, but also for depth of knowledge and beauty of character. One can experience harmony also in a negative way. The Islamic concept of harmony includes the formation of a certain type of character rooted in humility towards God, love towards fellow creatures, perseverance in times of affliction, honesty, decency, uprightness, courage to say the truth, a balanced attitude towards issues which involve human emotions, etc. etc. This education without an emphasis on character formation has practically no value in Islam. Knowledge without character, is just like a knife in the hands of a murderer. It would be the greatest calamity that could befall us if our system of education became instrumental in the pro-

EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Due to the desire to organize the administrative requirements of Progressive Islam in a more efficient way, the editor found it necessary to combine no. 4 and no. 5 in one issue. No. 6 will thus appear in January, 1955.

dution of men whose thinking and action are not harnessed in the framework of ethical principles. In this we could look for guidance to the devotees of true tasawwuf in their endeavour to attain the stage of *al-lisan al-Kamil*. We shall look for guidance to any one, belonging to any group, in any time and any place, provided that the life and thought of that person is sound enough for us to appreciate, and that his character is of such a nature that it reminds us always to strive for the good that is within our reach.

EDUCATION OF WOMEN: If there ever was a man who had done so much for women in his lifetime, it was the Prophet Muhammad. Yet it is in this very attitude towards women that the Prophet is misunderstood, especially in the West. The Prophet Muhammad had encouraged women to take part in social activities and to set themselves to the acquisition of knowledge. If the people of Islam are confronted with having to choose between first educating the men or the women, then we certainly have to set our choice in educating the women first. In fact, if not in theory, women exerted more influence than men in the formative periods of human development. Her role as a mother made it possibly the case why a child is more exposed to the influence of the mother than of the father, at least in the formative periods. Two glaring instances for us are the cases of the great mystic of Islam, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Djailani, and the celebrated German philosopher, Immanuel Kant. Both these great men were influenced to a high degree by their childhood experience with their mothers. It would therefore be comprehensible that we should vigorously insist, at any cost whatsoever, the proper education of women. He who prevents women from enjoying their inalienable rights on proper education, shakes the very foundation of his community and his religion. We must find proper means to surmount the obstacles against the education of women. We are taught to be patient but when injustice is done to man. We are taught to be tolerant but when corruption is challenging our survival. We are taught to be loyal, but not to those who betray the ideals of humanity.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE WEST: I am here referring to the West not as a political concept but in the sense of a historical and cultural unit. The religion of Islam teaches its followers to be receptive to all forms of beneficial knowledge from whichever part of the earth it comes from. Furthermore the Quran stated the possibility of non-Muslims being also endowed with true knowledge by God. Such being the case, it would be completely in line with the attitude fostered by the faith of Islam, if the Muslims would devour from the West whatever knowledge it has to offer them. Iqbal had very well perceived the significance of this fact when he reminded the Muslims to drink deep from the fountain of Western knowledge with an open mind and a critical attitude. There is nothing wrong in this process provided we adopt the proper attitude towards it. We must also avoid those factors which tend to hinder the formation of the proper attitude to assimilate the existing knowledge from the West, such as national arrogance or unfounded suspicion. We refer to the West not because we deny the possibility of seeking knowledge elsewhere. Rather it is because of the fact that the knowledge which is most vital to the people of Islam is at present to be found only in the West with the exception of the religious sciences.

¹) Sir C. W. Dampier, History of science.
²) F. A. Lange, History of materialism.

RELIGIOUS PARTIES IN WESTERN EUROPE

by S. A. ROZEMOND *Cand. (B.A.)*

Mr. Rozemond is a young Dutchman of Christian background. He is at the moment preparing his doctoral at the faculty of social and political sciences in Amsterdam University.

★

Religious parties in western democracies
In the western democracies not all parties have a religious character, as everybody knows. This proceeds from the fact, that many citizens do not experience God as a reality. Besides this not all convinced christians do sympathize with the existing religious parties or have a need to form such parties.

For a great number of christians religion and politics are essentially different matters. Among many believers we find the opinion, that a special christian party is not necessary or desirable. Yet the christian political parties have a very important position in the public institutions of many countries.

I mention here some figures, which give a rough impression of the number of electors, which voted upon these parties. In Belgium the catholic party can rely on more than forty per cent of the total number of votes. In Switzerland twenty-three per cent supports the catholic party. In the Netherlands fifty per cent of the electors voted upon christian parties. In Italy the christian democratic party has nearly a majority. The republican popular movement in France gets fifteen per cent of the seats in parliament. The christian democratic union in Germany is after the war the great government-party.

On the other hand England, the United States of America and the Scandinavian countries do not have political parties with a religious structure. We shall presently treat the question, why there are in certain countries christian political parties, while we do not find them in other ones.

From the given figures appears how important the religious parties are in many countries in quantitative respect. But besides this we see, that most often these parties have a central-position, by which they can form exclusively the government or constitute an important part of it.

Reasons for religious parties

The question rises: what does justify the existence of the religious parties?

According to the christian conception there is one almighty God, Who created the world, which He maintains and supports. Man can have faith in the win of God, because he will do good to people, who follow Jesus Christ His Son.

God has made laws when he created heaven and earth. His whole creation should be subjected to these laws. Man is by nature bound to rules. In politics and moral life people have the duty to execute the natural and divine standards.

We can mention in this context for instance the ten commandments and the idea, that the origin of governmental power is in God.

The christians also set great value upon a certain relation between the church and the state. The church is never considered as subordinate to the state or as an executor of the public will.

Yet as a matter of fact this sometimes occurred for instance in Russia before the Communist revolution. The church was then consciously used for imperialistic purposes and support of the govern-

ment. It is not without socio-historical cause, that the present russian government organizes and stimulates atheistical propaganda.

But let us not forget, that the idea: "Render unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's" is an original christian conception, which caused in the roman empire a revolutionary change in political thinking.

In the middle ages the christians gave awfully much energy to the solution of this problem: the relation between church and state. To my opinion we can justly presume, that the present democratic christian parties are a historical continuance of this conflict.

Now-a-days it concerns the defence and liberty of the church. The maintenance of her influence in society is for christians more than a duty, it is a commission of God. Therefore it is not remarkable, that they try to execute this charge by one of the instruments of power in the democratic state, namely the political party.

Religious character of christian parties

When we consider the religious character of the christian parties, we see, that there is influence from the clergy. Yet we cannot say, that these parties are purely ecclesiastical organizations. It is true, the church-leaders often protect the political parties or stimulate their actions as it befits a good guardianship, but the clergy does not play an active, leading role. Thus far the idea remains, that there are different tasks for the state and the church. Thus the aim of the christian political parties is to see that the divine and natural laws of the state are executed in public life. In this respect they distinguished themselves in some degrees from all other democratic parties. They are bound in principle to an absolute Will. Therefore the christian parties are never only interested in the enlargement of the number of seats in parliament. Primarily they are concerned with the defence or spread of old spiritual traditional values.

To my opinion this character also forms their weakness, because with it is connected a tendency to conservatism or a slight capacity to assimilate to a changing world.

The christian democratic parties cooperate more often with the conservative parties than with the socialists. Now-a-days we see a collaboration between the christian parties and the socialists only in the Netherlands and in Austria. On the other hand in Germany, Italy, Belgium and France the socialists are in opposition and conflict with the religious political groups.

But before I treat more extensively this problem of progressiveness and conservatism with regard to the christian political parties, we want to finish our original train of thought.

The christendom is concerned, as every important spiritual movement, with the defence and spread of her confessed truths. The important problems of the religious parties are therefore the relation of the church to the state and the education of the youth. The liberty of the

church and upon occasion the support of the state are their fundamental interests. This conception must be in agreement with the idea that the power of the state is limited. The state has his own sphere of competence. In spiritual matters the state is subjected to the church.

Geographical location of christian parties

The question I want to treat now is, what are the reasons, that in certain countries there are christian political parties, whereas among other western nations they are not found? I could not find enough literature about this problem. Therefore I do not imagine that the following is a solution of the question. I think that the most important cause of the mentioned phenomenon we must look into is the difference in manner of thinking of the two great christian movements: the roman-catholic and the protestant.

The reformation of christianity in the sixteenth century was especially inspired by the unwillingness of the people to subject themselves to the catholic organization of Rome. In this reformation stress was laid on the direct and personal responsibility of men to God. Protestantism is therefore more individualistic than Roman-catholicism.

It is true in the catholic church there is also room for differences of opinion. But on the essential points every believer has to submit himself to the authority of the pope.

The protestants show another line of conduct. When they do not agree with the leadership of the church, they leave it, go over to another church or form a congregation.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth century the idea was realized, that the state cannot tolerate different religions on her territory. Thus the spiritual map of Europe has come to look like a mosaic. In the north of western Europe the protestants are prevalent. It is just in these countries, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and England, the christian parties do not appear. Likewise in the United States of America, which has been populated in the beginning by emigrants from north-western Europe.

Another relevant thing is the difference between two sects of Protestantism, namely Calvinism and Lutheranism. The activities of Luther fell in the beginning of the sixteenth century after Christ. He was for the success of his religious reform dependent upon the princes. For that reason it is not remarkable that he laid great stress in his teachings upon respect for public authority.

This conception was of great significance in all those countries, where Lutheranism had much influence, as in Germany and the Scandinavian countries.

In our days Lutheran thinking is on a turning-point. The criminal activities of the fascists gave them the experience, that the ideology of passive obedience has dangerous consequences. They learned that the christians cannot be neutral when their primary values are threatened with destruction.

The Calvinistic religion showed from the very beginning other features than Lutheranism. It is rather a religion of deeds. Worldly activity is for the Calvinist a divine duty.

Because of this difference I think, we find in the Netherlands, where the Reformation was dominantly Calvinistic, christian protestant parties, whereas these parties do not appear in the Scandinavian countries, which are Lutheran. And also in the native-country of Luther, Germany, the protestants have never been able to maintain an autonomous reformed party. We remember some efforts, like the Christlich-soziale Arbeiterpartei of Adolf Stoecker and the Christlich-soziale Volksdienst. This latter party did not unite more than one million voters in its most glorious days. (1934).

An urgent appeal!

With all earnestness and fervent hope we direct this appeal to any of our readers who sympathize with Progressive Islam, to help us in the following things:

- To inform us that he or she has received a copy of Progressive Islam.
- Whether we ought to continue sending the forthcoming issues.
- To send us suggestions concerning Progressive Islam.
- To send us the names and addresses of persons who might be interested to receive the issues of Progressive Islam.
- To introduce and acquaint to us writers who might be requested to contribute to Progressive Islam.
- To assist us in distributing some copies of Progressive Islam.

Progressive Islam is maintained by those who are in dead earnest of strengthening the foundation of Islam and disseminating the proper knowledge of modern philosophical and scientific investigations. Our thinking, our money, and our sweat are offered to this cause. We therefore appeal to those readers who sympathize with our aim to grant us the above requests that our efforts need not be in vain.

Further there was in Switzerland an insignificant Protestant party called Evangelische Volkspartei. I am not certain if it still exist. In certain Canton-parliaments this party had a few members. National importance had this party not in the least.

In all those countries, where one cannot find christian political parties, the believers do not have the demanded interest or unity to institute a special religious party. Moreover in countries as the United States of America and England the elective system tends to select two great parties. Thus there is no space for a special political group, which defends religious values. Besides this the Churches are not threatened by political powers, so that nobody is in want of an organization of defence. Of course this is also a very important point.

Progressiveness and conservatism in christian parties

Finally I want to treat the problem of progressiveness and conservatism with regard to the christian parties.

These political groups are primarily concerned with the defence and spread of spiritual values. The material factors constitute a secondary part. This proceeds of course from the fact, that economic oppositions hold these parties divided. If a religious party chooses a clear viewpoint in these conflicts of interests, there is a very real danger, that certain groups become alienated.

More over, it is difficult for them to distinguish between christian politics and christian faith, so much so that if they feel themselves frustrated by christian politics, they also feel the same towards the church, or feel banished from the communion of believers. There is a big chance that this will happen, especially when there is a close connection between the church and the political party.

The christian parties are however constrained to take a position in the class-struggle. This choice of position will be decided within the party by the relations of power, which exists between the representatives of the classes. I think, generally spoken, the rich have more influence than the poor. This was probably the cause why a section of the labour class in Europe abandoned the christian parties. Political parties had in the past too little real concern with the special interests of this group, because the leaders of these parties were born in the middle or high classes.

A christian of course can never neglect the fact, that his religion implies rules

Continued page 5

The Mystical Experience of the Prophet Muhammad

The meaning of *Mi'raj* in the life of Islam

by HUSSEIN ALATAS

Islam revealed to us that the ultimate nature of reality is spiritual.

Every event in the religious life of the Prophet Muhammad, however unimportant it may appear to some observers, contains certain meanings and values which, when properly understood and followed, have the effect of moulding our life in concrete and visible forms of relationships.

Islam revealed to us the truth without which no human life would be durable, namely, that the ultimate nature of reality is spiritual. Since time immemorial, the attention of mankind has converged on the idea of the spiritual basis of existence. There had never been a single society recorded in history which had not a kind of religious institution. It is the very essence of the nature of man not to be satisfied with the purely material aspect of life. The whole annals of human thought and evolution itself are undeniable evidences of the attempt of man to transcend the world of matter and reach the region of the spirit. In tracing the evolution of human life Jalal-ud-Din Rumi brought forward also the reality of man's yearning for spirituality. He wrote,

"I died from mineral and plant became;
Died from the plant, and took a sentient frame;

Died from the beast and donned a human dress;

When by my dying did I'er grow less?
Another time from manhood I must die
To soar with angel-pinions through the sky.

'Midst angels also I must lose my place,
Since 'everything shall perish save His Face.'

Let me be Naught! The harp-strings tell
me plain
That 'Unto Him do we return again'."

The purpose of religion is to awaken in man the longing to transcend matter.

The desire to transcend the world of matter and explore the region of the spirit, is something which is innate in man, lying deep in the core of his being. In some hearts, this desire or longing is strong, in some it is weak and in yet others it is dormant. The aim of religion is to awaken this longing in man so that he may attain a particular kind of consciousness which will make him arrange his life according to certain patterns of behaviour and thinking. A life based on religious consciousness should, however, not be identified with that based on philosophy or *Weltanschauung*. Religion is not mere thought of feeling or action, but it is the expression of the whole man. It combines in itself the theoretical, the emotional and the active elements in human life whereas non-religious forms of life-experience do not embrace all these factors. Religion lays the emphasis on the worship and adoration of the unconditional cause of all possible conditioned phenomena of existence, whereas non-religious systems lay the emphasis on conditioned phenomena. Describing the nature of religion Professor A. C. Bradley rightly said, "Religion is not a mere state of activity of the intellect; it is worship — inward if not also outward. It implies and includes, no doubt, an intellectual activity, some idea, belief, theory, science or logos, concerning the object of worship. But this is very far from being all; religion is a movement of the whole soul."

The patterns of behaviour and thinking suggested by religion constitute the framework on which is to be built the ideal life.

Islam and the modern conditions of life. The ideal life in Islam, consists in reaching a harmony between our true self and our worldly experience. Our true self by its very nature already contains the essence of our spiritual existence. It is true

that many people to-day, living in modern industrial societies, do not feel inclined to give a spiritual explanation of their existence. But this is only because the nature of their society and the kind of life they lead have conditioned their intellectual as well as emotional make-up. Modern society has made less and less possible that particular type of experience on which religion is based. It is the decisive, basic experience which is felt to reveal the meaning of life as a whole. It can so deeply impress our mind as to provide a mould into which further experiences flow. Karl Mannheim attributed the acute crisis in modern life to the loss of this sort of experience which he termed "paradigmatic experience." He wrote, "It is their disappearance without anything else to take their place which leads to the disintegration of modern life-experience and human conduct. Without paradigmatic experiences no consistent conduct, no character formation and no real human co-existence and co-operation are possible. Without them our universe of discourse loses articulation, conduct falls to pieces, and only disconnected bits of successful behaviour patterns and fragments of adjustments to an ever-changing environment remain." Ibn Khaldun had rightly pointed out this conditioning influence of social factors on human nature and society. It was the Prophet Muhammad himself who discovered this truth when he said that every child was born a Muslim, and that it was his parents who made him a Jew, Christian or a Muslim. For this very reason Islam seeks to create favourable conditions for the necessary religious experience by means of indicating a social order and a pattern of life which ought to be followed by everyone who is and wishes to remain a Muslim.

The structure of movement in Islam combines both the factors of constancy and change. Islam is constant in preserving the basic values of human life without which no society could function properly. But at the same time, Islam emphasizes change and progress in the attempt to adjust ourselves to new discoveries and circumstances. The universe, as pointed out by the Qur'an, is in constant change and creation, and our adjustment to this change is what according to Islamic terminology is called "*Ijtihad*."

The central point of the Islamic way of life is that loyalty belongs only to God. The Islamic way of life connotes *inter alia* the fulfilment of our duties to our fellow beings and ourselves, and the attempt to disentangle ourselves from the world. By this is meant not running away into monastic seclusion or taking the line of least resistance, but the endeavour to purge our soul from what is low and undesirable. The Prophet once expressed his objection to monasticism because this, he said, dissociated us from others thus preventing us sharing each other's burdens together. The process of disentangling ourselves from the world is the outcome of the Islamic demand that loyalty belongs only to God. By identifying our loyalty to God we follow the dictates of our own ideal nature. Loyalty to God is the spring by which the noble qualities in man are released. It is only in this way that the warmth, enthusiasm and vigour of contributing our share to human welfare come into play. A life purely based on non-religious rationalism could not produce the necessary warmth, vigour and enthusiasm. Another point is that if our loyalty is not directed to God, some other object of worship which has created only disastrous results, such as the race, the nation or the class, will draw man's innate desire to worship a being more powerful than himself. Thus it is clear that the consequences of being loyal to

God above everything else can only favour the development of human welfare as a whole. The state of mind and emotion of one who devoted himself first and foremost to God was vividly expressed by the Persian Muslim poet, Khwaja of Kirman (1281-1341 C.E.). He wrote the following verses in connection with his thoughts on God:

"Pass us not by, for our thought is set on

Thy constancy,
Our heart on the hope of Thy promise,
and our soul on Thy faith;

If it be Thy pleasure to thwart our pleasure,
that matters little;

Our object in this world and the next is

Thy pleasure.

Hereafter, since we have staked our head

in following Thee,

Drive us not from Thy presence, for our

heart follows after Thee.

I put my neck under the yoke and bow

my head in service.

Forgive me, if Thou wilt, or slay me: it is

for Thee to judge.

He who is Thy slave becomes freed from

all:

He who is Thy friend becomes a stranger to

his own kin."

Kant's humanism.

It is thus clear to us that no higher workable principle of morality exists besides worship and adoration of God. The famous and meritorious German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, formulated a doctrine of morality which could be regarded as the highest development of that philosophical trend of thought called humanism. Humanism preached that man should be treated for his own sake and that morality should be based on loyalty to our own conscience. This creed denied the necessity of religion and revelation but only emphasized the duty to be good. But as Professor A. C. Bradley put it, when humanism based itself on man, it meant the good in man. This presupposed the existence of a standard to distinguish between good and evil and the conscience itself did not create the values but only adopted and assimilated them. Thus humanism, and every other system of thought which includes a value judgment, did not create but adopted the values. It is another form of revelation with the only difference that it is not attributed to God but to the Unknown.

Stages of Development

In the first stage of our spiritual development, the passion dictates the thought and action (*Nafs ammarah*). In the second stage, the thought controls the passion and action (*Nafs lawwama*). In the last stage, thought and feeling become one (*Nafs mutmainnah*).¹⁰ It is to reach this stage that the Prophet Muhammad said "*Takhalluqi bi Ahlqak Allah*" (Create in yourselves the attributes of God).

Mi'raj as the highest form of religious experience in the life of the Prophet Muhammad.

All the teachings of Islam and the events pertaining to the life of the Prophet, such as the *Mi'raj*, aim at revealing the truth which could transform man into "*Insan kamil*." The *Mi'raj* is the highest form of religious experience in the life of the Prophet. In it the Prophet perceived the hidden realities and intensely felt the communion with God. His spiritual separation with the world that night denotes the goal to which human life is moving, an inconceivable but real existence beyond the reach of our present faculties. The reality of the Prophet's experience was later proved by his devout followers like al-Ghazzali and some other sufis, although not in a completely similar nature and degree. Although the experience of the sufis was not entirely the same as the *Mi'raj* (Ascension), yet essentially it was the same, for they too, in their visions saw certain aspects of reality which it was impossible to recollect, or to express in words. This inability of the sufis to express their experience verbally does not invalidate their claims to the truth and reality of their experience.

Our conceptual mode of apprehending reality is only one of the possibilities. The results of researches in the psychical life of individuals suggest other possibilities of non-conceptual mode of consciousness. The celebrated American philosopher and psychologist, William James, demonstrated this truth in his studies on mysticism. He wrote, "It is that our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence; but apply the requisite stimulus, and at a touch they are there in all their completeness, definite types of mentality which probably somewhere have their field of application and adaptation. No account of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded."¹¹

Islam, as defined in the Qur'an, is "The nature created by God wherein He has created man." True human nature, as this verse indicates, is nothing but Islam. Diversities in man and his surroundings belonging to the nature of existence, it is logical that Islam provides the ways by means of which the possible differences of religious expressions could take place, the one not cancelling the other but instead complementing one another. The rationalist, on the one hand, selects for his intellectual framework, certain essence of Islam which suits his bent of mind. The mystically inclined, on the other hand, found in the *Mi'raj*, that truth whose nature forms the basis of their belief.

The *Mi'raj*, or the profoundest spiritual experience of the Prophet, thus denotes the higher possibility in the realm of words urged in the Qur'an to denote the three stages of the spiritual development of man. The aim of Islam, as I have mentioned before, is the creation of more or less perfect individuals from whom emanates the stream of ideal qualities that would permeate the whole of life. When writing of such individuals, Muhammad Iqbal, the Muslim philosopher-poet of Pakistan, said, "He is the completest ego, the goal of humanity; the acme of life both in mind and body; in him the discord of our mental life becomes a harmony. The highest power is united in him with the highest knowledge. In his life, thought and action, instinct and reason, become one. He is the last fruit of the tree of humanity, and all the trials of a painful evolution are justified, because he is to come at the end. He is the real ruler of mankind; his kingdom is the Kingdom of God on earth. Out of the richness of his nature he lavishes the wealth of life on others, and brings them nearer to himself. The more we advance in evolution, the nearer we get to him. In approaching him we are raising ourselves in the scale of life. The development of humanity both in mind and body is a condition precedent to his birth. For the present he is a mere ideal; but the 'evolution of humanity is tending towards' the production of an ideal race of more or less unique individuals who will become his fitting parents."¹²

To reach this stage of perfection, which Iqbal called "*niyabat-i-ilahi*" or divine vicegerency on earth, we direct our minds and hearts for guidance to the Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace). His life and religious experience are the points of departure from which we hope to reconstruct ailing humanity. He was the embodiment of perfection. His happiness is our happiness, his grief our grief, his concern is our concern, and his ideal is our ideal.

The Muslims and the spiritual crisis in Europe.

If Muslims ignore the historical role of religion as a power in moulding human life, the present state of affairs in the West would be theirs in the decades to come.

We shall not trace the causes of what is now happening in the West, but only describe the phenomena of a society which is undergoing a spiritual crisis of immense importance to the future of other peoples with which it has come into contact.

As everyone knows, religion in the West has lost its function as a vital force in shaping human life. Lying deep beneath the smooth surface of Western society, are the disturbances and unrest which at times erupted in the forms of catastrophic events in the physical as well as the psychical planes. Whole nations went to war without knowing its real causes. The psychical atmosphere became polluted. People distrust one another and each try to excel the other not in *'Amal Ibadah'* (the act of worship) but in self-aggrandizement. They live in a society in which might is right; in which moral scruples are considered as a sign of weakness; in which despair and uncertainty have seized the minds and hearts of the people; in which they are not only weary of finding a way out but also of maintaining their hope. Despite the material splendour that we find here, and the amazing rapidity in the progress of technology, Western society, viewed as a whole, is an abnormal one.¹ The very construction of its social order produces people whose views on life are sectional and whose faculties develop disharmoniously. Progress in science is not accompanied by similar progress in moral power. This disproportionate development of the human faculty generates deplorable consequences in the internal as well as external lives of individuals and groups.² One of the most heart-rending phenomena that eats away the fabric of Western society, is the general loss of belief in everything that has to do with the value and meaning of life. All sorts of social problems arise from this. The American social scientist, Professor Wirth, wrote, "The world has been splintered into countless fragments of atomized individuals and groups. The disruption in the wholeness of individual experience corresponds to the disintegration in culture and group solidarity. When the bases of unified collective action begin to weaken, the social structure tends to break and to produce a condition which Emile Durkheim has called "anomie" by which he means a situation which might be described as a sort of social emptiness or void. Under such conditions suicide, crime and disorder are phenomena to be expected because individual existence no longer is rooted in a stable and integrated social milieu and much of life's activity loses its sense and meaning."³

The above description shows us the fate of a people who have lost their faith in religion and everything else. The Muslims can prevent such a crisis in their respective countries, if only a form of planning is introduced, and the people taught the true teachings of Islam, and if the forces of vested interests can be kept within their proper limits. Reforms and reconstruction can be brought about by means of Islam. Did not Islam, during the lifetime of Muhammad accomplish the most far-reaching change in history? Has not Islam stood the test of Time more than any other system known to us? I am fully convinced that the Muslims will prefer the Islamic way of life to any other if they only realize the full implication of Islam in regard to the requirements of our age.

REFERENCES

¹ E. G. Browne, *Persian Literature under Tatar Domination*.
² A. C. Bradley, *Ideals of Religion*.
³ Karl Mannheim, *Diagnosis of Our Time*.
⁴ E. G. Brown, *Persian Literature under Tatar Domination*.
⁵ William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*.
⁶ Mohammad Iqbal, *Secrets of the Self*. (Trans. R. A. Nicholson).
⁷ Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society in an age of Reconstruction*.
⁸ Karl Mannheim, *Ibid*.
⁹ Al-Ghazali, *Some Moral and Religious Teachings of al-Ghazali*, being selections of the *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din*. (Trans. Prof. Nawab 'Ali).

ISLAM AND SECULAR DEMOCRACY

By J. W. SYED, M.A.

Mr. J.W. Syed is a Muslim from Pakistan attached to the teaching staff of the department of English at Sind University, Hyderabad Sind, as assistant professor of English. In 1949 he visited the United States as a winner of the United Nations Essay Contest. His other contributions shall be printed in the forthcoming issues of *Progressive Islam*.

(I)

There is a good deal of talk, in the press and on the platform, about the "Theocratic", the "Secular", and the "Islamic"; but most of this talk is divorced from historical perspective, which is essential to the understanding of these terms. The problem of framing the Constitution of Pakistan according to the principles and ideals of Islam has given a great impetus to discussions about these words. What makes confusion worse confounded is the lack of historical perspective in relation to these words. The word "secular" has very intimate and close reference to European intellectual history and tradition, and therefore, it can be understood only in its historical context. Out of this particular European context, it will lose all its meaning and import. Before we come to the meaning and history of secularism, we must know its anti-thesis, the "theocratic". "Theocracy" means a government and administration by the clergy as the direct representatives of God on earth, and who are responsible to God alone. As against this, "secular" implies a reference to the affairs of this world, that which is not "monastic", not "ecclesiastical". It implies a social philosophy and attitude which is independent of ecclesiastical and theological thought and Church authority and organization; but is concerned with the real social and moral problems of the world. The secular and the ecclesiastical represent the permanent dualism of the European consciousness,—its sense of the "sacred" and the "profane", the "spiritual" and the "temporal", the "ecclesiastical" and the "secular", the "Church" and the "State". This dualism of consciousness is based on the words of Christ: "My kingdom is not of this world" and "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's". In the classical Greek and Roman times there was no separation between "religion" and "politics", the "church" and the "state"; the two were one. But with the birth and rise of Christianity there came about a separation between the two aspects of life, the "religious" and the "political". Under the pagan Roman Empire, Christianity was one of the religions of the Empire, and its followers had to pay homage to the Roman Emperor. During its first three centuries, Christianity passed through three phases: persecution, toleration, and finally acceptance at the hands of the Roman Emperors, the first of whom to embrace Christianity was Constantine. But even after Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire, the separation and independence of the two powers, "Church" and "State", continued to exist. Peoples' loyalty and allegiance was divided between the Pope and the Emperor. The Christian tradition has always asserted the independence and separation of the two powers and the two realms of the Pope and the Emperor, the "Church" and the "State". The early and medieval Christian society considered the two powers as autonomous authorities of divine origin, each supreme in its sphere. The Christian Church has regarded itself as Christian society founded by Jesus Christ and governed after his death by the Apostles and their successors, the Popes and

Bishops. The Church hierarchy derives its authority not from the people but from Christ through the mediation of the Apostles. All power and sovereignty over medieval Christendom was vested in the Pope, who is not answerable for his actions to the laity. In the year 1046, Wazo, the Bishop of Liege, had declared that no one had ever enjoyed the right to depose the Pope, since "the writings as well as the words of the Holy Fathers stipulated that the Sovereign Pontiff can be judged by no one except by God". This statement of Bishop Wazo is a clear and precise statement of the theocratic ideal. Rousseau, in his famous book, "The Social Contract", has expressed very sane views on this Christian-European dualism of religion and politics. He rejects this dualism of Church and State. Referring to the religious and political unity of the Greek and Roman polity, he says: "It was in these circumstances that Jesus came to set up on earth a spiritual kingdom, which by separating the theological from the political system, made the state no longer one, and brought about the internal divisions which have never ceased to trouble Christian peoples... this double power and conflict of jurisdiction have made all good polity impossible in Christian states; and men have never succeeded in finding out whether they were bound to obey the master (prince) or the priest... Christianity as a religion is entirely spiritual, occupied solely with heavenly things; the country of the Christian is not of this world...". The trend of early Christianity was towards "asceticism" and "monasticism"; it held the earthly life in contempt and of no value and importance. It emphasized individual salvation in spite of the world and without it. The Greek and Roman conceptions which gave unity and harmony to life and society and which established a harmonious relationship between the individual and society, were weakened by Christianity. Administration of mundane human affairs and the maintenance of peace and order was left to the state, while the Church became the guardian of man's soul and mind. But in the very nature of things there could not and cannot be any complete separation between the various aspects of life, between the "spiritual" and the "temporal", and, therefore, there was a clash of jurisdiction between the Pope and the Emperor. Eventually there developed a struggle for power and supremacy between the Church and the State, who both claimed to govern the human herd. The struggle continued throughout the Middle Ages and came to an end with establishment of sovereign Nation-States, based on nationalism, as a by-product of the movements of the Renaissance and the Reformation. The medieval Christian Church was a perfect despotism. It completely tyrannized over the body and soul of man. The laity had no right to think, to read, and to write. They had to accept Church doctrines without questioning. The period during which the Catholic Church reigned supreme is known in history as the Dark Ages, the period when, in the words of Dr. Johnson, "Christianity was but the Queen of Night", when the laity were

expected to send their minds on a perpetual holiday in the blissful realms of ignorance. There was no salvation outside the Church. Abelard was persecuted, and Savonarola and Bruno were denied the right to life and burnt alive for the "crime" of thinking independently of and differently from the Church Fathers. The Catholic Inquisition burned alive thousands of people charged with heresy; slightest difference with the established Church doctrine and practice meant a cruel death. Belief in witches as the servants of the devil was a common superstition right up to the end of the seventeenth century. In 1484, Pope Innocent VIII launched a Papal Bull against the Devil. The ideals and outlook of medieval Christianity have been well described by Sir James Frazer in these words: "The saint and the recluse, disdainful of earth and rapt in ecstatic contemplation of heaven, became in popular opinion the highest ideal of humanity, displacing the old ideal (Greek and Roman) of the patriot and hero who, forgetful of self, lives and is ready to die for the good of his country. The earthly city seemed poor and contemptible to men whose eyes beheld the City of God coming in the clouds of heaven... A general disintegration of the body-politic set in. The ties of the State and the family were loosened; the structure of society tended to resolve itself into its individual elements and thereby to relapse into barbarism; for civilization is only possible through the active co-operation of the citizens and their willingness to subordinate their private interests to the common good... In their anxiety to save their own souls and the souls of others, they were content to leave the material world, which they identified with the principle of evil, to perish around them... This obsession lasted for a thousand years. The revival of Roman Law, of the Aristotelian philosophy, of ancient art and literature at the close of the Middle Age, marked the return of Europe to native ideals of life and conduct, to saner, manlier views of the world." The religious wars of Christian sects in Europe had done infinite harm to European society. Peaceful, ordered and progressive social life had become impossible. Ultimately the orthodox Christian world, termed Christendom, broke down under the impact of the combined forces of the Renaissance and the Reformation. The medieval chains were broken; the European mind revolted against the dogmatic authority of the Church and its intellectual tyranny. Wycliff and Luther, Erasmus and Montaigne, Thomas More and Shakespeare represent the revolt in various aspects of European life. The medieval attitude of world-and-life negation gave place to an attitude of world-and-life affirmation. The intellect and social conscience of Europe awakened to a consciousness of human dignity and freedom. The secular and humanist thought of the Renaissance emphasised that earthly life is worth-while, that it has a value and importance. The Renaissance Man, typified by Marlowe's Faustus, was intoxicated with the beauty and the glory of the world. Renaissance art and literature represented man's sense of beauty and his natural experiences and aspirations. As a result of reaction against medieval emphasis on the hereafter to the disdainful neglect of the present, the new thought and outlook of the Renaissance laid stress on the present life and on the need of improving it. The increasing interest in the manifold phenomena of nature and of man served to dim the prestige of medieval Christian other-worldliness. The Renaissance meant the liberation of the European man from the shackles of Church authority, a denial of dogmatic scholastic thinking and of Church guardianship over man's intellectual life. As against the medieval ideal, the new outlook and thought made

THE WEST AND THE WORLD OF ISLAM

A concise exposition of relevant factors connected with the attainment of cooperation between the West and the world of Islam

By MUHAMMAD NATSIR

If the Muslims will hope to cooperate successfully with other peoples of the world in the interest of peace, however, we shall have to realise that the appreciation of the virtues of Islam is greatly lacking outside the Islamic world, and that there are even amongst Muslims many misconceptions of the true aims and purposes of the Islamic teachings. Centuries of abject submission under foreign rulers, after their initial glory and greatness, have destroyed the prestige of the Muslims all over the world as well as their sense of self-respect. Nevertheless, the Western world having once experienced the power of the sword of Islam has never lost sight of the potentialities contained in the Muslim world. The endeavours of the Muslims in the 19th century to come to a resurrection in a united world of Islam (the Pan-Islamic Movement) has met with suspicion and apprehensions, by the Western world as a menace endangering their power over their colonies, the providers of precious indispensable raw-materials, for economic prosperity in the mother-countries. Writings of Lathrop Stoddard "The New World of Islam" and "The Rising Tide of Colour" and even the article on Pan-Islamism in the "Encyclopaedia Britannica" bear witness to that outright and open or at best barely covert animosity. On the other hand the Muslim world could not make their voice heard against the untrue and the unjust accusations and condemnations. But the course of history has nevertheless brought about the resurrection of the Muslim world and we are gradually coming into our selves again. The Western world, after having belatedly found out that Islam is not the peril the world has to face, is now soliciting our cooperation to preserve peace and ward off the peril of a calamitous third world war.

This change of attitude, however, has yet only a negative foundation. From their point of view it can conceivably be the choice of "the lesser of two evils". As long as we are in doubt about this point, we shall always have our misgivings about the real aims and purpose of the West, which we had good reasons to be suspicious of in our past history. In that case no real success can be expected from a cooperation founded on so weak grounds, with suspicion and distrust on either side ever lurking around the corner.

The existing misapprehensions and misconceptions about Islam will have to be rooted out completely, if that mutual suspicion and distrust is to be overcome. Moreover with regard to the part we shall be able to take in the cooperation, our own views and considerations must be fully taken into account. We cannot be expected just to fall in line and act as we are bid. The Islamic precepts and our position as Asiatic countries, are decisive factors which cannot be neglected. It is therefore important, that we wipe out the many prejudices and misapprehensions in the West about Islam which count for real knowledge on their side, and on which they base their attitude and policy. It is most necessary from

our own point of view as well as the fact that we are perfectly conscious of our needs, to participate on our own behalf, to the fullest extent, in the activities and endeavours of the United Nations, to establish the most favourable conditions in international relations, to develop a workable organisation for the settlement of disputes between states and nations without recourse to war. Mutual trust, or at least absence of more or less obvious reasons or occasions for distrust or suspicion, must undoubtedly be considered as a most desirable condition to that end. In this we can do our part in the first place by giving honest information and clarification about our real position and tendencies on account of our Islamic creed.

Mr. Muhammad Natsir is ex-premier of Indonesia and the present leader of the Masjumi, Indonesia's most potential political party. The Masjumi strives for the realisation of the ideals of Islam in the life of the state, society and the individual. At the moment the Masjumi is engaged in opposing the present government of Indonesia, together with the socialist party of Mr. Shahrir, and also the Indonesian Christian party. Mr. Natsir, like all conscious Muslims, believes in the religious solution to the problems of the modern world. The Islamic faith cannot be dissociated from its component social order, based on the rational and democratic human values. For the areas predominantly Muslim Islam cannot be separated from the Islamic State. Like the ideals it strives for, the Islamic State has always been misunderstood by non-Muslims and nominal Muslims in general. There is a tendency amongst educated circles to regard every thing Islamic as retrogressive. But the queer thing is that this misunderstanding has never been the results of familiarity with the teachings of Islam, or a logically built up conclusion. This group of people uncritically adopted the Western theory of separation between Church and State, without questioning its validity to the people of Islam. It is high time that we restrain the development of this thought copying habit which is either an expression of intellectual poverty or the outcome of mental indolence. Had they been more acquainted with the latest discoveries of Western thinkers, namely the relativity of concepts, they would have certainly adopted a more careful attitude towards the aspirations of the Muslims.

Ed.

more organised and more vigorous manner. This is certainly no easy matter, but we are anxious to see it solved as quickly and as well as possible, for upon it hinges our well-being, self-respect and stability as a nation."

In connection with the problems faced by the Muslims of Pakistan, Begum Liaquat Ali Khan mentioned the valuable contributions of the women of Pakistan. She continued by referring to the status of women in the Islamic social order. "For a woman," she said, "the home and the family must always form the hub of her interests and activities which radiate from it like the spokes of a wheel, and thus assist in moving forward the carriage of general progress, since the true well-being of any nation depends upon the strength and well-being of the families who constitute it. The home is the cradle of a nation's strength or weakness, and since it is the woman's key-position in a home which makes her the most powerful factor in it for good or evil, the education, status, and intelligent co-operation of women in national life are an absolute necessity, a measure of its progress, and the best hope for better international understanding and peace. Thirteen hundred years ago Islam gave women such rights of inheritance, franchise, status and action as many other women do not possess even to-day, but the tragedy has been that, for one reason or another, those rights have been allowed to lapse, or sink into a convenient oblivion or misinterpretation by the people themselves, so that they have been either unused or misused. For example, by Islamic law a woman has compulsory and fixed property inheritance rights and quotas as mother, wife, daughter and sister, and now it is for her to understand her rights and responsibilities and take advantage of them."

After touching upon various other problems connected with Pakistan in general and women in particular, Begum Liaquat Ali Khan expressed her opinion concerning the nature of education and its relation to our conception of life.

"I would say education must have a social relevance in that it affords a positive and forceful response to changing social needs and problems. It must aid man to be better able to know and to use through a better social set-up, better machines and better tools, the great potentials of modern scientific knowledge for constructive purposes, in the interests of the greatest number of the people and not merely of the favoured and limited minority, and in the desperate battle against the age-long dangerous, but now unnecessary evils of poverty, ignorance and disease." Apart from this education "must fit men and women to meet the problems and opportunities of their own age intelligently and successfully, and not as helpless pawns or disinterested spectators in the grip of social circumstances they have never learnt to either understand or control, and it must, therefore, give them the power to shape their own destinies."

Regarding science Begum Liaquat Ali Khan made the following observation: "Modern scientific knowledge must be harnessed to the physical and spiritual needs of man and society if we wish to build a better world for all."

Besides this, it is also in science that she sees the link between the co-operation of Asia and the West.

"Herein, too, lies the answer to a common meeting ground for East-West co-operation, mutual adjustment and development. The advancing skills and techniques of modern scientific knowledge have levelled down so many great barriers, physical intellectual and spiritual, which not only creates an ever-increasing interdependence in all ways, but also makes clearer the great underlying unity of diversity. Trouble arises when we fail to make proper and full use of that knowledge so that the factual and necessary diversities blur the outlines of the essential unity that also exists. East and West represent the two halves of a whole and are complementary to one another, so that the common basic principles of all religions and the universal potentials of modern scientific knowledge provide the spiritual, intellectual and physical meeting grounds for successful East-West co-existence and co-operation with dignity and desirable results. This is what we in Pakistan are striving for. Interests as well as those of the world at large. This is also why I feel so strongly that in re-orientating education anywhere, and specially in a country such as Pakistan with its many economic problems and great rural population it is very necessary that the new education should be socially relevant to national and world conditions, so that the whole power and advantage of constructive modern skills and knowledge may be at the disposal of all men: not as a show-piece, but as a tool that they can use confidently and effectively to destroy ignorance, poverty, disease of body, mind and spirit, and to build up an ever-growing knowledge, prosperity and health for all."

Begum Liaquat Ali Khan ended her talk by stating that only when "we can use knowledge and skill to construct for man's widest and greatest benefit, rather than destroy what little he already has: when we can cause world-wide tensions of fear, hate, mistrust and glaring inequalities to be eased or removed through the proper understanding and use of such knowledge: when we can learn to treat such knowledge as a powerful but grave responsibility from God", then we shall be well on the way towards human welfare.

Religious Parties in Western Europe

for his political conduct. But these rules have been formulated very abstractly. Many and even contradictory viewpoints are possible, which are not in conflict with the fundamental religious principles. The result is, that the christian political parties are constituted by elements, which are very heterogeneous except with regard to religious problems.

The disadvantage of this situation is, that many questions cannot be solved satisfactorily. I think of those problems, which are not clearly decided upon by religion. The oppositions between the elements are then constrained within these heterogeneous parties. The relations of power of the different groups within the party determine the necessary compromise. But such a compromise does not satisfactorily solve the problem from the democratic point of view, because the parliament then does not reflect the general opinion but only those of the dominant elements of the various parties.

Solutions

For the solution of these difficulties the christian parties followed several ways. I mention in the first place a Dutch phenomenon. After the second world war a group of Christian intellectuals agreed, that many actual problems could not be solved, if there would not come a reorganization of the party-system. Their reasoning was: that nowadays "There are many urgent non-religious problems, which demand a concentration of energy. Such a concentration is not possible, if we maintain the old party-system of Protestant, Catholic, Socialist and Conservative parties. Therefore it is necessary, that we as members of the religious parties break up and join the non-religious political groups."

In quantitative respect this so-called break-through movement is not important. Yet her significance is not small. Especially the Socialist party profits from the shifting of the electors. Before the war this party was always in opposition. Since 1945 it is one of the important government-parties.

A second possible solution of the tension caused by the problem of progressiveness and conservatism within the Christian parties we can also see in the Netherlands. This is the creation of conservative and progressive Christian political groups.

A third solution is the confederation of the religious party. This idea was executed by the Catholic parties of Belgium and Austria. These parties are composed of autonomous organizations. In Belgium the Catholic party is constituted by four classes: the conservatives, the farmers, the labourers and the middle-class. The Austrian popular party shows a similar character. Even the Catholic youth has been organized according to the same principle. Among the Roman-Catholic representatives in parliament one can point out exactly the various class representatives.

The meaning of the confederation of the party is clear, namely to keep together what is different in nature and purposes. According to Maurice Duverger in his book "Les partis politiques" experience proves, that this federal-character rather sharpens than weakens the contrasts. And indeed the danger threatens, that the adherents feel themselves more bound to their class-organization than to their party.

Whether it is better to give class antagonism a regulated outlet or to suppress and ignore it is a question, we cannot completely solve in theory. It is more a matter of strategy. The method to suppress or to ignore this class antagonism is adopted by the Christian political parties in other countries. They simply and emphatically ignore that there is such a problem.

SOME ASPECTS OF LIFE IN PAKISTAN TO-DAY

By H. E. BEGUM LIAQUAT ALI KHAN

Pakistan's ambassador to the Netherlands

The following is a concise account of a speech delivered by Her Excellency Begum Liaquat Ali Khan, at the invitation of the Sanctus Thomas Aquinas Association of Amsterdam, to inaugurate the academic year of Amsterdam University on the 15th of October.

Begum Liaquat Ali Khan commenced her talk, amongst others, by explaining the birth of Pakistan. She said:

"Pakistan came into being in August 1947 because the Muslim minority in undivided India feared a perpetual majority domination by the Hindus; because the Muslims were a majority in certain fairly large parts of the subcontinent (which now constitute Pakistan); and because with a minority of a hundred million people, which is a larger number than many nations in the world, the Muslim minority with its different and distinctive religion, culture, tradition and ideology, felt it had a right to a country of its own where, without fear of a dominating majority, it could pursue its own religion, ideas, customs and language towards a richer and fuller life as a nation and as a world entity. There was no desire then, as there is no desire now, to take anything which does not morally belong to us, or to develop at the expense of others. The areas in which the Muslims were in a majority were not the rich and developed areas, but what they genuinely sought was, not the right to exploit

others or otherwise harm them, but the simple right to freedom from both foreign and majority domination so as to live as what they were in actual fact — a nation."

She dealt further with the subsequent problems attending the partition of India.

"The subsequent mass-movements of population and the terrible conditions of fear, bloodshed and deprivation under which they took place, were never envisaged by the Muslim minority when the plans and terms for Partition were discussed and accepted; and were totally unnecessary if the majority had accepted the Partition in a spirit of honesty and not of temporary expediency. In the first few months alone some seven million people crossed over into Pakistan, bringing with them nothing but the will to survive in spite of unprecedented hardships, personal loss and misery; and thus was born what still remains as our major responsibility to-day — that of housing, feeding and rehabilitating millions of these stricken refugees — a gigantic problem whose intrinsic difficulties are magnified a hundred-fold in a new and under-developed country, struggling to establish itself from scratch, and a problem whose potentialities in economic and political unrest are a constant source of danger as time goes on, unless much greater stress is laid upon the rehabilitatory and progressively permanent aspects of it, and in a much wider,

Editorial Correspondence

The editor shall from time to time print one or more of the numerous letters he received from various parts of the world. At a later date, Progressive Islam should like to provide regularly some space for discussions between its readers concerning various possible subjects. The following is one of the letters received by the editor.

Dear Sir! I acknowledge with thanks receipt of the 10 copies of the journal "Progressive Islam" which you are editing. While I do appreciate your kind gesture I would like to give you hereunder my comments, in a concise form, in the hope that these comments will be of some use.

I am now over 60 years old. As since my childhood I was inclined towards the question of religion, I have consecrated about 45 years to the study and exploration of this very important matter. Today I feel that I have gained some views on the real inside of the matter and my understanding is that Islam is to be looked upon as a pure ideological movement. Islam is to be considered as the resultant of two components of which one is a cultural and the other a social activity. Politics have some place in it with the only purpose and idea that individuals be allowed to be active in a community so as to produce harmony which is necessary for the cultural development of individuals. In the first place it is necessary to define what religion is in reality. Our Quran gives us many indications in this respect. However in the course of my studies I came to the conclusion that the Quran is not properly understood in general. This holy Script contains many historical and scientific truths which unfortunately remain unrecognised by many. Instead of concentrating on the central point, people have given themselves to sidelines thus giving grounds to differences of opinion of which there are anyhow too many. It is the study of the central point that could bring all adherents of Islam and even the whole world to see the Light and the naked Truth. In this way many efforts and discussions could be avoided. I think that at least the educated circles of Islam should unite on the most important central points. Should this be achieved and the principal points gathered, it would not be difficult to elucidate the spirits of others and all. If the sun of Truth should shine there is no difficulty to come to a general understanding of all people.

I am enclosing some compositions I have written and hope these will show you some of my ideas. I look forward to receiving your comments and remain, Yours sincerely/Ragip Erensoy/Istanbul Turkey.

REPLY: Dear Mr Erensoy/Thank you very much for your kind letter. Many of the points you mentioned are indeed relevant. We agree with your views on Islam and the Holy Quran and in particular with the fact that the Muslim intellectuals should unite in the fundamental principles of Islam. The policy of Progressive Islam regarding its promotion of Islamic know-

ledge embraces mainly the fundamental principles of Islam to which all the Muslims are in agreement. These are the principles of Tawhid, the prophethood of Muhammad and its finality, the sacredness and authenticity of the Holy Quran, and of course the other tenets of the faith mentioned in the Holy Quran, such as the brotherhood of man, the attainment of social justice, the belief in certain inviolable and absolute spiritual values, freedom of religion, a dynamic view on human life, etc. Any violation or distortion of the Quranic teachings, in particular Tawhid and the finality of prophethood, shall be injurious to the wellbeing of the Muslim community. Regarding Tawhid and the finality of prophethood, we are completely in agreement with the late Allama Iqbal and the other Muslim scholars and religious leaders, who perceived the importance of Tawhid and the finality of prophethood. I am below printing your hints on Islamic mysticism. To explain our views further, you could refer to the article printed in this number entitled "The mystical experience of the Prophet Muhammad". Hoping that this reply would be to your satisfaction, I remain, Yours fraternally/Husein Alatas (Editor).

SOME HINTS ON MUSLEMYSTICISM

In every thing or being, seen or unseen, there is some of reality, or truth, especially in the creations of art, music, philosophy and literature, in the study of science, or in another intellectual activity, where the results are obtained with the help of full intuition and with the effort of pure devotion, without any material ambition or egoistical interest as is to be found in the stories of the religions or in different acts and states of religious experience and in the currents of history. I consider real mysticism as a sincere effort to gather, to value, and to admire all these truths, or realities, to make of them a treasure, and then to taste of them richly. Its essential work is to try to make from all of them as delicious an elixir as possible for life, as the busy bees do to prepare their honey, flying from flower to flower. In short, its aim is this, to help one live a sincere and righteous life.

There is no Creator, no great Architect, there is no space nor time, no beginning nor end, except in one, and He is of perpetual existence in full activity. That is God. But our experiences of God, Divinity, heaven, (all the great Names) are relative to our purpose, our respect, our feeling, our admiration, our service, our adoration and value of Him. In the end, all these are nothing but the reflection of His own consciousness.

ISLAM AND SECULAR DEMOCRACY

no attempt to suppress the nature of man, his natural desires and aspirations, but it aimed at the full development of human personality and the attainment of intellectual and cultural excellence. The secular and humanist thought insisted that human thought and conduct may be determined with reference to the present life and social well-being. Christian theology had assigned a subordinate and negative role to the state; but the new secular thought insisted that the state was entrusted with the positive function of creating moral and material conditions that are necessary for the attainment of the good life. As a result of the bitter wars of Christian sects, it became imperative to discover certain basic elements on which all citizens, whatever their religious affiliations, could agree. Grotius evolved a set of general principles of international relations and law, for which he claimed validity irrespective of religious differences. European secular thought was inspired by a desire to rise above the wars of Christian sects, and find a common ground of reason and morality and social progress. It had as its elements Renaissance humanism, stoic natural law, and a humanised and ethical conception of Christianity as propounded by Erasmus. These elements were fused by Locke into an integrated system based on rationalism, empiricism and religious toleration and liberalism, thus helping the emergence of a common body-politic, composed of various elements, and working for common welfare of all the citizens. The spread of such secular attitudes in Europe led to an increased emphasis on the practical and immediately verifiable elements in life,

as distinguished from the speculations of medieval scholasticism; conceptions of social welfare, of justice, of human dignity and equality came to have greater importance and value. This secular outlook was based on considerations of practical aims of physical, social and moral improvement of society. New Europe began actively to work for the improvement of social and economic conditions. This awakening of Europe's social conscience was not due to Christianity but was in spite of it. Secularism implied an attitude of mind which was scientific which attempted to organize European society on the basis of scientifically established knowledge, and it, therefore, implied major and fundamental departures from Church Christianity; it implied a rational and scientific approach to human life and its problems. Secularism is closely allied to humanism and it makes no distinction between man and man on the basis of race, colour and creed. Erasmus and Montaigne stressed the need of reason and common sense, tolerance and love against ignorance and superstition. Secular thought thus developed in Europe as a reaction against the tyranny of the Church, its irrational dogmas and superstitions, its neglect of the present life, its religious fanaticism and the religious blood-baths resulting from religious intolerance. Europe which claims today to be the cradle of science, rationalism, and democracy has passed through periods of most inhuman religious intolerance and most revolting superstition. The origins of modern secularism are to be traced to the fifteenth century, but they found culmination and completion in the European Enlightenment of the eighteenth

century. It was in the eighteenth century that the clouds of intellectual darkness and superstition which had enveloped Europe for centuries were dispelled by the work of European thinkers like Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Locke, and Lessing. These thinkers of the Age of Reason preached the cult of reason, commonsense, tolerance, liberty and equality, justice and humanity. The increasingly pronounced divergence between orthodox Christian doctrines like Original Sin, Predestination, Trinity, Papal Infallibility, and rationalist and scientific thinking prepared the way for the development of the modern scientific and secular outlook. The advance of the spirit of reasoned enquiry resulted in attempts to construct a rational picture of the universe on the basis of scientifically established knowledge. There also emerged ideas of universalism; Europe began to conceive of mankind as a unit, in pursuit of the same objectives and evolving under the influence of a single universal law. This humanitarian universalism passed into the socialist theories of the nineteenth century.

Rousseau was anti-clerical in his thought, but he was profoundly and deeply religious in the sense of recognizing an Intelligent Providence. Rousseau, who is rightly considered as one of the apostles of modern democracy, has expressed views about state and religion which may be surprising to many. He asserts: "No state has ever been founded without a religious basis." But his conception of religion was not that of the Christian Church. He says: "Religion may also be divided into two kinds, the religion of man, and that of the citizens. The first, which has neither temples, nor altars, nor rites, and is confined to the purely internal cult of the Supreme God and the eternal obligations of morality, is the religion of the Gospel pure and simple, the true theism, what may be called natural divine right or law. The other, which is codified in a single country, gives it its gods, its own tutelary patrons; it has its dogmas, its rites, and its external cult prescribed by law; outside the single nation that follows it, all the world is in its sight infidel, foreign and barbarous; the duties and rights of man extend for it only as far as its own altars." Of this kind were all the religions of early peoples, which we may define as civil or positive divine right or law. . . . There is a third sort of religion of a more singular kind which gives men two codes of legislation, two countries, renders them subject to contradictory duties, and makes it impossible for them to be faithful both to religion and to citizenship. Such are the religions of the Lamas and of the Japanese, and such is Roman Christianity, which may be called the religion of the priest. All that destroys social unity is worthless; all institutions that set man in contradiction to himself are worthless. . . . The dogmas of civil religion ought to be few, simple, and exactly worded, without explanation or commentary. The existence of a mighty, intelligent, and beneficent Divinity, possessed of foresight and providence, the life to come, the happiness of the just, the punishment of the wicked, the sanctity of the social contract and the laws: these are its positive dogmas. Now that there is and can be no longer an exclusive national religion, tolerance should be given to all religions that tolerate others, so long as their dogmas contain nothing contrary to the duties of citizenship".

Another great European and apostle of modern democracy, Joseph Mazzini, had real and profound religious conviction. Although he was, like Rousseau and Voltaire, anti-clerical and secular in his outlook, he has a passionate belief in God, whom he regards as the law-giver of mankind. He says: "God is the only law-giver to the human race. . . . Human laws are only valid and good in so far as they conform to His Law, explaining and applying it. . . . All sovereignty is in God, in the moral law, in the providential design

which governs the world. . . . The mere vote of a majority does not constitute sovereignty, if it is evidently adverse to the supreme moral law. . . . There is a conception which must one day harmonise or, rather, identify the two Powers of Church and State. . . . The end of politics is the application of the Moral Law to the civil constitution of a nation in its double activity, domestic and foreign. . . . Sovereignty is in the Ideal. The earth is of God; it cannot be accursed. . . . Life, like the God from whom it springs, is one and everlasting. . . . There is no antagonism between matter and spirit. The dualism between the temporal and spiritual power is an immoral conception. The sovereignty is in God. The will of the people is sacred only when it interprets and applies the moral law. . . . The world is at the end of God, of progress, and of unity. . . . heaven and earth, like the way and the end of the way, are one thing only. . . .

One wonders how close and near to Islam are the opinions of Rousseau and Mazzini? The great question is: how this remarkable change in Europe's intellectual climate came about? The Light which dispelled the night of Europe had come from some other horizon. Briffault writes: "The light from which civilization was once more rekindled did not arise from any embers of Graeco-Roman culture smouldering among the ruins of Europe, nor from the living death on the Bosphorus. It did not come from the northern, but from the southern invaders of the Empire, from the Saracens." It was, in fact, the impact of Muslim thought on Europe that made possible the rebirth of Europe.

To be continued

REQUESTS FOR PEN FRIENDS

Mr. Ali Saecet Polatlar, Cumhuriyet Caddesi, Boran Apartman Kat 2, Zonguldak, Turkey. Interest: Exchange of ideas.
Mr. H. Schaaf, van Breest, 110b, Amsterdam, Holland. Age: 26 Interest: Arabic and Indian art and music, and Arabic literature.

MAULID el-NABI

(Birthday of the Prophet). The Muslim Council of the Netherlands, composed of the existing Islamic organizations in the Netherlands, the Perkumpulan Islam, the Shakh Mian Mohammed Trust, and the Association of Islamic Students, celebrated the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad on the 8th of November 1954, at 8 p.m. in the building of the High Commission of the Republic of Indonesia, Prinsessegracht 21, the Hague. The celebration was attended by about 120 persons. Muslim and non-Muslim alike. Amongst those present were H. E. Mr. Susanto Tirtoprodjo, High Commissioner for Indonesia, and Mrs. Susanto Tirtoprodjo, and H. E. Begum Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan Ambassador to the Netherlands. Speeches were held by Mr. Husein Alatas, editor of Progressive Islam and chairman of the Association of Islamic Students, and Mr. Slamet Saubany on behalf of the Perkumpulan Islam. The celebration was begun by a recital of the Holy Quran followed by a short introduction by Mr. Fauzuddin Ahmad Overing, a Dutch Muslim and scholar in Persian literature. The speeches were delivered in English and Indonesian. The speech in English, delivered by Mr. Husein Alatas, contained amongst others, the following: "The meanings which are contained in the life of the Prophet, are of such a nature that it would require the succession of generations to discover and to understand them. Any epoch making event is always apprehended after a lapse of one or more generations. The 13 centuries separating us from the Prophet Muhammad have enriched our thoughts on his life and the religion which he founded. To the Muslims, to lift up the mantle of time stretching between them and their Prophet means to discover anew the treasures of wisdom hidden underneath."

KAMAL TRADING CO.

P. O. BOX 5108 — AMSTERDAM

Export managers and
manufacture's
representatives



Cement, soap, safety-matches, glassware,
perfumes, crystalware, watches.