ISLAM IN SOUTH AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Edited by

ASGHAR ALI ENGINEER

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PREFACE

The Institute of Islamic Studies, Bombay, is committed to interpretation of Islam relevant to our times. The Quranic theology has immense potentialities provided it is interpreted and re-interpreted in the light of our own experiences and not limiting it to the medieval ages. It is also important to see it in the context of historical, sociological, political, economic and other factors. In the light of these factors Islamic policy assumes different character in different countries.

The essays included in this volume are an attempt, by different scholars, to understand and analyse these factors and etch out the characteristics of Islamic polity in the countries of South and South-East Asia. The papers on India, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia included in this volume were presented at the International Islamic Consultation held by the Christian Conference of Asia in Hongkong in November, 1984. I am very much grateful to Fr. Clement John of the Christian Conference of Asia to permit me to include these papers in this volume.

I am also grateful to Prof. Abubakar of the Institute of Islamic Studies, University of Philippines, Prof. Ali Anwar of Rajshahi University, Bangladesh and Dr. V. Mohan, University of Bombay to have contributed articles on my request for this volume.

I also consider it my duty to thank the trustees of Ikhwanus Safa Trust for financing the activities of Institute of Islamic Studies in general and this volume in particular. My thanks are also due to Mr. Silvaraj of the Institute for carefully reading the proofs.

ASGHAR ALI ENGINEER

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OUR CONTRIBUTORS

1. Dr. Chandra Muzaffar. 58, Jalan Mayangpasir, Bayan Baru, Penang, MALAYSIA.

2. Prof. Carmen Abubakar. Institute of Islamic Studies, U. P. Diliman, Quezon City, PHILIPPINES.

3. Abdurrahman Wahid is currently the first secretary to the National Religious Coucil of the Nahdatul 'Ulama, the largest Islamic movement in Indonesia. He is also a board member of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development, Bangkok.

4. Dr. V. Mohan, Department of Political Science, Bombay Universith, Kalina Campus, Vidhyanagari, Bombay-98.

5. Mohammed Safdar Mir, 162, Scotch Corner, Upper Mall, Lahore, PAKISTAN.

6. Asghar Ali Engineer, Director, Institute Islamic Studies, Irene Cottage, 2nd Floor, 4th Road, Santacruz (East), Bombay-55.

7. Prof. Ali Anwar, Department of English, University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi, BANGLADESH.

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INTRODUCTION

Islam in South and South-East Asia is significant not only as a religious but also as a political force. Religion and politics not only interact with each other in our era, one influences the other strongly to determine the shape of things. Religion, in fact, has become the chief instrument of assertion of ones identity in a multi-religious society and that of political legitimacy for ruling elites and status-quoist powers. One must also, however, concede that in certain situation religion has played, and can play, the role of revolutionary transformation, challenging, and overthrowing, the status quo as in Iran.

The religious revival beginning with West Asia in early seventies has taken South and South-East Asia also into its sweep. Islam is the religion of predominant majority in some of the countries of this region like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Indonesia and of significant minority in some other countries like India, Ceylon, Thailand and the Philippines. The countries where Muslims are in majority and the countries where they are in minority face different problems and challenges. It is necessary to understand these problems and magnitude of those challenges and the way Islam is harnessed politically or socially to create or meet them.

This book is an attempt to analyse and understand various problems and challenges being faced by these countries, with the help of scholars, political thinkers, social activists and journalists. The contributors to this volume are aware of the fact that modernization and change throw up complicated problems and create a sense of insecurity for a large number of people as they get uprooted in the process and find it difficult to secure their place in the new socio-economic dispensation. Industrial and technological changes are often elite-oriented and subservient to their needs. The masses are left high and dry in the process. Modernization and change prove to be

a curse rather than boon for the poor and needy in developing societies. The intense sense of insecurity generated in the minds of people due to elite-oriented process of development easily drive them to the fold of religion and thus religious revival begins to strike its root in the developing society.

Prof. Chandra Muzaffar discusses in his article the factors responsible for spread of revivalist movement in Malaysia: According to Muzaffar Islamic revival is not confined to urban areas alone; it has spread to some rural areas as well in Malaysia. He observes, ".... many of the social issues which provide grist to the Islamic mill... are in fact most keenly felt within rural communities. This would include poverty, increasing income disparities in specific rural localities, misuse of development aid and so on. They have all helped indiretcly to fuel Islamic resurgence in rural Malaysia."

It is not to deny that Islamic resurgence is primarily an urban phenomenon. There are several interacting forces which tend to strengthen the resurgence. Prof. Chandra has perceptively discussed the role of various factors in the Malaysian situation. One of the important factors is ethnicity. The deprived ethnic groups, after independence, are known to have been asserting their religious identity (in certain cases racial, cultural or linguistic identity as well) thus constituting themselves into powerful pressure groups. Such assertion, needless to say, goes to consolidate religious revival.

Indonesia is another Muslim majority country in the region. Its problems are different from those of Malaysia. It passed through tumultous course of events during Second World War until it got its independence in the mid-forties. Sukarno was committed to a secular polity and earnestly set out to establish one. However, the **Ulama** in Indonesia had played an important role in the struggle against the Dutch colonialism and this created certain problems. The **Ulama** who had their own religio-political organizations began to assert themselves demand-

ing greater say in the political affairs. Later, with Military seizing political power, the problems assumed greater complexity. While the Panchsila came to be accepted by the State as a political philosophy a section of the **Ulama** demanded greater degree of Islamization. It is alleged by this section of the **Ulama** that the Christian Military officers are trying to snub the legitimate aspirations of the Muslims.

Abdurrahman Wahid who himself is connected with the Nahdatul **'Ulama',** an important religious organization, throws interesting light on various trends in Indonesian politics as well as religious movements. One of the important aspects of Indonesian society is its cultural plurality which throws up challenging problems in the process of development. Throwing light on this dimension of the problem Mr. Wahid says, "The legal-formalistic attitude, with its scriptural approach to life, demands a monocultural environment for its religious expression, with rigorous conformity to the prescribed life pattern and no room for any deviation. Such an approach is not consonant with the cultural plurality that is one of the salient historical characteristics of Indonesian life. It leads to a fortress mentality among minority groups — whether Islamic or non-Islamic, whether religious in nature or not — and creates socially disruptive conditions that foment deep mistrust and suspicion between Islamic and other communities."

This is not the only problem of Indonesian Islam. Abdurrahman throws detailed light on other aspects as well. There are different intellectual trends among Indonesian Muslims which are of interest to us Indians also. The question of application of **shari'ah** has assumed importance in Indonesia too in the wake of modernization and change. In this respect the Indonesian **Ulama** have proved to be more adaptive. Abdurrahman says, "In this way, Indonesian Muslims relied mainly on a form of adaptive legalism to face the challenge of modernization. One of the main functions of **pesantren** (an Indonesian

institution of religious learning, A.E.) since the end of the last century has been to provide public forums in which religious scholars could instruct the general population in the detailed implementation of adaptive legalism — legalism that, while maintaining Islamic principles, also implied a gradual framework for change through religious laws." Here there is great deal for the Indian **Ulama to** learn from the Indonesian experience.

Philippines also has been an abode of Islam since fourteenth century. Almost whole of south of this country was once under Muslims. The Portugese and later the American colonialists wrested political power from them and subjugated and presecuted them. The Moro problem (the Philippine Muslims are known as Moros, A.E.) has defied solution ever since. It has been further aggravated during the present regime.

The Muslims in the Philippines are concentrated in a few southern districts mainly in Mindanao and Sulu. They belong to various tribal groups. The Marcos regime allegedly encourages Christian-Muslim hostility in order to give communal turn to the Moro problem. Some well-meaning Christians have formed solidarity committees known as Duyog-Ramadan Committees. Philippines is also, like India, a pluralist society and faces similar challenges. The comparison is not only tempting but also rewarding.

However, there are important differences between the two situations. The Marcos regime faces an armed rebellion from the Moros in Mindanao. Several armed groups are waging struggle for an independent Islamic state in Mindanao district. Nur Misuari group is most powerful and influential among them. The Muslims in the Philippines are generally poor and backward. The rate of literacy is also low. The theologians therefore exercise great influence over them. In Marawi, a Muslim majority city in Mindanao district, there are quite a few large centres of Islamic learning. Many students aspire to go to higher centres of Islamic learning in Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Prof. Abubakar gives detailed analysis of the Moro problem in her article. She traces out the history of Islam in the Philippines and in that background discusses the Moro armed struggle in Mindanao province. Many young Moro Muslims have laid down their lives for the cause of their independence. There can be no doubt that it is the deep desire of the Moro Muslims to have their own homeland.

A prominent Moro leader of Sulu, Carmen Abubakar informs us, at the hoisting of American flag in 1915 after the abolition of the Sultanate had said: .....according to our religion, this land belongs to God. So I beg of you to refrain from hoisting the flag of American nation on our holy ground, as if America will stay here forever. But raise the American flag on buildings which are temporary, as if America will depart tomorrow.

Similar sentiments were expressed by a dying martyr in 1974 more than half a century later at the battle of Jolo when he wrote in his blood while he lay dying: we are martyrs upholding land, race and religion. The Marcos regime, the Moros feel, has never tried to solve their problem honestly. It did not even honour the terms of the treaty, they allege, which was worked out in the late seventies at the initiative of the Libyan chief Moamar Ghaddafi. The armed struggle was resumed in the early eighties after this betrayal by Marcos.

Sri Lanka in the South of Indian sub-continent has around 7% Muslim population. Islam in this Island, it is said, dates back to the Prophet's period. A section of the Sri Lankan Muslims are known as Moors. They are of Arab origin. The other Muslims are of Malay origin and they insist on separate identity. There are also Muslims of Indian origin most of whom speak Tamil. The other Muslims of Indian origin belong to the Bohra community who are rich merchants. Although the Muslims in Sri Lanka are generally poor and educationally backward, a section of the Bohra and non-Bohra Muslims is quite prosperous. The Muslims in Sri Lanka, though quite conscious of their religious identity, have generally lived

in peace with other sections of population. Of course, there have been brief interludes of skirmishes with the Sinhalese and recently with the Tamilians as well. No pluralist society can escape occasional bouts of violence in the process of development and change. The degree of conflict, however, might differ depending on local conditions.

Dr. V. Mohan discusses various dimensions of Sri Lankan Islam in her article which is based on her field studies in that country. While bringing out ethnic differences among the Muslims of diverse origin she also discovers a sense of religious solidarity among them. Though she does not discuss the implications of Islamic revival it, nevertheless, emerges from her presentation that the Muslims in Sri Lanka are increasingly becoming proud of their Islamic identity. She also gives statistical data to portray the economic, educational, religious and social status of Muslims. Though the data is not very exhaustive it gives fairly good idea of status of Muslims in Sri Lanka. The problems of Sri Lankan Muslims are not as acute as those of Muslims in the Philippines.

Now we come to Islam in Indian sub-continent. It is the most important region in South Asia from the view-point of Islam. Islam entered this region as early as later part of seventh century and played highly significant role in its socio-political life. Prof. Ali Anwar devotes his article to the history of Islam in Bengal in general and what is now known as Bangladesh in particular. The Sufis have played very important role in spreading Islam throughout the subcontinent with their humanitarian and universal approach as against the legalist and formalistic approach of **Ulama.** The political hegemony and the sword, contrary to the popular belief, were not the real cause of spread of Islam in the Indian subcontinent. The Sufis through assimilation of local customs and rituals made Islam more acceptable to the masses at lower levels. It is only the upper caste elites who submitted to the political hegemony of the **Ashraf** (the Muslim nobility). The Bhakti and sufi doctrines were social

levellers and were much closer to the heart of the suffering masses. It is in this sense that Prof. Ali Anwar's treatment of the subject with his emphasis on the role of sufis in Bengal is relevant though he does not come to the grips with contemporary Islam in Bangladesh.

Mohammad Safdar Mir, on the other hand, in his article on "Religion and Politics in Pakistan" deals with the recent history and how Islam influenced the shape of political events during freedom struggle ultimately resulting in the vivsection of the Indian sub-continent. He also discusses the role Islam played and continues to play in determining the course of events in contemporary Pakistan. Of all the Islamic countries in the region under discussion Pakistan is closest to the West Asian countries and is quickest to imbibe the influences of the resurgence of fundamentalist Islam. There are other factors besides these. The history of struggle for its creation and the compulsions of military rule give added significance to the Islamic factor in Pakistan. The slogan of Islamization is basically political rather than religious in nature.

Islam continues to be a significant force in Indian society even after partition. No political party, not even the BJP with its Hindu communal proclivity, can ignore the Islamic factor in Indian politics. The Muslims continue to be a force to be reckoned with. Their Islamic identity has found new significance with the resurgence of Islam in West Asia. However it is not aggressively assertive. The majority communalism in India is far more assertive and aggressive. The RSS and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, like the Jamat-e-Islami of Pakistan, represent the aggressive Hindu fundamentalism. The common Muslim masses often become the target of their aggression. Islam is more an identity than vitality for Indian Muslims. The former backward Muslim biradaries like the Ansaris and Qureshis are making it up economically filling the void created by gradual disappearance of nobility. These biradaries lack the cultural catholicity and religious liberalism and so is the case with the rising Hindu middle castes. This development has created a new

situation of confrontation between the Hindus and Muslims. One has to properly understand the sociology of economic development in order to trace the roots of contemporary Hindu-Muslim confrontation.

In conclusion one can say that the resurgence of Islam in South Asia does not open up new windows to the future nor does it emphasis fundamental values. It supports status quo and puts emphasis on fundamental rituals. While trapping the masses in the rituals, the power elites are feathering their nests in collaboration with religious elites. The religious elites endorse unhesitatingly the growth strategies followed by those who control the commanding heights of economy. Islamic resurgence does not and cannot survive, let alone thrive, on its own ground. It is integrally connected with the totality of social situation. It must be viewed as such. The essays collected in this book are an attempt in that direction.

ASGHAR ALI ENGINEER

Islam in Malaysia : Resurgence & Response

By
DR. CHANDRA MUZAFFAR

Like Islamic resurgence elsewhere, the essential characteristic of the phenomenon in Malaysia is an unyielding faith in the Quran and Sunnah as the basis of an alternative order. It regards Islam as the only viable answer to the grave challenges confronting humankind. It therefore seeks to shape and mould human and social behaviour in accordance with Islamic values, tenets and laws.

SIGNS OF RESURGENCE

In Malaysia, the signs of resurgence are everywhere. The most obvious is the rapid spread of the **hejab** among Muslim women in the country's urban centres. It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that a good 60 to 70 per cent of all Muslim females above adolescence in urban centres wear the hejab. A sprinkling of Muslim males also don what is commonly regarded as religiously-sanctioned attire. The intermingling of the sexes is limited and there are now clear spheres of male and female activity within a number of Muslim outfits. Consequently. a number of Muslim women have begun to assume less public roles. They feel that a woman's primary responsibility is as a wife and mother. At the same time, Muslim women and men who are part of the resurgence observe in meticulous detail the various

dietary rules. There are also other more subtle changes in behaviour and etiquette which are all aimed at upholding what the resurgents regard as an Islamic way of life.

There is also a tremendous proliferation of Islamic literature and cassette tapes. This is yet another sign of resurgence. Many of these publications deal with the strengthening of individual faith, the norms that should be observed in personal conduct, the importance of adhering to the various Islamic rites and rituals and the evil that befalls those who deviate from "the correct path". Like the written works, a good portion of the tapes that are now inundating the market are concerned with personal morality and sin though there are also those that are explicitly political.

Indeed, it is this growing commitment to an Islamic way of life expressed through individual behaviour that has added strength and stature to the political dimension of Islamic resurgence. At no point in the past has there been a stronger demand for an Islamic state. Today, more than ever before, there is a clarion call for a return to the untained, unalloyed purity of the Quran and Sunnah. The advocates of this approach reject nationalism in toto. They see it as antithetical to the universal concept of humanity embodied in Islam. They are even more opposed to secularism which they view as the repudiation of Allah's sovereignty and authority over the human being and all that is in the Universes. They want a totally different socail order where Allah's will and word will reign supreme. It is this demand that is being articulated through talks, forums and publications — apart from cassettee tapes.

Partly in response to all this, the Muslim-dominated government of multi-religious Malaysia, has embarked upon a vigorous Islamization policy. This, in turn, has given greater impetus to the resurgence itself. The government's response is evident from very minor to major aspects of administration and politics. For instance, the Islamic form of greeting and quotations from the

Quran now embelish the speeches of government leaders much more than before. There is also a significant increase in programmes devoted to Islam over the state-run radio and television services. An 'Islamic civilisation' course has been made compulsory for all Muslim students in institutions of higher learning; it is optional for non-Muslims. Islamic laws are being re-vamped and in some cases, implemented with a greater sense of purpose. Of course, these laws do not apply to the non-Muslims. Neither do they impinge upon the existence of a parallel system of laws based upon the English legal tradition.

More than all these piecemeal changes, the government has since 1982 established a number of public institutions in the name of Islam. There is now an International Islamic university. There is also an Islamic bank with a few branches in the country. An Islamic foundation devoted to social welfare has been set up. An Islamic insurance scheme is being planned. There is also talk of an Islamic pawnshop system.

Quite apart from all projects, is the government's programme of inculcating Islamic values. Hard work, discipline, honesty and sincerity are among the values that are often proclaimed in the name of the religion. The aim is to get workers in both the public and private sectors, professionals, executives, teachers and students to imbibe these values. Slogans, pledges and competitions are some of the modes of persuasion used in this drive to inculcate Islamic values.

All in all then, as far as strengthening formal Islam, institutional Islam, symbolic Islam is concerned, the government has played a significant role.

RESURGENCE : THE EARLIER PHASES

However, the rise of Islam in the last decade and a half which we have just described should not create the impression that Islamic consciousness and commitment is something entirely new and novel in the country. This is not true.

Take this notion of conforming to Islamic norms and practices for instance. Malaysian Muslims have always been fairly strict about dietary regulations. There is a strong revulsion towards the eating of pork — as a case in point. With the exception of segments of the middle and upper classes, Muslim women on the whole, especially those in the rural areas, chose to stick to their traditional attire which incorporates a notion of modesty and decency. In other words, even in those days when westernization was not subjected to scrutiny. Muslim women preferred their own indigenous dress-form. By the same token in rural communities and even at most levels of urban society there never was unrestricted socializing between the sexes.

All this goes to show that the 'return to an Islamic life', at least as far as personal behaviour is concerned, does not entail a radical transformation in the substance of human conduct. The difference now is that dietary prohibitions are given much more emphasis in form through 'halal', 'non-halal' signs in eating-places. Similarly, female attire is given a specific form through adherence to the conventional Arab dress style prescribed in the Quran. To put it differently, modesty is no longer simply a concept, a value whose expression is left to the individual; it assumes a definite form. At the same time, there is a conscious, deliberate attempt on the part of young Muslim females and males exposed to a secular system of education to become Islamic in attire, speech and behaviour. This again makes the situation today different from before because it was almost always secular-educated youths who adopted western ways most readily.

The resurgents' espousal of an Islamic state — as we have already mentioned — is also not new. In the past, however, it was often linked to other concerns. Thus, in the twenties and thirties, there were urban-based Islamic reformers who wanted Muslims to return to the Quran and Sunnah but, at the same time, urged them to absorb modern knowledge from the West. They did not subscribe

to an Islamic-western, spiritual-secular dcihotomy in the realm of knowledge. This attitude was due in part to the intellectual background of those reformers themselves who were greatly influenced by progressive Muslim thinkers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries like Sayyid Jamaluddin al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh. It was alsc perhaps conditioned by the state of western civilization at that point in history which exuded an aura of confidence and appeared to be the acme of human progress.

Similarly, muslim parties and social groups involved in the movement towards Independence in the fifties saw no contradiction between Islam and nationalism. Some of them were even prepared to reconcile Islam to socialism.

The accommodation of nationalism is easy to explain given the overwhelming desire for freedom from colonial rule. The acceptance of socialist ideas was, in the same way, influenced by the quest for a just social order where the welfare of the masses would be given priority, unlike the situation in the colonial state.

If we contrasted these two earlier phases with the present, it is apparent that Islamic resurgents today view Islam in a much more exclusive sense. The prevailing attitude is that Islam is total and complete, it is self-sufficient, it does not have to absorb ideas from other sources, it does not need the assistance of other ideologies, to function effectively. We have already noted how this leads to a complete rejection of the West, nationalism, socialism, secularism and all other 'lisms' — as the resurgents are fond of saying.

Finally, even with the state's relationship to Islam, there is a precedent tie which is worthy of analysis. Right from 1957, when the country achieved independence, the government had proclaimed Islam as the official religion. What this was going to mean in terms of laws, administration and the economy was never specified. Nonetheless, the government gave quite a bit of prominence to the

religion. Mosques were built all over the country. The Haj (pilgrimage) was organised by the state on a big scale. Various muslim festivals were declared public holidays. Most of all, a Quran-reading competition was organised in the month of Ramadhan first only at national, and then at the international level. Formal, institutional, symbolic Islam, it is obvious, was with the nation from the outset. Today, however the state's role **vis-a-vis** Islam has widened in scope and magnitude.

What distinguishes Islam today from Islam in the past, therefore, is the manner in which the institutions associated with it and its symbols and forms have become more significant. There is much more emphasis upon the outward characteristics of Islam today; it has become more pervasive.

Why this is happening and why a certain type of Islam is becoming so strong are issues which we must analyse in depth. But before that let us find out what sort of individuals and groups constitute Islamic resurgence in contemporary Malaysia.

RESURGENCE : THE ACTORS

There have been hints in this essay of the connection between urban centres and Islamic resurgence. And yet, it would be wrong to argue that rural Malaysia is not experiencing the phenomenon. For a variety of reasons Islamic resurgence is also occuring in at least certain rural areas.

First, there is in Malaysia, as in most other places. a continuous flow of tastes and ideas from urban to rural areas. In the Malaysian case, this process is facilitated by an extensive communication network which ensures that hardly any rural community is completely isolated from the impact of mainstream politics or culture.

Second, the government itself, though responding to resurgence, has, through its emphasis upon Islamic symbols and institutions, made the rural population quite conscious of the Islamic mood that is pervading the land.

Television, with its various Islamic programmes, has played a big part in this.

Third, the presence in rural areas of graduate teachers, government officials, rural extension workers and others, who in their college or university days might have been part of the resurgent movement, has also been a factor of some importance. These occupational groups often emerge as rural elites and are in a position to influence rural people into upholding what they perceive as "an Islamic way of life". From the evidence available, young schoolteachers in particular have been able to persuade their pupils to put on the Islamic attire and to pray regularly.

Fourth, even if there weren't these rural elites, it is quite conceivable that Islamic resurgence would have spread in the rural areas. This is because many of the social issues which provide grist to the Islamic mill — as we shall see later on — are in fact most keenly felt within rural communities. This would include poverty, increasing income disparities in specific rural localities, misuse of development aid and so on. They have all helped indirectly to fuel Islamic resurgence in rural Malaysia.

Finally, the fact that the major opposition Islamic party — the Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS) — is a rural-based party merits some consideration. PAS has been in the forefront of Islamic resurgence. It is primarily through this party that the rural population has been made aware of the 'pristine glory' of the Islamic alternative as against the 'evil' wrought by the present secular state.

Within rural Malaysia itself, it is not possible to pinpoint any particular social group or geographical area as more inclined towards Islamic resurgence. Generally speaking, the usual rural dweller — whether farmer, fisherman, or smallholder — would be an adherent of sorts. Given PAS's longstanding influence in the east coast states of Kelantan and Trengganu, one would perhaps say that Islamic resurgence has more of a

following in these two places than elsewhere. Parts of rural Kedah, in the north western corner of the country, also seem to be responding to the new Islamic wave.

In all these places, the leadership appears to be coming from certain specific occupational categories. Apart from the graduate schoolteacher whom we have already mentioned, the non-graduate schoolteacher who has always been part of the rural scene, is also playing an important role in the resurgence. A more significant category comprises religious teachers in government schools. Religious teachers, it must be noted, have all along been crucial in sustaining the Islamic momentum in the country.

Though there is evidence of resurgence in rural Malaysia, the fact still remains that the present movement originated in the urban centres, particularly Kuala Lumpur, the national capital. Even now, it is Kuala Lumpur that provides dynamic impetus to Islamic resurgence.

The urban adherents are, on the whole, from the younger generation. This is what lends vigour and drive to the movement. Many of them are university or college students. Others are graduates working in government offices, private firms and factories, or teaching in schools, colleges and universities. To put it differently, among the resurgents are professionals, executives and academics.

A good portion of them are quite new to the middle-class. In fact, they are part of a muslim middle-class that has been growing rapidly since the mid-seventies. Rural in terms of their background, educated in a western-type, secular system, and fairly comfortable as far as incomes and life styles go, these resurgents are new devotees of what they perceive as an 'Islamic world-view'.

Unlike these new devotees, there is a very small group of graduates from Islamic universities in the middle-east — Mecca, Medina, Cairo and Damascus — who have, for a long while, been totally committed to the creation of

an Islamic state. The graduates of local Islamic studies departments and faculties at the University of Malaya and the National University can also be included within this group. As the emphasis upon Islam grows, this group is becoming more and more significant. It is a significance that has no relationship to numbers. Elements from this group are providing intellectual leadership to both sides — the government and the opposition.

Below the middle-class is a growing muslim working-class, an important segment of which is becoming increasingly conscious of the need to adhere to an Islamic way of life. This class would embrace junior clerks, technicians, production operators, office-boys, labourers and the like. They are often led by middle-class types. Their own interests and values as members of the working-class have yet to find forceful expression within Islamic resurgence.

A large segment of these urban Islamic resurgents work through various organistaions. The less political, those more concerned with personal morality, are sometimes in one of a handful of **'tabligh'** movements. These movements eschew political involvement and instead stress the importance of strengthening individual faith through austere, puritanical living. A collective manifestation of this emphasis upon individual morality is the **'Darul Arqam'** movement. The movement's centre is a village community outside Kuala Lumpur which is purportedly organised on the basis of Islamic principles and rules. The village involves itself in a variety of economic, cultural and social activities but is not overtly political.

The political dimension of Islamic resurgence manifests itself mainly through 3 organizations — PAS, the Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) or Muslim Youth Movement, and, to a lesser extent, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the mainstay of the ruling Barisan Nasional. The youth wing of PAS in particular has become much stronger in the last 2 or 3

years with more and more young muslim professionals and graduates joining the party. Before this, in the first decade or so of Islamic resurgence, it was ABIM which was the automatic choice of young muslims committed to an Islamic alternative. However, after the ABIM leader, Anwar Ibrahim, joined the government in early 1982 and with the intensification of the government's Islamization programme and PAS's ardous crusade to convince the muslim community that it still wears the Islamic mantle, ABIM appears to be somewhat uncertain of its own role.

In the case of UMNO — as we have already hinted — its advocacy of Islamization has served to attract a number of muslims, especially civil servants and executives in the private sector, to its fold. Nonetheless, it still lacks the sort of Islamic image which both PAS and ABIM possess.

RESURGENCE : CAUSES

Having described the groups and organizations that make up the resurgent movement, we shall now examine the factors that have brought about this renewed interest in Islam.

Ethnicity has a great deal to do with it. The Malays (the overwhelming majority of muslims in the country are Malays) began to move into the cities (especially Kuala Lumpur) in a significant way in the early seventies. Education and social mobility, the rural-urban drift and the New Economic Policy (NEP) of the government which sought deliberately to urbanise the Malays were all responsible for the ensuing demographic change. However, Malay urbanisation was taking place in largely non-Malay, non-Muslim settings. Kuala Lumpur, like most of the other smaller cities, had always been dominated by non-Malay capital and culture.

Expectedly, the Malays who became part of Kuala Lumpur felt the need to preserve and protect their ethnic identity in what was perceived as an ethnically-alien

environment. Besides, it was an environment which could sometimes be insensitive, even hostile, to the Malay migrant. To make it worse, the constant harping on ethnic differences by the instruments of state-more precisely, the emphasis given to the Bumiputra — non-bumiputra, Malay — non-Malay, Muslim — non-Muslim dichotomies — only served to convince the new urban arrival that his cultural distinctiveness had to be maintained, if not enhanced.

Perhaps, the fact that he was in Kuala Lumpur augmented this feeling. For Kuala Lumpur was the political heart of the nation and the Malays were politically pre-eminent, historically, constitutionally and electorally. It is quite conceivable that the new Malay urban community thought that it was only politically logical to ensure that its ethnic identity was preserved so that it would not be overwhelmed by the others.

There was perhaps no better way of safeguarding one's ethnic identity than through Islam. For Islam defines the Malay. Islam, or at least its cultural dimension, helps to provide a distinct gloss to Malay identity in a city dominated by non-Malays. In all the things that matter in the cultural life of a person — from food to dress, to social intercourse, at one end, to birth, marriage and death, at the other end — Islamic forms and rituals provide convenient channels for distinguishing the Malay from the non-Malay within the Malaysian milieu.

Thus, a young Malay worker or officer from preponderantly Malay Kelantan who was never conscious of his ethnic identity suddenly becomes acutely aware of 'being a muslim' in his new setting in Kuala Lumpur. He seeks out, almost instinctively, those aspects of Islam which allow him to preserve his distinct Malay identity. Invariably, he goes for the symbols, the rituals, the forms. For symbols and forms, the others — the non-Muslims, the non-Malays — will not be able to share. They are often unique to a particular religious or cultural tradition.

This explains why the rise of the Islam of symbols and forms has coincided with the period of extensive, intensive Malay urbanisation. Islamic resurgence, is, in that sense, an ethnic reaction of sorts.

This is borne out by yet another closely related phenomenon. It is no accident that Malay students studying in the colleges and universities in, and around, Kuala Lumpur have, right from the beginning, been actively involved in Islamic resurgence. Indeed, some would argue that it was in the universities in the early seventies that the present resurgence took shape and form.

If we analysed the social background of these university and college students and contrasted this with the urban environment to which they are exposed, we would begin to understand their attachment to the resurgent movement. Of course, their social background is only part of the explanation: nonetheless it is important. Coming as they do, generally, from very rural localities, disadvantaged schools, and poorer families, compared to Malay students of the fifties and sixties, this new generation tends to be more vulnerable to the pulls and pressures of a largely non-Malay urban milieu. If anything, the limited command of English of these students in tertiary institutions where that language is still important for research purposes adds on to their insecurity.

Even in the larger setting, English is still the language of the middle and upper echelons of urban society.

Unable to cope with the complex challenges of the new environment, sections of these Malay students — like their contemporaries in the working world — turn to religion for solace and security. This they hope to achieve by spinning a cocoon around them built upon exclusive rituals and symbols.

What has aggravated the situation in the campuses is the emergence of teachers who justify and legitimize this exclusive approach to Islam. The students are told that 'Islam is complete' and therefore there is no need

to seek knowledge from other sources. Indeed, secularism and modernisation and all other ideologies and ideas are roundly condemned as leading to the negation of God. For students grappling with the problem of comprehending ideas in a language over which they have very little command, in an environment which appears unfamiliar, this rejection of all knowledge outside their own religious experience by their own teachers, is most comforting. It is the confirmation they want that the little ethno — religious world they have created around themselves is intellectually adequate. The intellectual myopia of their teachers helps assure them that their ethnic bigotry is spiritually justified.

One may wonder at this point why these students who turned to Islam from the early seventies could not have continued to seek protection for their ethnic identity from the Malay language and culture which was after all their platform in the late sixties. There was an important reason for this. After the 1969 ethnic riot, with the government re-dedicating itself to the National Education Policy, the major aspect of their struggle on behalf of the Malay language was virtually over. The government had committed itself to a step by step implementation of Malay as the medium of instruction in schools starting from 1970. At the same time — and perhaps more importantly — even in Universities Malay was going to be implemented immediately as the medium of instruction. Besides, a new generation of non-Malay students was surfacing rapidly fluent in Malay. It was obvious that soon the Malay language would cease to be a distinguishing factor between young Malays and non-Malays. But since ethnic divisions remained in economics and politics — like the Bumiputra — non-bumiputra dichotomy — there was a need for a new medium, a new message which would serve as a rallyingpoint. Islam, as we have seen, more than fulfilled that role.

Of course, ethnicity does not explain everything about resurgence. Politics and power should also be considered.

With the dramatic expansion of the Malay middle-class in the seventies, it is becoming increasingly obvious that establishment politics cannot accommodate all the new aspirants. And there is a tendency in this respect, for Malay middle-class elements to gravitate towards establishment politics since it offers so much in terms of power and position. Those who cannot be accommodated sometimes turn to opposition politics. Within opposition politics, it is only Islamic politics that enjoys legitimacy. This does not mean, however, these aren't resurgents who are where they are for genuine idealistic reasons.

Changes within the working-class have also contributed towards resurgence. The growth of the working-class in recent decades has made a number of them acutely aware of the increasing disparities between the rich and poor. In a situation where the Malay upper class is also expanding, and what is worse, flaunting its wealth, such a perception is bound to develop. The unexpressed frustration of these individuals and groups within the working-class propels them towards Islam since the religion is seen as just and fair. This explains to some extent why in the depressed parts of Kuala Lumpur — Kampung Kerinchi, Kampong Pantai Dalam. Kampong Abdullah Hukum and so on — Islamic resurgence appears to have caught on. It explains why workers in government offices and private firms are so keen on Islamic talks and discussions. What is unfortunate is that though some working-class muslims know that Islam is just and fair, the manner in which the religion is practised encourags them to seek expression mainly through its rituals and symbols.

Islamic resurgence then has benefitted from the dormant feelings of protest among the people but it has not, it must be stressed. become an ideology of protest as yet. This is supported by other evidences as well. Within the disadvantaged segment of the rural muslim community in particular — as we have already observed — there is a certain degree of unhappiness about the government's

inability to attend to problems of poverty and corruption. It is this general feeling of dissatisfaction that has prompted some of them to support Islamic movements. However, since those who control and determine the direction of these movements are not capable of translating this feeling of dissatisfaction into a crusade for social justice, Islamic resurgence is not strongly identified with the struggle against poverty or corruption.

In certain other instances, grievances which go beyond poverty and corruption, have also helped the resurgent movement to grow. We have made some mention of discrimination in development assistance against village folks who are opposed to UMNO. Since many of the victims are often PAS supporters, discrimination of this sort has served to strengthen their determination to propagate ideas associated with Islamic resurgence.

If anything, the restrictions upon PAS activities — the curbs upon the freedom of speech and assembly of that party — have made its members and leaders more zealous in their struggle to achieve a new Islamic social order. In other words, by denying the resurgents freedom, the state has, paradoxically, helped the Islamic movement to spread its influence.

Obviously then, anger, frustration, disenchantment arising from social injustices committed by the state have provided that impetus to Islamic resurgence. As a result of this, the ruling elites become the cynosure of attention. Their alleged wrongdoings against the people lead very quickly to a critical examination of their private lives. Islamic resurgents, in particular, have always been very concerned about the personal conduct of the ruling elites — partly because personal morality features so prominently in their scheme of things. The allegedly un-Islmaic behaviour of muslim ruling elites in Malaysia has been a vital factor in gaining new adherents to the resurgent movement. This is why talks by PAS leaders often contain innuendos and insinuations about the life-styles of the ruling elites.

Invariedly, their behaviour (or alleged misbehaviour) is linked to their 'secular', 'westernized' background. Thus, the secularized, westernized nature of the elites becomes an issue that is used to further the cause of Islamic resurgence.

It is because the ruling elites are secularized and westernized, the resurgents argue, that they have adopted a western model of development for the country. In their view, the ideologies of capitalism and democracy which are part of this model have failed to solve the major challenges facing the people. The alleged failure of the existing model of development is contrasted with the flawless vision of society that Islam offers. Since many of the ills of present-day Malaysian society can be traced back to the type of social system that obtains, its denunciation has undoubtedly assisted Islamic resurgence in its growth.

It is not just a question of a western model or social system in relation to Malaysia; what the Islamic resurgents reject, as we have shown elsewhere, is western civilization in its entirety. Without advocating such an extreme position, it is still possible to hold to the view that certain aspects of western society are in the midst of a serious crisis. Problems arising from unlimited production, unending consumption, an anarchic fiscal situation, the erosion of absolute values, an antagonistic relationship between the individual and community, the loss of both discipline and love within the family, the decline of a sense of sacred in man — man and man — nature relationships have all contributed towards the malaise. To this catalogue, one should perhaps also add the arms race, the subordination of man to machine, the bureaucratization of society, the alienation of the human being, the homogenization of culture and the tensions between different ethnic communities. It is because of all this that the West is no longer seen as a civilization worthy of emulation. It appears to be aimless and uncertain at this juncture in history.

The state of western civilization has been an important factor in the rise of Islam. It is this perception of the West as a civilization in decline among a lot of Islamic resurgents that has emboldened them to present Islam as the only real alternative before humankind. Muslim students studying in the West — among them a sizeable number of Malays — ardently believe in this scenario of a West in its twilight and an Islamic civilization heralding a new dawn. These students, both from abroad and on their return home, have played a significant role in initiating, sustaining and propagating the Islamic movement. They belong to that category of students who, though educated in the secular stream, have now become enthusiastic Islamic advocates.

Some of these students, like many other resurgents in Malaysia and in other places. are also strongly motivated by a belief that Islam's ascendancy is inevitable because it has been divinely ordained. There is a tradition attributed to the Holy Prophet that starting from the 15th century (the present century in the Islamic calendar), Islamic civilization will rise again, after 7 centuries of decline which were preceded by 7 centuries of glory. A belief can sometimes keep an entire struggle going.

At a more tangible level, the oil windfall of some of the Arab states, notably Saudi Arabia, has also helped Islamic resurgence in Malaysia. It is known that both the Saudi government and other Saudi sources have provided substantial financial support to the religious activities of certain Islamic bodies which are directly or indirectly linked to the rise of Islam.

Monetary assistance, however, cannot match the impact of the Iranian revolution upon Islamic resurgence in the country. The revolution of 1979 which was viewed both inside and outside Iran as an Islamic revolution and which gave birth to an Islamic republic, was the proof Malaysian resurgents needed to show that Islam could overthrow a secular, westernized regime and set up its

own social order. The Iranian revolution then has helped to boost the confidence of some of the resurgents; for others, especially those outside the resurgent movement, Iran is clear testimony of the utter failure of the ulama to establish a just and free Islamic polity.

So far we have examined the causes of Islamic resurgence and the circumstances which have helped to sustain this phenomenon. There are a couple of other factors too which must be analysed though they are by no means unique to Islam. Revivalisms which are occuring in a number of religious traditions seem to be responses, in a sense, to the transnationalization process. If we look at the cultural dimension of transnationalization, it is apparent that the penetrative power of western consumer values and life-styles is so great that no society has been able to withstand its onslaught. This commercial, consumerist culture which is both superficial and decadent is often presented as a global culture when actually it represents the dregs of American culture. It is this culture that has overwhelmed many a local community, destroyed the uniqueness of local arts and crafts, annihilated the richness of local music, eliminated the distinctives of local architecture and exterminated the diversity of local foods. It may be argued that when people lose their identity and autonomy in this way, they turn to a powerful, emotional and psychological instrument which has some link to their culture in the hope that it will be able to protect their integrity. This is where religion comes in. For when every other facet of culture and society has surrendered to the impact of transnationalization, it is only the spiritual essence of faith that remains intact.

Similarly, the nature and structure of the modern city — the megapolis — is such that it breeds a deep sense of alienation in the individual. Work is so routinized and meaningless that it creates a spiritual vacuum in the human being. Work and home, work and leisure, indeed work and life are dichotomized to a point where man himself is compartmentalized into 'different selves'. Man's

inner self is separated from his outer being, his home personality is distinct from his work personality. What is worse, man, the modern city-dweller, has neither the time nor the inclination to communicate with his neighbour. Each human being remains locked in his own self-made prison-cell. When city life assumes this form, it is evident that a spiritual crisis has developed. The return to religion may be an endeavour — however limited — to reintegrate life, to give meaning to one's existence, to infuse our sojourn on earth with a goal which is larger than the individual or his ego. On the other hand, it may be nothing more than an attempt to fill the spiritual vacuum in the individual.

Finally, we must not fail to mention that the state, as we have already noted, has also contributed towards Islamic resurgence through its own responses to the situation.

RESURGENCE: ITS CHARACTER

Through our study of the causes of Islamic resurgence, we have now a clearer idea of the character of the movement.

The emphasis upon the exclusive purity of the religion, its symbols and its rituals and the total rejection of ideas which have sprung from other sources is certainly one of the major intellectual characteristics of resurgence in Malaysia. Related to that is a set of motives and attitudes conditioned by ethnicity. Both these orientations will now be analysed.

The preoccupation with rituals and symbols and even laws and rules — which are after all outward manifestations of a religion — misses the essence of Islam. For its essence is the concept and practice of **Tauhid** (the unity of God) and the real meaning of **Tauhid** cannot be comprehended through mere attachment to rules and rituals.

For the truth about **Tauhid** is embodied in the concept of the human being, his origin, his purpose, the

meaning of life, the relationship between the human being and community, between human being and nature between the human being and the cosmos, between man and women. It is the unity that permeates all these relationships that is **Tauhid.** It is struggling against all those obstacles that impede the realisation of this unity that is true devotion to God. It is only through such a struggle — which in the ultimate analysis is an eternal struggle — that one brings **Tauhid** into one's life.

That this is the human being's purpose in life is clearly ennunciated in the Quran. This is what is meant by the human being's position as **Khalifah Allah** (Viceregent of God). As God's viceregent it is his sacred duty to achieve His unity in all relationships. In order to help him achieve this, the Quran lays out a comprehensive set of values. These are perennial values — the values of truth and justice, of love and compassion, of freedom and equality, of modesty and restraint, of humility and honesty. Since they are parennial, these values transcend time and circumstance. They are absolute values.

More than that, the Quran also articulates various social principles pertinent to those transcendental values which are supposed to serve as guidelines to the human being. Thus, there is a clear admonition against the unlimited accumulation of riches and a plea to redistribute wealth, to share, to give, as equitably as possibble. And yet, there is a recognition that there can be no absolute equality. Differences will arise from differing capacities linked to varying inclinations and aptitudes. These variations will have to be rewarded accordingly. Over and above all this, there is the constant reminder to the human being that the ultimate owner, the ultimate sovereign of all, is God. All ownership is therefore relative. More accurately, there is no concept of ownership as such; it is the position of the human being as a trustee of God even in relation to his own earnings that is stressed.

Similarly, there are other social principles pertaining to other spheres of life. Since the human being is the Viceregent of God, he must be given the freedom to ensure that truth and justice triumph. This is why, the Quran accords the human being freedom — the freedom of will, of choice, of speech, of action. But it is freedom that is shaped by the entirety of eternal values which guides him as a human being. In other words, it is freedom to fulfil his destiny as **Khalifah Allah**, no more, no less.

Likewise. in the Quran is the recognition of every human being as a leader. The power he exercises as a leader fulfilling his trust with God is however, relative since it is only God that has absolute power. The remarkable thing about this concept of power is that it equalises all human beings — including Presidents and Prime Ministers — in their relationship to one another and to God. Further, Prime Minister and citizen are both conditioned by the same perennial values in the exercise of power. Both have the same responsibility towards **Tauhid.** And yet, the Quran accepts that there will always be those who lead and those who do not.

If the essence of Islam is seen as **Tauhid, Khalifah Allah,** the transcendental values and the eternal social principles, the 'exclusive psychology' that dominates muslim thinking today will cease. For such a concept of 'the essence' embraces the whole of humanity. The notion of unity of God for instance is expressed in different ways in other spiritual traditions too. Similarly, the idea of the human being as God's steward is also in other religions, notably Christianity. The trancendental values, and even the social principles, are found in most other spiritual philosophies. They are part of humankind's common heritage.

Likewise. once the unity of God and eternal values emerge as the essence of Islam, rituals, symbols and rules will become secondary. They will be seen merely as channels, conduits for achieving a larger purpose. They

will not be revered as the 'be-all' and 'end-all' of Islam. Indeed, it will even be possible in such a situation to set aside certain laws and regulations which are obviously time-bound and place-bound. For it will then be understood that laws and regulations must reflect the spirit, the underlying philosophy that a certain value or idea embodies. More specifically, this means that if a woman is as much a **Khalifah Allah** as a man and is guided by the same values and principles in her spiritual journey on earth, then it is not right to regard her testimony in court as only half the value of a man's.

This sort of change in thinking is crucial for Islam in Malaysia for the obsession with the implementation of laws and rules codified in the **Syariah (Shariah)** will only lead to the intellectual and spiritual destruction of a great tradition which centuries ago blazed the trail for human civilization with its innovative spirit and dynamic vision. There can be no uncritical, unthinking relationship with the **Syariah**. Indeed even with the Quran and the Sunnah there has to be a creative relationship. The Quran — as the Word of God — must be understood as a universal, transcendent message which had to be practised by a certain community at a certain point in time. It therefore embodies elements which are contextual. This is a sign of God's infinite wisdom for if the eternal Truth was not transmitted within a historical framework, if it was not translated into a specific sociological setting, it would not have assumed life and form. Without life and form derived from a certain human context, the Quran would have been mere abstract ideals and values.

If there is a more profound, philosophical approach to the Quran, that distinguishes the 'perennial core' from the 'particular crust' it would be much easier to absorb in a creative manner as much knowledge as necessary from other sources. Without such absorption, Islam's eternal message will never be realized. This is something that the Islamic resurgents in Malaysia do not understand. For the question of how to bring eternal values

and principles into fruition, — the question of how to realise **Tauhid** if you like — demands a thorough analysis of all those existing structures and relationships that prevent us from achieving this sacred goal. Knowledge of these structures and relationships cannot possibly be obtained from the Syariah or the Sunnah. Neither can it be found in the Quran. In a sense it is unrealistic to expect to find such knowledge in the Quran. For the Quran is not a sociological treatise though it contains references to social structures. No sociological analysis can claim to be relevant for all times and all places since the contextual dimension is vital for its validity. The very fact that the Quran's foundation is transcendant puts it in another category. This is why it provides metaphysical explanations of injustices and inequities. It traces back shortcomings in the social order to inadequacies in human character. This is understandable for the Quran's real purpose — its **raison d'etre** — is to transform human behaviour, to raise the moral consciousness of the human being.

If the Islamic resurgents in Malaysia had a deep understandnig of the Quran's role and why it is important to imbibe knowledge all the while, they wouldn't assert that the Quran already has a political system or an economic programme. A political system encompasses specific modes of political organization, procedures related to legislation and execution of decisions and defined channels of political expression. What the Quran contains, on the other hand, are ethical values pertaining to human behaviour, of which political conduct is an integral part. At the same time, it advocates certain perennial principles applicable to political action.

Just as there is no political system in the Quran so is there no economic programme as such. The Quran however does embody values relevant to economic life and principles which should govern economic behaviour. Even if there are certain laws and regulations — like **zakat** and **riba** and those pertinent to inheritance — they do not

constitute a whole programme. One has to go beyond these laws and regulations in order to achieve the justice and equality that the Quran envisages.

However, Islamic resurgents in Malaysia are incapable of doing this. They are incapable of working out the various dimensions of a new social order guided by **Tauhid**, the position of man as God's Viceregent, transcendental values and eternal social principles. This is because — if we may reiterate a point — they are completely trapped in an exclusive concept of Islam dominated by laws and rituals and symbols.

Why are Malaysian resurgents in this situation? Why are they so attached to such a retrogressive, conservative version of Islam? There are reasons for this.

Firstly, the problem with Islamic resurgence in Malaysia is part of a larger problem confronting Islam at this juncture in history. Islam is just beginning to re-emerge after centuries of colonial subjugation. It often happens that a culture or civilization that is re-establishing itself after a long period of domination tends to be very concerned about its identity, its exclusiveness. It tries hard to emphasise its uniqueness. Hence, the obsession with rituals and symbols rather than the substance of the religion.

Secondly, unlike certain other Muslim countries, Malaysia does not have an Islamic intellectual tradition. Such a tradition is created through decades of vigorous reforms within the religion, or even attempts at reform. This is what happened in Egypt, Turkey and Indonesia, among others. In Malaysia there were some ineffectual attempts at Islamic reform in the twenties and thirties. But there was no sustained endeavour to re-examine Islamic laws, methods of religious education, concepts of economic progress and attitudes towards political leadership. The conservative attitude of the Malay ruling class and its hostility towards religious reform, the structure of Malay feudal society, the absence of a strong challenge to Islam during the colonial period, and most of all, the

overall ethnic situation have all militated against the development of an intellectual tradition.

This brings us to the third point. The ethnic environment has simply overwhelmed any move, however limited, towards Islamic reform. As with certain other issues, the fear is that if Islamic teachings and traditions are re-appraised and re-examined, the ensuing debate would give rise to controversy and conflict which, in the end, would split the Malay community. If the community is split, it is often argued, it will fall prey to the power of the non-Malays.

Fourthly, like ethnicity, the relative affluence of the Malay middle-class has also worked against Islamic reform. For it is usually middle-class types who provide the impulse for reform work of this sort. It is perhaps because no segment of the Malay middle-class has as yet suffered deprivation that there is so little concern with social justice or freedom or unity from an Islamic perspective. It is only when such issues dominate thinking within the Islamic movement that the desire for serious reform will express itself.

Fifthly, the nature and content of religious education that young Muslims have been exposed to for the last 4 or 5 decades whether in **madrasahs** or secular schools has also been a problem. Broadly speaking, the theological instruction that is provided encourages an unquestioning, uncritical attitude. It is basically induction into **taqlid**. The emphasis is on absorbing lock, stock and barrel, the formal legalistic tradition in Islam embodied in the Syariah and in the writings of the great Imams of the past. Such an approach to Islamic education is guaranteed to stultify and ossify creative thought forever.

Finally, the national political leadership itself has been responsible for this unthinking atmosphere that surrounds Islam in Malaysia. It is, to start with, afraid of reformist ideas in Islam. This is why it has not encouraged such a trend; if anything it has tried to curb it. It fears that any attempt to reconstruct religious

thought will result in the people raising all sorts of questions about justice and freedom and equality which will undoubtedly put the leadership in an embarrassing situation. This is, in a sence true. For, as an example, if progressive, reformist ideas took root in Islam, one would want to know why the government is giving so much emphasis to ethnicity in its public policies. One would want to know why society is so stratified, why there is such a gap between rich and poor, why there is still a great deal of corruption.

Quite apart from its own fear of the consequences of developing a progressive concept of Islam, the political leadership may not be knowledgeable enough in Islam to initiate a comprehensive reform programme. Very few in the leadership know Islamic philosophy and theology well. This lack of knowledge is in fact a problem with secular-educated Muslims as a whole. Some of them may be genuinely concerned about reforms and may want to see changes in certain areas of Islamic jurisprudence, for instance, out of a love for the well-being of the Muslim community but their lack of knowledge inhibits them from playing a role.

On the other hand, even if certain leaders were knowledgeable they may not want to take the risk of reforming Islamic law or Islamic rules pertaining to women for fear that a substantial segment of the Muslim electorate would turn against them. After all, it is undeniable that the traditional, conservative ulama exercise considerable influence over the thinking of the Muslim masses in Malaysia as in other societies.

For all these reasons, then, the Muslim attitude towards Islam in Malaysia has remained retrogressive — perhaps more retrogressive than in many other Muslim states.

Having examined the first intellectual trend in the character of Islamic resurgence, let us now turn to the second orientation.

Analysing the ethnic motives and attitudes that

characterise the movement poses a difficulty of sorts. On the one hand, as we have seen, Islamic resurgents criticize nationalism, and by implication, chauvinism and communalism. Indeed, some of the leading proponents of an Islamic alternative have openly condemned the UMNO leadership for its **"assabiyah"** (ethnic attitude) evinced, they say, in its devotion to Malay nationalism. On the other hand, we know from our analysis that ethnic sentiments have been significant in shaping Islamic resurgence. The movement itself owes its origin, in a sense, to the overwhelming power of ethnicity. How do we reconcile these two ostensibly, contradictory evidences? Is Islamic resurgence in Malaysia ethnic in its orientation or not?

If we left aside the utterances of the resurgents on behalf of universalism and concentrated upon the actual ethnic situation in the country and how PAS in particular has responded to it. we will get a more accurate picture of what the party really represents.

For all its rhetoric on universalism, PAS has seldom championed the cause of the non-Muslim poor. Over the last decade or so — the period of Islamic resurgence — there have been numerous instances of exploitation and oppression involving non-Muslims in land schemes. plantations, factories and squatter areas. Though these issues should not be seen as Muslim or non-Muslim concerns, the fact still remains that injustices connected to other communities outside the boundaries of Islam have seldom evoked their response. It is irrefutably true that for PAS and a large number of other resurgents justice and compassion are values which are confined to one's own religious kind. This is further substantiated by PAS's attitude towards international episodes requiring a compassionate response.

What is true of economic injustices is also true of other facets of life. PAS has yet to take up specific cultural grievances often articulated by the non-Muslim minorities. While some of these grievances may have no

justification, there are others which are more than legitimate. Since Islam protects the cultural rights of the non-Muslims as PAS is never tired of asserting, then it is only logical that at the concrete, tangible level, it demonstrates its commitment to cultural diversity. After all, it is through real, specific situations that one shows one's sincerity rather than by espousing universal abstractions.

Similarly, PAS has seldom been bothered by the erosion of political and civil rights in the larger polity as long as it does not affect its own interests. The party becomes concerned only if it can perceive a certain Islamic element to the curb or restriction in question. This is why very often non-Muslim groups are left fighting increasing authoritarianism on their own.

If there was any group within Islamic resurgence that was prepared to take up certain causes which were important to a sizeable portion of non-Muslims it was ABIM under its previous leadership. Be that as it may, it is still true that Islamic resurgence's vision of society is restricted to the Malay-Muslim community. Insofar as confining one's concern and commitment to one's own kind in a multi-ethnic society can lead to communalism, Islamic resurgence is guilty of promoting ethnic feelings.

RESURGENCE : THE CONSEQUENCES

It would have been logical perhaps to start with 'ethnic feelings' as a negative consequence of resurgence. But that will have to wait. What are the positive aspects — if any — of this phenomenon?

Islamic resurgence's greatest contribution, here as elsewhere, is that it has succeeded, more than any other movement in recent years, to raise some important questions about development, progress and the human being. In the process, it has created some legitimate doubts about western paradigms, whether capitalist or socialist. To put it differently, the resurgents seem to be asking : is this what we want? Is this development? What

is the purpose of development? What does this sort of development do to the human being? What is the human being here for, in any case? What is the purpose of life? This is the ultimate metaphysical question. Because development cannot be separated from fundamental metaphysical issues which have always been crucial to man, the Islamic resurgents have helped to bring to the fore, considerations which hitherto have been foolishly ignored by the vast majority of western developmental theorists .

Outside this, the impact of the present resurgence appears to be largely negative. Unfortunately, it is quite possible that it will grow stronger and stronger in the coming years. However, it is unlikely that Islamic resurgence as represented by the opposition will capture state power. The demographic structure of the country and various other checks and balances, make such an eventuality highly improbable though not totally impossible.

If Islamic resurgence threatens to get stronger, it is because social trends favour it and not because of its proponents as such. The ethnic situation, which has helped the movement to grow, is likely to get worse. Both Malay and non-Malay vested interests benefit directly from communal politics and they would want to keep 'ethnicity' going. Similarly, there is nothing to indicate that the power-holders will be able to come to grips with the challenges posed by increasing income disparities. continuing poverty and worsening corruption. Nor is there any change of the government removing some of its curbs and controls and allowing greater freedom to flourish. For it will be recalled that the denial of channels for democratic articulation have helped Islamic resurgence to spread. Finally, it is certain that the state will continue to pursue its present pattern of development with all its adverse consequences for the individual brought about by the transnationalization process, the nature of city-life. the type of industrialization and urbanization. It is this

type of development — it is worth recollecting — that creates alienation and de-culturalizes the individual.

As resurgence gains strength, the government will continue to react to it in one of the two ways. It will direct even more authoritarian measures against the resurgence. As we have already noted, this will have a backlash effect. If anything, resurgence will get stronger.

At the same time, the government will also continue to try to appease the movement through various concessions. Short of surrendering its own power, it is quite conceivable that the UMNO leadership will try to accomodate a wide spectrum of resurgent demands especially when it realizes that PAS and other such groups are making significant inroads into its own Malay political base. Groups and individuals within UMNO who are themselves resurgents will encourage these concessions — to a point.

As the UMNO leadership concedes more and more in order to ensure its political survival, non-Muslim, non-Malay apprehensions are bound to increase. The fear of the imminent establishment of an Islamic state will be widespread in such a situation. It is very doubtful if the present UMNO leadership will create such a state in the form demanded by the resurgents — that is, the enforcement of the Syariah in toto with all its implications for the legal, political, administrative and educational systems in the countrv. For in a state of that sort UMNO — type leaders will be rendered irrelevant in no time as theologically-educated, doctrinnaire Muslims assume the reins of authority with the participation of, or support from, the ulama.

Nonetheless even if there is no Islamic state, continuous accommodation of the type of demands that are now surfacing in the name of Islam, through the government's own Islamization policy, could make the position of the non-Muslim quite untenable (we have already seen how the type of resurgence that is taking place will affect Muslims and Muslim society). In this connection, it is

not the imposition of Islamic law upon them that the non-Muslims should fear. For even in the conservative Islam that prevails in Malaysia, there is explicit recognition of the right of non-Muslims to be governed by their own laws. As far as economic rights go, non-Muslim interests at the middle and upper echelons need not suffer for conservative Islam is unlikely to make any fundamental changes to class and social relationships. The real danger, however, lies in the political and administrative spheres. If the pressures from the resurgents are overwhelming and if the state is compelled to concede to them, it is quite possible that the non-Muslim role in politics and administration will diminish over time. This will mean more limited participation just not in government, the legislatures and the bureaucracy but also in the judiciary, the police service and the armed forces.

There are reasons why this is not inconceivable as far as future trends are concerned. To start with, non-Muslim, non-Malay participation in the political and administrative spheres is somewhat limited even now. Over the years, especially since 1969, their role has become less and less significant. Perpetuating and extending Malay (and therefore Muslim) political pre-eminence is in fact integral to UMNO's ideology. It will not be ideologically inconsistent therefore to accommodate a demand for a more restricted political and administrative role for the non-Muslims. It will be one instance where UMNO's ideology and resurgent thinking would have coincided. Needless to say, for the resurgents the argument would be that in an Islamic polity it is only Muslims that should play important legislative, executive and administrative roles.

Over and above the question of the non-Muslim role in various spheres is the psychological impact of an atmosphere laden with Islamic rituals, symbols and institutions. Since it is an atmosphere that emphasises Islamic exclusivity, non-Muslims will never feel part of it. They will increasingly see themselves as citizens whose

status is secondary — compared to the Muslims. There will be a strong sense of alienation among them. For if people cannot participate on a full and equal basis in shaping and moulding the society to which they belong, they are bound to experience a deep, bitter frustration arising from a sense of rejection.

It is partly because of this that many non-Muslim groups are now turning to their own religions and strengthening their own cultural traditions. They see their religions as their fortresses to protect them from what they perceive as the dominance of Islam. In the process, they are reviving all sorts of practices and customs to emphasise the uniqueness, the distinctiveness of their respective religions. In other words, a religious revivalism of sorts is taking place among the non-Muslim religions too — as a reaction to Islamic resurgence. Like Islamic resurgence, this non-Muslim revivalism is also obsessed with forms and rituals, symbols and caremonies.

There is yet another similarity between the two phenomena. Among the non-Muslims too, their religions have become channels for asserting ethnic interests. It is perhaps not wrong to suggest that Chinese chauvinism is now expressing some of its grievances through Buddhism and Christianity, in the same manner as Indian communalism is sometimes articulated through Hinduism. Just as language and education have always been avenues for venting ethnic positions, religion has now become a conduit for the same purpose.

As a result of all this, ethnic polarization caused by religious antagonisms threatens to be a major challenge confronting the future.

RESURGENCE AND THE CHRISTIAN MINORITY

It is within this framework that one has to locate the minority Christian faith in Malaysia. It shares some of the fears of the other non-Muslim religions. It is also reacting to Islamic resurgence. It is also experiencing a revivalism of sorts.

Apart from general fears, there is some apprehension among major Christian denominations of their right to build churches, of the availability of burial land, of the freedom to publish and dessiminate theological literature, of the opportunities to train missionaries, of the scope for missionary work. In order to liaise with the state on some of these issues, Christian church leaders have taken the initiative to form a Malaysian inter-religious council for non-Muslim faiths.

There is no doubt that some of the grievances of the Christians have a basis. Others arise from miscommunication and misinformation. Sometimes, problems are magnified out of all proportion. But what is encouraging is that there is still some dialogue between the Christians and a largely Muslim state. If conservative Islamic resurgence becomes much stronger, it may be more difficult to persuade government leaders to listen to the Christian point of view — at least on certain matters.

Of course, apart from attending to its own legitimate interests, the Christian faith — like all other religions — should give serious attention to the larger question of how it can help each and every Malaysian male and female realise his or her spirituality in the truest sense of the word. It must be realized that as long as there are structures and relationships which de-humanize the human being, it will not be possible to discover that spiritual essence that lies within each of us. In this regard, Christianity — both Catholicism and the various Protestant sects — enjoys an unique advantage. Of all religions. it is Christianity — or at least the progressive strain within it — that has committed itself wholly to the liberation of the human being with the aim of enabling each and every individual to celebrate his or her true spirituality.

If this progressive attitude becomes the total outlook of Christianity in Malaysia, it will have an immensely significant contribution to make to the well-being of the people. It is perhaps the only way through which

Christianity and other minority faiths can live in harmony with Islam. For if minority religions are going to emphasise rituals and symbols, sooner or later they must come into conflict with the majority religion which also insists on its own rituals and symbols. This is why the non-Muslim faiths must continue to stress upon the importance of shared spiritual values. On the basis of these values they must formulate a common programme for the reconstruction of Malaysian society — a programme which both Muslims and non-Muslims can identify with because it appeals to their purest religious ideals.

It is in this respect that the Christians in particular have a crucial role to play in forging a strong link with the Muslim community. For of all the religions in Malaysia, it is Christianity that is closest to Islam — in the scriptural sense. This affinity must mean something. It must be used as a basis, as a foundation for creating a truly spiritual, and therefore a truly just, free and united society.

CONCLUSION

It need not be emphasised that this is possible only if there is a holistic transformation within Islam as it is understood and practised in Malaysia. This is the most urgent challenge of the hour.

How few and far between are the Muslims who even acknowledge the importance of this challenge! How many among them have the courage and conviction to respond to that challenge? It is because of this that the future seems to be vanquished of hope. It is this that causes despair — the sort of despair which Muhammad Iqbal must have felt when he wrote :

The date tree of my thought despairs of leaf and fruit;
Either despatch the axe, or the breeze of dawn.

Islam in the Philippines — The Morc Problem

By
PROF. CARMEN ABUBAKAR

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to give an account of the Muslims of the Philippines and shed some light on what has popularly become known as the Moro problem. Today, this problem has assumed a complex character where the internal and external factors have become intermingled and difficult to unravel. Because this paper cannot hope to tackle these complicated issues within the space requirement of this journal, it will simply focus on certain events and processes which have directly led to the problem itself using a historical framework as a convenient peg for discussion.

As already mentioned, the Moro problem has become ccmplicated but during colonial times, the problem was clearly delineated. It can be seen in terms of colonial ambitions tc annex and integrate Moro territories as part cf the Spanish, then later, of the American colonies and the Moros' strong and fierce resistance to this colonial policy even as it is being implemented so they perceive, by the national government today. Before turning to this main thesis, however, let me say a few words about the Morcs tc better acquaint the reader about the subject.

The word Moro was the name given by the Spaniards

to the group of people they came across in this country whose religious practices reminded them of the Moors who once occupied Spain for several centuries. In the beginning, the word Moro was given a negative connotation (of pirates and killers) but now it is being used positively to indicate both historical continuity and pride in the name of a group who had withstood Spanish colonial forces for more than three centuries.

The Moros are inhabitants of Mindanao. Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Sulu. Of the 13 known Moro groups, the biggest are the Maranao of Lake Lanao (42,000)[1], the Maguindanao of Cotabato (644,000), the Tausug (502,000), and Sama (244,000) of Sulu and Tawi-Tawi. The smaller groups are :[1]

1. Bajau (Samal Laut) — South Sulu (28,536).
2. Ilanun (Iranun) from Buldon and Parang, Maguindanao Province, north along the shores of Illana Bay in Lanao del Sur (12,542).
3. Jama Mapun (Samal) — Cagayan de Sulu; also in Northeastern Palawan, most especially in Pulot (14,347).
4. Kalagan — Davao Province, on the Shores of Davao Gulf (7,902).
5. Kalibugan — Zamboanga del Sur (15,417).
6. Molbog — Balabac Island, Southern Palawan (5,316).
7. Palawani — Southern Palawan (35,654).
8. Sangil — Sarangani Island Group (77,000).
9. Yakan — Basilan Island (196,000).

The Moros are estimated to be around 2.5 million according to official census figures[2] but other sources list them as being 5 million, and constituting around 10% of the entire population.

The critical factor in the development of Moro communities into a cohesive force during colonial times was the presence of Islam to which we now turn.

II. ISLAMIZATION OF MINDANAO AND SULU

Generally speaking, the coming of Islam to southern Philippines was not an isolated incident but part of the widespread Islamic expansion that began after the death of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in 632. This expansion was characterized initially by the movement of dedicated Muslim individuals either as traders following the accelerating commerce in the Far East; or of Sufi missionaries working out of their Tariqas which have been established throughout the Muslim world including Southeast Asia.[3] Later accounts spoke of Muslim political personalities from the Indo-Malayan archipelago, who organized the flourishing Muslim communities by introducing the sultanate as a political system including its support institutions such as the Agama court system and the Madaris. It is essentially through the introduction of this political system that these communities developed into highly centralized states in the 15th-16th centuries.[4]

According to the Sulu genealogy, the first person to introduce Islam to Sulu was a certain Tuan Mashaila, who is estimated to have arrived in Sulu in the 13th century, and whose descendants constituted the core of the Muslim community in Sulu. When a later missionary by the name of Karim ul-Makdum arrived during the second half of the 14th century, he found ready acceptance among the presumably Muslim community in Buansa. His religious activities thus served to reinforce the growing Islamic community established by the descendants of Tuan Mashaika.[5]

An interesting postscript to the Makhdum episode is the number of places in Sulu which claims the honor of having his grave. Scholars have come to the conclusion that there could have been many Makhdumin who visited and preached in Sulu for the Makhdum* was used in India

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*** Makhdum literally means one who is served. A learned person or a sufi was highly respected and served by the people and hence called Makhdum.**

and Malaysia to refer to learned men or teachers. On the other hand, Majul notes the possibility of accretion whereby the activities of many persons become combined into one through the passage of time.

At the beginning of the 15th century, another Muslim came to Sulu bearing the title of "Baguinda", a Menangkabaw honorific for prince. His name was Rajah Baguinda and his coming carried a different significance from that of his predecessors. At first, he was met by a hostile force of local people who tried to sink his boats but whose behavior dramatically changed when it became known that the Rajah was a Muslim. At this point, it is worthwhile noting that the Islamization process had reached a stage where being a Muslim had become an acceptable passport into the community.

Another point also becomes obvious. The fact that Baguinda was a foreign prince travelling with his own retinue of men introduces the political element into the Islamization process. That Baguinda exercised authority became evident later when he designated his son-in-law, Abu-Bakr, to be his successor.

Abu-Bakr was reputedly an Arab who had come to Malaysia to preach the doctrines of Abu-Ishaq embodied in a book entitled Dar ul-Mazlum (the House of the Oppressed). He arrived in Sulu in 1450, travelling from Palembang, Sumatra via Borneo. He became Qadi (judge) and Imam of Rajah Baguinda and later married Baguinda's daughter, Paramisuli.

Abu Bakr consolidated his political power in Sulu by introducing the sultanate as a political system with himself becoming the first sultan and taking the name Sharif ul-Hashim. His 30 years, reign saw the construction of mosques and the establishment of **Madaris.** More important, he was able to Islamize the Buranun or the hill tribes of Sulu. By achieving this, Abu Bakr not only unified the sultanate but also intensified the islamization of the community. These activities turned Sulu into a

flourishing part of the expanding dar-ul-Islam in Malaysia by the 16th century.

The spread of Islam to Maguindanao and Lanao is generally attributed to Sharif Kabungsuwan. also a foreign prince. However, much of the earlier works rested on the acccmplishments of missionaries such as Sharif Awliya & Sharif Maraja. Kabungsuwan is estimated to have arrived in the Maguindanac area in the early 16th century. There are many tarsilas about his exploits but most agree on certain common features: (1) Kabungsuwan came with many followers, (2) his men were sea-faring people, (3) an element of force was initially involved, (4) this men built the town of Cotabato or Maguindanao (Siangan), (5) there were already Muslims in the area when (Kabungsuwan landed at the mouth of the Pulangi river.

The expansion of Islam into Lanao has been seen as the result of the various alliances undertaken by Kabungsuwan with the different ruling families in the area, as well as with the ruling families of Sulu, Borneo and Ternate. In addition, Kabungsuwan had a great deal of proselytizing zeal. These alliances and personal zeal accelerated Islamization so that by the 19th century, the whole of Lake Lanao had been Islamized. a situation that did not obtain in the late 17th century. This period. roughly the beginning of the 15th to the 16th century. symbolized by the presence of Baguinda, Abu Bakr and Kabungsuwan directs attention tc the missionary activity ensuing from the Malay archipelago as well as to the way political, religious and educational institutions were utilized to advance Islam. Furthermore, the relatively easy acceptance of the authority of these political personalities by the indigenous people supplement the idea that Islam had imbued its adherents with a sense of identity that was at once able to transcend territorial, racial or ethnic boundaries.

From this brief disccussion of events, certain striking

features of Islamization can be discerned as it developed in Southern Phillippines :

1. Islam was introduced by Muslim missionaries and traders who intermarried with the local population and produced descendants of Muslims who made up the core of the first Muslim communities.

2. The arrival of Muslim political figures who acquired political power and who introduced Islamic political, socio-cultural, educational, religious support institutions.

3. The formation of alliances among Muslim ruling families of Sulu, Maguindanao, Lanao, Borneo, and the Moluccas. These alliances reinforced the sense of community and strengthened Islamic consciousness.

4. The relative absence of conflict in the Islamization process is because this worked mainly through contact, kinship relations, and close associations, in addition to personal conviction.

The coming of Islam to Mindanao and Sulu marks a significant point in the history of this area. Firstly, it developed a vibrant culture among the people; secondly, and more important, it created a deep sense of community and commitment to Islam which helped to unite and strengthened all resistant efforts against the onslaught of colonialism, a period that spans almost 400 years.

III. A. COLONIAL PERIODS : SPANISH ERA

When the Spaniards arrived in 1521, Islam was an established way of life among the Muslims of Mindanao and Sulu. A fledgling community in Manila under the leadership of Rajah Soliman and Rajah Matanda of Tondo was already evident.[6]

The confrontation between the Spaniards and the Muslims was perhaps inevitable. In 1565, when Spanish colonization of the country began in earnest, the fall of

Granada (1492) and the memory of the Moorish occupation of Spain was only 73 years old. The discovery of a group of people adhering to the same faith as the Moors on the other side of the globe infused the Spaniards with additional ardor in extending the struggle fought between Christianity and Islam several hundred years before during the Crusades (11th to the 13th centuries) and during the Reconquista in Spain itself (12th to the 15th centuries).

It is worth considering that had it been another European power which found its way to the Philippines, the tone and style of this meeting might have been different. But the historical circumstances previously mentioned and the fact that King Philip II was a 'Most Catholic Majesty' and a zealous Christian could not but influence Spanish policies toward the Moros of Mindanao and Sulu. The essence of this policy was spelled out by King Philip II in a written instruction sent to Miguel Lopez de Legazpi in 1566, a year after the first Spanish settlement was founded on Cebu island :[7]

> We have also been petitioned in your behalf concerning the Moro islands in that land, and how those men come to trade and carry on commerce, hindering the preaching of the holy gospel and disturbing you. We give you permission to make such Moros slaves and to seize their property. You are warned that you can make them slaves only if the said Moros are such by birth and choice and if they come to preach their Muhammedan doctrine, or to make war against you or against the Indians, who are our subjects and in our royal services . . .

This letter no doubt inspired the formulation of Governor-General Francisco de Sande's own written instruction to Captain Esteban Rodriguez de Figueroa in 1578.[8] An armed expedition was being sent to Jolo, seat of the Sulu sultanate, ostensibly to quell piracy[9] but as this letter reveals, primarily to reduce and subjugate the

Moros into vassalage, to exact tribute as a sign of this status, and to convert them to Christianity. The expedition was intended therefore to make Moroland into an integral part of the Spanish colonial territory and the Moros, loyal and faithful Christian subjects of Spain.

The Spanish siege on the Moro homeland and on their indomitable will to be free and independent continued with no let up and was met with fierce resistance.

The fire and spirit of resistance was captured by Sultan Kudarat of Cotabato and one of the Moro's greatest heroes during this period, as he exhorted his followers to continue the fight against Spanish colonial ambitions :[10]

> You men of the lake, forgetting your ancient liberty, have submitted to the Castillans. Submission is sheer stupidity. You cannot realize to what your surrender binds you. You are selling yourselves to toil for the benefit of those foreigners.
>
> Look at the regions that have already submitted to them. Note how abject is the misery to which their peoples are now reduced. Behold the condition of the Tagalogs and of the Bisayans whose chiefs are trampled upon by the meanest Castillans. If you are no better spirit than them, then you must expect similar treatment. You, like them, will be obliged to row the galleys. Just as they do, you have to toil at the shipbuilding and labour without ceasing on the other public works. You can see for yourselves that you will experience the hardest treatment thus employed.
>
> Be men. Let me aid you to resist. All the strength of my sultanate. I promise you, shall be in your defense.
>
> What matters if the Castillians at first are successful? This means only the loss of a year's

harvest. Do you think that is too dear a prize to pay for liberty?

However, in the middle of the 19th century, the Spaniards began using steam gunboats and their success became more evident. For instance, Jolo was razed twice, first in 1851, then in 1876 by which time Spanish forces managed to obtain precarious footholds in Moro areas where military garrisons were speedliy established. Nevertheless, only nominal control could be exercised in these areas, for resistance continued outside.

It is during this period that the "sabil" institution (**fi-sabil-allah** fight in the way of God)[11] became a major means of effective resistance against the Spaniards; a practice that went on well into the American period and was reported to have been the main reason for the development of the American 45 calibre pistol, since ordinary weapons were found to be useless against the Sabils.

The Sabil institution was understood among the Tausug as the ultimate religious obligation to protect the community from invasion. The Spaniards gave the term **Juramentados** to these warriors and the Americans contributed the term **Amok** or **Amuck.** But these terms gave different meanings to what the Tausug considered a sacred act; not something comitted out of temporary insanity or fanaticism as the western terms connote. These heroic deeds became celebrated in songs known among the Tausug as the "Kissa Parang Sabil."

The Moro wars as this extremely debilating exercise came to be called, left a legacy of hatred and suspicion between Indios or Christianized Filipinos and the Moros; people who were brought to wage war not of their own making. It should be pointed out that prior to the coming of the Spanish colonizers, commercial and trade relations were going on freely among the various inhabitants of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. In the natural course of

time, these communities could have consolidated into bigger configurations and developed indigenous socio-political structure, of which the Moro state at this time was already an example. Colonization interrupted this development and instead gave birth to a deep cleavage between the Christianized natives on the one hand and the Islamized natives on the other; a cleavage that even now has not been sufficiently bridged.

The Spaniards never quite abandoned their hatred of the Moros. Even as late as 1898, this feeling still lived prompting a Spanish Officer to give words to its intensity in a letter to the Spanish Governor General of the Philippines: "The Moro race is completely antithetic to the Spanish ... and will ever be our eternal enemy."[12]

Meanwhile, the Philippine revolutionary leaders (the Philippine revolution against Spain began in 1896) were scouting for alliances against the new American threat and they looked toward the Moros for a possible unified stand. In a message to Congress on January 1, 1899, Emilio Aguinaldo proposed that the government be empowered" to negotiate with the Moros' of Sulu and Mindanao for purposes of establishing national solidarity upon the basis of a real federation with absolute respect for their beliefs and traditions."[13] Working along the same line of thought, letters were sent to Pedro Cuevas, a datu of Basilan, and to the Sultan of Marangas.

By this time, however, the hatred and suspicion sown by the Spaniards' policies against the Moros had already borne fruit and the Moros turned a deaf ear to these appeals. To their minds, the Christianized Filipinos of Luzon and the Visayas, had all too often given aid and succor to the Spaniards in terms of providing the necessary number of soldiers to fight them and subjugate their islands. They were not keen to form alliances with a group of people bearing the name of their most relentless and hated enemy. The alienation that came to characterize Muslim-Christian relations had begun.

It is a tantalizing aspect to imagine that had such an alliance indeed come to fruition, the present Moro problem would not be as severe nor as persisting.

III. B. COLONIAL PERIODS: AMERICAN REGIME

In December 1898, unknown to the Sultan of Sulu, Spain, by virtue of the Treaty of Paris, ceded her colony to the United States, thus, putting an end to the Spanish colonial rule in the country. In a last moment of colonial extravagance, however, Spain included the Moro areas as part of her territorial possessions in spite of the fact that she never completely controlled said areas.

In May 1899, therefore, American occupation forces arrived in Sulu. On August 20, 1899, Brigadier-General John C. Bates signed a treaty (Bates Treaty) with the Sultan of Sulu, Muhammad Jamalul Kiram, recognizing the sultan's right to govern over the internal affairs of the sultanate. This treaty obviously accepted the status of the Moros as sovereign states albeit only temporarily, for as events turned out, the treaty was summarily abrogated barely five months later, on March 2, 1904. It had served its purpose in keeping the Moros quiescent while Americans actively suppressed resistance in Luzon and the Visayas.

The Americans initially adopted a general "policy of attraction" coupled with "benevolent despotism" in Moro areas. But because the Moros were not so easily won over, harsher, more drastic measures were implemented to bring them in line. In Jolo, the Moros engaged American forces in many battles, the most notorious of which was that at Bud Dajo, where over a thousand Moros; men, women and children, were massacred." The Americans on the other hand, suffered only 21 casualties thereby emphasizing the unequal contest. Similar campaign against the Moros of Cotabato and Lanao were also undertaken.[14] Eventually, as these many battles demons-

trate superior arms inevitably prevail and hostilities somewhat abated in the early 1920s.

The turnout of the war cannot be entirely surprising. By the late 19th century, Moro power had considerably declined after conducting an exhausting war for more than three centuries. The introduction of modern technological war machines increased colonial advantage over indigenous technology and war strategy.[15] American superior arms soon began to change the direction of the confrontation between Moros and colonialists. Thus, in contract with the Spaniards, the Americans were able to consolidate their territorial gains and established direct control.

Although American rule was brief, its impact on Moro society had far reaching effects. The policy of direct rule meant the imposition of western institutions and a complete and drastic change from the system of thought and action that characterized Moro society since the 13th century when Islam gained substantial influence in these areas. Since then, the Moros had evolved traditions and adopted institutions that reflected the Islamic and indigenous way of life. These were now completely disregarded (even at times despised as being worthless)[16] by the colonizing power. Instead, "new" and presumably "better" institutions were enforced to "elevate" Moro society; but in reality as the effects of this policy show, to undermine and weaken it.

A good case in point is the abolition of the Sulu sultanate accomplished through the Carpenter's Agreement of 1915, which called for the renunciation of the sultan's sovereign powers. The Americans felt that continued exercise of the sultan's powers detracted from the recognition and full implementation of their own authority. The Americans also appreciated the fact that the sultan served as a rallying figure for further resistance among the Moros. His ouster and the abolition of the sultanate would not only enhance American superiority but most

especially strike at the very heart of Moro society by effectively depriving them of organization and central leadership.

As expected, the Agreement did make organized resistance difficult and consequently reduced in its frequency and intensity, although sporadic outbreaks did continue to harass American rule. More important, however, was the breakdown of systematic leadership and authority pattern which had guided Moro society for the last 700 years prior to American arrival. Its presence had once insured a high degree of political consensus and cohesiveness as well as allegiance among Moros for the sultan was both the temporal and spiritual leader. Its passing, on the other hand, reduced the Moros to warring factions; a situation exploited by the colonial power through a successful strategy of devide and rule as well as colonial dole outs of privileges for those leaders willing to collaborate with them. This consequently kept Moros' strength and power disorganized, localized and unable to rise from its state of decline and malaise.

There were other areas of Moro life that were also drastically affected by direct rule outside the political system. The compulsory attendance of Moro children in American administered public schools, for instance, ran against Madarasa education which emphasized Islamic values and knowledge about religion. The present claim by many scholars that Moros know very little about Islam is an immediate effect of secular education started during this period. In this connection, Moro children were taught the English language and consequently learned new set of values which tended to look down on their own culture and society. They read history books which were the distorted products of biased western perception. They became captive followers and imitators of western traditions and values in much the same way other children throughout the country were also learning to do thereby producing a population steeped in colonial mentality.

The legal system was another institution taken over by American rule. In the past, the Moros were guided by the laws formulated by the sultans with the help of the Ruma Bichara and the Qadi. These laws, while taking consideration of Moro customs and traditions (adat) were promulgated according to Islamic prescription and administered by the Agama court system of which the Qadi was the Chief Justice. The system worked through arbitration and conciliation. Courts settled cases in order to restore social equilibrium as well as harmony. The western system, on the other hand, worked on different principles and values. Courts settled cases through direct confrontation between the parties and aimed to redress the injured party purely on the individual level.[17] The difficulty of implementing this system was not only because its source was foreign to the understanding of the Moros but also because its sense of "justice" was also alien. Many Moros became "outlaws" because they could not grasp the meaning of the law which was so far divorced from their adat and Islamic values. For instance, Moro marriages in Islamic rites were unregistered simply because the requirement for registration was the issuance of a marriage licence obtainable for a fee at the Municipal office. Moros were often forced to marry twice in civil as well as in religious rites to obtain legality for their union in the eyes of Civil Law. Births more often also went unregistered and for the same reason so were deaths.

But it was in the introduction of the Torrens system of land titling that, like the abolition of the sultanate, significantly altered the condition of Moro territory and society. The system was intended to break up what the Americans perceived as the feudal land ownership structure of the Moros so as to give way to private land ownership and encouraged entrepreneurship. This concept is described below :[18]

Under the Torrens System of land Registration

Act, developed by a British register of deeds, Sir Robert Richard Torrens, Land can pass hands by the mere exchange of money, execution of the requisite documents and the registration of such document. The quality of Western concept of land as reinforced by the Torrens System, is that, it is a commodity; the extent of a person's right over it is not guided by his actual use or occupation but what the paper title indicates.

In contrast to this view, Moros conceived of land as a legacy (**pusaka** among the Tausug). It is not alienable property to be sold especially to outsiders but must remain in trust for the maintenance of the community. Thus, all land within a given area is often thought of as belonging to the community inhabiting the area. Members of the community, however, do not own the land they farm although they receive the right to use it from the Data as head of the community. Thus, the concept of individual or personal ownership and tenure are strange ideas that the Moro could not comprehend.

These views are, of course, in direct contradiction to the concepts forwarded in the Torrens System which looks at land as a commodity and subject to purchase. Ancestral land or communal lands were, therefore, parceled into lots for awarding to claimants who may not always be Moros but settlers from the Luzon and Visayas areas. In this way, many Moros and tribals lost land that were rightfully theirs. This was made even easier when the Americans suspended the application of a section of the Public Land Law introduced in 1906, which specified that a claimant had to be in continuous occupation of the land for 10 years before he could have it registered. While the suspension was ostensibly to speed up the process of land titling, its effect was to open the doors for other claimants to obtain titles to land at the expense of the local people. In this manner, huge rubber and peanut plantations began to spring up in Cotabato, Lanao,

Cagayan de Sulu, and Siasi. This further led to the opening up of six agricultural colonies in Cotabato, and one in Lanao between the years 1913 and 1917.[19]

But the tie between the land and the people is more than economic, for the socio-political, religious and cultural institutions and practices are also bound with the land. Thus, the Moro concept of "Bangsa" (race or nation) does not entirely refer to racial distinction alone but to territorial as well as cultural identification. The concept of dar ul-Islam to the Moros refers to territorial imperatives as much as to religious entities such as the ummah. Finally, the Moros have derived a definition of their basic identities[20] in terms of the most physical or geographical characteristics of their homeland. Thus, the Tausug (people of the current "sug") drew meaning and identification with the archipelagic nature of their island, the Sulu archipelago; the Maranao (people of the lake "ranao") derived their name from the most significant feature of their environment and the source of life to their communities which is Lake Lanao; the Maguindanao whose name is a combination of words meaning a group of people who are kins to the Maranao, points to the affinity easily shown by language as well as by other cultural elements between the two groups.

The relationships between the Moros and their land attains an almost mystic quality since Moros usually think of land as a trust (amanah) from Allah which should be preserved for future generations and to be defended against aggressors as part of dar-ul-Islam. This mystic quality was once articulated by a prominent Moro leader of Sulu at the hoisting of the American flag in 1915 after the abolition of the sultanate :[21]

> ... according to our religion, this land belongs to God. So I beg of you to refrain from hoisting the flag of the American nation on our holy ground, as if America will stay here for ever. But raise the

American flag on buildings which are temporary, as if America will depart tomorrow.

then again in 1974, more than half a century later, at the battle of Jolo when a dying young freedom fighter spent the last minutes of his life writing with his own blood his message to the world: **"In kami parang sabil nagbaugbug sin hula, bangsa, iban agama"** (we are martyrs upholding land, race and religion).

The juxtaposition of these two events separated in time but voicing the same sentiments serve to emphasize the innermost aspirations of the Moros to keep their land free and independent and show that the extent of their commitment to this ideal spans both time and space.

In short, as this discussion tries to show, American direct rule was a devastating and traumatic experience for the Moros. The total rejection of indigenous institutions in favour of imposing western ones, no matter what good intentions were behind their implementations as their sponsors repeatedly argued,was a bitter pill for the Moros. Socio-political changes brought about by colonization could have been less painful had the Americans the insight or the foresight to introduce changes slowly, or cautiously and selectively, making use of indigenous institutions to provide for transitional periods of adjustments.

As it was, the Americans generally applied the same harsh policies that they used for the American Indians with almost similar results except that the Moros were luckier to have gotten rid of the Americans before they were reduced to living in settlements like their Indian counterpart. This was an eventuality that was already well on its way to being implemented as a result of the American encouragement of the establishment of agricultural colonies in Mindanao and Sulu.

In the words of a western writer, the implementation

of American policies relative to those already discussed were a "fundamental assault on (the Moros) Islamic faith and American rule struck not only at the previous political authority of Muslim leaders but at the very substance of dar ul-Islam."[22]

It is to the credit of Moro societies that in spite of the extensive attack on their way of life, they were able to keep intact their cultural and religious traditions.[23]

IV. INDEPENDENCE TO 1972

When independence was granted on July 4, 1946, the Moros became part of the Philippine polity and their territory incorporated into the newly created independent Philippine nation. The sense of alienation that Moros felt ever since the imposition of American direct rule deepened at this further display of arbitrary decision regarding their status; and carried over to their resistance to integrate into the mainstream of Philippine society. This war manifested in the peace and order situation which had plagued American rule and began to do the same to the Manila government.

In 1954, a Congressional Commission was mandated to investigate the problem after some pressure from Moro representatives in the wake of Kamlon's rebellion (1951-1955) in Sulu.[24] This investigation led to the creation of the Commission of National Integration (CNI) in 1957, a government agency assinged the task to implement and monitor programs intended to integrate the Moros more fully into the national polity. But this agency folded up after 10 years due to lack of funding and was unable to affect the lives of the Moros or the process of integration in any significant way.[25]

The policy of integration dates back to colonial times and had been adopted as the centerpiece of the Philippines' policies vis-a-vis the Moros. But though integration was a declared policy, it did not appear to have been a serious

endeavor. For example, there were no concerted efforts to transform the public school system into an effective socializing agent toward the inculcation of values in consonance with building a sense of unity and understanding amongst inhabitants whose recent colonial past was deeply immersed in hatred and bloody wars. Thus, history books continued to portray Moros as pirates and **juramentados**; Moros' customs and traditions remained pieces of exotica good only for the delectation of the press whose penchant for identifying Muslims as criminals persists to this day.[26] The old hates, fears, and prejudices therefore remained sizzling just below the surface and as events later showed, helped to trigger a violent conflict in southern Philippines.

The political system, for that matter, did little to help the integration process. While it guarantees democratic representation through the electoral process, it actually discriminates against groups which did not have the necessary number of votes to elect their candidates to the national office. More so when the right to vote can be exercised only by those who can read and write which a large number of Moros were not able to do.[27] While it is true that the Moros were represented nationally, such representation was inadequate, and hardly sufficient to give the Moros the sense of belonging and security that this exercise was expected to develope.

The political system also spawned politicians intent on personal aggrandisement and the perpetuation of their powers. In this matter, the Moro and Christian politicians did not differ from each other. In participating in the American democratic two-party system, Moro politicians learned most of the vices of politics but very little of its virtues.

In some ways, programs intended to help integration appeared to have been short-sighted if not ill-conceived. The government-sponsored resettlement and agricultural colonies in Mindanao and Sulu, for example, were premised on the belief that more Christians in Moroland will bring

about better understanding between the two groups. But more often than not, however, new settlers were awarded titles to land within Moro or tribal ancestral domains and led to conflict rather than understanding. During Magsaysay's administration, for instance, 40,000 hectares of the best agricultural land in Mindanao were given to the Huks and their sympathizers from Luzon.[28] It is because of this and similar cases that the land problem stands as the very center of the current Mindanao hostilities.

The increasing number of settlers brought to Mindanao resulted in a population imbalance and has led to the division of Moroland into provinces with Christian majorities. The big province of Cotabato, for example, has been divided into four provinces of which only one (Maguindanao) retained a Moro majority. Lanao has also been subdivided into two: Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte, only the former is a Moro enclave. These divisions reflect the population imbalance as a result of increased settlers into mainland Mindanao.

The Moros as can be seen by this situation have become a minority in their own homeland. Thus, the relevancy of the issue of preserving the homeland becomes more pressing and acute. The former Moro territory known as the Moro Province during American rule has now been reduced to a mere 1/3 of its former size in terms of areas where Moros still predominates. In 1913, they were 98% of the population in Mindanao; in 1976, they were only 40%;[29] in 1983, the figure stands at 39%. At this rate, the Moros will soon be an insignificant community in reservations and the colonial plan would have succeeded.

This reason among many others such as the low level of development in Moro areas, the slow if not total lack of delivery of vital services in their communities; e.g. education, health, water, roads, electricity to mention only a few, convinced the Moros that there is a systematic plan to keep them in an underdeveloped state and further

confirm their suspicion that this neglect was intentional rather than accidental. Some comparative data of the early 'seventies will serve to illustrate this situation.

TABLE I[30]

Education

1970	Moro Areas	Christian Areas
Literacy rates	49.50%	75.52%
Enrollment in schools of pupils ages 5 — 9	37.9%	49.05%
School dropouts	12.4%	9.22%
College graduates	13,611	36,376

Vocational Education

TABLE II[31]

Number of Vocational Schools, Muslim and Non-Muslim by Province and by Training Program : 1970-71

MORO

Province	Total	Agri-culture	Fishery	Trade	Enroll-ment
Basilan	0	0	0	0	—
Tawi-Tawi	0	0	0	0	—
Lanao del Sur	4	1	—	2	754
Sulu	5	3	2	1	1,527
Maguindanao	0	0	0	0	—
TOTAL	9	4	2	3	2,281
CHRISTIAN					
Lanao del Norte	2	1	—	1	774
Davao Oriental	4	1	—	3	800
Palawan	2	—	1	1	625
Misamis Occ.	1	—	1	—	208
Zamboanga del Sur	4	1	1	2	2,841
TOTAL	13	3	3	7	5,248

TABLE III[32]

Government & Private Hospitals, by Province, Muslim and Non-Muslim, 1970

MORO

Province	Government Number	Government Bed Capacity	Private Number	Private Bed Capacity	Total Number	Total Bed Capacity
Basilan	—	—	3	84	3	84
Maguindanao	5	550	2	130	7	685
Lanao del Sur	2	100	2	14	4	114
Sulu	4	270	3	37	7	307
Tawi-Tawi	2	50	—	—	2	50
TOTAL	13	970	10	265	23	1,240
CHRISTIAN						
Lanao del Norte	5	360	2	115	7	475
Davao Oriental	1	75	3	85	4	160
Misamis Occ.	5	225	12	296	17	521
Palawan	7	2,525	2	31	9	2,556
Zamboanga del Sur	5	850	14	174	19	1,124
TOTAL	23	4,035	33	701	56	4,836

TABLE IV[33]

1973	Moro Areas	Rest of Mindanao
Roads	20.4 km. per 100,000 inhabitants	397 km. per 100,000 inhabitants
Electricity	12 per cent of population	17.8 per cent of population
Water supply	20 per cent of population had water supply	25 per cent of population
Doctors	one doctor per 6,959 people	one for 3,954

Unemployment (1970)		
Sulu	12.3 per cent)	7.6 per cent
Lanao del Sur	10.4 per cent)	national average

The failure of the integration program, however, can be attributed to Moro understanding that such process will mean the dissolution of their identity and way of life; therefore, to be resisted. In addition, Moro society, in spite of political factionalism has remained a fairly cohesive community integrated at many levels.

At the highest societal level, of course, is Islam, which acts as a unifying force amongst the various Moro ethnic groups and provide them with a similar world view. On the communal level, the Moros' socio-cultural institutions, while elaborate in some and more simple in others, all adhere to Islamic principles and values. These institutions have socialized Moros into common ways of behaving and understanding from which arise a recognition of commonalities and a feeling of community. Furthermore, Moros share not only a territorial base but a common history, aspirations and stake in the future.

On the individual level, the Moro, because of shared religious and cultural basis, feels more easily the sence of brotherhood with another belonging to the same "ummah" which tend to obscure personal differences especially in times of crisis. On the other hand, this highlights the difference he feels from outsiders. This sense of individuality and at the same time of community has kept the Moros ever conscious of their identity and communal legacy and has persistently locked out the sence of natianlity from developing.

The answer to the integration policy, however, finally came in 1972. The long years of neglect and alienation was given voice by the Moro Liberation Front (MNLF) by means of armed struggle for independence and self-

determination. The past years had done nothing to erase the Moros' conscious yearning and attachment to their glorious past when their communities were rich and powerful and they were free and independent people. In contrast to this, they were now a minority peopel with very little power to determine the direction of their future, nor the power to rehabilitate their present or reclaim their past.

There was a time, perhaps in the long years that followed after independence when it was possible to heal and bridge the deep sense of alienation that colonial experience had created in the hearts and minds of the Moros. But when they see the relatively depressed economic conditions and the general underdevelopment of their communities, they feel only the resentment familiar to those who have become victims of neglect and indifference from national governments still unable to come to terms with minority aspirations, to design programs for their welfare so that they may become full and equal participants in the life of the nation.

IV. 1972 TO THE PRESENT

The fertile seed of the MNLF rebellion was planted a long time ago in the historicity of the Moro people, to whom membership in the national polity has been an unwanted case of belonging to a **"gobirno a sarwang a tao"** (government of the foreigners). To the majority of the Moros, being Moros or Muslims counted for much more than being Filipinos. As a Moro scholar once noted in 1969, the question "are you a Filipino" was generally met by a categorical "no". To the Moros, the Filipinos are the Christians.[34] In 1971, the same query produced the same answer except that 98% of those who referred to themselves as Muslims responded positively when asked about being a Filipino.[35] The survey, however, was taken at the height of the Mindanao gang war (of which more will be said later) and the environment was not conducive to eliciting categorical answers.

Moro disenchantment with national government as these sentiments display remained generally placid until 1968 when it flared up as a result of the Jabida incident. This scandal concerned a secret-project of the military. Code-named Operation Merdeka, this involved some 180 young Moro recruits from Simunul, Sulu, who were taken to Corrigidor Island for training. In March 1968, newspapers suddenly headlined the death by shooting of 14 trainees while 17 were reported to be missing from camp. Details of the killing was narrated by a lone survivor, Jibin Arula, to an outraged and shocked Moro populace.

The effect of this incident on Moros' consciousness was exceptional. It united all fronts against what the Moros saw as the government's long-standing insensitivity to their welfare, including "a cavalier attitude of officialdom toward Islam."[36] The four separate Congressional and Military inquiries, which resulted only in the acquittal of the accused military officers, further strained the already thin line of credibility existing between Moros and government.

One immediate development after the Jabida incident was the formation of the Muslim Independent Movement (MIM) on May 1968, five months after the massacre.[37] The MIM's original goal was to establish an independent Islamic Republic in Mindanao and Sulu. This call for independence, however, was nothing new. It was already articulated earlier in 1961 by Sultan Ombra Amilbangsa, lone congressman from Sulu. The sultan sponsored a Bill calling for the independence of Sulu, citing government indifference and the historical traditions of the Tausug as an independent people as the overriding rational of the Bill.

The difference between these two proclamations however, was mainly in its timing. In 1968, Moros' feeling of being victimized and ill-used was at an all time high, spurred as it were by the Jabida massacre. In addition, there was a large number of Moro residents and students in Manila whose demonstrations and rallies served to focus

national attention on the Moros' plight. This, in turn, made the Moros more aware of their situation and further stimulated their sense of communal oppression.

During this period, there was also a growing radical and militant student activism in the Manila universities, especially with the organization of the **Kabataang Makabayan** (Patriotic Youth) back in 1964. Moro students in Manila became drawn into this stream of militant, cause-oriented organizations and imbibed the revolutionary fervor of this environment. All these factors were absent in 1961 so that the call for the independence of Sulu remained confined in the halls of Congress. But in 1968, the call fell on more fertile grounds.

The presence and convergence of all these factors produced an electric situation. Moros were galvanized into activities in support of the MIM's Manifesto. Christians, on the other hand, were alarmed and highly apprehensive of what an independent movement would bring. It was within an atmosphere of growing tension that a violent gang war erupted in Mindanao led by a terrorist gang named Ilagas or rats. A confidential report made in 1973, identified a group of politicians behind this gang whose avowed goal was to ensure their political power and to wrest it from other groups "where they still don't have it."[28] The atrocities perpetrated by the Ilagas on Moro communities soon led to the organization of retaliatory Moro gangs called Barracudas and the Blackshirts. The activities of these rival gangs produced the "shooting war" in Mindanao.

This "war" began on March 22, 1970 in Upi, Cotabato and quickly spread to North Cotabato, to Wao in Lanao del Sur, then to Lanao del Norte and later to other areas like Zamboanga del Sur. The depreadations of these gangs sent a wave of panic and fear among civilians in both Christians and Moro communities. Two of the worst incidents took place in 1971; one in Manili, North Cotabato in early June when Muslims waiting inside a Mosque for peace talks were gunned down resulting in the death of 65

people, including 29 women, and 13 children. Ten others were shot in front of the schoolhouse where they were lined up. 60 Moro houses were burned down. The second incident took place in Barrio Tacub, Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte on election day. A group of Moros returning from the polls in Magsaysay were fired upon. 40 people were killed. The perpetrators of these crimes were known to be Ilagas.[39]

Reports during this period claimed that an estimated 600 people were killed in Cotabato alone. Refugees were numbered at more than 100,000 although unreported killings and violences would probably increase these totals.

What fired Moros' anger and sense of oppression were the evident support given by the military for the Ilagas and other Christian terrorist gangs. Such support, oftentimes meant collaboration between these gangs and the AFP during search and destroy missions; or in the tardy way the PC or AFP troopers respond to violence when Moros were the victims. For instance, in the "Tacub Massacre" referred to earlier, elements of the AFP were seen by newspaper reporters to be lounging in their checkpoint while the dead and the dying remained unattended.[40]

In the face of these escalating violence, Martial Law was declared, September 21, 1972. From here on, the war in Mindanao and Sulu took on new features : from gang war to a full-fledged war of liberation. At the forefront was the MNLF, a newly organized revolutionary group headed by Nur Misuari, a former professor of Political Science at the University of the Philippines.

From 1972 to 1975, the MNLF held the upper hand in many battles fought with the military. Official estimates reported MNLF combat strength as between 14,000 to 16,000 but unofficial sources claimed the figure was more like 60,000. The striking power of the MNLF was demonstrated in many encounters with the AFP throughout Mindanao and Sulu. But it was at the Battle of Jolo in

February 7, 1974, that the fury of the war reached unprecedented heights.

The battle of Jolo lasted two days and left the town in ruins due to bombardments from three navy ships anchored off Jolo's harbor and continuous strafing from air force saber jets before ground forces began shelling the town with mortars. The MNLF shot down two saber jets and four helicopters. The town burned for four days.[11]

The intensity of the war in Mindanao and Sulu made international headlines and brought the Moro situation to the attention of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) under whose auspices peace negotiations were speedily undertaken. This resulted in the Tripoli Agreement signed between the MNLF and the Philippine Government on December 23, 1976 through the good office of Muammar Kadaffi, President of the Libyan Arab Republic.

The Tripoli Agreement was signed on December 23, 1976. It consists of 14 substantive paragraphs embodying agreements on general principles, on ceasefire and regional autonomy in Southern Philippines and five procedural paragraphs. One of these fives was considered critical in the sense that it gave the Philippine Government more control and leeway in the interpretations as well as in the implementation of the agreement. This controversial paragraph read :[12]

> 16. The Government of the Philippines shall take all necessary constitutional processes for the implementation of the entire Agreement.

This provision allowed the government to undertake what it considered as constitutional processes in terms of: first, the issuance of presidential Decree No. 1628 declaring autonomy in Southern Philippines; second. the holding of a referendum plebiscite on April 17, 1977. The area of autonomy includes 13 provinces that now comprise Region XII and Region IX. These are : Basilan, Sulu. Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga del Sur and Zamboanga del

Norte which belong to Region IX and known as Western Mindanao.

Region XII comprises what is known as Central Mindanao and includes the provinces of North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte. The autonomous regions were formally inaugurated on July 27, 1979.

The implementation of the Tripoli Agreement, however, has been repudiated by the MNLF after the debacle regarding the referendum questions and the type of autonomy that was eventually set up. As a result of these disagreements, the MNLF has gone back to its former stand of independence. Consequently, MNLF armed activities resumed and continue up to the present although the character of these compaigns have changed from the 1974-1977 battle strategies which at the height of confrontations tied down 70-80% of the Philippine armed forces.[43]

In addition, internal developments in the MNLF camp have given the government some reason to think that the secessionist movement is on the wane. The MNLF has been rent by internal dissensions in the Central Committee leading to the split between Nur Misuari and Hashim Salamat, a Maguindanao, who now heads a newly organized faction known as the MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front). Another faction known as the MNLF Reformist Group is led by Dimasankay Prendato, a Maranao. This split in the central leadership together with the increasing number of surrenderees (reported by Times Journal as being nearly 46.000 since 1972),[44] not only of rank and file soldiers but of field commanders have led the military to conclude in 1981 that the MNLF is no longer a big threat to the country's internal security.[45] No less than Pres. Marcos in an interview with Asia Week dated June 11, 1982, stated that as far as he is concerned "the MNLF no longer exists..." that the "MNLF is immobilized and inoperative at the moment."

This view, however, does not account for MNLF activities in Mindanao and Sulu. As recent as May of

last year, MNLF forces under Commander Narra reportedly battled military forces in Lanao del Sur for 76 days. It is here where chemical bombs were reportedly used and was headlined in the Malaya issue of August 16, 1984. This incident resulted in a Fact-Finding Mission sent by concerned organizations from Metro Manila which confirmed reports about the bombing. In Sulu, military operation against MNLF forces has been going on since March of this year.

These being the case, at present, it is important to remember the government stand regarding the non-negotiability of the integrity of the national territory. Furthermore, it is also worthwhile to note the assessment of a research group that "to many Filipinos, the idea of an independent Moro republic is still largely inacceptable. Even the enlightened and liberal ones do have reservations. The most that majority of Filipinos could accept is an autonomous Moro government."[46]

Bearing this in mind, many Moro leaders have now concentrated their efforts on securing the real implementation of the Tripoli Agreement. The late Salipada Pendatun, Speaker Protempore of the Batasan, before his unitimely death this year, was agitating along this line. In another development, Gerry Salapuddin, MNLF Field Commander of Basilan who recently returned to the government's fold last June 3, 1984 and now member of Region IX's Assembly, talks about institutionalizing the creation of the autonomy through a constitutional provision since a PD according to him is no guarantee that autonomy will prevail under a new political regime.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Much have been said about the war in Mindanao and Sulu as arising from the socio-economic and politico-religious factors. While these cannot be denied, the movement for independence or secession becomes even more intelligible when these various factors are seen within the context of the history of the Moro people.

The separateness of Mindanao and Sulu from Luzon and the Visayas is not only a geographical fact but also embraces sccio-cultural politico-religious differences that even the Americans acknowledged during their rule in the Philippines. It is for this reason that a separate administrative unit was made up of the Moro province which governed the Moros under a separate mandate. Subsequent administrative agencies since 1957 starting with the creation of the CNI also tended to reflect this distinction.

This sense of separateness was the subject of declaration sent to the U.S. President and the U.S. Congress in 1935 by a group of Moro datus in 1935. The text of this petition reads :[47]

> Because we have learned that the United States is going to grant the Philippines independence, we want to tell you that the Philippines is populated by two different peoples with different religious practices and traditions. The Christian-Filipinos occupy the islands of Luzon and the Visayas. The Moros predominate the islands of Mindanao and Sulu. With regards to the forthcoming independence, we forsee what condition we and our children who shall come after us will be in. These conditions will be characterized by unrest, suffering and misery. Our Christian associates had for many years showed their desire to be the only ones blessed with leadership and with progressive towns, without sharing with us the advantage of having good towns and cities. Their provinces progressed while ours are left behind. Should the Americans grant Philippines independence, the islands of Mindanao and Sulu must not be included in such grant...

The MNLF follows a similar agreement as contained in a statement issued by Nur Misuari in June 25, 1973 at the beginning of the war: "It is impossible to find any single moment in our existence as a people where we were part, let alone a possession of the Filipino government.

Ever since, our people have always zealously maintained their distinct character and identity as a nation."[48]

The same idea was reiterated by Misuari in his address before the plenary session of the 14th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in Dhaka, Bangladesh on December 1983. Misuari states that, "our nation became a colony only on July 4, 1946, when the Philippines obtained its independence .... Our people and homeland were unlawfully annexed and declared as parts of the Philippine political and territorial sovereignty."

In an interview in October of the same year, Misuari stated that the question of secession does not exist. "To secede is to be ensnared into accepting the presumption of being an integral and permanent part of another of which we are not and never will be."

Before the MNLF, however, Moros tried to achieve accommodation of their historical aspirations within the national framework through structural reforms. This was seen in the 1971 Constitutional Convention when the Moro delegates proposed federalization as a form of political structure. The fear of secession believed by many to be inherent in such a federalist structure and will lead to the dismemberment of the nation, however, had too hard a grip in the minds of conservative conventionists, so that this proposal never got the attention or discussion it deserved.

The establishment of autonomy, however, as envisioned by the MNLF in the 1976 Tripoli Agreement parallels the federal set up proposed by the Moro delegates in 1971. The nature of the autonomy as it has been implemented, however, leaves much to be desired. Peter Gowing, for example, notes the setting up of two autonomous regions instead of one. In addition, the autonomous regions does not include all the 13 provinces originally proposed in the MNLF Draft Demand.[49]

Significantly, even ex-Chairman Ulbert Ulama Tugung noted that "there were no clear provisions that were given

to the autonomous government as to the peculiar internal administrative matter that it should undertake."[50]

The indictment against the autonomy in Southern Philippines, however, comes from a former government man, ex-Assemblyman Reuben R. Canoy, who was once Undersecretary of Public Information and former Chairman of the Scuthern Philippines Development Administration (SPDA) before leaving government service in 1976, had this to say about the Autonomous government in Mindanao :[51]

> What can we expect of an autonomous government that cannot even operate for lack of adequate funding, that responds not to the will of the people but to one man ... who governs by remote control; an autonomous government that subordinates itself to local military commanders, and whose representatives, some of whom may be capable, were elected in a rigged election,....

Alejandro Fernandez, a noted Filipino scholar, has also pointed to the "wide gap between the acceptable form of autonomy as far as the MNLF is concerned and the kind of autonomy that has been granted under P.D. 1618. On this basis, Fernandez predicts that "the problem is far from being solved ..."[52]

This is perhaps that best summary statement that can be forwarded viz the Moro problem. As the situation now stands, the hope for a peaceful solution and an end to the problem indeed seems far away.

NOTES

1. All the figures cited here are provided by the National Council of Churches of the Philippines (NCCP), 1983.
2. National Census Statistics, 1970.
3. H. Lammens. *Islam, Beliefs and Institutions*. London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1968. The writer notes that of 14 or more orders (tariqas) known to be organized at least three were known to have spread to Southeast Asia.

4. See Cesar A. Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines,* Asian Center, U.P., 1973.
5. Most of the discussion can also be found in a previous article by the writer entitled "Islamization of Southern Philippines: An Overview" in *Muslims, Their Institutions and Cultural Achievements,* F. Landa Jocano (ed.), Asian Center, 1983.
6. These were the first Muslim communities to suffer Spanish colonization efforts when Legazpi decided to leave Cebu in favour of developing Manila as the Spanish premier city. Rajahs Soliman and Matanda resisted Spanish aims but were overrun by Spanish forces.
7. Cited from Saleeby's History of Sulu, by Teopisto Guingona in his "Historical Survey of policies pursued by Spain and the United States toward the Moros of the Philippines." Originally published in 1943, reprinted by the Dansalan Quarterly, Vol. II, No. 3 (April 1981), p. 170.
8. A full text of Gov. Gen. Sande's letter can be found in Saleeby's History of Sulu.
9. Moro retaliatory raids on Spanish northern and Visayan colonies were always seen as piracy by Spanish authorities and chroniclers.
10. Alunan Glang. *Secession or Independence,* p. 10.
11. For more details see Majul, op. cit., Appendix B, pp. 353-360.
12. Peter G. Gowing. *Mandate in Moroland,* Asian Center, 1977, p. 13.
13. Majul, p. 315-316.
14. Gowing's conservative estimate show that around 3,000 Moros were killed during Leonard Wood's incumbency while American losses were less than 70. p. 164.
15. For more details in Moro-American war, see Samuel Tan, The Filipino Muslim Armed Struggle 1900-1972, Manila: Filipinas Foundation Inc. 1977.
16. This comment is especially true as far as Leonard Wood was concerned. He was Gov. General of the Moro Province through 1903-1906 and known for his Mailed Fist Policy.
17. These general differences were pointed out to the writer by Mehol Sadain, a law student of the UP College of Law, in a discussion about indigenous laws.
18. See "The Interface Between National Land Law and Kalinga Land Law" in Human Rights and Ancestral Lands: A Source-book. UGAT, 1983, pp. 289-303.
19. T. J. George. Revolt in Mindanao, The Rise of Islam in Philippine Politics. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980.

20. See concept of basic group identities developed by Harold A. Isaacs in "Basic Group Identity: The Idols of the Tribe' in *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience.* Nashan Glozer and Deniel P. Moynihan (eds)., Mass: Harvard University Press, 1975, pp. 44-45.
21. T. J. George, *op. cit.*
22. Stuart A. Schlegel. "Muslim-Christian Conflict in the Philippine South" in Readings on the Mindanao Problem, Vol. II, Southern Philippine Center for Peace Studies, MSU, pp. 99-100 (unpublished).
23. Much of the credit belongs to the traditional Islamic educational system and the Madrasa which continued to propagate Islamic teaching even while receiving no aid nor encouragement from government and to the local religious leaders who kept and nourished the faith within their various communities.
24. Kamlon's small group kept the military at bay until his surrender. His rebellion was due to land registration which Kamlon refused to undertake since he claims the land is his and registration does not make it so.
25. See Leothiny Clavel's They Are Also Filipinos, Manila, Bureau of Printing, 1969.
26. This has been a subject for an editorial by the Times Journal entitled "Racisms' Ugly Head", September 26, 1984, p. 4. A recently conducted study for a masteral thesis on stereotypes in print media shows that a large number of news articles carry unfavourable labels for Moros or Muslims. See Abdul Rashid Cafe, "A Content Analysis of the Image Portrayal of the Mindonao Muslims by the 'Bulletin Today' Daily Newspaper in 1971, 1976 and 1981."
27. As shown in Table 1, Moro literacy rate even as late as 1970 was below the national average which is around 85%.
28. T. J. George, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
29. Aijaz Ahmad. "400 Year War: Moro Struggle in the Philippines." Southeast Asia Chronicle, No. 82, February 1982, p. 9.
30. T. J. George, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-225.
31. H. Monte Hill. "The Impact of Philippine Development Policy Upon Filipino Muslims: A Retrospect" in *Journal-Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs,* Vol. IV, Nos. 1 & 2 (1982), pp. 24-40.
32. *Ibid.,* p. 35.
33. T. J. George. *op. cit.*, pp. 224-225.
34. Alunan Glang. *Secession or Integration,* Phil.: Garcia Pub. Co., 1969, p. 35.
35. An Anatomy of Philippine Muslim Affairs: A Study in depth on Muslim affairs in the Philippines, Filipinas Foundations Inc., 1971, p. 116.

36. T. J. George, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
37. MIM was founded by Datu Udtog Matalam of Cotabato. He later renamed it into Mindanao Independence Movement, modified into a Lebanese type state in which Christians would have guaranteed representation; finally, it became a movement for statehood under a federal system. T. J. George, p. 133.
38. According to T. J. George, *op. cit.* This report claimed that the Ilaga was founded in Cotabato City on September 1970 by Wenceslao dela Serna of Almada, Esteban Doruelo of Pegkawayan, Pacifico dela Serna of Libungan, Nicholas Dequina of Midsayap, Bonifacio Tejada of Mlang, Condrado Lemana of Tulunan, and Mayor Jose Escribano of Tacurong. The Overall Commander was Manuel Teoneo, a retired Constabulary Captain, p. 146.
39. Most of this account was given by Robert D. McAmis in "Muslim Filipinos in the 1970's." *Solidarity* (Dec. 1973), pp. 3-16.
40. T. J. George, op. cit., p. 176.
41. Aijaz Ahmad claims that the dead numbered 2,000 and there were 60,000 refugees, p. 17. For more details, see T. J. George, pp. 194-219.
42. See from Secession to Autonomy-Self Government in Southern Philippines, Manila, Ministry of Muslim Affairs, September 21, 1980, for the government stand on this and other relative issues regarding the Moro Problem.
43. Far Eastern Economic Review, August 9, 1985, p. 30.
44. Times Journal, February 22, 1985, p. 11.
45. Daily Express, November 3, 1981, p. 2.
46. Moving Heaven and Earth, an Account of Filipinos Struggling to Change their Lives and Society. Commission on the Churches' Participation in Development (CCPD), Philippine Ecumenical Writing Group, Manila Philippines, 1982, p. 183.
47. Quoted by Alejandro Fernandez. Regional Autonomous Government and the Philippine Foreign Policy. *Philippine Political Science Journal,* No. 10 (June 1980), p. 78.
48. CCPD, p. 183.
49. *Dansalan Quarterly,* Vol. 3, No. 4, (July 1982), p. 245.
50. Ulbert Ulama Tugung. "The Economics of Development in Autonomous Regions," *Philippine Political Science Journal,* No. 10 (June 1980), p. 9.
51. Reuben R. Canoy. "Real Autonomy: The Answer to the Mindanao Problem," in the *Philippine Sociological Review,* Vol. 27, No. 4 (October 1979), p. 301.
52. Fernandez, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

Islam, the State, and Development in Indonesia

ABDURRAHMAN WAHID

The development of Islam in Indonesia provides an interesting picture of a unique experience, one no less dramatic than the recent events in the Middle East — from Libya's tinkering with government by militant People's Associations to Saudi Arabia's petroleum-supported state welfarism to Iran's **wilayat-e-fagech** (government by religious scholars). The Indonesian development is no less dramatic in its long-term impact on the future of Islam itself, although its silent dynamics have almost eluded the media so far. Less well covered by the media than those other developments — indeed, almost entirely ignored — events in Indonesia give us deeper insights into a world religion's continuous dialogue with the process of modernization and, by extension, offer some universal elements of the responses of world religions to the disturbing effects of modernization.

This chapter does not attempt to deal with the substantive problems arising from the interaction between religion and the processes of development. It does not, for example, seek to examine the nature of the conflict

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This chapter represents the efforts of different individuals involved in various national dialogues on this topic in 1980-1981. These dialogues were conducted under the direction of Dr. Mochtar Buchori, deputy chairman for social sciences and humanities of the Indonesian Academy of Science. Although the author is indebted to many others for the ideas expressed here, he is solely responsible for any inaccuracies in the entire chapter.

between Islam and the structures of modern knowledge or value systems transmitted through development. The analysis initially assumes the validity of the religious experience and its overriding importance for societal changes in Indonesia; it proceeds on the premise that the religious vision of life and the goals of development will need to readjust to each other at a more meaningful level than at present. On these assumptions the chapter focuses on the institutional framework currently available for managing the relationship between religion and political authority and directing the religious responses to the processes of secularization that are taking place through development. The challenge to national policy is one of containing a vast heterogeneity of religious responses, ranging from inflexibly conservative positions to innovative and creative adaptations. Indonesia's government must provide a framework of communication and tolerance among them that avoids explosive and irrational conflict and sets in motion a process of collective selection and discrimination that enables the creative forces to assume leadership and guide the transition. In this context, the Indonesian experience offers many significant lessons.

A striking phenomenon that differentiates Indonesia from other Muslim countries is that, although the other countries have religious offices at the ministerial and subministerial levels, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Departemen Agama) in Indonesia becomes the crucial battleground for the diverse (and often mutually conflicting) politicoreligious aspirations of the governing circles and the opposition alike. Except in Egypt, religious offices in Muslim countries tend to assume the exclusive right to formulate and then implement religious policies, and thereby become instruments of state control over religious affairs. No genuine participation of nongovernmental organizations is sought; neither are these offices accountable to anyone outside the government. Even the exception to that situation, namely Egypt, does not provide any

means of articulating the needs and aspirations of those outside the governing circles. Although Al-Azhar, the universally venerated body of Muslim religious scholars (ulamas), is headed by a grand scholar (with the title of Shaikh Al-Azhar) with an office outside the governmental structure, the administrative jurisdiction over him and Al-Azhar itself comes under the authority of a state minister. Budget allocations and administrative appointments are made by him, not by the grand scholar. Consequently, only those scholars with the "right" understanding of the government's intentions have the opportunity to be appointed to that post.

DILEMMAS OF THE MEDIATING ROLE

The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs has changed greatly in its relationship to the political structure of power and in its role in society. During the first phase after its establishment in 1945, it developed into the forum in which members of the opposition could express their politicoreligious aspirations. Although the president appointed the minister of religious affairs, the person selected was not necessarily a spokesman for the government or an executor of governmental or presidential policies. The minister had to be someone who was acceptable to the different Islamic movements in the country. Furthermore, because of the active participation of various mass-based religious organizations, the ministry could not afford to be a mere mouthpiece of the government. It had to be able to interact positively with these different groups and to be sufficiently independent of government to be credible in its role.

In this complex situation the ministry is called on to play different and even conflicting role in a wide range of activities. The ministry promotes religious education through an extensive network of nongovernmental educational institutions, a network about one-fifth as large as the entire national system of education. At the same time, the ministry is required to ensure that the nongovernmental system conforms broadly to the state system

of education, with its entirely different aims and objectives. Likewise, although the ministry has to facilitate the integration of existing religious laws into the developing national legal system, it often has to act in a way detrimental to that task by responding sympathetically to the existing religious organizations' desire to preserve the integrity of these religious laws in anticipation of their full implementation in the future.

The ministry therefore must steer its way through the conflicting expectations about its role held by the various actors in the politicoreligious arena. Meanwhile, other developments that take place outside its jurisdiction further compound its problems. Various other ministries and subdepartments, pursuing their own programs and objectives, formulate policies that have implications for religious issues and that are often inconsistent with the main policies followed by the religious ministry. These initiatives invariably lead to hostile reactions from powerful nongovernmental organizations, with the Ministry of Religious Affairs caught in the cross fire of contending groups. In the effort to find a middle ground between opposing forces, the ministry is pushed into a mediating role that renders it ineffective. It tends to avoid initiatives of a creative nature and lacks a sense of constructive purpose. Instead, it devotes itself to formulating and implementing routine programs, thereby losing its capacity to respond to the genuine religious needs of the people.

The present situation poses a serious dilemma to both policymakers and the major organizations concerned with religious life in Indonesian society. The present institutional framework of the Ministry of Religious Affairs provides little scope for evolving dynamic, creative policies that can resolve the conflicts between religion and modernization. There is grave danger that, continued in its present form, it will stifle any genuine creative forces that emerge. On the other hand, the alternatives to the existing institutions raise a different set of problems, which can arise if the mediating role of the Ministry of

Religious Affairs is removed from the scene entirely. Such a situation could lead to a heightening of conflicts between opposing factions and a deepening of the cleavage in the country's religious life. Therefore, the effort to create an overarching framework that contains conflicts and provides for constructive interaction that can enrich the spiritual life of Indonesian society presents a crucial challenge.

To understand fully the origins and nature of this dilemma, it is necessary to examine the various efforts made to provide solutions that were fair and equitable to all parties with an active interest in the relevant issues. Within this context we should also examine the role played by a small group of young intellectuals seeking more viable and satisfying alternatives. Such an exercise requires a broad analysis of the main trends in religious thinking among the Muslims in Indonesia throughout its modern history and an identification of the crucial problems faced by Islam in contemporary Indonesian society. Such a survey also needs to define the role of the dynamic indigenous Islamic institutions that lie outside the modernized segment of Indonesian life, and their potential for regenerating and reorienting Indonesian religious consciousness.

The dynamics of interreligious relationships spring from the fact that Islam has not yet clarified its basic objectives in Indonesia — whether to pursue a legal-formalistic attitude toward life with its exclusive and sectarian orientation, or to open itself to a more cosmopolitan world view with tolerance toward other religious experiences and a readiness to gain new insights for developing itself. The approach to religious laws provides a reliable means of identifying the basic objectives pursued by Indonesian Muslims. Should past laws be accepted and implemented literally by being imposed superficially on the population at large, or should new methods of religious interpretation be pursued diligently? Should the religious approach to life be scriptural —

implying a strict adherence to scripture — or more accommodating to the real situations of human life?

The legal-formalistic attitude, with its scriptural approach to life, demands a monocultural environment for its religious expression, with rigorous conformity to the prescribed life pattern and no room for any deviation. Such an approach is not consonant with the cultural plurality this is one of the salient historical characteristics of Indonesian life. It leads to a fortress mentality among minority groups — whether Islamic or non-Islamic, whether religious in nature or not — and creates socially disruptive conditions that foment deep mistrust and suspicion between Islamic and other communities.

Efforts to overcome this deplorable situation through the reformulation of Islam's attitude toward life in general — a profoundly agonizing task prosenting extremely hard choices from a very limited list of options — provide another perspective of the grave problems facing Islam in Indonesia today. The intensification of these problems itself creates the conditions that stimulate the Islamic intellectual community to new efforts to discover the appropriate answers and make the adequate responses. It is the impetus needed to develop a creative process in which the positive legacy of the past is used to rediscover the essence of religious experience in its totality, which goes beyond the legal-formalistic framework and monocultural approach to life.

THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN RELIGION AND THE CENTERS OF POWER : A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The origins of Islam in Indonesia can be traced far back, but the spread of Islam as a major religion of the region took place only from the thirteenth century A.D., according to available historical accounts and archaeological evidence. The interpeninsular trade that became the means of propagating Islam concealed the profound fact that Islam actually came to Indonesia in the context of Sufi movements. In this first phase the Muslims organized

their efforts to proselytize the Indonesian population by establishing, propagating, and maintaining Sufi orders throughout the Archipelago.

Until recently Islamic studies presented Sufism as an institution that stood in diametrical opposition to Islamic law (**Shari'ah**). This distortion of historical reality has contributed to the erroneous view that the Islamic institutions in the Arabian peninsula were the direct source and inspiration of Islam in Indonesia. The existence of Sufi-leaning kingdoms in the northern part of Sumatra since the thirteenth century does not substantiate this view. It is more probable that the early Sufi kingdoms adopted their religious practices from regions such as present-day Bangladesh, rather than from Arabia proper.

The dialogue between coastal Islamic communities and the non-Islamic hinterland kingdoms of Java and Sumatra showed that a long and protracted chain of spiritual warfare took place between the mainly Sufi culture and the indigenous spiritualism deeply rooted in pre-Hindu and the subsequent Hindu-Buddhist religious beliefs of those hinterland kingdoms. That dialogue ended in bloodbaths during different periods, such as when the Kartasura (Central Java) ruler Amangkurat slaughtered more than six thousand of the Muslim religious scholars in his kingdoms, as well as the sixteen-year war between adherents of the Shari'ah and the followers of indigenous common laws in West Sumatra during the first half of the ninteenth century.

The dialogue Islam had with centers of power throughout its history in Indonesia reveals three main types of interaction. The first type, developed first by the Acehnese at the northern tip of the island of Sumatra, shows Islam as the policy that established unified kingdoms out of a plurality of smaller communities. In this type of relationship between Islam and the state, reality as defined by religious concepts is accepted formally as the doctrine of the state. With later developments, how-

ever, when political authorities and holders of state power became incapable of maintaining the purity of religious doctrine and upholding the religious norms, and failed to resist the penetration of foreign political power and the concomitant expansion of alien culture, the function of defending the teachings of Islam as formalized in the state doctrines was taken over by the religious scholars, both intellectually and institutionally. Subsequent military defeats suffered by the Indonesian rulers could not dislodge the fact that the view of governance held by the scholars had become accepted by the people. The former rulers lost their rights to reestablish their rules, since they were so throughly discredited in the eyes of the scholars by their collaboration with the enemy — so much so that it was impossible to bring about a genuine reconciliation between the two groups that could be regarded as the elite and the counterelite.

The second type of relationship between Islam and the state could be found in the case of West Sumatra. The absence of a strong central government in that area in the past created an environment in which the Muslims were able to develop their ideology, adapting and adhering to the existing indigenous beliefs and faith, and unchecked by any formal establishment. The sixteen-year-long Paderi (Priests') War demonstrated the capability of the religious scholars to challenge the authority of the indigenous pre-Islamic common law. The fact that the Dutch colonial government championed the common law and finally defeated these religious scholars militarily did not alter the fact that ultimately these scholars achieved what they had sought: the redefinition of reality in a fundamental manner. That common law is based on religious law, and that the latter is based on the Qur'an is the guiding principle accepted formally for the whole community ever since.

The third type of interaction between Islam and state power is symbolized by the Javanese case. Islam came to the island when the Hindu-Buddhist tradition began

to disintegrate. Although Islam contributed greatly to the final demise of the last East Javanese Hindu-Buddhist kingdom of Majapahit, it failed to replace that kingdom with a new central-hinterland power that was Islamic in nature. Instead, Islam contented itself with establishing small coastal kingdoms, whereas the Hindu-Buddhist tradition was left intact to become the nucleus of a future strong central power (**kraton**). With the emergence of a powerful kingdom in Central Java, not yet fully Islamic, which replaced the kingdom of Majapahit, a new interaction developed — a multikratonic relationship between the central power and peripheral kingdoms, analogous to a cluster of kratons in which the strong one had to keep the weaker ones always weak. The religious establishment in the form of those peripheral kingdoms (and later the religious scholars) emerged as the rivals contending for power with the ruling centers. An uneasy interaction developed and has continued between the two ever since.

Along with this type of relationship that grew in seventeenth-century Java, however, there were other developments, particularly in the modern period after independence. Religious scholars of other islands, especially from Minangkabau in West Sumatra and Aceh, who derived their own realities from their respective situations in the past, gave expression to different aspirations. Deriving those aspirations from historical situations in which the religious establishment played a more central role in the state and the structure of power, they found it hard until the last decade to get used to the idea of a peripheral relationship for Islam vis-a-vis the state. With the demise of the widely dispersed Islamic political party Masjumi in the last quarter of the 1950-1960 decade at the hand of the Sukarno government, as expressed by the national orientation of Java-concentrated Islamic movements such as the Nahdatul Ulama (Awakening of the Religious Scholars) and Muhammadiyah, the more centrally functioning relationship between Islam and the state in the past periods of Aceh and West

Sumatra became a local pattern, to be tolerated or not according to the wishes of the central government in Jakarta.

A surprising interaction did take place as a result of the dialogue between the peripheral and central variants — for example, the Javanese variant of the heretical branch of Islamic mystical movement, the Wahdaniyah. This "Javanese belief' (**kejawen**), in which full communion of a worshipper with his God is stressed in the most expressive form — the anthropomorphic doctrine of **manunggaling kawula lan Gasti** ("full union between the servant and his lord") — is prevalent in the Javanese elite culture up to modern times and forms the basic aspiration of the formally acknowledged **aliran kepercayaan** ("creed without religious affiliation") now supported heavily by the government and looked on with misgivings and outright anger by the leadership of Islamic movements at large.

One integrative element in what was seemingly a divisive and conflict-ridden process was the adoption of the pre-Islamic institution of **pesantren** by the Sufi leaders for their mystical endeavors. (**Pesantren**, the place of the **santri** — the learned ones in the scripture, derived from the word **shastera** — is a residential educational institution — not necessarily school — where the students try to master religious sciences and the members of the outside community get their basic religious public instruction and personal religious guidance from the master, called **kiyai**. Now there are about 7,000 **pesantren** dispersed among Indonesia's 65,000 villages, ranging from small compounds with only a few santris to those with more than 3,000 students schooled in different types of schools and courses, including nonreligious ones.) They transformed this institution into the place used for their collective religious rituals such as **nyepi** (literally. "isolating oneself"), which differs from the original Javanese concept of self-annihilation, as a temporal rejection of worldly life. Pesantren was transformed into

the place for pursuing a more purified life and gaining a deeper understanding of the "secret of the righteous life according a Allah." Individual instructions for attaining that secret (**ma'rifah**) in the form of personal guidance in rituals through different stages under a master (**murshid**), made up the main feature of life in pesantren for centuries, up to the time of the abrupt changes that followed the first onslaughts of the process of modernization.

RESPONSES TO THE PROCESS OF MODERNIZATION

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the colonial administration introduced the beginning of a socioeconomic change so profound that it influenced irrevocably the history of Muslims in the Archipelago, then known as the Netherlands Indies by the colonialists and Nusantara by the natives. The abrupt change consisted first in the forced cultivation system (**cultuurstelsel**) to provide the mother country with practically unpaid crops of export commodities, and subsequently the outright exploitation of large tracts of land by the big plantations and sugar mills owned by private capital. This socio-economic change resulted also in a profound change in the nature of adopted religious institutions such as pesantren. Capitalist exploitation of the economy resulted in the emergence of active rich farmers in Java's rural areas and a cluster of dynamic groups of native entrepreneurs in the towns.

With the improvements in communication, the newly emerging well-to-do class of farmers and urban entrepreneurs established links with the Middle East. They began to send their sons to institutions in the Middle Eastern countries to be educated. There was a growing consciousness of the need to reformulate and redefine the functions of the prevailing religious institutions and approaches. The **nouveaux riches** were not satisfied with the ritualistic approach of the Indonesian Sufist institutions. The reformist ideas that were gaining ground in

the religious states of the Middle East offered some basis for a reorientation of the religious establishment in Indonesia. The new elite consequently gave a new socioreligious thrust that put the main emphasis on developing a legalistic approach. The central concern became the interpretation, application, and adaptation of religious laws in relation to the needs of contemporary society. **Fiqh**, the discipline of religious law, became the main vehicle for the propagation of Islam. The formulation of religious laws came to be regarded as an important part of the religious scholars' functions, both socially and individually.

The very fact that this kind of legalism proceeded directly to "purify" Sufism of alleged un-Islamic excesses, and thereby made it dependent on the Shari'ah jurists (or juriconsults, according to the late J. Schacht) for legitimacy, proved beyond doubt that a fundamental shift both in ideology and power occurred in the second part of the nineteenth century. Accepted religious disciplines, known as the fourteen religious sciences, as formulated by the renowned sixteenth-century Egyptian Qur'anic exegesist Al-Sayuti in his **Itmam Al-Dirayah**, were adopted as the main curricula for **pesantren** from that time. In this way, Indonesian Muslims relied mainly on a form of adaptive legalism to face the challenge of modernization. One of the main functions of **pesantren** since the end of the last century has been to provide public forums in which religious scholars could instruct the general population in the detailed implementation of adaptive legalism — legalism that, while maintaining Islamic principles, also implied a gradual framework for change through religious laws.

Far from isolating themselves from the changes taking place outside their pesantrens, those religious scholars responded to modernization by formulating a new set of legal decisions reflecting a close interaction between the legacy of the past, as prescribed in the old law books, and the ever changing situation in real life. Legal

maxim, legal theories, and legal philosophies of the past were used to discover and formulate answers to questions posed by the community concerning injunctions for or against practices prevalent among the population. The legal maxims (**qawa'id al figh**) constitute practical guidance on how to make decisions in particular cases — for example, the popular maxims that whatever is unattainable in full should not be rejected entirely, that local customs should provide a basis for a legal decision, and that prevention of destructive action is given priority over performing good deeds. Legal theories (**usul al-fiqh**) as formulated since the ninth century A.D. provide the complete set of rules on how to treat Qur'anic sayings and the Prophet's traditions (**hadiths**) and apply them to real cases found in everyday life. Although not entirely accommodating to human needs, those theories do provide a good balance between literal adherence to the scripture and human reasoning. The legal philosophy (**hikmah al-tashri'**) of the last two centuries examines ways of relating religious laws to the development of sciences in various fields. Thus ablution, as the ritual required for praying, is explained in the context of health practices; fasting (**sawm**) is explained in a dietary context. Often shallow in spiritual content and meaningless scientifically, those explanations nevertheless provide a viable framework relating religious laws to actual conditions of life.

This approach, however has a serious drawback that renders it incapable of coping fully with the challenge of modernization. The drawback lies in the laws' complete lack of any social framework needed to formulate an adequate response to the processes of change and the problems of life as manifested through these processes. Those laws remain casuistic in nature, relevant only to individual cases without clarifying the fundamental aspects of life besieged by the process of modernization, such as the relation between transcendental faith and empirical scientific reasoning. The laws that were intended

to be the appropriate response to the challenge of modernization — a response that necessitates their adaptability to changing situations — become routinized and ossified into rigid rules with no capacity to adapt sensitively to human aspirations. What was a dynamic tool to remold society becomes a mass of formulas for the denial of creativity. A revitalizing process becomes an inert tradition, and the resulting adaptive legalism is transformed into legal traditionalism.

THE PURITAN REACTION

While the traditionalists were busy elaborating their casuistic laws, another development followed soon after. The inability of the traditionalists to provide a societal framework that could adequately respond to the challenge of modernization led to a reverse movement that campaigned in its fullest sense. According to this approach. Islam had to be purified from all aspects alien to its original character and purpose as a liberating religion for mankind as a whole. It had to be returned to its primary sources : the Qur'an and the Prophet's traditions. Human intervention, whether in the form of independent interpretative methods or some other form, had to be rejected for its deviationistic effects on Islam. Putting Islam on the right path meant a return to the original mission : to relive the golden age of the Prophet and his companions.

The simplicity of the faith should constitute the strength needed to face the onslaughts of modernization. The explicit injunction to use one's reasoning faculties should form the basic attitude toward the development of scientific knowledge. The injunctions for equality should be translated into egalitarian economic structures. The direct return to the fountainhead of religion would also diminish the dominant role of the religious scholars in religious life. Innovation (**ijtihad**) symbolizes the direct relation between Allah and His worshipper, regardless of the degrees of the person's religious knowledge.

The liberation from religious traditionalism means

the elaboration of a new societal framework and structure that could translate the basic norms into social reality in the life of the Muslims. Stress on economic undertakings, pursuit of nonreligious sciences, and establishment of health services for the public, combined with charitable works for orphans, old people, and the disabled, made up the main elements in the way of life advocated by the puritanical movements such as Muhammadiyah and Persis (Persatuan Islam or Islamic Unity). The first of these is now the largest of the movements, having originated in West Sumatra and currently headquartered in the central Javanese town of Yogyakarta. With a chain of thousands of schools and hundreds of health clinics, Muhammadiyah has left its imprint on the modern history of Indonesia. Persis, a more locally situated movement and more narrowly oriented in its social perspectives than Muhammadiyah, now takes a somewhat more militant viewpoint in religious questions. Other movements of similar persuasion, such as the organization of Indonesians of Arabic extraction, Al-Irshad, have developed lesser variants of this basic puritanical strain.

The call for a more simplified religious belief combined with the stress on developing a modernistic societal framework should work ideally as the logical response to the challenge of modernization. The actual experience, however, shows that this is far from the reality. It is true that the societal framework developed so far has been able to sustain social activities quite extensive in range and scale, but difficulties abound when trying to adapt this framework to respond to the main challenges of modernization. The charitable character of their works fails to take into account the structural nature of poverty. It is true that the strong emphasis these movements place on educational programs has aided the establishment of both religious and modern secular schools throughout the country and has facilitated the emergence of Muslim scientists and scholars in practically all disciplines. From this, however, it would not be correct to conclude that the

movements have been successful in reconciling religious ideology with modern knowledge. The attitude toward the modern empirical sciences is still ambivalent in that the approaches developed so far are apologetic in describing the relationship between Islam and modern science. As a result, a spurious reconciliation between the two emerges in the most unfortunate form: whatever is good about the various sciences is claimed to originate in Islam (or, at least, anticipated and corroborated by this religion), whereas the undesired aspects of the same sciences are blamed on the "Western materialistic and secular civilization" that produces them.

The failure of the puritanical movements to develop a viable response to the challenge of modernization originates in their insistence on purification. Such a demand stipulates the total acceptance of the Scripture and a noninterpretive adherence to it. What emerges is a literal approach to the understanding of religious teachings; strict Scripturalism becomes unavoidable. Although the pursuit of knowledge and egalitarian goals, a readiness to concretize the religious consciousness into a corresponding societal framework, and the liberation of individuals from the domination of religious scholars are the main pillars of modernistic puritanism in Islam, strict Scripturalism obstructs any significant new approaches to religious beliefts and, consequently, new ideological adaptations.

The transcendental concerns of these puritanical movements, despite their ostensible dynamism and modern orientation, lose their relevance in the face of the growing consciousness of the ned for a humanism significantly different from the one developed so far by the traditional ideologies. The inability of the Islamic puritanical movements to put the whole religious experience in a sociohistorical perspective is exposed glaringly in their pet slogan of presenting the **zakat** (almsgiving) injunction as Islam's basic concern for social justice. Although they understand zakat's role as a redistributive tool to

secure the basic needs of the poor, they remain unable to relate its nature to the social origins of poverty : the exploitative social structures that grow from a lack of any limit on individual property.

Although the Iranian revolution provides an opportunity to observe how a just society can be developed from a middle position that corresponds neither to the accepted capitalist model nor to the socialist one, the theoretical underpinnings of the undertaking are still shaky and seem somewhat artificial. How to transform the ideal frameworks developed so far into constitutional and societal ones remains a hard question to answer. Even if we grant that the Iranian revolution is committed to positive social goals — by accepting at face value the countervailing force it creates against the repressive nature of a Westernised type of modernization — Islamic puritanism still must find satisfying answers to the fact that many puritan Muslims collaborate with oppressive regimes in the Muslim countries to suppress the genuine aspirations of the people. The ideological contradictions in such situations are blatantly illustrated by the attitude of Pakistani Muslim purists toward the execution of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. They have argued that the execution was feasible according to Islamic constitutional laws but at the same time are eager to claim that one of the basic political convictions of Islam is democracy.

The literal implementation of Qur'anic and Prophetic injunctions in the form in which they were elaborated in their original historical context and without modification by new humanitarian perceptions of the dignity of the human being as an individual has bizarre consequences. It leads to atrocities by law, such as cutting off the hands of thieves, stoning to death those guilty of adultery, or publicly beheading criminals sentenced to death. The same attitude continues to place woman in a position subordinate to man, at least in practice. At best, the Islamic puritanical approach provides only a partial reinterpretation of Qur'anic verses and the Prophet's

traditions. Although it denounces slavery as un-Islamic according to the principle of the gradual approach of Islam to the abolition of slavery, based on the equality of human beings as explicitly upheld by the Qur'an and the Prophet's traditions, it fails to adopt a similar approach to the issue of a man having more than one wife. On this matter it merely prescribes moral injunctions to limit oneself voluntarily to one wife, but it does not give legal decisions at all. The same thing applies to the question of population control. Many eminent so-called modernist puritans reject the idea of family planning and see it as a plot to decrease the number of Muslims, even part of an alleged Christianization scheme.

Their views on inequality are equally superficial, since they do not go to the root of the matter, but merely accuse both capitalism and Marxism of being unable to eliminate inequality. These Muslims, however, purists themselves, are unable to provide more effective alternatives in terms of their own ideology. Their demand for equality consists only of protection of Muslim members of the middle class against the increasing economic power of Chinese businessmen and those of Chinese descent. It is not strange, then, that their main complaints are usually against what they term cultural penetration from the West, with its ensuing tendencies toward moral decadence among Indonesian Muslims, especially youth. A refinement on this theme is the persistent accusation that modern scientists still deify the natural sciences.

The failure of such Muslim modernists, as they are called by U.S. social scientists on dubious grounds, to respond positively to the challenge of the modernization process can be seen by comparing their views with what actually takes place in Indonesia. Registered acceptors or participants in national family-planning programms are increasing dramatically. They are still unable to combat so-called indicators of moral decadence, despite their concentration on indoctrinating the nation against it. Members of the younger generation of practicing Muslims

increasingly express their dismay over their limited options to move within the confines of ethnic, religious, economic, cultural, and political barriers. The empty promises to bring ultimate justice and true democracy merely bore them. The speed with which the young reading public snapped up the recently published memoirs of the late young religious rebel, Ahmad Wahib, with its denunciation of so-called modernist puritanism, shows the extent of disappointment with this self-proclaimed reformation.

Modern Islamic education in Indonesia reflects the dilemma that now faces Indonesian Muslims. In need of far-ranging and complete acquisition of modern technology, institutions of Islamic education among the modernist Muslims are beset by two equally irrelevant issues: how to balance religious instructions against nonreligious ones, and how to explain modern sciences in a Qur'anic context. The best minds in physics, biology, medicine, chemistry, and astronomy are engaged in futile exercises that will give only shallow and short-lived relief. The modern Islamic education system, however, cannot afford to cut itself off from much needed natural scientists and experts despite their unconvincing endeavours. These endeavours at best succeed only in producing false or contrived explanations reconciling Islam with modern science and find expression in high-sounding terms such as "an Islamic framework of science". They present their religion in such terms as "Islam as scientific discipline" instead of trying to develop a new universal framework that can overcome sectarian and exclusive tendencies.

Whereas the adaptive legalism of the traditionalist religious scholars develops into a rigid traditionalism that fails to respond satisfactorily to the problems of modernization, Islamic modernist puritanism tends to be vague and amorphous in its ideology, without any coherent direction. As a result, its carefully elaborated basic framework of rationalization is readily used to support exploitative social structures and repressive military

regimes throughout the Islamic world on the one hand, and the agents of change in an oppositional role on the other.

THE PROLIFERATION OF DISSIDENT GROUPS

It is not strange, then, that elements dissatisfied with that kind of puritanism, seeking to establish — as their own answer to the current splinter groups — a neo-orthodoxy with various objectives, have grown up in Indonesia. This is largely a result of the inconclusive efforts at puritanical reformation over the last seven decades, which at best can be characterized as a period of arrested development. The splinter groups that have emerged have only one characteristic in common : each claims for itself the title rightful Muslims. Each group views all other Muslims outside its own community as infidels, which has further intensified the fortress mentality and produced various psychological defense mechanisms such as forms of messianism, which are often found in many of these movements. These traits are often condemned by both the established movements — the traditionalists and puritans — but these splinter groups have shown their viability by surviving against all odds (including government bans instigated by the established movements).

Divisive in nature, the splinter groups become a haven for talented people who feel strangled in their religious expression by either the legalism of the traditionalists or the Scripturalism of the puritans. In this sense, the real contribution of these neo-orthodox splinter groups. such as the Islam Jama'ah movement in East Java and the Istiqamah Group in West Java, just disbanded by the government, is the fact that they provide opportunity for the critique of the established traditionalism and Scripturalism and offer some kind of alternative. This they become the last resorts for many people who are otherwise ready to abandon Islam altogether.

This role is evident in the development of a new

phenomenon in the life of Islam in Indonesia today — that is, the use of the splinter groups as political tools by competing factions within the ruling circles. Each political faction feels the need to be included in the Islamic community (**ummah**) but without being idenitfied with either the traditionalists or the modernist puritans. Their shallow Islamic identification, labelled by one observer "sociocultural Muslim", as opposed to the political (and fuller) one, makes it easier for these diverse political factions to patronize these splinter groups, albeit discreetly, so as not to antagonize the majority of the population. The splinter groups play one further important role : the countervailing function of containing the militant demands of the established movements for restrictive policies toward non-Muslims. By insisting on the necessity of consensus on the question of non-Muslims, the ruling circles can use these neo-orthodox splinter groups to stall the demands of the militants.

The emergence of short-lived splinter groups within the Islamic polity in Indonesia coincides also with another kind of neo-orthodoxy — the revival of Sufism. Although Sufi movements still have to seek legitimacy from Shari'ah juriconsults, religious scholars today exercise little control over them. The inability of the traditionalists to provide an appropriate response to the needs of development and modernization, as well as their inability to contain the puritanical movements and the neo-orthodox splinter groups, has given a new impetus to Safi leaders to provide their own answers to the problems faced by Islam in Indonesia.

Sufism has a long tradition of absorbing outside influences into its uniquo spiritualism. By stressing the salvation of the individual worshipper through meditation, introspective personal piety, and other modes of inner reflection, Sufism has been able throughout its history to adapt its outer forms while retaining its total integrity. This absorptive capacity clearly attracts many people experiencing psychological strains in reconciling their

needs in various contemporary life situations with their conventional religious morality and their formal faith. Sufism's spiritual core, the universal sharing of personal experiences in search of Ultimate Truth, gives its adherents the strong sense of belonging that is so intensely needed by modern man. Self-identification with a large, active brotherhood certainly helps to overcome the sense of alienation that is prevalent in modern life. This explains why a revival of Sufism seems to be likely in Indonesia now, despite the long-recognized backward-looking orientation of Sufism. Visits to sacred tombs, frequent voluntary self-withdrawals (**khalwat**), the personal allegiance (**bai'ah**) to the masters, and similar features of a Sufi's life in general constitute the orientation to the past so prevalent among Sufi movements.

The way Indonesian adherents of Sufism reconcile the conflicting demands of forward-looking modernization with the backward-looking orientation of its own tradition is a curious phenomenon in itself. Merchants, rich farmers, government employees, and other professionals are required by their respective professions to be dynamic and forward-looking in their life orientation. By observing pro forma outward manifestations of a backward-looking Sufi orientation, but still not allowing such an orientation to direct them in their occupations and their everyday life, they are able to retain the modern world view their professions demand. By visiting the sacred tombs and expressing openly their full allegiance to their masters, they can symbolically participate in Sufism while continuing to be the shrewd merchants, enterprising farmers. industrious employees they were before their conversion to Sufism. This kind of adaptation, though interesting, provides only a shallow understanding of the basic faith of Islam, which stresses the compatibility of the external secular life and the inner spiritual life of a Muslim. That is why Sufism still does not satisfy the religious scholars' intellectual needs. Hence the old problem of mutual distrust and recrimination between non-Sufi scholars and Sufi leaders, especially the nonscholar ones.

The politicization of Sufi movements, as in the case of the neo-orthodox splinter groups, is also revealing. Besides using local Sufi groups as political clients to back up their authority, local government officials are often converted to Sufism for the same reason that they relate to the splinter groups: while finding a spiritual refuge from their anxieties, they can still retain their loyalty to the government. Although the past history of Sufism in Indonesia is replete with cases of such messianistic and millenarianistic movements emerging and again rapidly declining and disintegrating — as is illustrated by the more than four hundred local rebellions against the Dutch colonial administration during the nineteenth century in Java alone — the present nonconfrontational character of the Sufi movements makes it easier for the government officals to relate to them. When politicization does occur in these movements, the process often furthers the initiative of the government and is beneficial to government policy as a whole. By declaring them nonpolitical, it can at the same use them for its own political purposes and show its attitude of acceptance toward the Islamic movement at large without having to encourage movements that are more clearly opposed to its policies.

Hence the emergence of the unique response of the ordinary traditionalist Muslims in Indonesia now, of having a double loyalty — to their Sufi masters and to the Shari'ah religious scholars at the same time. The Sufi masters provide them with spiritual salvation, and the non-Sufi scholars provide the channel through which they can express political views that diverge from those of the government! One can be tempted by this kind of dual approach in religious life — salvation seeking together with the practical need to bend religious injunctions here and there — to see the beginnings of an unformulated secularization process. The constant need to reconcile competing drives — the loyalties to the things of the past and the need to calculate the imperatives of the worldly present — can also be interpreted as the

pragmatic dialogue between religion and development. This type of problem solving, however, by evading the hard process of making conscious choices in all their spiritual implications — not just as haphazard compromises undertaken by these new Sufists — brings with it serious dangers of being marooned in a spiritual middle ground, unable to compete fully in worldly matters because of minimal adherence to certain religious teachings, but at the same time also unable to get the deep satisfaction and peace of mind expected from spiritual affiliation with the Sufi movement. In a sence, then, what is achieved is not any meaningful solution to the central problem of defining one's identity in the modern context, in both the spiritual and secular sense.

PANCHASILA : THE PRIMACY OF RELIGION AND THE MODERN STATE

This complex situation, which has witnessed the emergence of different types of responses to the process of modernization, is made even more complex by the issue of secularism, which has entered the scene in the last decade. Although Muslim intellectuals had been beset by the question of the separation of church and state since the establishment of formal Islamic organizations during the first three decades of this century, those organizations themselves did not feel an acute need to respond explicitly to the idea of a secular state until recent years. One reason was that those in favor of the idea never declared their ideology in clearly defined terms. They were satisfied merely to express a general need for a modern state viable for all sections of the society. Even when the need to decide the nature of the newly independent state arose in 1945, these nationalists — as distinguished from the Muslim ideologues — agreed to soft-pedal their secular aspirations by accepting a compromise with their Muslim counterparts in the form of the **panchasila** state philosophy, a set of five principles for guiding the life of the nation. The issue of a state philosophy, posed as a national problem for the religious scholars, was

resolved in such a generalized way that eventually it came to be interpreted loosely in different ways for different purposes. The five **silas** or principles — namely, belief in one God, acceptance of humanitarianism, commitment to Indonesian nationality and social justice, and acceptance of people's sovereignty through representatives — could provide the formulation for keeping Islam free from a direct relationship with the state, without ever saying so. As a result, the Islamic movements at that time perceived no unacceptable contradiction between the state philosophy and their own politicoreligious aspirations.

This state philosophy declares belief in one God to be one of its basic tenets, which means no antireligious aspirations are given the right to grow in Indonesia. Nontheocratic acceptance of religion in the life of the nation provides Indonesia with a model of reconciliation between leading nonreligious and religious values, to be preserved and managed through a delicate act of balancing. Panchasila caters to the fundamental yearnings of the Muslim majority for a clearly pronounced religious participation in politics. This acceptance of the religious role in the political life of the nation differentiates panchasila from the exclusive ideologies of that time. How to provide for a society's religious aspirations by giving it a central role in the sharing of power, yet safeguard the system against the danger of a theocratic state, is the question panchasila seeks to answer.

Puritan Muslim intellectuals and traditionalist religious scholars challenged the state philosophy, not because they rejected it but because a crucial formula to maintain their political role in a leading position — namely, the phrase "with obligations to implement Islamic Law for adherents of Islam" — had been deleted from the preamble of the then prevailing version of the 1945 constitution. The Islamic challenge to promulgate the state philosophy and the constitution containing it resulted in a constitutional deadlock, which was overcome only by Sukarno's presidential decree to "return to the

1945 constitution" in July 1959. The dissolution of the constituent assembly and the elected parliament of 1955, together with the introduction of a guided democracy with fully or partially government-appointed legislative assembles ever since — the present government's rejection of that kind of so-called democracy notwithstanding — made it impossible for even law scholars to discuss the question of secularism openly. At the same time the lack of meaningful discussions on the merits and dangers of separating state power from religious authority made it impossible for the government to adopt a clear policy on this matter. The government has been forced to maintain the status quo of noncommitment to secularism ever since.

This stalemate induced various Islamic organizations to pronounce their own cultural views of rejecting the atheistic ideology of secularism, introduced by capitalist and socialist ideologies as something alien to the nature of the Indonesian people and contradictory to the teachings of Islam. Various developmental policies were, and still are, branded as secular in character by those religious circles and accordingly opposed vehemently by the Islamic mass media. Should the government try to defend a particular policy branded as secularistic in nature by those people, the pointing finger is unfailingly directed to "certain secularist elements within the government". These recriminations against the secularists, which have continued for two decades. gathered such an intensity that President Suharto has been forced lately to declare that Indonesia is not a secular state and panchasila is not a secular ideology. One case proves this stalemate clearly. In 1973 the government tabled a marriage-act bill before the Parliament. It was perceived by religious scholars and nearly all sectors of Islamic movements as secular in nature. The opposition to it, including a temporary occupation of the plenary chamber of the Parliament, was so strong, that the government was forced to shelve the bill and adopt a more or less Islamic act instead — the one legally in force now.

From these accounts it is logical to compare the situation to the present one in Pakistan : the dismantling of Western laws and the promulgation of Islamic laws in their place. The tactics (and antics) of Islamic groups that oppose secularistic policies of the government, including such actions as walkouts from parliamentary voting sessions, clearly intimidate other sections of society to the extent that the latter are compelled to take a low profile for the time being. Further observation, however, reveals that dynamic forces are at work under this superficial conformity. It is here, beneath the surface, that the real developments take place. There was already partial adaptation to the thrust of modernization since colonial times, as is apparent from the responses of both traditionalist and puritah Muslims to the challenge of the Westernized school system. The modernist puritants adopted the Westernized school system in toto and developed a framework appropriate for that kind of undertaking. They were called Muslim modernists by Western historians and social scientists precisely because of this trait. and the name is applied to them even today, particularly when religious militants launch attacks against secularists. The traditionalists, likewise developed an early response in the form of modifying their age-old religious systems, which evolved into the modified school system called the **madarasah** adopted by their pesantrens.

THE SEARCH FOR A MODERNIST ISLAMIC FAITH

This tradition, with its religious underpinnings, runs strongly in a steady — albeit nonverbal — manner. Sons and daughters of pious religious scholars gradually enter the modern world properly. either as graduates of modern and fully secularized universities or as professionals educated in specialized disciplines. True, there is a tendency toward militancy in an increasing number of modernized Muslims. but another important development has also occurred simultaneously. In the early 1970s a Muslim intellectual, formerly educated in the traditional pesantren way and subsequently graduated from the State

Islamic University, called for a radical restructuring of the creed. Nurcholish Madjid spelled out the idea of **secularization of nonsacral teachings of Islam developed throughout the ages.** He argued that except for the essential beliefs constituting the central faith of Islam, all teachings should be reviewed to accommodate the ever changing human situation. He accepts the theologically acknowledged central position of man in the life of the universe (God creates man as His vice-regent on this earth and puts him in the best form of creation, so that he is able to pursue the righteous way of life beneficial to all other creatures and the universe as a whole) as the basis for his desacralization of the unsacral beliefs of Islam. This call, according to Madjid, is the way to secularize life without becoming secularist. Secularism and secularization of Islam are not identical, since in the very idea of secularization the basic adhernece to Islam is still preserved. It is intended only to make Islam relevant to the contemporary world, not to abrogate its right to regulate human life.

A bitter backlash from the militant Muslim modernists followed Madjid's exposition, and he was forced to moderate his position to accommodate views closer to the general trends of Islamic thought. He has been able so far to resist pressure to retreat entirely from his main ideas, and he has modified his approach only to the extent that he admits that secularization is a misnomer while still maintaining the basic concept connoted by the word. In doing so, he is able to deflect the attacks of powerful cretics and continues to enjoy the confidence and intellectual respect of tens of thousands of young Muslim university graduates and professionals beset by the problem of reconciling their basic religious beliefs with the demands of the professional roles assigned to them in a society undergoing a process of modernization.

Madjid's call to a modernistic Islamic faith is echoed in the responses of various groups of young intellectuals. A group of activists in rural development, for example,

tries to formulate the framework of a movement to develop the traditional institution of pesantren as the base for the socioeconomic transformatoin of the rural areas. In this endeavour the group must develop its own viable religious ideology in the face of fatalism and the belief in predestined roles still prevalent among village religious communities. This type of effort to deal with problems of modernization in the name of Islam, as undertaken by different groups in various places, represents the diversified pattern of Islamic responses to the current situation in Indonesia.

The main point of contention between the puritan Muslim modernists and those who try to accommodate the demands of modernization lies in the methods of treating the very sources of Islam : the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet. For the puritan modernists, these two sources comprise the bulk of teachings to be implemented fully or partially in a literal way, whereas for the accommodating intellectuals, the Qur'anic verses and the traditions of the Prophet represent an ideological core, with the main function of providing an inspirational center for the responses Muslims must formulate in various individual or collective situations. In this approach, personalization of the different responses is inevitable, making a single pattern of religious thinking practically unattainable. Conformity of thought is not a desirable end in itself, and the plurality of opinions and religious views becomes the natural expression of the search for the truth.

This flexible framework for developing relgiious views is, however, anathema to the militant so-called modernists. One possible reason for the increasing militancy of their religious views, which express strong opposition to those government policies they deem secularistic, is a sense of being threatened by these loose, flexible methods of interpreting basic sources of Islamic faith. Hence the sigh of relief detected among them since Nurcholish Madjid has shown what they regard as a readiness to

recant his mistakes. A comment on how these so-called heretics (a term of criticism in religious teachings employed by the majority of Muslims everywhere, since the traditions of the Prophet threaten such people with purgatorial punishments in the life hereafter) should pursue their aspirations is worthwhile here, although it falls outside the scope of this narration. These innovators cum reformers are expected to present their undertaking and reinterpretation not as a reformation, since such a presentation connotes that the literal interpretation of the Scripture is not adequate. Purification of religious teachings from un-Islamic elements — a process that took place over the past hundred years and has coalesced into the present ossified attitudes and militant tendencies — is proudly viewed by these so-called modernists as the one and only reformation (**tajdid**) needed to reinvigorate Islam. They regard further developments as merely heresies (**bid'ah**) that should be condemned categorically. Tactically, whatever the young intellectuals formulate should be presented as a continuation of the previous puritanical reformation, not as a departure from it.

The case of one young intellectual is noteworthy here. He works in the Ministry of Religious Affairs and for the past ten years was branded a deviationist for his tolerance toward the Ahmadiyah splinter group. A few years ago he argued that Islam should consider the sociohistorical context of the Prophetic traditions when formulating the framework needed to implement the Scripture. He brought up the question of the spirit of **zakat** (almsgiving to the poor) and inquired whether it should be kept in its present form of charitable deeds incorporated into the Islamic way of life. According to him, we should understand the historical background of this injunction. It was revealed to the Prophet during the time when the commercial activities of the Arabs in the market places were the main occupation of the ordinary people, and agriculture was the main field of work for the elite (the cost of claiming the arid lands and maintaining them agriculturally as

viable production units was so high that only the elite could undertake agricultural enterprises). Consequently, Islam imposes zakat of between 5 and 10 percent of the harvests reaped as an egalitarian measure to redistribute wealth in a limited way in favour of the majority of the population, who are usually the poor traders,. It was the rich agricultural elite, the minority in the community, who were taxed. This young intellectual questioned the continuance of this kind of imposition in a sociohistorical context that had changed entirely. Commerce is now concentrated in the hands of the few in Southeast Asia, and agriculture is dispersed among the poorest sections of the society — so much so that it is impossible to carry out the literal implementation of the zakat injunction without contradicting its previous egalitariam spirit.

To continue the imposition of a 10-percent zakat on the diminishing harvests of the poor, while letting the rich escape with only 2.5 percent of their yearly profits, constitutes a flagrant violation of the very sense of justice that Islam has nurtured from the beginning of its history. This restructuring of zakat naturally caused an uproar, not because the militants did not understand the basic issues involved, but because they were indignant at the call to discard the definite percentage already prescribed by the Prophet himself. When another young intellectual called for enlarging the zakat injunction to include professionals with their high incomes, as well as narrowing the application of the same injunction to a few types of farming jobs only, without changing a word from the Prophetic traditions, he was praised by the Islamic media as a resourceful intellectual worthy of the name reformer.

The basic contention of whether to follow a literal interpretation of the Qur'anic passages and Prophetic traditions relates to the attitude taken toward interpreting the Islamic heritage. According to the militants, the reigns of the Prophet and his subsequent first four Righteous Caliphs, regardless of their time span, represent a golden age to be emulated in its entirety — a period in

which there was no separation of the power of the state from that of the religion. Islam has no church, but its laws should be the base of the state's life.

Intellectuals more accommodating to the modernization process think differently. The past heritage of Islam, according to them, should be recast in an entirely new context. The development of human history, with its full impact on human society and the personality of the individual, imposes its own laws beside the laws formulated by Islam in the past. One of these impacts is the need to separate the power of religious establishments from that of the state. The subjective nature of Islamic judgement of events should be tempered by the objective nature of scientific findings. Only by giving concessions to such an extent can Islam redefine its own priorities, reformulate its world view, and restructure its teachings — a process needed to place Islam in the mainstream of human development. It is natural, then, that a group of young Muslim activists believing in tolerance to different ideologies as well as religious affiliations emerged a few years ago, under the banner of working for humanitarian causes.

The new group, involving a considerable number of people, is led by a young Muslim intellectual. It seeks ways to make amends for the traumatic experience of the communists in the second half of the 1960s at the hands of Islamic groups. More than half a million people died — most of them innocent — and more than a hundred thousand were detained for long periods. More than ten thousand of these detainees were still in jail when the young Muslim intellectuals' institution was established. This institution began soliciting funds from society, mobilizing volunteers, and creating goodwill to secure the release of the remaining detainees, preparing their introduction into normal life after their release and helping them rehabilitate themselves on a self-reliant basis. In the process these active intellectuals find that an openness to attitudes that are different and even antagonistic to

those they themselves hold is essential in enabling them to serve these unfortunate victims fully and satisfactorily. The nonconformist attitude of the detainees toward everything in the prevailing system, including religious beliefs held in high esteem by those helping them, is understood as the natural product of their own past ideology as well as the inhuman ordeal they had to undergo during their long detention period.

When extended to religious attitudes, this discipline of tolerance toward ideologies alien to Islamic teachings transforms itself into tolerance toward internal developments within Islam itself. Bold religious ideas and concepts began to get a hearing from these young intellectuals. Criticisms levelled against the religious establishment, such as indictments of its indifference to the exploitation of Islam by existing unjust structures for their own purposes, began to be circulated to a limited extent in printed form. A group of young professionals even began to publish a mimeographed journal questioning the validity of established theological doctrines such as the doctrine of the orthodoxy about predetermination and free will (**qadja and qadar**), which forms one of the **arkan al-iman** ("six principles of faith").

Much depends on the outcome of the dialogue between these contending schools of thought. The ideological consensus that will emerge as the agreed social solutions to the central problems now faced by Islam will be crucial for the future of Indonesian society, since it will constitute the meeting ground needed for the creation and dynamic interaction between the Islamic center and other forces of change in Indonesian society.

WHERE THE DILEMMA LIES

The Ministry of Religious Affairs was born as a political compromise during the early days of independence. By accepting panchasila as the state philosophy, and the 1945 constitution based on it, Islamic groups got an institutional substitute for their former theocratic

political aspirations in the form of this ministry. Although probably intended as a temporary compromise by more secularist groups, like the framework of the state philosophy as envisaged by the Islamic Polity at that time, the ministry developed into a permanent fixture with a unique role.

In the beginning, it was concerned mainly with the promotion of Islamic education in its various systems and the supervision of religious life in general (including establishing the rights to officiate at marriages and divorces and to settle disputes concerning inheritance according to religious laws). The educational wing soon flowered into a full-fledged national program engaged in formulating guiding principles for modern religious education (including the use of the school system in the primary-secondary-tertiary levels, the maintenance of educational standards through state examination systems, and related matters); giving aid and assistance to private schools run by different organizations; and developing pilot projects to refine educational systems that already existed. At present, the religious-school system is one-fifth as large as the national education system. A dual national system of education inevitably emerged, with one-fifth of it under the jurisdiction of the ministry, including fourteen state Islamic universities in different provinces, whereas the rest comes under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs. Another inevitable consequence is the ensuing confusion, which defies internally consistent solutions to the problems the dual system creates.

The supervision of religious life also developed into a miscellany of different kinds of activity, from the yearly task of organizing pilgrimages to Mecca for at least thirty thousand Muslims, to monitoring (and banning, if necessary) religious and intellectual trends that were contrary to the beliefs of the religions acknowledged by the state, including the ban on discussing openly the merits and dangers of atheism. This wing of the ministry

developed into the present-day octopus with so many arms (information, planning, religious courts, supervision of endowments, maintenance of mosques and other places of religious worship, and so on) that it is difficult to find a government agency without its counterpart within the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The ministry now is hopelessly entangled in so many overlapping joint projects with other government agencies that it seems to act more and more as a state within a state, with these works resembling joint enterprises between two sovereign states. The ministry's activities in the health field can be used here to illustrate this kind of entanglement: nutrition education, public health, and family planning are all major fields in which the ministry is active with different types of programs in each.

The ministry's overlapping functions are apparent from the purposes formulated at the beginning of its life:

1. to promote religious life in general;
2. to safeguard acknowledged religions from elements detrimental to their existence;
3. to supervise nongovernmental activities in religious fields and provide them with necessary assistance.

The promotion of religious life now includes the mammoth undertakings of providing religious lectures and texts (including the preparation and printing of both the Qur'an and the Bible on a massive scale) and establishing agencies to organize and supervise pilgrimages to Mecca. Its works include the establishment of an Ulama Council of Indonesia at national, provincial, and subprovincial levels, as the meeting point between government agencies and nongovernmental religious organizations. From this point of view, the ministry plays a variety of positive roles for religious life in Indonesia, the most important being legitimizing both government and nongovernmental initiatives in the religious field; clarifying and expounding the aspirations of nongovernmental religious organizations to other government

agencies; mediating in brief but potentially troublesome conflicts and misunderstandings among government and nongovernmental institutions about each other's intentions over sensitive matters such as the recently proposed Panca Agama (joint religious instructions in schools among adherents of different religions); and pioneering new forms of religious education, albeit still by presenting and implanting conventional religious views. The ministry forms a model of a moderating institution in a society troubled by deep cleavages in nearly every facet of life, including the religious one.

Nevertheless, a considered appraisal of the ministry's role shows that its negative effects on balance outweigh all these positive aspects. This is manifested in the ministry's present predicament. It is now embroiled in a bitter fight for survival between those who demand a more secular orientation toward religion and the so-called Muslim modernists described earlier. In the past the ministry acted only as a traffic officer in disputes between various sections of the community. It is now under pressure to develop a more active posture — that is, resisting ideas that run contrary to the wishes of the main religious nongovernmental establishment. The ministry has attempted to cope with this problems and to limit the articulation of ideas and opinions of the younger generation through an ingenious device : let diversity run in full force, if necessary by giving rights of expression to minority Islamic groups and splinter groups to carry out their activities. This Islamic pluralism, it is hoped. will liberate the Muslims from narrow conformity to the formal orthodox doctrines. The liberation is a necessary prelude to the emergence of healthy responses to the process of modernization, beyond the formalistic response that reiterates Islam's superiority to other systems of life without showing anything concrete to support that claim.

This kind of pluralism, in the Islamic sphere, of course, runs counter to the institutionalized nature of the activity of the ministry. Although it is beneficial for the

Islamic polity to have the ministry's legitimizing role and various form of support, especially in the field of religious education (resulting, among other things, in the emergence of those young intellectuals who question the feasibility of retaining the ministry itself), the ministry's inherently bureaucratic approach to socioreligious developments is a formidable obstacle to this very pluralism. Moreover, the ministry's predilection for centralizing authority in itself in formulating religious policies — at least to the extent that they concern the religious perceptions of the Muslims — makes it impossible to develop an adequate and viable framework of Islamic pluralism in a governmental context.

Consequently the fundamental question is that of the very existence of the ministry itself. The following reflect the ethical dilemma inherent in maintaining a Ministry of Religious Affairs:

1. How can the ministry's symbolic role as guarantor of a religious orientation in national life be translated into a more functional role of promoting diversity — not only among different religions and cultural groupings but, more important, within the Islamic polity itself?

2. How can the ministry define in a holistic sense the role of religion in development, without merely making religion supportive of development in other sectors with their own nonreligious global and sectoral objectives?

3. How can the ministry shoulder the burden of giving religion a central role in development, while at the same time promoting the necessary processes of socioeconomic transformation and modernization — two things that often run counter to each other in the developing countries?

4. It is possible to contain the tendency for religious bureaucratization within the ministry so as to

fulfill the acute need to accommodate the creativity of the intellectuals, with their search for new insights and perceptions in the religious life?

It is increasingly felt that the ministry is not a part of the process of social transformation, but even becomes an obstacle to the changes needed to create more fertile ground for the religious aspirations that could give a more adequate response to the problems of modernization. The new religious conscience that presses for a just, democratic, and egalitarian society, free from any kind of exploitation and domination of one sector of the community by another — to take one example of a religiopolitical aspiration among the younger generation — is certainly anathema to a ministry ensconced within a government not yet fully democratic. Equally negative reactions can be expected in the case of other similar aspirations.

The institution has already fulfilled its original role of guaranteeing the acceptance of the role of religion in the life of the nation in a formal and definitive way, however deficient that role may be. Can it be transformed into an institutional framework that takes forward this acceptance into the more positive task of developing the rich, pluralistic religious conscience of Indonesian society, to respond to the need for socioeconomic change and the concomitant problems of modernization? Or has it fulfilled its life span and outlived its purpose, and must it now be removed from the scene to liberate the religious life from rigid institutional constraints?

Islam in Sri Lanka

By

Dr. V. MOHAN

The chief ethnic groups inhabiting Sri Lanka are the Sinhalese, the Tamils and the Muslims. The last of them comprise, again ,the Sri Lanka Muslims and the Malays.[1] None of these ethnic groups is 'native' to Sri Lanka' in as much as all of them have set foot in the Island at one point of historical time or the other. The Muslims of Sri Lanka, the second largest minority after the Tamils, also trace their origin to the Arab traders of the past. Before we consider the present status of Islam in Sri Lanka, a brief review of the historical background would help in understanding the Muslim ethos.

Historical background :

Due to insufficiency of available evidence and lack of sustained effort for research, which calls for a knowledge of several languages, the ethnology of the Muslims of Sri Lanka has remained an inadequately explored field of research. The various authors writing on the Ethnology of the Muslims of Sri Lanka, have depended on snatches of information and contemporary history to reconstruct a plausible account of the early Arabs in the Island. The earliest reference to the Muslims of Sri Lanka is found in the travellogue of Ibn Batuta, the celebrated 14th century traveller, who visited Sri Lanka on a pilgrimage to the Adam's Peak in 1344 A.D.[2] Later writings by Europeans is considered as based upon "nothing but

the vague, and often distorted, traditions circulated among the natives themselves."[3]

The strategic location of Sri Lanka in the Indian Ocean and the coveted goods it offered had attracted a fair amount of external trade from the ancient times. With the fall of the Roman Empire in the 3rd century A.D., the Roman trade also died out and the Arabs and the Persians filled the vacuum created in the inter-coastal trade. With the conquest of Persia, Syria and Egypt, the Arabs were in possession of all important ports and trading stations between Europe and the East.[4] The interruption of non-Muslim trading activity by the Islamic expansion in West Asia helped the Arabs to gradually strengthen their trading might, acquiring a virtual monopoly on commerce in the Indian Ocean. Although it is estimated that the Arabs had settled in Sumatra and Sri Lanka by the 1st century A.D., "by about the 8th century A.D., the Arabs had formed colonies at the important ports of India, Sri Lanka and the East Indies. The presence of Arabs at the ports of Sri Lanka during the period is attested by atleast three inscriptions discovered at Colombo, Trincomalee and the island of Puliantivu".[5] According to one tradition, the Arabs settled in Sri Lanka were among those expelled from Arabia by the Prophet for displaying cowardice in the battle of Ohad, while according to another tradition, "the first Mohammadans of Ceylon were a portion of those Arabs of the House of Hashim, who were driven away from Arabia in the early part of the 8th century by the tyranny of the Caliph Abdul Malek ben Merwan and who, proceednig from the Euphrates southwards made settlements in the Concan in the southern part of the peninsula of India, on the island of Ceylon and Malacca. The division of them which came to Ceylon formed eight considerable settlements along the North-East, North and the Western coasts of that island viz., one at Trincomalee, one at Jaffna, one at Mantota and Mannar, one at Coodramalle, one at Puttalam, one at Colombo, one at Barbareen and one at Point de Galle".[6]

While it is of no avail to quote all the available references on the aspect in this article, suffice it to say that Islam was brought into Sri Lanka by the Arabs, who maintained close contacts with the Arab world till the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate. During this period, they introduced into Ceylon many works in Arabic, the most valuable being the Greek and Roman classics upon medicine, science and literature. But, "with the decline and fall of the Abbasid Caliphate, the Muslims of Ceylon turned to their co-religionists along the Malabar coast and from that time onwards the influence of the Mussalmans of the sub-continent of India came to be felt in Ceylon"[7]. Later influences apart, the Muslims of Sri Lanka still cherish in their belief that they are the our ancestry to the colony of Arab Muslims exiled from descendants of the original Arab traders and say "we trace their home land by a rival dynasty that proved intolerant and tyrannical."[8]

The Arab settlements soon grew in number and the Muslim population in the Island started increasing; the increase accounted for by (i) natural increase (ii) inflow of Muslims from India and (iii) certain amount of conversions of the local population to Islamic faith. The religious tolerance of the Sinhalese kings and the native population and the absence of competition in trade and commerce helped the Muslims to prosper in Sri Lanka. The peaceful life of the Muslims in the island and their economic prosperity was also due to the fact that this community, despite the economy of the Island in its hands, lacked territorial ambitions.[9]

The lives of Muslims in Sri Lanka were unaffected till the advent of Europeans in the Island. The Portuguese who 'discovered' Sri Lanka in 1505, were arch rivals of the Arab traders. The political situation in Sri Lanka, particularly the bitter rivalry between the kingdoms of Kotte and Sitawaka, was availed of by the Portuguese, offering military assistance to the warring kings. In the bargain, the Portuguese acquired trading concessions as

a first step and later became rulers of entire Island except the inaccessible Kandyan kingdom.[10]

The rivalry in trade on one hand and the efforts made by the Muslims to get rid of the Portuguese from the Island on the other, made the ruling Portuguese go against the Muslims very hard. Added was another reason that the Muslims resisted conversions by the Christian Missionaries, who had, under government patronage, undertaken proselytisation in a big way from about 1557. The irate Portuguese imposed economic sanctions against the Muslims, both to punish them economically and force them accept conversions. But such measures hardly made a dent on the Muslims' faith in their religion and Islam in Sri Lanka survived the Portuguese onslaught though the community suffered materially.

The Dutch, who succeeded the Portuguese in 1658, being mainly interested in business, were also ill-disposed towards the Muslims in the Island. They attempted to drive the Muslims away both from the import-export trade and also the retail trade. Legislation was enacted to eliminate the monopoly of Muslims as tailors bakers and butchers in the towns in favour of the Colonists and other Christian inhabitants. Periodic census was taken to deny residence rights to newly arrived Muslim merchants from the Indian coasts. Suspecting their loyalty, the Dutch did not permit the Muslims to reside inside fortified places. Land-ownership was made an impossible task for the Muslims until almost the mid-18th century. Restrictions were imposed on the observance of certain wedding ceremonies and taking out religious processions by the Muslims. Although the Christian Missionary activity did not have any effect on the Muslims, the atmosphere was still too pregnant with religious propaganda. From the points of view of both commercial religious interests, the Muslims wanted the Dutch to leave the Island.

The Dutch expeditions against the Kandyan kingdom

and the Treaty of 1766 forced both Kandy and the Muslims seek British assistance to expel the Dutch. The Muslims played a very important role in the British expeditions (as they did in inviting the Dutch to get rid of the Portuguese) in their anxiety to create for themselves the necessary atmosphere in Sri Lanka in which they could live in peace and prosper. For over three centuries, thus, Islam in Sri Lanka witnessed a lean period, its adherents suffering untold misery. The lives they had built for themselves under the Sinhalese kings was shattered with the arrival of the Portuguese in the Island and they had to flee for their lives seeking the protection of one king after the other. In the process, they were dragged into politics, paving a heavy price even with their lives. They were forced to become 'opportunists' in the struggle for existence: a trait to become characteristic of this community to this day.

Towards Independence :

The Colonial rule had introduced English education in Sri Lanka since about the beginning of the 17th century, with the twin intentions of proselytisation through education and for building up native cadres to fill middle and lower levels in the administration. While the educational facilities were taken advantage of by the Tamils and the Sinhalese (particularly the Low Country Sinhalese) the Muslims staved away from the Missionary schools as they felt that education in such schools would endanger the faith of their children in Islam. When the living conditions eased with the advent of British in Sri Lanka, the Muslims began to concentrate on rebuilding their disturbed economy. The establishment of Coffee plantations (1820) and the improvements in the communications system in Sri Lanka provided adequate opportunies for the Muslims. They also took up toddy and arrack contracts, labour supply, packing and transport and fishing contracts. Similarly, when coconut plantations grew in number (19th century) the Muslims entered this field too both as plantation owners and oil millers.

The Muslims, however, dominated the gem industry as gem-cutters, sellers and middle-men. The Sri Lanka Muslims (as against the Indian Muslims) had developed mastery over selection of gems, cutting and evaluation, over the centuries. On the other hand, the Eastern Province Muslims concentrated in agriculture. Being, thus, engaged in business or agriculture, the Muslim community did not bother about secular education. There was also their will to maintain a separate religious identity, for, education in the English schools established by the Colonial governments was not only Western but Christian in content. The Muslims were satisfied with their traditional schools of learning, the **Maktabs** and the **Madrasas**. Though such apathy towards secular education helped in preserving their religious identity, their small numbers and loss of cultural contacts with the wider Muslim world, the Muslims had sunk in ignorance and become parochial in outlook and grossly materialistic. The effects of Missionary school education on the native cultures had indeed come to be felt by the Buddhist and Hindu groups too. But having realised the importance of English education, these groups had established their own schools to impart English education of high standard in an atmosphere unmixed with Christian religion.[11]

The cause of Muslim secular education was taken up by M.C. Siddi Lebbe, a Proctor from Kandy, who started canvassing among the Muslims for a change in their outlook towards education. His efforts bore fruit only after the arrival of Arabi Pasha, an exile from Egypt, in 1883. Arabi Pasha advocated the educating of Muslim children, including girls, in the Christian Schools arguing that Islam was not such a weak religion that its adherents would lose faith in it by merely attending Christian schools and listening to religious propaganda. The efforts of Arabi Pasha and Siddi Lebbe, joined by I. L. M. Abdul Azeez and Wapichi Marikar resulted in the setting up of Colombo Muslim Education Society in 1981 and the establishment of Al Madarasathul Zahira in 1892, which

was fashioned after the Missionary schools and was quite apart from the **Maktabs** and **Madrasas.**[12]

Though a beginning was made, the response from the Muslim community was poor and the progress in the field of education was painfully slow. Between 1890 and 1906, the number of Muslim children successful at the Cambridge Senior examination was only 1.4 per cent.[13] But the sustained efforts of leaders like T. B. Jayah, M. T. Akbar, H. M. Macan Markar, N. H. M. Abdul Cader, N. D. H. Abdul Cader and later of Sir Razik Fareed and Dr. Badi-ud-din Mahmud etc., helped the cause of Muslim education in Sri Lanka. More and more vernacular schools were opened, two teacher training colleges were set up (Alutgama and Addalachennai). Arabic was introduced into the curriculam and Arabic teachers were appointed in government schools. The community's efforts were aided by Dr. W. Dahanayake, who, as Education Minister in the S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike government, declared that all government schools in which Muslim pupils formed more than 50% be deemed as 'Muslim Schools' and shall be headed by a Muslim.

The spread of educaiton among the community gave birth to a political elite. Thus when the Legislative Council was being expanded, the Muslims agitated for a separate representation for themselves. Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, a Tamil Member in the Council, opposed the Muslim demand by stating that the Muslim of Sri Lanka were, after all, Tamil-converts to Islam. He also came up with a lengthy paper on the "Ethnology of the Moors of Ceylon" to prove his point.[14] The Muslims, who, even today are proud of their Arab ancestry, were incensed, at Ramanathan's suggestion. I. L. M. Abdul Azeez not only intensified the campaign for a separate Muslim representation in the Legislative Council but also issued an equally lengthy criticism on Ramanathan's 'Ethnology of the Moors'.[15] The Muslims were successful in that W. M. Abdul Rehman was nominated (1889) to the Legislative Council as a 'Mohammadan Member'. In

the subsequent expansions of the Council, the Muslims received their due share and the Muslim interests were represented by the following :—

1920-1924	1925-1930
H. M. Macan Markar,	H. M. Macan Markar,
N. H. M. Abdul Cader,	N. H. M. Abdul Cader,
T. B. Jayah,	T. B. Jayah,
E. G. Adamally @	
S. R. Mohamad Sultan @	

(@ Representing the Indian Muslims)

The practice of combining communal representation through election of members belonging to various ethnic groups and nomination of interests otherwise unrepresented, was given up under the Donoughmore Constitution (1927-28). This was a set-back to the minorities, who could not send their own representatives to the Legislative Council merely by territorial representation. The Muslims, like the Tamils, feared that on account of their sheer numbers, the Sinhalese would dominate the Council by getting elected in large numbers. Their apprehensions proved right when in the elections for the State Council, set up under the Donoughmore Constitution i.e. following the territorial representation system, only one Muslim candidate (Sir Haji Mohamad Macan Markar) was elected.[16] In the elections to the 2nd State Council (1936) not a single Muslim got elected.[17] A politically conscious community by now, the Muslims represented to the Soulbury Commission which was visiting Sri Lanka (1944) to examine further reforms, that it be ensured that the Muslims get a 'reasonable representation'. Having understood that in an Independent Sri Lanka they have to live in the good books of the majority community, the Sinhalese, the Muslims did not endorse the 50:50 formula put forth by the Tamils.[18] The Muslims began hitching their wagon to the Sinhalese. The All Ceylon Moors' Association, the first Muslim Organisation to be formed in the Island, was apparent in its pro-Sinhalese attitude.

Muslims in Independent Sri Lanka :

It is difficult to cover all the facets of Islam in Sri Lanka in an article of this size. Hence only the following aspects will be touched in brief :

—Demographic trends;

—Religion and Societal aspects; and

—Economy and Politics.

Demographic Trends : Prior to 1946, the adherents of Islam in Sri Lanka used to be classified, religion-wise, under the category of "Muhammadanism". However, since the 1946 Census, the Sri Lanka Muslims are being enumerated, as also the Indian Muslims and the Malays, as "Muslims" as insisted by them. At the first Island-wide Census taken by the British in 1871, the Muslims numbered 171,542, forming 7.1% of the total population. The increase in the Muslim population, thereafter, has been as under :

Census Year	Muslim Population
1881	195,775
1891	211,995
1901	246,118
1911	283,631
1921	302,532
1946	436,556
1953	541,506
1963	724,043
1971	909,941
1981	1134,556

The three important groups among the Muslims of Sri Lanka numbered, since 1946, as under :

(in '000)

	1946	1953	1963	1971	1981
Sri Lanka	373.6	464.0	626.8	824.0	1056.9
Muslims	5.6%	5.7%	5.9%	6.5%	7.1%
Indian Muslims	35.6	47.5	55.4	29.0	—
	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%	0.2%	—
Malays	22.5	25.4	33.4	43.0	43.4
	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%

(the percentage is in the total population of the island)

It will be observed that the population of Sri Lanka Muslims has more than doubled during the 25 years ended 1981, which is entirely attributable to 'natural increase', keeping in view, especially, factors such as early marriages among them and the drop, in general, of the mortality rate in the island. The 1946 Census, for instance, recorded a total number of 783 males and 2,898 females "under 15 years of age" as married (by registration or custom), most of whom belonged to the Muslim races resident in Colombo district. In 1946, the number of married girls "under 15 years of age" exceeded 100 in Badulla (508), Batticaloa (349), Kandy (243), Kurunugela (181) Anuradhapura (171), Trincomalee (164), Jaffna (112) and Ratnapura (110) districts. Very few girls (15 years of age and over) were found unmarried among the 'Ceylon Moors' (Sri Lanka Muslims). In 1953, the 'mean age at marriage' for the Island's females, in general, was 23 years, while it was 18.7 years for Muslim females. By 1963, while the 'mean age at marriage' in general rose to 23.6 years, that for Muslim females remained without any significant change. With the passage of time, and with more Muslim girls taking to education, the 'mean age at marriage', particularly in the Urban areas, has slightly increased. Thus, though in 1974, it was 19.4 years for

females and 26.0 years for the males, the mean age at marriage of Muslim girls was still lower than the other ethnic groups in the Island.[19] This phenomenon coupled with the Muslim attitude towards family planning (as a taboo under Islam) has resulted in rearing larger families as compared to other ethnic groups in Sri Lanka. This is particularly so in rural areas and among the poorer sections.

The Sri Lanka Muslims are distributed all over the Island, with the largest concentrations of them in Amparai district (41.53% of the population) followed by Trincomalee (28.97%) Mannar (26.62%) and Batticalo (23.97%). There is no district in which the Muslims do not form more than 1% of the population (see map). As for the Indian Muslims, a majority of them were found (1971 Census) in the interior districts (15,272) compared to the maritime districts (14,144). The 1981 Census (Preliminary release) do not give the population statistics of Indian Muslims, although their numbers are decreasing due to (i) out-migration to India from where they had come and (ii) absorption in the Sri Lanka Muslim group due to marriage relationships.

Religion: The Muslims of Sri Lanka, belonging to the Sunni sect, have, as we have observed earlier, struggled during the Colonial period to retain their religious identity and continue to do so. A true Muslim is required to pray 5 times a day, observe 'Roza' (fast) during the sacred month of Ramzaan, avoid eating pork and consuming liquor, contribute a specified portion of his wealth for charitable purposes (**zakat** and **zakat-ul-fitr**) and perform **Haj**, if he can afford. In these matters, the Muslims of Sri Lanka are no different from the Muslims of India. The author's personal experience has been that the younger generation of the Sri Lanka Muslims are eager to know and understand Quran and to follow the tenets as far as practicable. A majority of them say their prayers at the appointed hours and when it is not possible, offer Friday prayers at the Mosques. Similarly,

the author did not hear of any Muslim eating pork. They also avoid intoxicating drinks. However, a few wealthy Muslims indulging in drinks have been noticed but these are stray incidents. The Moors' Islamic Cultural Home and the Islamic Secretariat in Colombo are trying their best to inculcate good Islamic habits among the young. However, the institution of **Zakat** is, the author is told, neglected by, particularly, the wealthy of the community. H. S. Ismail, ex-speaker of the Sri Lankan Parliament had an occasion to observe that "Social welfare work amongst the Muslims (in Sri Lanka) is sadly lacking in intensity and continuity, although the Quran repeatedly admonishes us to render social service to our less-fortunate brothers and sisters".[20]

Similarly, M. A. M. Hussain complains that "the principle of gathering Zakat-ul-fitr and the distribution of it has now been abandoned by the Muslims in Sri Lanka and the result is that a most beneficial institution of Islam for the uplift of the poor and the needy has been neglected with its necessary consequences."[21] Hussain also deplores that "Zakat has tended to become neglected by the Muslims in Sri Lanka, except for a niggardly contribution to the Baitulmal Fund."[22]

There is no systematic way of collection of Zakat by a centralised agency among the Muslims, unlike in the small Bohara community in Sri Lanka among whom the institution of Zakat is well organised.

While the general economic condition of the Muslims of Sri Lanka whose wealthy account for only about 2 to 5 percent, is pretty bad. The rich ignore the observance of Zakat and Zakat-ul-Fitr. The other aspects of Muslim religious behaviour is influenced by the Tamil culture in particular, and Sinhalese in general.

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* But unfortunately this centralization does not work to the advantage of the community. The priesthood which has tight control over the community mis-appropriates those Zakat funds. (ed.)

The mother tongue of the Muslims of Sri Lanka is invariably Tamil, on account of which Islam is taught in Muslim schools in Tamil. There are as many as 500 Quran Madrasas and 25 Arabic colleges in Sri Lanka, catering to the religious needs of the Muslim population. But, most of these institutions being in the countryside, the standard of maintenance and the quality of education imparted in them leave much to be desired. The Quranic schools are fed by Moulavis produced by the Arabic colleges.[23] But the general opinion as to the standard of these Moulavis is that it is far from satisfactory. It is also complained that these Moulavis are not competent enough to interpret Quranic inscriptions and theologically they are "just routine." Consequently, it is deplored that the Community is lacking a proper understanding of the true spirit of Islam and is losing its cultural traditions. At the University level, Jaffna and Peradeniya Campuses offer graduate courses in Arabic and Islamic Civilisation. There are no facilities for prosecuting advance courses in Arabic in Sri Lanka nor for printing text books in Arabic.

Thus, although in the recitation of prayers Arabic is the medium, the knowledge of Arabic, the language of Quran, is very poor among the Muslims of Sri Lanka. The number of Arabic words understood and used by the Muslims in their daily life could be counted on fingers. In spite of the efforts of some of the Muslim organisations to promote the study of Arabic in Sri Lanka, as a means of maintaining the religious identity, the response is poor; the only incentive in learning Arabic being the acquirinig of additional qualifications for a Gulf job. The status of Arabic in Sri Lanka may be gleaned from the following

response the author could gather during her field work in the Island :

(Total No. of respondants : 162)

Opinion in regard to learning Arabic	Number of respondants
— it is enough if a Muslim knows to recite Quaran.	75 (46.3%)
— not interested in learning Arabic.	6 (3.7%)
— Arabic has no value in Sri Lanka.	30 (18.5%)
— we need more facilities for learning	42 (25.9%)
— no response.	9 (5.6%)

In regard to Haj, the Sri Lankan government under Sirimac Bandaranaike had imposed restrictions on foreign travel due to a difficult foreign exchange position. These restrictions applied to Haj pilgrims also. However, since the UNP coming to power in 1977, the Muslims have no problem in undertaking Haj.

Societal aspects :

There is a strong influence of Tamils on the Muslims of Sri Lanka in a variety of societal aspects. Besides the Tamil language, the Muslims have adopted some of the Tamil customs like the tying of **Thali** at the time of marriage, offering of betel leaves, consulting **almanac** and observance of **Rahukalam** before undertaking important ventures etc. The dowry has also become institutionalised and is rampant among the Muslim community of Sri Lanka.

Writing on the marriage customs of the Sri Lanka Muslims, a 19th century author had quipped that "among the Muslims of Ceylon matrimony is merely a 'matter of money'; love and courtship playing no part".[24] Some of the practices prevalent in the 19th century still continue to be observed by the Muslims, of which Dowry takes the

cake, in spite of the Muslims holding that the Dowry is a "contradiction and an isolation to Islamic Law."[25]

An educated son-in-law being considered an asset, the quantum of dowry increases proportionately with the educational qualifications of the bridegroom. The author's enquiries in this regard are summarised in the Table below :

Components of Dowry	Magnitude of prevalence			
	Western province	Northern province	Eastern province	Central province
— cash	Rs. 5000 to Millions	Rs. 5000 to Rs. 500,000	Rs. 3000 to Rs. 10 Lacs	Rs. 5000 to Millions
— land/ building	house	house	land house and	house
— clothing	yes	yes	yes	yes
— jewellery	yes	yes	yes	yes
— auto-mobile	car, in some cases.	car in the case of Doctor, Engineer/ chartered Accountant	car, in the case of Doctor or Engineer.	No.

Although some authors have attempted to explain away the Dowry system as something which helps in cementing ties among the different classes of Muslims,[26] this author could not find any evidence of it being the case. The affluent gem merchants invariably choose a boy from their own family circle and there was no instance of a boy from a poor Muslim family marrying a gem merchant's daughter. While the wealthy do not feel the pinch of dowry and maintain that "after all it is like apportioning father's property among the daughters too", the not so well to do and the poorer sections are the real victims of the dowry system. There are instances where Muslim girls have remained spinsters or have emigrated to the Gulf countries to become house-maids,

as their parents could not afford the dowry. Efforts are afoot in the community to discourage the dowry system but the prospects of its vanishing in the near future are bleak. In the meanwhile, the Muslim organisations are helping the poor families in meeting a part of the dowry or in arranging austere weddings. While the dowry has gained so much importance, the institution of **Mehr** as the author has been told, is not being strictly followed and what is offered as **Mehr** is 'a mere pittance'.

Muslim women :

It was observed as early as in 1918 that the Muslim women of Sri Lanka enjoy more freedom than in other countries. This could be ascribed to the Tamil ancestry of the women, the smallness of the community in a multi-racial society and the absence of a culturally identical state in the close proximity etc. The Muslim women in Sri Lanka do not don **purdah,** although they wear a modest dress and cover their head while appearing in public. The Bohra women in Sri Lanka, however, still wear **purdah,** as also some of the elderly ladies of orthodox muslim families.

In the field of education, the credit for spearheading the movement for Muslim women's education in the 20th century goes to Sir Razik Fareed. There are a number of Muslim Balika vidyalayas all over the Island apart from a few Muslim Girls' colleges and training colleges. Still, it is only during the last about two decades that an increasing number of Muslim girls have been taking up education, with the intention of acquiring educational qualifications for employment and contributing to the family income. But, the number of girls dropping out even before completing the G. C. E. (Ordinary) level (equivalent to matriculation) course is alarming. Although education in Sri Lanka is free upto University level, educating the girls is still a burden for a Muslim parent as money is needed for the dress, shoes, books etc., Hence the girls are taken out of the schools by the parents with

first job opportunity or to get them married. Those who complete their schooling, prefer to be employed as teachers and the number of Muslim girls taking to higher education is small. The following table shows the number of Muslim boys and girls in the various faculties of Jaffna Campus during the years 1975 to 1980 :

Year	Arts		Science		Medicine		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1975	—	—	3	—	—	—	3	—
1976	23	8	4	—	—	—	27	8
1977	7	2	11	1	—	—	18	3
1978	22	1	2	1	7	—	31	2
1979	33	3	4	1	3	—	40	4
1980	27	7	22	—	9	—	58	16

(Source : Registrar,Jaffna University)

The total absence of Muslim girls in the Medical faculty is conspicuous, although it has come to be felt in the community that the goal of female education should not aim at producing teachers alone but there should be Muslim lady-doctors, nurses, lawyers etc., if the community were to progress.[27]

Whether it is education or employment, the Muslim women of Sri Lanka endeavour to keep in line with Islamic principles. Even the Sri Lanka Muslim Womens' Conference (January 1980) which wanted to redefine the status, role and responsibilities of the Muslim women made clear that such redefined characteristics would be in accordance with the Islamic Laws. The Muslim women of Sri Lanka, the Conference assured, did not want "the kind of freedom that the women of other religions have."[28]

In the field of politics, Muslim women of Sri Lanka have remained non-starters. There are only two instances in the modern history of Sri Lanka, when Muslim women contested elections to the Parliament, though without success.[29] The Sri Lanka Muslim women have a long way

to go in the field of politics. There are competent women who are actively engaged in Social services, but Politics still remains the men's field among the Muslims of Sri Lanka.

Muslim Law in Sri Lanka :

Muslim Law is based on the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet and covers a wide range of subjects affecting the daily life of the Muslims. Prior to the advent of European rule in Sri Lanka, a knowledge of the Muslim Law was imparted among the Muslims by the **Ulema,** among whom were men who had spent long years of study and travel in Arabia, Egypt and India. It was through them that standard works of Islamic Law in vogue in those countries were introduced in the island from time to time; some of them in Arabic-Tamil; translations from South India from the Arabic originals. Manuscript copies of these books were made by the pupils of the **Ulema** and taken to every village to serve as reference in the Mosques and to be expounded to the people as occasion arose. But, during the Portuguese rule in Sri Lanka, when the Christian Missionary activity was intense and the Muslims were leaving their homes and hearths in search of security for their lives, the Muslims suffered a severe set back by losing their books. Later, the Dutch compiled a set of 'Code of Laws' for the Muslims, as "they found that the Muslims were not aware what was their Law and what was not". The Headmen of the community in the different villages were following different Laws in dealing with the community and administration of justice by such Headmen was subject to corrupt practices, personal bias and individual interpretation of whatever Muslim Law that was there. The Dutch, therefore, took the initiative and compiled the Code, framed by "the best informed and the most learned of the Mohammaden priests who resided within the government". The Code so drawn up was circulated among the Headmen of Muslim settlements and upon their approval, ordered it to be considered Law by all the Dutch Courts of Justice."[30] The Code embodies

the Civil Laws and customs relating Succession, inheritance, marriage and divorce etc. The Laws incorporated in the Code were guaranteed by the British. A revised Code of Mohammadan Laws was compiled in 1806 and applied throughout the Island under the Ordinance of 1852.

The Muslims of Sri Lanka are governed by the provisions of the Muslim Law and the Roam-Dutch Law is applied in matters where the Muslim Law is silent. The author's enquiries reveal that the Muslim Law as practiced in Sri Lanka conforms, mostly to the Islamic concepts.

Marriage and Divorce: During the early days of the British rule in Sri Lanka, it was the practice to enter the **Kadutham** (paper drawn up at the time of a Muslim marriage, setting out the names of the bride and the groom, the names of their parents, the amount of the **Mehr** and the Dowry and the date of marriage duly signed by the priest and two witnesses) in a public register maintained by the Government Agent. This requirement was not called for in the Code of 1806, leading to abuse and fraud by some of the Muslim priests, who were the sole keepers of the **Kaduthams.** In 1822 a regulation was made to make registration of Muslim marriages compulsory but as this was disregarded by the community, the regulation was withdrawn in 1849. The conflict between the Code of 1806 and the customary usage, **Adat**, continued to surafe time and again and a need was felt for a comprehensive legislation covering Muslim marriages, divorces, gifts, guardianship and custody of children etc., By an Ordinance (No. 8 of 1886) registration of Muslim marriages was again made compulsory but due to opposition from the community, it was made optional in 1888. Lebbes and suitable Muslims were appointed to act as Registrars of marriages under the supervision of the Registrar General. However, many marriages continued to take place without approaching the Registrars, although the **Kadutham** was maintained.

In 1926, a Committee was appointed under the Chairmanship of M. T. Akbar, Attorney-General (later Senior Puisne Judge) to make amendments to the Muslim Law. The report submitted by the Committee in 1928 contained the following, among other, recommendations :—

— appointment of Muslim Judges (**Kathis**) to hear matrimonial actions;

— creation of a Board of **Kathis** to hear appeals (final appeal to lie with the Supreme Court);

— compulsory registration of Muslim marriages and divorces, with a penalty for non-registration (but a marriage valid according to Muslim Law was not to be rendered invalid by reason of non-registration).

An Ordinance was later passed (January 1, 1937) which empowered the Governor (later the Minister concerned) to appoint 'a male muslim of good character and position and of suitable attainments' to be **Kathi.** The guiding principles in selecting a **Kathi** were that the person chosen should not merely possess a theoretical knowledge of Muslim theology and laws but should be one with experience, intelligence and possessing knowledge of Muslim customs prevailing in Sri Lanka. He should have good grasp of the facts and be able to conduct enquiry on correct lines of procedure. He should be in a position to be able to reconcile the parties and adiudicate upon question of maintenance . He should, above all, be a man of some status in the community with good general educational qualifications.

The 1937 Ordinance was further amended and the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act, No. 13 of 1951 was promulgated in 1954. In 1965 the Act was further amended providing for the appointment of the **Kathis** (now called **Quazis**) by the Judicial Services Commission.

The Wakfs Act was enacted in 1956 apart from establishing a Department of the Mosques and Muslim

charitable Trusts. All these aspects have now come under the newly created Department of Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs, headed by Al Haj M. H. Mohamed, the Minister for Transport.

Economy and Politics :

The political-elite of the Muslim community in Sri Lanka emerged, in the beginning, from the well-to-do classes among them. These were later joined by the educated and the land-owning classes.

From the point of view of economic status the Sri Lanka Muslims offer a wide spectrum. The richest among them are the gem merchants.[31] Their ways of living and their riches have also attracted criticism from the community, which considers them as 'economic freaks'. They have the money to contribute to the political parties, establish and maintain hospitals and Arabic colleges and make handsome donations even to non-Islamic causes, if only to keep the sponsoring Sinhalese leaders happy. But they have not earned the affection of their own community, which fears that "the ostentatious lives of this small minority blinds those who attempt to study the conditions of the Muslims in Sri Lanka, thereby denying these people (the rest of the Muslims — VM) the understanding and concentration they urgently need."[32] Are they not doing anything to help their poor brethren ? The author's enquiry in this regard elicited a mixed reaction from the Muslims. One member of the richest gem merchant class in Colombo was incensed with the question. "We can not take care of every poor Muslim in the Island. They are lazy and do not want to work", was his reply. Bakir Markar, the Speaker of the Sri Lanka Parliament (in June, 1981) told the author :" It is not correct to say that the rich are not doing anything. They are contributing to various causes, like colleges, hospitals, mosques etc. Some Muslims have also established industries which provide jobs to the Muslims. But still, skill is wanting among the Muslim

boys to take up such jobs." But M. M. Bahauddin, one time National President of the All Ceylon Young Men's Muslim Association Conference differed, saying", the Muslims of this country are poor. The rich constitute only a very small percentage of the community. True, the rich give out charity but most of it is for advertisement and to gain popularity. What is being given as charity is just a pittance and it would not change the status of the majority of the Muslims". On the other hand, another famous gem merchant of Colombo informed the author : "A normal Muslim of Sri Lanka spends 20 to 25% of his annual income for charitable purposes. These are opportunities if one wants to work and earn a living. But some of the community feel that it is easy to beg and make a living. We can not help them."

The fact remains that there is little affinity between the two economically extreme sections of the Muslim population and the chasm starts developing right from the school days.

There are 200 to 250 prominent gem merchants among the Sri Lanka. Muslims, who monopolise the gem trade and hold the maximum wealth. They have attained their present status by dint of hard work and honest business practices. "Religion has nothing to do with business ethics. Our reputation is what we have built up through honesty", replied S. M. Jabir, a famous gem merchant of Pettah area in Colombo when the author asked him what part religion played in their business.[33] The gem merchants have survived in spite of other communities entering the gem trade and the establishment of Sri Lanka Gem Corporation.

The other Muslims of Sri Lanka are engaged in agriculture (mostly in the Eastern Province), general trading, dealing in wholesale and retail trade in various commodities, petty trade covering a village botique keeper, a peddler in coconuts, a scrap dealer etc. Fishermen, weavers, cane workers, butchers etc., form another category. Muslims have also entered hotel and restaurant

business with the boost that tourism has received in Sri Lanka. Those in professions include Attorneys-at-Law, Engineers, Doctors, Teachers and Chartered Accountants. Sri Lanka once boasted of famous Muslim builders and architects. The town of Jaffna is unique in that over 90 per cent of the tailors in the town are Muslims, a phenomenon observed no where else in Sri Lanka.

A systematic study of the economic status of the Muslims in Sri Lanka has not been undertaken so far. However, poverty is rampant among the Muslims, both in the urban and rural areas. Large families, lack of resources for education, high unemployment rate and rising cost of living have made the lives of the poorer sections miserable. Ever since the Gulf job boom started, many Muslims have availed the opportunity but being unskilled, they could find only low-paid jobs.

Political profile: Political consciousness had developed among the Muslims of Sri Lanka since the establishment of the Legislative Council in the Island (1833) by the British government. The attempt of Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan to prove that the Muslims of Sri Lanka were Tamil converts to Islam on one hand and the 1915 Sinhalese-Muslim riots, when the evidence of Ramanathan was going to fix the responsibility for the riots on the Muslims (the Indian Moors, to be precise) made the Muslims to move away from the Tamils and strive to maintain a separate identity for themselves in all aspects of their life in Sri Lanka. As an Independent Sri Lanka was going to be ruled by the majority community, the Sinhalese, the Muslim leadership decided to throw their lot behind the Sinhalese. This decision for the community was, however, taken by the Muslim leadership of the period which belonged to the Western Province irrespective of the wishes of the Muslims of other Provinces. On the eve of Independence it was not a problem to join the Sinhalese band wagon, for, there was only one political party, the United National Party, formed by the Sinhalese, excluding the leftist parties.

As a prelude to the first general elections to the House of Representatives under the Soulbury Constitution, a Delimitation Commission was appointed (1946) to carve out constituencies for electing representatives on a purely territorial basis. In so far as the Muslims are concerned, the Commission's endeavour was to ensure that they could elect 6 of their own community in a House of 89 elected members and 6 nominated ones. For a community which formed 6.1% of the population (1946) the possibilities of returning 6 of their own candidates was good enough. Accordingly, at the 1st general elections (August-September, 1947) four Muslims were elected on UNP ticket and two as independents.

An alternative to the UNP was formed in 1951 when S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike fell out with the UNP leadership. To wrest power from the UNP, Bandaranaike took up popular Sinhalese issues like the Official language and revival of Buddhism and Sinhalese culture. This was a crucial period for the Muslims, whose mother tongue was Tamil. If they did not support Sinhala for the Official language of the country, they would be antagonising the majority community. But in A. M. A. Azeez's words :

> "... the abandonment of Tamil by the Muslims of the South and Central Ceylon (where they were living among the Sinhalese — VM) would almost cut then off from the Muslims of the East and North Ceylon. ... would deny them the benefits of the Muslim-Tamil literature produced in South India ... would make it difficult for the theological institutions in Ceylon to function effectively ... (but) Sinhalese can not also be neglected in the present context of affairs in Ceylon ... and abandonment of Tamil would definitely destroy the solidarity of the community and considerably weaken its political power..."[34]

On the eve of the 1956 general elections, while the UNP had lost its charisma, the SLFP of Bandaranaike, with Sinhalese nationalism as its corner stone on one hand and association with left-wing parties on the other,

was still to be watched, before the Muslims could shift their loyalties. And there was no separate all-Island Muslim political party. While, therefore, supporting the 'Sinhala only' demand, the Muslims thought it wise to contest the 1956 elections as independents. Thus, while 9 and 6 Muslims contested the 1947 and 1952 elections, respectively, on UNP ticket, only two did so at the 1956 elections. The Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP) (an alliance of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, the Viplavakari Lanka Sama Samaja Party, the Bhasha Peranuna etc.,) could field only one Muslim candidate. On the other hand, 7 Muslims contested as independents.

The political behaviour of Muslims thereafter was guided by the relative benefits of supporting either the UNP or the SLFP. The Sinhalese parties also cultivated the Muslims as a counterpoise to the Tamils, by offering them small concessions. Muslim leaders who were vociferous were sent away on Ambassadorial assignments (e.g., T. B. Jayah and Sir Razik Fareed). The Muslim's policy was guided by Azeez's caution : "... The Muslims probably could wield a larger measure of influence in the body-politic by joining individually political parties already functioning in this country, whose policies do not conflict with the principles of Islam."[35] This policy, coupled with the absence of the necessary cohesion within the community, has been the reason as to why the Muslims of Sri Lanka could not form an Island-wide party of their own. Of course, there were Muslim Political parties, like the All Ceylon Islamic United Front formed by Gate Mudaliyar M. S. Kariapper in 1960 and Islamic Socialist Front formed by Dr. Badi-ud-din Mahmud. But while the ACIUF is a long dead party, the ISF is almost dead.[36]

The Sirimao Bandaranaike rule preceding the present UNP government was a period which the Island's population shudder to recall. While her socialist policies affected the Muslims in business, the poor shape of the country's economy and the acute shortage of essential commodities

made the people crave for a change in the government. At the 1977 general elections the UNP under the leadership of J. R. Jayawardene returned to power with a thumping success. While both the UNP and the SLFP fielded almost equal number of Muslim candidates, as many as eleven out of twelve candidates were successful contesting on UNP ticket as against only one (out of 11) with SLPE ticket. The UNP rewarded them with positions in the government. The UNP also set up a separate Muslim religious and cultural affairs department. Other favours include the celebration of the 1400th Hijra on a National scale, issue of a special postage stamp (first among the non-Islamic countries) to commemorate the 1400th Hijra, appointment of a Special officer of the rank of Charge D' Affairs in Mecca to look after the Sri Lanka Muslims going on Haj etc.

But, does these things mean that the Muslims in Sri Lanka are happy about their status in the Island? Does the fact that their men hold important portfolios in the government (M. H. Mohamed as Transport Minister and A. C. S. Hameed as External Affairs Minister, apart from other junior and District Ministers) mean anything? Are the Muslims discriminated against in any fields? In the words of Sir Razik Fareed, the Muslims in Sri Lanka are 'down in the dumps.[37]

Ethnic conflicts involving Sinhalese and the Muslims are not infrequent. If not a wholesale discrimination, the Muslims are not too happy about the opportunities available to them in the Island in the matter of education and employment. The community's wealthy, with their penchant for exhibiting their luxurious ways of living rouse jealousies on one hand and the Muslim resistance, in general, to family planning irritates the Sinhalese on the other. While the Muslims in business have prospered under the UNP's economic policies, there are others of the community, like the weavers of the Eastern Province, who are ruined with imported cloth flooding the market. The author has heard stories of how certain weavers have

had to use their looms as fire-wood. In so far as the Muslims in government are concerned, the author's interviews reveal that the community considers them as a mere 'window dressing', a clever ruse adopted by the UNP to attract petro-dollars (and Sri Lanka has been successful in this regard). "These Members of Parliament and the Ministers do not have the courage to face the President with the community's problems and instances of injustice", the community complains. They are more bothered about their own positions and not about the community's welfare, the author is told. It is also a fact that whenever the Muslims suffered during the Sinhalese-Muslims riots, it is the Tamil leaders who raised questions in the Parliament. No Muslim leader had the courage to lodge a protest against the Sinhalese. For instance, when in 1981 the government proposed to acquire extensive areas of Muslim paddy lands in the Estern Province for setting up a Buddhist pilgrimage centre, no Muslim member of the Parliament could dare to protest. The whimper of protest raised recently when the Jayawardene government invited the Mossad to train the Sri Lanka troops to face the Tamil 'tigers', was too weak. On the other hands, when the Arabs threatened to close down their banks in the Island and cut down aid as a retaliation to Sri Lanka's action in inviting Mossad, Jayawardene deputed a Muslim minister to pacify the Arabs!

In view of the helplessness of the Muslim elite of the Western Province to safeguard the interests of the community, the Eastern Province Muslims have decided to take the initiative and take over the leadership. A new Muslim political party, the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, was inaugurated in 1980 at Kattankudi, an almost 100% Muslim village in the Batticaloa district.[38] Whether this party will be able to unite the island-wide Muslims and work for the interests of the community remains to be seen.

If the Muslims are not satisfied about their status in Sri Lanka, why do they not join hands with the Tamils

and support their demand for 'Eelam'? Firstly, the Muslims are sure that the Sinhalese will never concede 'Eelam' to the Tamils; secondly, the Muslims feel that the Tamil Nation, 'Eelam', will not be able to survive as a separate state; thirdly, in a Tamil-dominated 'Eelam', the Muslims will again be a minority; fourthly, the progress made by the Tamils in the field of education being well known, all the lucrative jobs and positions in the government in the 'Eelam' would go to the Tamils. What will be the position of the Muslims Fifthly, if the Muslims opt to stay within the proposed Eelam, they will be considered to have proved the Tamil hypothesis that the Muslims are Tamil converts to Islam — a hypothesis which the Muslims have been denying and attempting to prove their Arab ancestry. Lastly, unlike the Tamils, the Muslims are scattered all over the Island and have established deep-rooted commercial and other interests, which makes it difficult for them to migrate to the Eelam territory.

But, the Eastern Province Muslims who live among the Tamils and lean heavily on the Tamils in the field of education have expressed the desire that if the Jayawardene government succeeds in solving the ongoing ethnic tangle and establishes the proposed Regional Councils, they wish to be tagged on to the Regional Council created for the Tamil-speaking population (in the Eastern Province) and not with that created for the Sinhalese. While the Muslims can not give up Tamil, which is their mother tongue, the Muslims know that if they opt to be clubbed with the Regional Council created for the Sinhalese, they will have to switch over to Sinhala. The present position of Muslims in Sri Lanka is, therefore, very precarious. This is also a time when the Sinhalese-chauvinist elements could make the Tamils and the Muslims fight each other to divert world attention from the real problem. The Muslims have therefore to be wary of the situation. They will also have to weight the options carefully as and when a political solution is

evolved for the present ethnic tangle in Sri Lanka. But, there is no threat to Islam in Sri Lanka nor the Muslims pose a problem to the ruling Sinhalese.

NOTES

1. Sri Lanka was earlier known as 'Ceylon. But the present name, Sri Lanka, is used in this article except in quotation. Similarly, although the Malays are also the adherents of Islam, the word 'Muslims in this article refers only to non-Malays. There is yet another group, the 'Indian Muslims' in Sri Lanka, whose numbers have dwindled over the years so much so the 1981 Census (Preliminary Release) do not enumerate them as such.
2. Batuta, Ibn., *Travels in Asia and Africa*: 1325-1354 (translated by H. A. R. Gibb), London (1929) Routledge Kegan Paul Ltd.
3. Mudaliyar, Simon Casie Chetty, 'Manners and Customs of the Moors of Ceylon' in Ceylon Gazetteer, Colombo (1834), Cotta Mission Church Press, p. 254.
4. Perera, B. J., 'Ancient Ceylon's Trade with the Empires of the Eastern and Western worlds' in *Ceylon Historical Journal*, Vol. I, 1951-52, p. 305.
5. Ibid.
6. Johnston, Sir Alexander, 'A Cufic inscription found in Ceylon', (with translation by Rev. Samuel Lee) in *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. I, 1827, p. 537.
7. Azeez, A. M. A., '*Education in Ceylon*: A Centenary Volume III, from 6th century B. C., to the present day, Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, Government of Ceylon, Colombo (1969), p. 1145.
8. Badi-ud-din Mahmud, reported in *Ceylon Daily News*, July 22, 1970. Dr. Badi-ud-din Mahmud was Minister for Education under the Banadaranaikes.
9. There is, however, an instance of a Muslim king in the history of Sri Lanka. Vathimi Raja, who reigned at Kurunugela in the 14th century is reported to be the son of Bhuvanekabahi-I through a Muslim spouse. But he became the subject of foul play of Parakramabahi-III, the Sinhalese son of Bhuvanekabahi-I. (see, Corea, C. E., 'Muslim Kings of Ceylon' in Serendib, Vol. II(1), Feb., 1930) Even during Ibn Batuta's visit to Sri Lanka, a Muslim ruler by name Jalasthi, was found to be holding Colombo with a garrison of 500

Abyssinians (see Ranasinha, A. G., 'The Moor settlements' in *Census of Ceylon,* 1946, Vol. I, Part I, (General Report) Government Printing Press, Colombo.)

10. For a detailed account, see Perera, Fr. S. G., *History of Ceylon for Schools, Vol. I, The Portuguese and the Dutch periods,* 1505-1796, Colombo (1955), The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd., and De silva, C. R., *The Portuguese in Ceylon,* 1617-1638, Colombo (1972), H. W. Cave & Co.
11. Arumuga Navalar established a Hindu English School in North Ceylon in 1872 followed by a Buddhist English School in Colombo by Anagarika Dharmapala in 1886.
12. Al Madarasathul Zahira continues to function today as Zahira College at Maradana in Colombo.
13. For a detailed account of Muslim Educational resurgence, see Vijaya Samaraweera, 'The Muslim Revivalist Movement, 1880-1915' in *Collective Identities, Nationalism and Protest in* Modern Sri Lanka, (Ed) Michael Roberts, Colombo (1979) Narga, pp. 243-276.
14. Ramanathan, P. 'The Ethnology of the Moors of Ceylon' in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (Ceylon Branch), Vol. X (36), 1888, pp. 234-262.
15. Azeez, I. L. M. Abdul, *A Criticism of Mr. Ramanathan's Ethnology of the Moors of Ceylon,* Colombo (1907), Colombo Moors' Union.
16. Mohammad Khalid Sultan was, however, nominated to the State Council to represent the Indian Muslims.
17. Between 1936 and 1942, there was not a single elected member in the State Council. Dr. M. C. M. Kaleel won a bye-election only in July, 1942. There were, of course, two nominated members viz., Sir Razik Fareed and T. B. Jayah; the latter a Malay.
18. Under the 50:50 formula, 50% of the seats in the House of Representatives was proposed for the Sinhalese and the rest 50% to all the other ethnic groups.
19. There are no statutory limitations regarding age in case of Muslim marriages in Sri Lanka.
20. Ismail, H. S., 'Muslims and Social welfare work' in Moors' Islamic Cultural Homes *Silver Jubilee Souvenir,* 1944-1969, Colombo (1970), pp. 67-69.
21. Hussain, M. A. M., 'The Faith of Muslims in Sri Lanka through belief and Practice' in *Religiousness in Sri Lanka,* (Ed) John Ross Carter, Colombo (1979) Marga, pp. 215. (M. A. M. Hussain is a retired District Judge of Sri Lanka).
22. Ibid., pp. 218-219.

23. The minimum qualifications for entry into the Arabic colleges is a pass in the 5th standard examination and knowledge of Quran. After a study of 8 years in an Arabic college one becomes a Moulavi.

24. Bawa, Ahamadu, 'The Marriage customs of the Moors of Ceylon' in the *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society* (Ceylon Branch) Vol. 10(36), 1888, pp. 219-233.

25. Thawfeeq, M. M. *Muslim Mosaics,* Colombo (n. d) Al Eslam and Moors' Islamic Cultural Home, p. 71.

26. Mauroof, Mohamed, 'Religion, Economy and Society among the Ceylon Muslims' in *Muslim Communities of South Asia* (Ed) Madan, T. N., New Delhi (1976) Vikas, p. 78.

27. The Moors' Islamic Cultural Home, Colombo lists the names of 11 Muslim lady doctors (all practicing in Colombo City) and ten Attorneys-at-Law (9 in Colombo and 1 in Gampola) in its Desk Diary for 1980. The author is given to understand that in the Batticaloa General Hospital, which serves the entire Eastern Province, there is not a single Muslim Lady Doctor and has only one female Nurse (Muslim).

28. The Malay women are different in this respect on account of Westernisation of the Malay Community. The author was told: "You will not find a Moor (Muslim) girl going for public dancing. But a Malay girl should have regular outings, eating in restaurants and dance. As the Malays are poor and a Malay boy can not afford to foot the bill, the Malay girl ends up marrying a Sinhalese, a Tamil or a Burgher boy."

29. Mrs. Ayesha Rauff contested the 1947 general elections as an Independent candidate from Colombo-Central constituency and lost. She could not win even the May, 1950 bye-elections for the same seat. Mrs. H. G. Sattar, another independent candidate contested the Negombo seat in June, 1967 bye-elections without success.

30. Farouque, H. M. Z. 'The Introduction of Muslim Law in Ceylon' in *The First 21 Years,* 1944-1965, Souvenir of the Moors' Islamic Cultural Home, Colombo (1965), p. 15.

31. "There are a few among the gem merchants who can buy the Island, lock, stock and barrel", is how a Colombo-based Muslim Social worker described the gem merchants to the author.

32. Bahauddin, M. M., The Economic problems of the Muslims of Sri Lanka and the programme to solve them' in the Souvenir of the *Muslim Development Fund,* Colombo (n. d) Similar views were also expressed by Dr. Badi-ud-din Mahmud, ex-Minister of Education and President, Islamic Socialist Front, Sri Lanka.

33. Mohamed Mauroof (n. 26) offers a contrary view.

34. Azeez, A. M. A., in a communication dated April 11, 1953 to the Central Ceylon Muslim Educational Society Ltd., Gampola (*Articles and Addresses of A. M. A. Azeez*) (Cyclostyled).

35. Azeez, A. M. A., 'Problems of Muslim minorities with special reference to Ceylon' in *University Majlis*, Peradeniya, Vol. IX, 1959-60, pp. 21-22.

36. The ISF was branded 'Communist' by M. H. Mohamed and Dr. Badi-ud-din Mahmud was unable to convince the Muslim masses over the 'Socialist' part of his party i.e., Islamic Socialist Front.

37. Sir Razik Fareed in an interview with the author in Colombo in June, 1981.

38. Out of the total population of 17,526 (1981), Muslims number 17,217, Hindus 246, Buddhists 31 and Christians 32.

Religion and Politics in Pakistan

By
MOHAMMAD SAFDAR MIR

A vast and sweeping Islamic revivalist movement has gripped the Muslim countries and peoples throughout the world. Variously described as an Islamic Upsurge, Islamic Fundamentalism, and Militant Islam, the phenomenon is regarded with sympathetic appreciation in some quarters of the Western world while other sections look at it with a certain measure of apprehension and concern. Scholars and researchers are busily engaged in studying the religious, social, political, economic, strategic, philosophical and cultural aspects and implications of this immense upheaval which is affecting the lives and thinking processes of one-fourth of the population of the globe.

The origin and source of this phenomenon are often attributed to the induction of pro-Western oil producing Arab countries into the political and strategic activity going on in and around their region. There is an element of truth in this theory but it does not quite explain the emergence of the much more violent variety of Islamic militancy of the Iranian Revolution which is not only antagonistic to the West but also to the aspirations of Western allies among the Arabs. This antagonism between two currents of the Islamic upsurge has taken the form of the Iran-Iraq war in which the Arab countries seem to be ranged on the side of Iraq.

This duality and conflict within the general movement of Islamic revivalism is not restricted to the Arab and non-Arab countries around the Gulf, but can be observed in various forms and shades of an emergent Islamic consciousness throughout the world. Some sections of it uphold the status quo, oppose modernism and take a socially conservative pro-Western attitude in their political and economic policies. Others favour a mild modification of existing social, political and economic forms. Still others propose a general re-structuring of society on revolutionary lines and oppose the strategic objectives of the West in their regions.

Despite these divergences, however, their sense of common identity as Muslims has become an important factor in the social and political life of most of the Muslim peoples in the world. Different groups may have their own particular perceptions of this sense of Islamic identity, of the Islamic tradition, and of the possible modes of adjustment of this tradition with the necessities of modern life, but most of them are imbued with a consciousness of unity and brotherhood within the fold of the Islamic Ummah. The membership in the Organisation of Islamic Conference of over forty Muslim countries is a reflection of this sense of identity and consciousness of unity. Some of this camaraderie may be attributed to the lure of the petro-dollars and the exigencies of the maintenance of the Western connection preferred by the ruling elites of most of the Muslim countries, yet it cannot be denied that there is anohter, less mundane and more idealistic motivation involved here. Those who would like to understand the phenomenon of Islamic upsurge must take into account all the essential aspects of its reality.

This sense of Islamic identity is not a new factor in the social and political life of the Muslim peoples of the world. In the modern period of history its first stirrings can be observed at the time when the decadent, disintegrating, feudal kingdoms and empires of Asia and Africa

(mostly under Muslim rulers) were being dominated, conquered and absorbed by European imperialist countries. Mainly in response to this incursion of the West we already find religious reform movements in Arabia, in the Ottomon Empire and in India towards the end of 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century. Mohammad bin Abdul Wahhab, in Arabia, Rafi al Tahtawi in Egypt, Shah Abdul Aziz and Shah Ismail Shahid in India were trying to reinterpret religion in terms of fundamentals. The ideas of religious reform in Bengal led to the Faraidi movement of Muslim peasants in 1831. They not only asserted the observation of only the essential obligatory duties of religion (**Faraiz**) but also made a bid for the abolition of the new landlord system imposed by the British under the Permanent settlement. Raising the cry of **Al-Arzo Lillah** (Land belongs to God) they drove out the landlords and waged armed struggle against the British administration until overcome by superior force.

Such religious reform movements among Muslims continued throughout the 19th century in various parts of India. Some of them inspired or merged with anti-Imperialist armed struggles like the 1857 rebellion. But resistance and rebellion against the Imperialist authority was not the only response among the Muslim reformers of 19th century to the colonial reality which had not only eliminated the feudal structure on which large sections of religious and lay sections of Muslim population depended for their living and social status but also had replaced it by a new social, political, economic, cultural, educational and administrative structure. There were those who opposed it and those who came to terms with it.

The Muslim intelligentsia and the elite in the South Asian region were split into two antagonistic sections. The traditionalist and conservative elements rejected the new social and cultural reality and tenaciously stuck to thinking and behavioural patterns which they had inherited. Some of them were so bitterly opposed to everything

Western that they refused to use the new means of communication like the railway and the telegraph on religious grounds. Learning of the English language and the study of modern sciences was of course anathema.

The other section of the Muslim elite and intelligentsia made their peace with the new reality of colonial structure and found it advantageous to adopt the new cultural values. They studied the Western sciences and arts and became useful functionaries of the new administrative system. Their exposure to new learning and the pressures of the proselytising activities of the Christian missionaries made it incumbent on them to reinterpret the religious tradition in which they had been born, and bring it closer to a rationalist view of spiritual reality. Their defence of Islam resulted in a reformed version of it which made it possible for them and the Muslim community to adjust with the changed circumstances of life in a bourgeoise dominated world.

This conflict between the modernists and the conservatives in India has stayed with us ever since, and taken the form of the struggle between the orthodox and the liberal trends, between the Ulema, the religious scholars upholding the concept of an unchanging, tradition bound, cut and dried Islamic faith and legal system, and the liberal, western educated, modern Muslims who advocate a reformed religion based on Ijtihad, independent judgement working out new solutions of problems of living according to the basic principles and spirit of Islamic faith.

In the first category, the conservative intelligentsia, we have the ulema of various denominations. Brought up in the traditional schools of religious learning, such as Deoband near Delhi, they have maintained their strict adherence to the medieval interpretations of the Quran, the Hadith, and the Fiqh or Islamic jurisprudence. They have maintained their old stance of rejecting Western ways and Western thought. They played a very positive role in the course of Indian freedom struggle. Their

leaders, like Maulana Mahmudul Hasan and Ubaid Ullah Sindhi, tried to set up an Indian government in exile in Kabul during the first world war with the help of Turkish and German agents. They were also foremost in the Khilafat movement of 1919-1924. They remained stout followers of the Indian National Congress and the preponderant majority of them rejected the movement for Pakistan.

In the 2nd category, the modernists, we have the celebrated figures like the great educationist Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898) whose founding of the Aligarh College and University, has played a vital role in the growth of the liberal trend in Muslim counsciousness in the South Asian region, and incidentally in the development of the separatist movement which culminated in the demand for Pakistan.

But apart from these two broad categories of Islamic intellectuals we have a third trend represented by such dynamic personalities as Syed Jamal-ud-Din Afghani, (1839-97) whose contribution to the awakening of the Muslims everywhere in the later half of the 19th century remains unsurpassed. Born in Iran he played a revolutionary role in Iranian, Afghan, Indian, Egyptian, Turkish polities and was expelled from everywhere until he settled in Paris and brought out the first modern political journal which was addressed to the entire Islamic world. His politics was democratic and anti-Imperialist. He stressed the importance both of modern scientific knowledge and of the adherence to traditional ways of Muslim society. But above all he was working for the unity of Islamic world in the form of Pan Islamism. He is also the initiator of the idea of an Islamic Socialism.

In the context of South Asia, the two major currents of conservatism and modernism in the Muslim community developed side by side. The former were in the main opposed to the British colonialists, their administration, their system of education, and the new social patterns of living and behaviour that had taken root

within the colonial order. The latter in the main had adjusted themselves to the new order and were content to live within it.

By the first decade of the 20th century, however, both the conservatives and the modernists were faced with a new situation by the rise of the militant nationalism of the Indian National Congress. This originally loyalist organisation of the Indian middle class, founded under the tutelage of the British administration in 1885, was composed of all communities, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Parsis. By the first years of the 20th century, however, it was showing signs of a radical militancy at the same time as of a Hindu bias in its idea of nationalism. The aggressive movement of the Bengali Hindu middle class against the partition of Bengal (1905-1911) which was adopted by the extremist leaders of the Congress — Bepin Chandra Pal, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai — revealed a political stance which was not only anti British but showed signs of an anti-Muslim bias.

By the time the Bengal agitation was over after the annulment of the partition in 1911 the Muslim middle class had been driven to form its own separate national organisation, the Muslim League. (1906). It aimed at the protection of the rights and interests of the Indian Muslims and was as loyal to the British rulers as the Congress had been at the beginning.

The Balkan War (1913) in which the European powers were ranged against the Turks, and later the participation of Turkish Empire in the first world war on the side of Germany, created an entirely new situation for the Muslims in general. There was a tremendous anti British and anti-Imperialist pan-Islamic wave among Indian Muslims, in which both the conservatives and the modernists became involved and started speaking the same language as far as the relationship of the West with the Islamic world was concerned. The wave turned into the flood of the Khilafat movement at the end of the war

with the defeat and dismemberment of the Turkish Empire at the hands of the allied powers.

It was also during this period, the 2nd decade of 20th century, that the currents of Hindu nationalism and Muslim nationalism came together. In 1916 the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League agreed to work together while retaining their independent identities. This was the achievement mainly of Mohammad Ali Jinnah — a young liberal democrat, passionately attached to secular democracy and non-communalism — who was at that time given the title of "the Ambassador of Hindu Muslim Unity", and who was later to emerge as the Quaid-i-Azam (the Great Leader) of the Pakistan movement and then the founder of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Mohammad Ali Jinnah, although a great champion of Hindu Muslim Unity, kept away from the joint Khilafat and the Congress Non-Co-operation movements of 1919-1922, which were led by the new Congress luminary Mahatma Gandhi. Jinnah's main objection to Gandhian politics was its "spiritualisation" which he regarded as having in it seeds of disaster. He envisaged politics in liberal and mainly constitutional terms and was opposed to the rousing of mass passions in the name of religion. Probably he could foresee the discord which was bound to follow the the disillusionment when the unpracticable agitations of the Khilafat and Satyagrah (Non-Co-operation) movements came to an end.

That is precisely the way it turned out. The unity of the Hindus and Muslims which had arrived at its highest pitch at that time led to widespread rioting between the two communities soon after the withdrawal of the movement. And ever since the two communities drew farther and farther apart. By the beginning of the 2nd world war the Muslim masses throughout India were inspired by separatist rather than Indian nationalist slogans. In 1940 the Muslim League under the leadership of Jinnah launched its demand for a separate Muslim

state in India based on the self determination of muslim majority areas in South Asian Sub-continent.

The two currents of Islam — the conservative and the modernist — had for a brief period in the 2nd and 3rd decade of 20th century come together. After the fiasco of the Khilafat and 'Satyagrah movements they again drifted apart. Paradoxically, the main section of the conservatives, i.e., the orthodox religious scholars, became champions of the secular cause of Indian National Congress, while the major section of the modernists kept away from the Congress, and ultimately provided the leadership of the separatist movement. The paradox is compounded by the fact that the socio-political doctrine of the conservatives, despite the secular creed of the Congress, remained religious in nature, while the socio-political doctrine of the modernists, demanding a separate state of the Muslims in the name of religion, was couched in liberal, secular democratic terms.

The political developments in Pakistan since 1947 can be broadly viewed in terms of the conflicting positions on state craft adopted by these two major sections of the Muslim intelligentsia. The modern, liberal democratic elements were trying to establish a national state and society moulded in the form of 20th century Western bourgeois state and society. The conservative section mainly composed of the ulema, the traditional Islamic scholars, were engaged from the beginning in trying to thwart the efforts of the liberal-democrats, and struggling for the formation of a theocratic Islamic state on the basis of their interpretation of the Quran, the Shariah, and the Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence inherited from the Feudal Empires of the 2nd and 3rd Hijri centuries).

An element of crucial importance for the understanding of the political conflicts and developments in Pakistan is their international context. The nature of the Indian Muslim politics in the first half of the 20th century and earlier was determined largely by the fact that its various contending currents were responses to

the Imperialist colonial domination of India as well as of the Islamic world in general. The nature of Pakistani politics since Independence is determined by a different context — that of the neo- colonial reality which emerged after the 2nd world war, and the international political, economic and strategic necessities of the Western powers.

There are two factors which must always be taken into account in this respect. Firstly, the Western connection of the Pakistani national state imposed on it by history and the tradition of its administrative, political, economic, social and cultural patterns which had developed in the region during the two hundred years of British colonial rule. Secondly, the international class struggle in the form of the cold war between the Western and the Eastern blocs whose pressures have impinged on all the post colonial countries and to a large extent have determined their policies.

Pakistan came into being as a modern national state and to begin with its polity was based on secular democratic ideals. Although the Pakistan movement aimed at forming a national state of the Indian Muslims in their majority provinces yet its leadership always emphasised its secular character. Again and again, before and after 1947 Mohammad Ali Jinnah declared that Pakistan was not going to be a theocratic state. In 1946, in an interview to the Reuter's correspondent he said :

"The new state would be a modern democratic state with sovereignty resting in the people and the members of the new nation having equal rights of citizenship regardless of their religion, caste or creed".

In his famous inaugural address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on 11th August 1947, he said :

"We are starting in the days when there is no discrimination, no distinction between one community and another, no discrimination between one caste or creed and another. We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of

one state ..... Now I think you should keep that in front of us as our ideal, and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual but in the political sense as citizens of the state."

With the sovereignty of the State resting in the people without distinction of religion or caste or creed and the equality in law of all citizens, there cannot be any doubt about the secular democratic nature of the state which Jinnah, the Quaid-i-Azam of the Muslim people had struggled for and had brought into being in 1947.

He often talked of the principles and ideals of Islam because only broad principles could be the basis of a polity which had to do justice between individuals belonging to various religious groups, various sects in the same religious groups, and various castes and creeds. He never talked in terms of dogmas or details of sectarian creeds. In his civic address to the Karachi Corporation, on 25th August 1947, he said :

"It should be our aim not only to remove want and fear of all types, but also to secure liberty, fraternity and equality as enjoined upon us by Islam."

In a broadcast talk to the people of the United States in February 1948 he described the political system of Pakistan as he envisaged it.

"The constitution of Pakistan has yet to be framed by the Pakistan Constituent Assembly. I do not know what the ultimate shape of this constitution is going to be, but I am sure it will be of a democratic type, embodying the essential principles of Islam. Today they are as applicable in actual life as they were 1300 years ago. Islam and its idealism have taught us democracy. It has taught equality of man, justice and fairplay to everybody. We are the inheriters of these glorious traditions and are fully alive to our responsibilities and obligations as framers of the future constitution of Pakistan. In any

case Pakistan is not going to be a theocratic state — to be ruled by priests with a divine mission. We have many non-Muslims — Hindus, Christians and Parsis — but they are all Pakistanis. They will enjoy the same rights and privileges as any other citizens and will play their rightful part in the affairs of Pakistan."

The other most important personality connected with the movement for Pakistan was the poet philosopher Dr. Mohammad Iqbal. He was inspired by the career and political ideas of Syed Jamal ud Din Afghani and sang of freedom from the yoke of Western Imperialism which he considered to be the common curse of all humanity. He wrote passionately about the overthrow of the feudal-monarchical system in the East and about the revolution against the capitalist system in the West. Looking around in his own society he found the hold of the Mullah and the Pir — the conservative and reactionary traditional religious elements — as the instruments of vested interests for the enslavement of the masses. He talked of the modern age as the age of the working class and proposed the formation of revolutionary peasant communities among the village youth in the Punjab. In his last book **Pas Cheh Bayd Kard ay Aqwam-i-Sharq** — what then shall we do, O nations of the East? — he called for a struggle for the overthrow of the colonial system and a self reliant economic order for the poor Eastern countries.

His most important prose work was called **The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam.** Basing himself on strictly rationalistic principles he made a thorough criticism of the inherited medieval pattern of the political, social, moral and religious concepts prevailing among the Muslims. He aimed at rediscovering the essential teachings and principles of Islam, and in the light of these principles to recast the political, economic, and social forms of the Muslims in harmony with modern conditions of life and the progress in the consciousness of humanity which had followed the age of enlightenment and reason in the West.

In the last chapter of this book entitled "Is Religion Possible? he defines his own concept of religion while emphasising the necessity of religion :

"Surely the present moment is one of great crisis in the history of modern culture ..... And religion, which in its higher manifestation is neither dogma, nor priesthood, nor ritual, can alone ethically prepare the modern man for the burden of the great responsibility which the advancement of modern science necessarily involves, and restore to him that attitude of faith which makes him capable of winning a personality here and retaining it hereafter."

We are here far away from the fanatical exclusiveness and medievalist authoritarianism of the conservative and reactionary priesthood against which he waged a life long struggle.

He proposed the reworking of the Islamic system of inherited medieval laws on the principle of **Ijtihad,** meaning a reinterpretation of the Quranic concepts in the light of modern developments. He believed that the originaters of the earlier schools of Islamic law themselves did not insist on their codification as final in any sense. They worked out the intention of the Quranic injunctions according to the changed conditions of the people in terms of time and place. Other conditions and other times and places would require new codification. This he insisted was quite in keeping with the spirit of the Quranic teachings which concieved of human beings as rational, responsible, and free.

The principle of **Ijtihad** or reinterpretation has been a part of the Islamic Jurisprudence from the beginning and even the traditionalists accept its validity. But the medieval theologians laid down certain conditions for the mechanism which made it well nigh impossible to put it into practice. Or they appropriated the right of reinterpretation and new condification of laws to themselves, thus forming themselves into a separate class of clergy above the community and wielding sole authority for

speaking in the name of Islam. As is well known to all and sundry there is no place for such a class of divinely ordained priests in Islam.

Iqbal declared himself in full agreement with the **Ijtihad** of the Turks who had concluded that the free legislative assembly of the people's representatives would be the mechanism for the reinterpretation and codification of the law of the Muslims. He opposed the institution of a separate body of clergymen for examining the legislation of the Assembly to give their final opinion about its being Islamic or un-Islamic, as was then proposed by the Iranian constitutionalists. Thus the legislatures of the Muslim nations were, in Iqbal's opinion, the only valid authorities for making or remaking of laws for the Muslims.

Iqbal was immensely inspired by the republican polity of the Turks under Ata-Turk. His vision of the free Islamic world was composed of a group of independent republics ruled by their peoples through their elected representatives. As for the unity of the **Ummah** under one banner it could, in his opinion, only come when every Muslim people had solved its own problems through its own efforts.

In economic matters Iqbal was totally opposed to feudalism, capitalism and Imperialism, and greatly attracted towards the socialist experiment initiated by the October Revolution. He did not agree with the atheistic aspect of Bolshevism but declared at one time that if the concept of God is added to Bolshevism it comes very close to Islam. On another occasion he said that "Islam is itself a kind of socialism". In a letter to Jinnah during his last days he proposed the acceptance of social-democracy by saying that "for Islam the acceptance of social democracy in some suitable form and consistent with the legal principles of Islam is not a revolution but a return to the original purity of Islam".

No wonder then that Jinnah in a speech at public reception in Chittagong on March 26, 1948 said : "You are

only voicing my sentiments and the sentiments of millions of Musalmans when you say that Pakistan should be based on sure foundations of social justice and Islamic socialism which emphasises equality and brotherhood."

The founding fathers of Pakistan, Iqbal and Jinnah, were both liberal democrats aiming at a reorganisation of the Islamic community in accordance with known principles of democracy, and to a certain extent wished to change the economic system on socialistic lines. In any case they envisaged the community of the Muslims as the community of free individuals, totally independent of the authoritarianism and diktat of monarchs, feudal lords, priests, capitalists and imperialists.

These were their ideals. And it was because of these ideals that the broad masses of Muslims in India followed them in the struggle for an independent national state.

But soon after Jinnah's death two powerful groups of the elite in Pakistan started their bid for moulding the new state according to their own purposes: the theocratic Ulama and the bureaucracy.

The first was the group of traditionalist religious scholars and priests. It has been pointed out that during the period of the struggle for Pakistan the overwhelming majority of the groups and political parties led by priests and religious scholars either opposed the concept of a separate national state for the Muslims or were merely indifferent. One of the most powerful of these groups — the Deobandi **Jamiatul Ulama** — was a part of the Indian National Congress and worked against the Pakistan movement from its platform. So also the **Majlis Ahrar-i-Islam,** which was very strong in the Punjab, and worked in close alliance with the Congress against the Muslim League. The Khaksar movement, patterned on the militaristic organisation of the Nazi Party was likewise opposed to Pakistan, and one of its members even tried to assassinate Jinnah at one time.

But the most insidious propaganda against Pakistan

was carried on by the Jamaat-i-Islami, founded in 1941, and led by Maulana Abul Ala Maudoodi who was later to lead the movement for a theocratic state in Pakistan.

All these political groups and parties, opposed as they were to the very idea of a separate Muslim national state, had perhaps believed that Pakistan would never come into being. It was therefore a tremendous shock for them when it did materialise. After their disarray and confusion of the early years after 1947, however, and especially after the death of the Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah in 1948, they tried to establish their feet once again and started their struggle for power in Pakistan.

They began their struggle by reinterpreting the Pakistan movement as a movement not for the establishment of a national state but for an Islamic state. They based their assertion not on the political documents and the statements and writings of the accredited leaders of the Muslim League, but on sophistry and fallacies of deductive logic. Since the state had been formed by the Muslims they argued, it could not but be an Islamic state. And if it was to be an Islamic state who could better define its principles and structure except those who had the best acquaintance with Islamic scriptures and Islamic law and jurisprudence — namely the conservative priests and religious scholars, who had opposed the Pakistan movement and the very concept of Pakistan in alliance with its enemies.

Because of this glaring contradiction in their claim for being spokesmen for Pakistan's state structure it was with great difficulty and after a considerable time that they could gather much of a following. But their tactical position improved after they had pressured the Constituent Assembly to pass the Objectives Resolution, with its first clause affirming the concept of the Sovereignty of God.

The concept is not new, nor is it alien to Islam. And we find it in other religions also. The Christians uphold

the concept of Kingdom of God, and the Hindus believe in Ram Rajya.

In the Quran God is called **"Malik-ul Quddos"** (Holy King) and Sultan (Sovereign).* There is also a Quranic verse which declares **"La Hukma illa Lillah"** (there is no authority but God's).** From these phrases the leader of the Jamaat-i-Islami — Maulana Maudoodi — had deduced and evolved a complete theory of the Islamic state. Islam, according to him, is :

"The very antithesis of secular Western democracy. The philosophical foundations of Western democracy is the sovereignty of the people. Law making is their prerogative and legislation must correspond to the mood and temper of their opinion ... Islam .... altogether repudiates the philosophy of popular sovereignty and rears its polity on the foundations of the sovereignty of God and the vicegerency (**Khilafat**) of man."

It was not for the first time that concept of sovereignty mentioned as an attribute of God in the Quran was used for the political purpose of negating the temporal authority of the state. When the Khwarij rose in rebellion against Hazrat Ali — the 4th Caliph — they used that concept for negating the institution of the Caliphate itself. And they quoted the Quranic verse **"La Hukma illa Lillah"** .(There is no authority but God's.) In answer to their claim the 4th Caliph observed — "This is a truth being employed in the service of a falsehood." He upheld the necessity of human rulers and their administration of the society despite the over all authority and sovereignty of God in the universal order. Actually the anti-Caliphate move of the **Khwarij** was a call for the abolition of the

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* *Sultan* in the Quran has been generally used not in the sense of sovereign but in the sense of 'clear reason' (*sultanan mubina*) or in the sense of authority. (ed.)

** Allah has also been described in the Quran as ahkam al-hakimin i.e. the greatest and the justest of all the rulers. (ed)

state, and was motivated by their desire to return to the isolationism and particularism of the tribal autonomy which had been eroded by the organisation of a supra tribal political system.

In the case of Maudoodi, and later the rest of the conservative religious politicians, the concept of God's sovereignty was not motivated by the desire for the abolition of the Pakistani state but by the objective to control it.

The Objectives Resolution, which incorporated this concept of God's sovereignty, was confused and contradictory in its formulation. It said :

"Whereas sovereignty over the entire universe belongs to God Almighty alone, and the authority which He has delegated to the state of Pakistan through its people for being exercised within the limits prescribed by Him is a sacred trust; this Constituent Assembly representing the people of Pakistan resolves to frame a constitution for the sovereign independent state of Pakistan .... etc.

Already in the very first sentence of the Resolution we have two sovereignties — that of God and that of the State of Pakistan. But such contradictions and confusions were of little consequence as far as the needs of the theocratic politicians were concerned. They were served very well, because on the basis of this Objectives Resolution, incorporated in every one of the Constitutions framed in Pakistan from time to time, the theocrats have been negating the sovereign position and hence the right of the people of Pakistan to govern themselves.

But the theocratic politicians were not the only group of the elite in Pakistan to benefit from the negation of the sovereignty of the people in the name of the sovereignty of God. The civil bureaucracy, which has been in effective power in the state from its beginning to the present, also benefited from this confusion and fallacious reasoning. Later, the military bureaucracts joined it and the sovereignty in actual fact has belonged to either one or the other, or both.

Thus the bid for power of the theocratic politicians in Pakistan has actually resulted in the rule of the civil and military bureaucracy, which is quite in the tradition of the colonial state of the British which was inherited by these two sections of Pakistan's elite. Like the British army and bureaucracy, they look at themselves in the role of the Guardians of the country, the people and the state. What they actually have managed to do in Pakistan is to guard the status quo of neocolonialist structure of economy. That is their real function, and it is for this reason that the Ulema's concept of the sovereignty of God as the negation of the sovereignty of the people has been of great help to the civil and military bureaucracy for the establishment of their rule in Pakistan. The conservative theocratic politicians had hoped that by ousting the people from power through their theory of the Sovereignty of God they would themselves be able to rule in His name as the custodians of His Word and Law. But ultimately they discovered that they had only paved the way for the civil and military bureaucracy to usurp power. For the last 25 years and more Pakistan has been ruled by the bureaucracy. Even during the Bhutto interlude from 1972-1977 the ultimate power remained in the hands of the civil and military bureaucrats. They have proved to be the real sovereigns in Pakistan. And in the background can be clearly discerned the **eminence grise** of the Western Imperialist powers, who have their political, economic and strategic interests to protect in this region. The political structure that has emerged in Pakistan has proved to be the best protection of these interests.

The Bhutto Interlude was a brief embarrassment but it passed. and the Western connection which was in many ways jeopardised by Bhutto's policies, has been reaffirmed, and today Pakistan has attained the honoured position of "the frontline state" of the Western powers in their cold war against the East.

Bhutto came into power, quite unexpectedly even for

himself, on the shoulders of the great upsurge of the people in the late sixties. It was an unprecedented political upheaval for a country like Pakistan with its weak and disorganised progressive forces. Mainly spontaneous, the mass movement which brought down the dictatorship of Ayub Khan, was the assertion of the assertion of the democratic, anti feudal, anti capitalist, anti imperialist urges of the people. They had had enough of the stagnating neo-colonial economy which had further impoverished the working classes of town and country, while the feudal and capitalist classes were growing richer and richer. The burden of developmental assistance which propped up the civil and military bureaucrats and helped many of them to emerge as the new comprador capitalist class, was all pushed on to the shoulders of the working classes.

Even the middle class found itself slipping into the ranks of the impoverished workers. The general disillusionment of the working classes and the middle class expressed itself in the demand for a total change of the economic and political structure. The great achievements of the Peoples' Republic of China and the austere life style of the Chinese leaders had got a lot of publicity in Pakistan in the wake of Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 and the Chinese pro-Pakistan stance at the time and later. The younger generation of the intelligentsia became imbued with socialist ideals in which they discovered resemblances with the social, political and economic ideals of the early Islamic state of the Prophet and the first four Caliphs. This led to a wide-spread demand for a socialist revolution. To make it more acceptable the middle class intelligentsia, which assumed the leadership of the mass upsurge, raised the slogan of Islamic Socialism. It became immediately popular and was adopted by the newly formed Peoples Party of Bhutto. It was mainly due to this socialist stance of the People's Party that Bhutto got an over-whelming majority in West Pakistan.

The theocratic politicians were shocked at the

emergence of the powerful socialist wave which seemed to have swept along with it the ignorant masses of the poor and the deprived. They had all along opposed the Western educated elite in the administration and among the rich classes whom they regarded as their opponents because of their liberal Western ways. On the contrary they had depended on the support of the ignorant masses whose passionate attachment to religion made them the natural constituancy for a theocratic politics.

The theocrats were surprised to discover that the ignorant masses were no longer prepared to listen to them. They had gone over to the side of the socialists.

With a greater surprise they discovered that the Westernised elite — the feudal landlords, the capitalists, the rich merchants, and above all the civil and military bureaucrats — who had so far been suspicious of religious politics and had been attached to liberal ideals, were now more than prepared to listen to their theocratic doctrines and even to avidly adopt them.

This radical change in the political alignments in Pakistan — with socialists and socialist motivated politicians on one side and the religious, administrative and economic elite on the other — determined the results of the 1971 elections. In both wings of Pakistan it was the socialist parties and their allies which swept the polls.

A new phase in Pakistan's politics began with the socialist mass upsurge of 1967-68. Class struggle became the hub of all political activity. Despite the traumatic partitioning of Pakistan and the formation of Bangla Desh, the ill-advised policies of the Bhutto government, the eroding of the socialist veneer of the Peoples Party, the overthrow and execution of Bhutto, the total suppression of the people by the Martial Law regime of General Zia, the terrible suffering of the leadership and cadres of the People's Party, and the impossible conditions for any kind of political work, the basic political fact in Pakistan is the polarisation between the working classes and the landlord and capitalist classes, and the fundamental issue

of politics is the class struggle. That is the rationale for the draconian policies of Zia's regime.

In retrospect when we analyse the events which led to the overthrow of Bhutto we discover that the united front of the various forces which had been threatened by the spontaneous socialist mass movement started forming as far back as 1967-68 when the people took to the streets and a great debate between socialists and anti-socialists was raging in the press. During the years of Bhutto's government it mainly assumed the form of an anti-Bhutto front, and many of the old leftist and socialist parties and politicians became involved with it, but its essential character was determined by the elite and the vested interests who had made up their mind to suppress totally the socialist and democratic aspirations of the masses and to root out all possibilities of a new upsurge of the kind which had overtaken them unawares in 1967-68.

It is unnecessary to go over the various stages of the growth of the united front of the vested interests. What is important to emphasise is the use of religious demagogy in the final stages of the movement for the overthrow of the People's Party government of Bhutto. The political parties' alliance which took to the streets in 1977 with the express purpose of removing Bhutto from power adopted the slogan of bringing about a revolution for creating the **Nizam-i-Mustafa** (the system of the Holy Prophet) which was opposed to the socialist system of People's Party. It was also called **Nizam-i-Islam** and **Hukumat-i-Ilahi ya** (God's govt.). The rhetoric used was couched in the ideological arguments popularised by the Jamaat-i-Islami of Maulana Maudoodi, including his theory of the Sovereignty of God.

The PNA, as the united front of these political parties was called, had hoped that the Martial Law imposed by General Zia was to be short lived. After their objective of removal of Bhutto had been fulfilled, the elections would be held, and since Bhutto had been thoroughly

discredited, the PNA confederacy would be able to win by an overwhelming majority. But the stupendous reception by the people of Lahore accorded to Bhutto on his first visit after his removal from power showed that there was no hope for them in any election in which Bhutto could participate.

That is why the elections of October 1977 solemnly pledged by Zia on assuming power were postponed. Even after the execution of Bhutto there was little possibility of any politician or political party opposed to him getting anywhere in an election. That is why the elections of 1979 were also postponed.

But by then another factor had come into full operation, The PNA politicians had acclaimed the various steps taken by the Martial Law government against Bhutto, including his execution. They had helped General Zia's government to consolidate itself. They had praised his efforts to give an Islamic tone to the society and virtually proclaimed him as the Soldier of Islam. In the process they had themselves got discredited with the masses, while General Zia had decided to seriously cast himself in the role of the Soldier of Islam that they had assigned to him. The theocrats had helped him get rid of Bhutto and his political power on the basis of Islamic slogans. Now he went about the business of getting rid of the theocratic politicians and himself emerging as the greatest of theocrats, who did not merely talk about Islamic government but had power enough to give a practical shape to the theory.

Bypassing all the politicians he set up a number of institutions to support him. An Islamic Ideology Council had been in existence for a long time. It was activated and staffed with committed theocrats. Similarly the academic body, Islamic Research Institute, was put to action. A National Advisory Council or **Majlis-i-Shoora** was set up with handpicked likeminded persons from all regions to advise the President on legislative matters, and

to discuss the Budget after it had been passed by the cabinet. Similar councils were instituted in the provinces. The main function of these organisations was to acclaim the decisions orders and ordinances of the Islamic government of President Zia-ul-Haq.

The various steps taken by this Islamic government to Islamise the country and the state are:

(1) Institution of the **Hudood** or so called Islamic punishments for offences like theft, adultery, drinking, and robbery.

(2) Compulsory exaction by government of religious taxes **Zakat** and **Ushr** (respectively from capital and land).

(3) The preparation for abolition of interest by the institution of profit-and-loss sharing deposits in Banks.

(4) The law regarding **Qisas** and **Diyat**, referring to the Islamic injunction about the right of the family of a murdered person to demand the execution of the murderer or to accept compensation.

(5) The instituting of an Islamic Law of Evidence.

(6) Formation of **Salaat** Committees (committees of persons for exhorting the people in their areas to say their prayers.

Most of these measures are merely cosmetic in effect.

(1) For instance the implementation of **Hudood** punishments can be often avoided because an offender is free to choose the kind of law court in which he is to be tried. There are three kinds; the prevalent law courts in the tradition of the British Indian system of justice; the Martial Law courts; and the **Shariat** Courts. The **Shariat** Courts are rarely preferred by offenders.

(2) The payment of **Zakat** and **Ushr** is similarly sought to be avoided by various strategems. The specialists in **Shariat** Law have objected to the **Zakat** exactions

because they are extracted from savings bank accounts or other interest bearing deposits and this is tantamount to a licence for usury.

(3) The profit and loss sharing banking system is similarly objected to because in actual fact it is tantamount to a mere changing of the name of interest to profit. Most depositors are assured a fixed rate of profit.

(4) The law of **Qisas** and **Diyat** has created a lot of agitation especially among women. It stipulates that the compensation for a woman is to be half of that for a man. It also refers to the compensation for the life of a non-Muslim being half of that for a Muslim.

(5) The Islamic law of evidence has merely been challenged by women because it rules that the evidence in financial matters of two women is neccessary to make it effective and equal to the evidence of a single male.

(6) The **Salaat** Committees are mainly redundant, and are often staffed by persons who are themselves rarely seen in the mosques.

The greatest benefit of these measures has been the widespread discussion that has taken place on the introduction of each one of them by turn. They may not be effective in themselves and do little by way of turning Pakistani state and society into an Islamic state and society, but the debate for or against them keeps the government in the news as a government which is at least trying to change the system into an Islamic one.

Nothing much is heard about any radical change in the economy of the country. A committee appointed by the Finance Minister a couple of years ago to investigate the mode of abolition of interest reported that the profit and loss sharing form of banking was actually going to increase the exploitation of the masses. It said that according to the Quranic injunctions the land rent, interest on money and profit on capital were all forms of usury. It concluded by saying that if economy was to be genuinely Islamised it would have to be moulded into

a system very similar to socialism. In any case capitalism with the profit motive as its chief ingredient was totally opposed by Islam.

And yet the major characteristic of the economic policies of General Zia's Islamic government is the fullest freedom for free enterprise and capitalist industry. That is the quality which has endeared it to the middle class and the various sections of the bouregeoisie, both local and foreign. There is no reason to doubt that the most ardent supporters of the Islamic system as envisaged by this government are the vested interests. But the economic features of an Islamic system rarely come under discussion. Not even the theocratic politicians, who are very bitter at the treatment they have received from General Zia, are prepared to discuss the economic system in its essentials. Presumably they are in agreement with his policies in his regard.

What they are not quite happy with is his attempt at formulating a political system which clearly aims at doing away with the prevalent mode of political activity. He himself, and many of the religious scholars who support him, have made a number of declarations from time to time, many of them conflicting with one another, but all of them geared to the purpose of nullifying parliamentary, or any other type of democracy. It has been said that, (1) Elections are not a necessary part of Islam. (2) Elections can be held but political parties are not to be allowed to contest, because making political parties is anti-Islamic. (3) There can be no opposition in an Islamic Assembly because this would lead to dividing the community. (4) The assembly may be composed of elected representatives but it cannot have more than an advisory function; the ruler (the President, or **Amir**) elected by the Assembly or the people, may or may not accept the advice of the Assembly. (5) The Amir or President once chosen can remain in office as long as he does not go against the **Sharia** — the Canon Laws. (6) The candidates for election to the Assembly, and even the voters, must

bear a good character and must be good Muslims. Otherwise they can be disqualified. In this context General Zia on many occasions has declared that secularists and socialists cannot be allowed to contest.

While most political parties, including the theocratic ones, have been clamouring for elections on the basis of the constitution of 1973, General Zia and his aides have been proposing a new framework, often called party-less system, i.e. elections without political parties contesting. Even at this moment, however, when the Election Commission seems to be making preparations for the polls, it is not at all clear what form the elections will take. Or even whether they will necessarily be held.

While the vested interests, the civil and military bureaucrats, and their partisans among politicians, are happy with things as they are, the unrest among the people is growing day by day. The political leadership has either been rendered ineffective or has retired from the scene voluntarily. But it is not necessary that the democratic urges of the masses should follow only known means of expression. The condition of insurgency in Sind last year was just such an unorthodox mode of political action. And it has not completely died down even now.

What form the political activity of the people takes in the future cannot be forecast, but one thing is certain; the Islamic and theocratic form of it has been so thoroughly discredited by the practices of the last seven years that the conservative religious politicians can have little hope of attracting the masses. Theocratic politics was already played out at the end of the sixties. In any new dispensation where the people have a say in matters, it is not likely to make much of an impression.

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* The Partyless elections were held in last March after this paper was written. However, there was very low turn-out, it is alleged. (ed)

Islamic Fundamentalism and Communalism in India

By
ASGHAR ALI ENGINEER

Islam was the religion of the ruling classes before the British rule was established in India. This fact has been very deeply embedded in the subconsciousness of the upper-caste Hindus. It is also a fact that a section of middle and even upper-caste Hindus was a part of the ruling classes and enjoyed all the privileges associated with the ruling class. The culture evolved by the ruling classes in India was composite culture precisely because it was commonly shared by both the ruling classes Hindus as well as Muslim. This culture was influenced by the Hindu traditions on one hand, and, by Islamic traditions, on the other. Poetry, fine arts like music, dance and painting as well as ways of speech and modes of dressing all came under the influence of this composite culture.

There was confluence of religions, particularly of Islam and Hinduism, at the level of the masses too. Many festivals were celebrated in common and many temples and mausoleums were held in high reverence by both the communities. Muslim **Sufis** and Hindu **Sants** used Hindu as well as Islamic idioms to influence the masses and it left very deep imprint on their minds. Many new sects were born under the influence of this confluence of two religious traditions. Dr. Tara Chand, a noted scholar of

Indian Islam, even maintains that the concept of **Advaita** (monism) of Adi Shankracharya was born under the influence of Islam. It would be interesting to quote Dr. Tara Chand here at some length :

> "Beginning from the fifteenth century Hindu reformers like Kabir and Nanak sought to minimise differences between the Hindus and Muslims and to bring them together. The Muslim Sufis and saints, especially those who followed the teachings of Ibn Arabi, became interested in the principles of Vedanta and the practices of Yoga, and were influenced by them. The Hindu and Muslim writers contributed to the development of modern Indian languages and literatures. The artists evolved styles in architecture, painting and music, in which the Islamic elements were fused with the Indian ingredients.
>
> "The Hindu **bhakti** schools spread all over India and the **bhakti** cult in its impersonal and personal forms captivated the popular mind ..... Similarly **tasawwuf** (mysticism) was spread widely .... Both (i.e. **tasawwuf** and **bhakti** movements) founded their faith upon the principle of pantheistic monism (**advaita, wahdat al-wujud**),and both followed a similar methods of self-control and purification (**yoga** and **dhikr**). Both regarded song and music as contributory to the inducement of mystic states — contemplation and unification."[1]

We have quoted at length from Tara Chand in order to show how much common was there between the two principal communities of India. What has been said above is only the proverbial tip of an iceberg. Then the question arises why this endemic conflict between these two principal communities? Why communal riots keep on erupting even 37 years after the sub-continent became independent? It appears as if the two communities are fated to remain embroiled in eternal conflict. Are we

justified in taking fatalistic view of the tangled inter-communal relationship? Any such view in my opinion would be superficial and simplistic. The reality must be seen in all its complexity. We would examine, in the lines below, various aspects of this complex reality.

II

Religion, needless to say, plays very prominent role in exacerbating communal relationship. However, it is important to add the rider that religion is an instrumental rather than a causative factor. Keeping this in mind it would be necessary to probe the role of religion and its emergence with new vigour in the politics of Indian sub-continent. Religion, on account of its powerful emotional appeal, has often sought to be dragged into political and social arenas by various interest-groups. It is precisely in this sense that it becomes significant to study the role of religion in the Indian sub-continent.

Islam, as pointed out earlier, was the religion of ruling classes before the advent of the British rule in India. In a monarchic and a feudal society the role of religion is fundamentally different from that of a modern colonial, democratic and capitalist society. There is no scope in a feudal society to exploit religion to the extent it can be in a modern parliamentary system with ballot-box orientation. In a feudal society people were more religious-oriented and religion was ritual-oriented. In a modern colonial semi-colonial or independent domocratic society people are less religious but religion tends to become politics-oriented. This difference must be borne in mind in order to understand the role of religion in modern society, especially the societies of the developing countries of the third world.

The political orientation of religion began with the consolidation of the British rule in India after failure of the war of independence of 1857. A new political consciousness began to emerge in the members of both the communities. In political arena religion was no longer

oriented towards faith, rational or irrational, but towards evolving a religious identity, a primordial consciousness, for its political utility. Now onwards ones identity as a Hindu or a Muslim was more important than ones true religiosity or actual faith in religion. Jinnah, the supreme leader of Muslim League was an archetypal model of such a Muslim. So was Vikram Savarkar archetypal Hindu of similar model. Both were secular and progressive in outlook, stood for reforming religion and religious traditions and yet fought for political power on the basis of religion and religious identities.

It must be remembered that religion **per se**, or religion as a profound personal faith is no threat of any kind; it is its political use, depending on the exigencies of the situation, that makes it a negative force. As we have seen above there was basic working harmony, if not complete fusion, between the Hindus and Muslims at upper as well as lower levels. However, it was during freedom struggle that a sense of separatism was injected in the minds of Hindu and Muslim middle-classes which were instrumental in articulating their respective political ambitions. The elites of both the communities freely made use of religion, culture and language for this purpose. Rafiuddin Ahmed points out :

> "The selection of language and culture as symbols of Muslim identity was a significant feature in the development of Muslim self-consciousnesss. The power to forge links between widely separated social groups was enormous. The **ashraf** had only limited success in imposing their culture on the community at large, but for sure the humbler elements in society were made to feel very uneasy about the links with the local culture. The Muslim elite now could manipulate to their advantage the social insecurity of the less privileged without giving up their exclusiveness. They knew now that the cry above all others that could be counted on to rally the Muslim masses was the cry of "Islam in danger". The rising tide of ill-

feeling between the Hindus and Muslims drove the Muslim masses closer to the ashraf at least for the time being, and hardened their exclusive attitudes. The weakness of the enforced **entente** between two incompatible cultures — one elitist, the other popular — was not recognized at the time. It took more than half a century for the Bengali Muslims to realize that their Muslim identity was in no way inconsistent with their Bengali origins."[2]

The Hindus too were no exception to such a process. They were made to realise they were ruled for centuries by the Muslims and that they were no better than second class citizens under their rule. This thought was made a part of the collective psyche of the Hindu middle classes. Thus while the doctrinal conflict remained muted the political conflict between the two communities sharpened the sense of separate communal identities. It is religion-based communities rather than religions which clashed with each other. It should also be remembered, as very aptly pointed out by Mr. Rafiuddin Ahmed, that it is the elite (ashraf) of both the communities who benefitted the most, or at least sought to benefit most, from such communal-based politics. That epitomises the history of struggle between the two communities.

Here there arises an important question which has often been debated among the scholars, especially of the left orientation. Can a community-based structure be a viable structure in socio-economic terms? In other words can a religious community (or for that matter a linguistic or cultural community) develop into socio-economically viable community without splitting into class lines and developing conflict along these lines. The answer to this question can neither be yes or no. Reality is much more complex and operates at different levels. We shall try to answer this question at some length in the following lines.

III

To begin with we must distinguish between religious structure and economic structure of a community. Religious structure has, besides others, emotional, psychological and metaphysical aspects. Economic structure, on the other hand, has social and material aspects involving the entire web of relations of production. It should also be noted that there would be a continuous process of interaction between the religious and the economic and one or the other would dominate depending on the concrete situation and the stage of the development of the communities.

Viewed purely in socio-economic terms, a religious community is not, by itself, an homogeneous structure as it tends to split into different classes. However, in the periods of crisis (perceived or real) comparatively less developed religious communities tend to show a degree of behavioural homogeneity (**not structural**) albeit for the time being. Even highly developed communities show such behavioural homogeneity in times of acute crisis as for example the Jewish community of the United States of America. In times of war between the Arabs and Israel, the world Jewery tends to show its solidarity with the state of Israel.

In the event of uneven development of various religious communities the less developed religious community tends to show greater degree of behavioural homogeneity as the Muslims are often perceived to be doing in India. With greater and greater degree of capitalistic economic development the community develops more pronounced class-structure and intra-communal class conflict begins to emerge on the scene. It has happened with the Hindu community in India but the Muslims have not developed economically sufficiently to evolve sharply defined class-structure. The Sikhs in Punjab, on the other hand, have achieved sufficient economic development to evolve a perceptible class-structure. However, the recent crisis has convincingly

shown that minority communities, even if sufficiently developed, can, for the time being, overcome class differences and close their ranks. One can, therefore say, with sufficient degree of assertion that in times of perceived or real crisis, the minority communities tend to show greater degree of communal solidarity and can even overcome limitations of class-structure. The politicians have very shrewdly exploited this potentiality of communal polarization in order to advance the interests of the elites of their community.

IV

The role of what has come to be termed as 'fundamentalist movements' must be understood in the light of its mobilizatory potential on one hand, and, its legitimizing function, on the other. Religion, in the instrumentalist sense, is being made to paly a very significant role in politics in South Asia. Even the secular parties find it increasingly irressistable to make use of religion for their political ends. To use Marx's words one can say that the modern secular state of India has political attitude towards religion instead of having religious attitude towards politics as it happens in a theological state.[3] The secular state, by adopting 'political attitude towards religion' has done great damage to the development of genuine secular culture. It has given encouragement for greater and greater use of religion in politics.

Marx also very aptly points out that religion is not the cause but the effect of the kind of society we have. It is secular narrowness which explains religious narrowness and not the vice-versa. Marx says:

> "We no longer regard religion as the cause, but only as the **manifestation** of secular narrowness. Therefore we explain the religious limitations of the free citizens by their secular limitations. We do not assert that they must overcome their religious narrowness in order to get rid of their secular restrictions, we assert that they will overcome their religious narrowness

once they get rid of their secular ristrictions. We do not turn secular questions into theological questions. We turn theological questions into secular ones."[4]

Marx's perceptible observations are highly relevant in Indian situation today. If we reduce the whole question of fundamentalism and resurgence of religion in Indian subcontinent into a theological one we would not be able to make much headway. It is essentially a secular question, a question of proper and sufficient economic development and judicious distribution of the fruits of development which alone can overcome secular narrowness in order to provide a viable basis for overcoming religious narrowness. The process of economic development, if insufficient and iniquitable (i.e. uneven community or caste-wise and region-wise) is likely to stoke the fire of caste, communal and regional fanaticism and encourage narrow bigotry.

The rise of religious fundamentalism must be seen in this light. Of course, besides this, there are other reasons as well, as any social reality is constituted by religious, cultural, political, historical and socio-economic factors. Economic development unleashes forces of change both social as well as technological and threatens security of certain sections of society. Those who depend on old technology for their economic survival feel threatened when new technology of production is introduced and find psychological compensation in religion. The new social mores are also not taken kindly by those sections of society which are adversely affected by the economic development. They strongly denounce these new mores as moral corruption resulting from change and development.

The rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the Islamic world should also be understood in the same light. The oil revolution in the early seventies put enormous resources in the hands of Middle-East rulers. Under pressure from the Western countries these resources were partly used to buy advanced Western technology in the form of turn-key projects (whether the technology suited

the country or not). This sudden transformation from camel age to jet age had its own psychological consequences. Large sections of society were adversely affected and sought psycological refuge in religion. The oil revenues also brought greator corruption among the ruling classes further convincing the masses of the 'necessity of religion'. Thus was prepared the ground for revival of religion.

It is also important to note that sudden changes threatened the political stability of the ruling classes. The revival of religion became a political necessity also. The rulers of the Middle-East too adopted a 'political attitude' towards religion. The latest to join the bandwagon was Numeiri of Sudan. Thus we see that revival of religion became 'necessity' both for the rulers as well as the ruled. The rulers used it as an effective instrument to perpetuate status quo and the ruled as an effective psychological refuge from threatened insecurity as a result of the process of sudden change. This political use of religion is not a novel phenomenon in the Islamic world. What was new was its sudden resurgence to politically manage a situation of equally sudden change.

No doubt the fundamentalist movement in the Islamic world as well as in Indian sub-continent has been playing a reactionary role. But it should also be noted that the role of religion has not always been counter-revolutionary in history. Buddhism, Christianity and Islam, the three great religions of the world have played revolutionary role in their early stages. It was only much later that they became powerful establishments and reconciled to, or colluded with, tyrannical empires of their times to perpetuate status quo. There were, however, from time to time, dissenting movements within these great religions challenging the status quo and launching revolutionary movements. Kharijites, Shiites and Qaramita in Islam and various protest movements within Christianity played this role.

Thomas Munzer, a close collaborator of Martin Luther, was a revolutionary priest who sought to trans-

form this world itself into a Kingdom of Heaven. Marx himself approvingly refers to one of his revolutionary sermons in which he said, "that all creatures have been turned into property, the fishes in the water, the birds in the air, the plants on the earth; the creatures too must become free."[5]

Ali Shari'ati, a noted Islamic thinker of Iran gave revolutionary interpretation to Islam and inspired the Iranian masses to fight against the tyrranical regime of the Shah. Talking of the Shiite religion — the religion of the masses of Iran — he distinguished very aptly between the **tashayyu'-i-surkh** (the red Shiism) and the **tashayyu'-i-siyah** (the black Shiism). The former symbolised a religion of sacrifice, of shedding ones own blood to bring about revolutionary transformation whereas the later was the religion of status quo, of those who contented themselves simply by mourning the death of Imam Husain and beating their breasts.[6] 'Ali Shari'ati's writings and speeches on Islam undoubtedly contributed a greate deal in the overthrow of the hated regime of the Shah. The liberation theologians among the Christians in Latin America is yet another example of religion playing a revolutionary role and fighting against percecution and exploitation.

V

Religion in the Indian sub-continent has played, in recent history at least, not a very glorious role in social transformation. The Indian sub-continent was divided on the basis of religion and this division meant massacre of more than a million people. What is worse, the partition did not solve the communal problem. The formation of Pakistan was very fragile. It was based on a contrived religious ideology improvised by the interested elite of North India. It was more chauvinistic than ideological, more damagogic than democratic in orientation. Democracy, therefore, never struck roots in Pakistan. Feudal lords led by bureaucracy and military ruled over it.

Religion was most unabashedly used by the vested interests to oppose any democratic movement. The Qadiyanis are being persecuted. The most narrow minded 'ulama are riding roughshod over the masses of people. Rituals, superstitions and medieval practices are encouraged at the cost of true, rational faith. It would be no exaggeration to say that Zia-ul-Haq has reduced religion to a great farce. 'Islamic fundamentalism', if it could be so described, is found at its worst in Pakistan today. It coexists with worst kind of moral degeneration, political corruption and amassing of wealth by the few. Religious slogans are mouthed by the hypocrites to grab wealth and power. Westernization at its worst (not modernization, please note) goes hand in hand with fanaticism and bigotry. The ruling classes want to take all the benefits of westernization while keeping the masses steeped in religious bigotry. Religion has ceased to be a meaningful faith; it has been turned into an irrational obsession. It is no longer a vision of life; it is being made to serve as a crafty stratagem. It is not a project for establishing a just society but a vehicle for aggrandisement of the ruling classes.

Now religious fanaticism is fanning the fire of sectarian war between the Shi'as and Sunnis. They had coexisted peacefully in the past. Such a sectarian fight now is the logical culmination of bigoted policies being followed by the Zia regime. It is also possible that the sectarian differences are being encouraged to irrupt into violent form. In other words religion has been made to play a very negative role in Pakistan.

VI

The situation in India is not very gratifying either. It is true that India has adopted secularism as the anchor-sheet of its policy and democracy has survived here, even emerged stronger, despite many threats to it. But the slowly developing capitalist system keeps on creating one crisis after the other and does not admit of just solution

for the problems of poverty-stricken masses. More and more people have been pushed below the poverty line and any struggle on the part of the toiling people is ruthlessly put down. Perhaps more people have been killed in police firings and caste and communal violence in independent India than during the British period.

The caste and communal questions have become greatly aggravated. There was, as pointed out in the beginning of this article, basic harmony among the people of diverse faiths in the pre-British period. This harmony was disturbed and the country got divided. However, as already pointed out the process did not stop with that. Communal discord appears to have become endemic despite our avowals of secularism and national integration. It is getting worse every day. Caste and communal violence is occuring on the increasing scale. It would be interesting to throw some light on this.

The caste and communal identities are acquiring greater and greater significance. In rural areas the emerging middle-castes, in order to grab more and more land and other resources, are becoming more belligerent and using caste-identities to mobilize the poor of their own castes against the poor of lower castes. Also, the democratic process, despite many shortcomings, has brought political and social awareness among the lower castes which are trying to assert themselves for their legitimate rights. This provokes more violence from the upper castes who see threat to their own privileges. The politicians are making use of this caste polarisation in their election calculus and thus further aggravating the caste question. In view of the above snowballing process no solution seems to be in right.

The communal tangle is no less worrisome; perhaps even more. The Hindu fundamentalism is at its aggressive worst today. The ruling party, it is no longer any secret, is encouraging Hindu fundamentalism in many subtle ways to increase its appeal among the upper-caste Hindu voters in view of its shrinking base among the minorities

and the Scheduled castes. The Sikh fundamentalism got partly aggravated because of such short-sighted policies of the Central Government in India. However, the rise of Akali fundamentalism had some reasons of its own and owed its aggressiveness to the socio-economic and political situation in the Punjab.

Communal violence has been endemic in our country. But the Hindu fundamentalist campaign spearheaded by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad has added a new dimension to it. A new wave of communal riots has been sweeping the country ever since the birth of this fundamentalist organization. The Muslims have been the worst sufferers in these communal eruptions since early eighties. Bhivandi-Bombay riots provoked by a Hindu demagouge Bal Thackaray, the Shiv Sena Chief, shook the entire country. Communal idiom is being used more and more aggressively for political ends. Apart from arousing communal passions these bigoted communalists strengthen the forces of obscurantism and irrationalism. Forces of secularism and rationalism are taking back-seat and primordial consciousness is replacing national consciousness. The secular questions are being increasingly couched, as Marx would put it, in theological terms.

The Muslim leadership is equally deprived of any future vision. The leadership-structure is unfortunately dominated by the bigoted 'ulama. They are opposed to any meaningful change. The reason is obvious. Any progressive change threatens their religious leadership. The question of progressive reforms in the Bohra community best illustrates this state of affairs. The Bohra high priest is trying to ruthlessly put down the struggle for reforms using most inhuman forms of persecution. The Muslim leaders, perhaps fearing the same fate, tend to support the Bohra clergy. The secular leadership among the Muslims is extremely weak and vascillating. The non-left secular leadership almost tails behind the 'ulama and there is hardly any worthwhile left leadership among the Muslims. The Islamic fundamentalism in India,

though not aggressive is certainly regressive. It opposes vehemently any change even within the Islamic framework. Communal riots bring about more and more communal polarisation and the 'ulama take full advantage of this polarisation for their own ends. The doctrinal structure has been totally frozen and the value-structure of Islam totally disregarded by the opportunist or bigoted 'ulama who are perpetuating the worst form of sectarianism, narrow mindedness and medievalism. In case of Muslims these tendencies are reinforced by their greater degree of backwardness, poverty and illiteracy. It is very unfortunate that instead of solving these problems by aligning themselves effectively with the progressive forces in the country, the Muslim leadership is following the short-sighted policy of using Islamic fundamentalism to perpetuate these problems by strengthening the status quoist forces.

NOTES

1. Tarachand *History of the Freedom Movement in India* Volume one (Delhi, 1970), pp. 172-73.
2. Rafuddin Ahmed, *The Bengal Muslims* 1871-1906 *A Quest for Identity* (Oxford University, 1981), pp. 132.
3. See Karl Marx, Frederick Engels *Collected Works* Volume 3 Marx and Engels 1843-44 (Moscow, 1975), pp. 157.
4. *Ibid*, pp. 151.
5. Quoted by Marx from Thomas Munzer's pamphlet directed against Martin Luther. This pamphlet was published in 1524. See "On the Jewish Question", *Collected Works* Ibid, pp. 172.
6. See Ali Shari'ati *Tashayya'i-'Alavi wa Tashayyu'-i-Safavi* (Husainiyah Irashad, 1957) and also Shi'a (Husainiyah Irshad, 1357, Bahmani).

Muslim Mind and Society in Bangladesh : An Historical Retrospect

By

ALI ANWAR

Like all other world religions Islam as well has adapted itself to various climate and cultures. This is true about Islam in Bangladesh too. As a way of life Islam has taken on local characteristics in Bengal which makes it look different from the ways of Islam elsewhere in the world. When the muslims invaded Bengal in 1204 A.D., it already had a rich accumulation of Buddhist and Hindu cultures of at least fifteen hundred years and a complex structure of society. Inspite of the great political power that the Muslim rulers gradually came to acquire over the country it was neither possible nor did they mean to wipe out traditions rooted in local ways of life, mores and beliefs and start with a clean slate. There was a long period of political and cultural exertion and conflict, followed by equally long periods of cultural coalescence and synthesis between the indigenous and the new. But neither the conflict nor the coalescence was ever absolute and the contours of this phenomena remain undetermined until today. From the very first days of encounter the muslim society in Bengal has been characterized by the dialectic of separatism and synthesis, oscillation between conservation and innovation. The

Turks, the Afgans and the Mughals who had successively invaded Bengal were not only ethnically, linguistically and culturally aline to the country but they also jealously guarded their separateness as a ruling elite — just as the conquering Arabs had done for a long time in Sudan or in Spain. On the top of that the language of the muslim scripture — Arabic, and the language of muslim administration — Persian, both non-Indian languages stood in the way of easy give and take between the outsiders and the indigenous population. If all these factors hindered assimilation, the exclusivist Hindu social mores of a caste — ridden society hedged around with an obsession for ritual purity and fear of contamination, did not make things easy either. However once introduced under the umbrage of muslim political power — the basic simplicity and egalitarianism of Islam as a faith and the social cohesion of muslims as a community held an immediate appeal to Bengali society rent by communal dissensions between the Hindus and the Buddhists, weakened by an unjust and divisive caste — system, impoverished by economic exploitation and confused by political ineptitude. As a consequence conversion to the Islamic faith made steady progress, particularly among the socially disadvantaged and the poor. The Buddhists, who under the Sena kingdom had lost their previous positions of prestige and power they used to enjoy under the Rala kingdom, — possibly formed the bulk of the newly converted. The Brahminical resurgence during the Sena kingdom will have made the Buddhist a special target of their inquisitorial attack and the oppression must have gone to such insufferable extremes that conversion seemed the only alternative to them. We have a literary record of this phenomenon. In a poem called **Niranjaner Rushma** composed from the Buddhist point of view during those troubled days, an elaborate justification of the conversion is produced. The poem describes how the followers of **Dharma Thakur** — a sect of the Buddhists being harrassed and exasperated by the Brahmins appealed to God for redress. God i.e. **Dharma Thakur** was deeply disturbed

at this. So he decided to appear personally on earth in the garb of a 'Yavana' muslim Khondkar wearing a black cap, armed with cannons and other weapons to teach the Brahmins a lesson. The **Devas** and the angels gladly accompanied him wearing the dress (**ijar**) of the ordinary muslim soldiers. **Vishnu** chose to assume the shape of a **Paigambar** i.e. prophet, while **Brahma** appeared as Hazrat Muhammad — all carrying lance and other appropriate weapons in their hands. Likewise **Ganesha** appeared as a **Gazi** (i.e. Knight crusader), **Kartik** simulated a **Qazi** (i.e. Jurist), goddess **Chandi** became **Bibi Hawa** and **Padmavati — Bibi Nur.** Such was the magic spell cast by **Dharma Thakur.** They entered the city of Jaipur and demolished the temples and holy places of the Hindus. However it was not the Buddhists alone, but many Hindus as well who accepted Islam. And soon enough the true-born Bengalee Muslims for outstripped the Pathans or the Mughals in number and formed the main corpus of Bengali Muslim society. The process of assimilation will have started since then and it started from the bottom. The new converts brought along with them many of the ritual practices and prejudices they had inherited from their forbears — which they did not feel to be in contradiction with their new faith. Islam in Bengal thus started to assume an indigenous character — which in its turn attracted more and more converts and stopped short of a social revolution.

Bengal was not conquered by the Muslims in a day or within a few years at that. Ikhtyar uddin Mohammad Bakhtyar — a Khalji Turk from Garmshir and a military adventurist under Kutbuddin Aibak had conquered Lucknowti — the capital of Sena Kingdom of Bengal in 1204 A.D., and Navadwip in the same year. Bakhtyar's was the first muslim Kingdom of Bengal. He had a part of western and northern Bengal along with a part of Bihar under his suzerainty. He did not try to penetrate into estern Bengal. His abortive expedition into Tibet brought about his death in 1206 A.D. The Sena Kings though dispossessed of Lucknowti continued to rule in

East Bengal at least till 1260 A.D. Neither eastern Bengal nor southern Bengal came under the Muslim rule before the last decade of the thirteenth century. Giasuddin Iyuz Shah (1212-1227 A.D.) first attempted to conquer Tripura and Kamrup and without much of a success. Shamsuddin Firoz Shah conquered Saptagram, Mymensingh and Sylhet in the early decades of the fourteenth century. Fakruddin Mubarak Shah (1338-1399 A.D.) conquered Chittagong and held it for some time. Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah (1342-1358 A.D.) conquered Kamrup. Many of these places slipped out of muslim hands after a while and had to be reconquered later. Alauddin Hussain Shah (1493-1518 A.D.) for example conquered Kamrup and Koochbehar. Jalaluddin Mubarak Shah (1418-1433 A.D.) conquered Tripura. Shamsuddin Yusuf Shah (1476-1481 A.D.) conquered Hugli. Thus more than two hundred years elapsed before the greater part of Bengal was under effective muslim control. Nor have these two hundred years been one of uninterrupted peace or political continuity. The first eighty years of Muslim rule in Bengal witnessed no less than twenty rulers from Ikhtyar uddin Muhammad Bakhtyar to Mughisuddin Tughral. Four years on an average per ruler, many of whom like Yuzuddin Muhammad Shiran or Nasiruddin Mahmud ruled for two years each or even less. The pattern does not change very significantly in subsequent centuries either. The very brief regimes of these quick changing rulers were hardly peaceful and cannot be expected to be conducive to the cultivation of culture. Most of these rulers neither had the inclination to be involved in the culture of the ruled, nor the respite to influence the same save through violence. Periods of law and order have been punctuated by stretches of anarchy and lawlessness. Dynasties followed each other in quick succession. The Turks were followed by the Pathans. The Pathans were chased out by the Mughals. It is also doubtful how many of these adventurist rulers were interested in the propagation of Islam, or how far their personal way of life conformed to the Islamic code of conduct.

The proselytization was left to the **Sufis** and secular culture to the Arab traders. Some traders and a few Sufis even preceded the conquerors in certain areas. Chittagong the port city of Bangladesh was linked with the Arab trade route even as early as the eleventh century and possibly there was also a settlement of Arab traders in Chittagong. The unusual preponderance of Arabic words in the local dialect bears testimony to the early and long association of the Arabs with the Chittagonians. The Arab traders in other parts of the world have had their trade-guilds which were akin to the Sufi **Khanqas** and sometimes coincided with it. It is not entirely illogical to assume that they might have had such guild or **taifas** in Chittagong as well, in which case it must have played some role in acquainting the local people with the ways of Islam. It is, however, the free ranging Sufis, — accompanying the conquerors or sometimes preceding them and venturing into unknown territories, that should be credited with the propagation of Islam. Whatever conception and admiration for Islam as a theology and as a way of life the people had was largely from these Sufis since the **Ulamas** and the **Qazis** — who stayed on in the cities around the seats of power and who were the official guardians and interpreters of the Sharia were too high and too remote from the people. The **Sufis** on the other hand organised their hospices or **Khanqas** mostly away from the cities. They were eminently approachable and by their conduct and charcter earned the admiration and respect of the people among whom they lived. The Islam they practised or propagated possibly was often rather unorthodox and did not go strictly by the scripture and relied a good deal on the personal fiat and charisma of the founder **Shaikh** of the **Khanqah** for authentication. These were the mystics who gave a personal flavour to religion. But all Sufis were not ascetics. Some like the Knight errants of Europe were warrior-saints who considered it a virtue to take up arms against the infidels standing along side the invading muslim generals. Legend goes that Shah Jalal of Sylhet,

Mahi Sawar of Bogra and Shah Makhdum of Rajshahi took part in military expeditions. A plethora of punthi literature has sprung up in Bengali centering round the exploits of such **Gazi** saints.

The rulers however were not entirely indifferent to the propagation of Islam or exertions of the **Sufis.** The Sultans of Bengal and later the Emperors of Delhi often granted rent-free land to the Sufis for the construction of their **Khanqahs.** The Sufis however were not a homogenous group. They belonged to different schools or **tariqas** and were ever so different from each other. They entered into Bengal at different times and were variously treated by successive regimes. At least fourteen such **Tariqas** or mystical orders entered into Bangladesh of which the **Chishtiyas,** the **Suhrawardiyas,** the **Qalandariyas,** the **Naqsbandiyas,** the **Madariyas,** the **Haidarias,** the **Quadirias,** the **Adhamiyas,** the **Gawthias,** the **Kabiriyas** are the most well known. Most of these mystic orders originated in Syria, Iraq or Iran from the eighth century onwards and by the time they entered into India in the eleventh century they had well-developed canons of their own. Each of the **tariqas** built its own chain of **Khanqas** for the study of the relevant literature and for the training of the novitiates.

Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi, the great Suhrawardiya[1] saint, came to Bengal in 1210 A.D. and built a **Khanqah** in Malda, West Bengal, supported by a generous land grant from the Sultan. This was called the **Baish Hazari.** His grandson Shaikh Qutb Shah Jalal also grew to be an accomplished spiritual himself and was revered for that. This Shah Jalal however is to be distinguished from the Shah Jalal of Sylhet and Shah Jalal Dakhini of Dhaka.

The first Sufi to come to Rajshahi was Turkan Shah in 1288. In the same year Shah Makhdum Abdul Quddus Ruposh arrived at Bagha — a river port few miles away from Rajshahi. Legend goes that he was the grand son

of Abdul Quader Jilani and that he had arrived at Bagha, a northern out-post, via Noakhali, a southern town near Chittagong. Those who had accompanied Shah Makhdum were Dilal Bukhari, Syed Abbas, Sultan Shah and Karam Shah-accomplished mystics all, and fondly remebered for their saintliness and services to Islam.

The **Naqshbandiya** sect[2] was established in Bengal by Shaikh Hamid Danishmand. Shaikh Hamid Danishmand and Haji Bahram Sakka settled in Burdwan and established a madrasah at Mangalkot. Mughal Emperor Babar patronized the order and Akbar is said to have granted the village of Faquirpur to Sakka.

Shaikh Sirajuddin (d. 1357) introduced the Chishtiya Order[3] into Bengal. One of the earliest of Chishtiyas we have a reference to is in the work of the medieval Bengalee poet Daulat Quazi. He is Ashraf Khan, a minister in the court of Shri Sudharma of Arakan and patron to the poet.

On the other hand another famous Bengali Muslim poet Alaol was of the Quadiriya order. Shah Qamis of Baghdad was the initiator of the sect in Bengal. Shah Qamis died in 1584.[4]

The **Qalandariah**[5] mendicants must have become quite numerous by poet Mukundarama's time (late sixteenth century) to find their way into his **Chandimangala**, a long poem celebrating the power and accomplishment of the Hindu goddess **Chandi.**

The Madarias were the followers of Syed Badruddin Madar and came to India in the fifteenth century. Their influence among the lower classes of Rangpur was very widespeead. They had some affinity with the Chishtiyas but had acquired other indigeneous practices.

Of the mystic **dervishes** and sufis who came to the Dhaka region the more famous ones are Shah Balkhi, Khawaja Sharfuddin and Shah Jalal Dakhini of Dhaka, Adam Shahid of Vikrampur, Niamat ullah Butshikan, Sadeque Gamnam Shah Wali Beghdadi of Mirpur and Khondkar Muhammad Yusuf of Sonargaon. As a matter

of fact nearly every district of Bangladesh seems to have its patron-saint. We have the **mazars** and **dargahs** of Bayezid Bistami in Chittagong, Khan Jahan-e-Ali in Satkhira, Shah Jalal Bokhari, Mahi Sawar in Bogra, Shaikh Ismail Gazi in Rangpur, Shah Sultan Rumi in Netrakona; Syed Ahmed Tannuri and Rasti Shah in Comilla; Shah Cherag-e-Alam in Barisal and so on ad infinitum.[6]

The extent of the spread of the influence of these saints and their mystic orders is evidenced by the hundreds of **dargahs** or shrines that have come up on the tombs of these people, all over Bangladesh and the veneration they attract from all kinds of people irrespective of religion, even today.

The importance of the Sufis is not exhausted in the mere fact that they were efficient missionaries. They were important in two other ways. They provided ways of cultural coalescence and they presented a distinct kind of social experience — both of which have shaped the Bengali Muslim mind and is reflected in their attitude to even secular issues in history. A quick over-view of the basic assumptions of Sufism and Sufi organization may not be amiss here.

Sufism proposes to awaken man's dormant spiritual faculties through the training of the body and the mind and promises spiritual experience that culminates in the direct apprehension of Godhead the Real (al-Haqq). Thus sufism is a method of approach to Reality — a **Haqiqa**. The training is travelling the path (**Salak-at-Tariq**) which aims at dispensing the veils which hide the self from the Real. The Self thereby becomes transformed or absorbed into undifferentiated Unity. That is the state of **fana fillah** in Sufi parlance. Perhaps Sufism is the natural development of the Quranic piety, but its contact with Judeo-Christian mysticism and Indian **tantra** influenced it in many ways in the elaboration of Sufi **tariqas** as systems. The idea of **fana** is so akin to the Budhist **nirvana**, absorption of the Self into undifferentiated Unity

with **Advaita tantra,** or Kundalini with **Latifa,** that communication between **Tantra** schools and **Sufism** easily suggests itself. Like the Yogic exercises the Sufis also concentrated on the control of the body and through the body successively the mind, the heart and ultimately consciousness — the **nafs,** the **qalb,** and **Ruh** in Sufi terms. The seeker must go through a succession of stages or **Maqamat.** Beyond the **shariat**, the scripture, the stages are **tariqat, haquiqat** and **marifat** each with a goal of its own. Shariat takes us to the **maqam** of **nasut** — the corporeal stages. **Tariqat** takes us upto **malqut** i.e. gnosis or **bodhi, Haquiqat** to **Jabrut** i.e. energy or **Sakti** and **Marifat** takes us to **Lahut** and **Hahut** — i.e. from selflessness to perfect merger into the Real or **Samadhi.** All these stages, reminding one of exact parallels in the **tantric** lore and practices, made the Sufi system communicable across the barriers of language. Some of these ideas the **tariqas** acquired before they entered into Bengal and some they will have acquired later. **Madariyas** rubbing ashes on their bodies or using **hashish;** the **Qalandariyas** going about naked or using intoxicants; the **Haydaris** adorning themselves with iron necklace's or bracelets; the **Chistiyahs** practising Chilla-i-Makus i.e. upside-down suspension in a well for forty days-are among the many heterodox borrowings from the local tradition. Such liturgical proximity of the Sufi doctrines with the Indian tradition partly explains the immediate success of the Sufis at conversion. The emergence of the **Bauls,** the **Satya Narainis,** the **Maijbhandaris,** the **Shahebdhanies** and such other sects in the eighteenth and nineteenth century is the logical development of this syncretistic trend and cultural coalescence and no wonder that they earned such wide following and popularity.

The Sufi **Khanqas** were also a source of a unique social experience. The **Khanqas** provided the first microcosm of the Islamic society in practice that the people could see at close quarter. Mukundarama as late as in the sixteenth century is fascinated by the daily life of

the Muslims and provides us with a glimpse of the life around **a Khanqa.**[7]

"Waking up early in the morning he (a mussalman) offers his prayer on an ochre coloured prayer mat. He prays for five times a day. He recounts the names of Pir and Paigambars on the rosary — the rosary being of the Sulaimani order. He lights up the lamps at the dormitory of the Pir (the spiritual mentor) every evening. A group of ten or twenty disciples are seen busy debating fine points of eschatology and the Quran day in and day out. Some come out to the village market to distribute the **shirnee** (sweetened rice pudding cooked at the dargah) on behalf of the Pir. In the evening the kettle drum rumbles and the (inmates) troop out waving banners in their hands. The resident Pir — a very devout and scholarly person, who does not know any hypocrisy and would strictly adhere to the austerity of a month-long fast (during the month of **Ramadhan**) and can not be persuaded to forsake a single **roza** even on pain of death. If the Pir happens to meet a fellow-muslim in the street without his cap on, he would be very cross and hit him with whatever comes handy to him. A Mussalman would wear long robe-like dress, shave off his head but allow his beard to flow down and cover his chest. He strictly follows the rituals of the order. His cap has a design of ten ribs radiating from the centre. He wears pajamas tightly fastened at the waist. The village **mian** (a man of some importance) goes to see the **Danishmand** after his meals, wiping his hand in a piece of cloth or lungi, and wearing his inevitable **topi.**"

A **Khanqa's** appeal was not merely exotic. The Khanqa as a social organisation partook of the phenomena of any other social institution elsewhere, with secular function and structure. While the men were bound each to each by piety — the organization was not too other worldly. In the community life of the **Khanqa** there was no class-distinction. Save for the Shaikh or the Pir who was the spiritual elect by virtue of his personal accom-

plishment and charisma — the rest of the members were a brotherhood of affiliates. The **Shaikh** in his turn was close to his disciples and to the people around. He was the father figure and very often was addressed as **Baba** and the community was a family surrogate. Thus he responded to the social media in which he found himself. Often the trades-men clustered around the Sufi order and maintained close association. Thus the **Khanqa** might assume the features of a trade — guild or taifa. The family likeness remains. While the basis of the family was kinship, the basis of the **taifa** was religious. A sacred obligation held this extended holy family together; the holy fmaily reinforcing the ties of the natural family — a paradoxical end for a Sufi order. The laity's attachment to the **Khanqa** likewise was mostly a family link — associated by a principle of loyalty to the Shaikh and continually reinforced on social occasions like festivities and rituals of birth, death, marriage, illness or calamity. The affliate not only derived spiritual solace from the blessings of the Sheikh, but also social comforts and economic benefits from the communal identification. Away from the urban centres and its political hubub the orders provided security and stablity in times of turmoil. In remote peripheral areas because of the virtue of their cohesion, these **Khanqas** naturally grew into social power groups — associated in various ways with different strata of society, which sometimes even the political powers had to reckon with. Their occasional linkages with the Sultanate or powers that be expressed through special visits, endowments, land grants or construction of hospices reflected an aura of aristrocracy on some of them. The favour enjoyed by the **Suhrawardiya** order in the Sultanate of Delhi in thirteenth century or the **Chishtiyas** in the court of Arakan or the intimacy of Akhi Sirajuddin and Al'al Huq of Pandua with the Illyas Shahi dynasty are cases in point. But such linkages were few and far between and more often the orders were willy-nilly associated with the humbler ranks. It is the message of egalitarianism and promise of classlessness that will have attracted the

common people to these orders. The more the orders were 'contaminated' by the common people the more the urban aristocracy and the elite stood apart and invoked the coservative ulemas to curb the orders in the name of the scripture — the **Sharia.** Thus a class syndrome came to operate in the case of clientale of these orders. In the new social stratification the people of the lower ranks brought along with them tensions and anxieties about the future of their professions and status. If the saints did not succeed in breaking the social and occupational stratification they could at least promise prosperity and magical protection to their trades. The mystique centering round **Khwaja Khizr** as protector of the mariners and ship, **Pir Bodr** as protector of fishermen and boatmen, **Bara Khan** or **Muhurra Gazi** as protector of the wood-cutters from tigers in the forest might have developed from such emotional compulsions. Sometimes old deities would re-appear in a slightly modified form and enjoy the allegiance of both Hindus and Muslims. Kalu Rai or Dakhin Rai, Jinda Gazi, Bon Bibi, Uddhar Bibi, Manik Pir, Ghora Pir, Kumbhira Pir — have had their devotees among Hindus and Muslims alike. The more such accretious took place the more there was a tendency for the orders to break up into sub-orders. Such break-ups continually created new social groupings centering round a new pir. The orthodox ulemas, the officially recognised interpreters and guardians of the **Sharia,** did not like these parallel religious organizations and centres of authority but they dare not suppress them altogether, even though they condemned many of their practices as **Ba' sharia** — i.e. contravention of the scripture. But because of the subjective personal nature of the experience — a Sufi's claim to illumination could not be challenged without provoking a scandal and hence sects proliferated.

One could at this point speculate for a moment upon the psychological component of these orders. The Sufi orders have always attracted people fascinated by the numinous and the mysterious — the quester and the non-

conformist explorer into the spiritual realm. It was also a haven for the battered and the defeated. The communal **dhikrs** — litany of incantatory repetitions, and other ritual exercises like dancing and singing satisfied the lonely inplividual's need for participation and fulfilment denied by society due to stratification and status bondage. It was a way of circumventing society and its official values. It was as though dissent by **indirection.** Through the idealization of the **dervish** — the out-caste, the non-conformist and the poor, the ordinary affiliate and the laity felt a kind of vindication of the common man, a vindication of the symbol of dissent. When a society throws up too many of such maladjusted people there is cause to suspect some deep social malaise. The Sufi experience at the very onset of Islamic society in Bengal possibly had set an archetypal mould of expression to deeper social malaise — a archetypal mass-reaction that has recurred again and again in our history. The phenomena of Bauls in the eighteenth century, the Faraizis in the nineteenth and the Tabligh movement in our own time with the undercurrent of messianism in them offer tempting parallels. It cannot be mere coincidence that it is always the underpriviledged that seek solace in them.

The emergence of a Bengali muslim culture took a long time to come about. We have already seen that even during the sixteenth century the muslims retained sufficient exotic appeal to be described in some details by Mukumdarama. He also mentions the different social classes among the muslims that give us some idea of the composition and stratification of muslim society. Firstly it was divided by race — the Turks, the Pathans etc. Superimposed on this and running across it was the hierarchy of status and profession : the Sayids, the Qadis, the Ulemas, the Shaikhs, the Laskars and so on. In the lower order were the Jolaha (weavers); the Mukheri (fishermen); the Kabadi (butchers); the Sankars (brass-smiths); the Hajam (barbars); the Kagazis (paper manufacturers); the Dariees (tailors); the Renates (dress makers); the Rangrej (dyers); the Halan (sweet vendors);

the Tirkars (makers of bows and arrows) and so on. What is interesting to note is the fact that the long list given by Mukudarama of the **itar jatis** and untouchables does not include the muslims. Rather there is a note of deference. Whereas the influential Raghunandana a **Smritisastra Kar** (codifier of norms) of the same period in his **Praiyashchitya Tatwa** relegates the muslims to the lowliest of untouchables. In social life however the Hindu power-elite — both feudal and bureaucratic, had intimate social intercourse with the muslims and in many details of their life habits they consciously imitated the muslim aristrocracy.[8]

If the emergence of literature is a measure of maturity of a culture, then muslim literature had to wait for respites in between the periods of conflict and warfare among the often rebellious Sultans of Bengal and the imperial power of Delhi. The arts and literature under the muslims predictably started appearing during the comparatively peaceful and longer rules of the Illyas Shahi and Hussain Shahi rulers. Giasuddin Azam Shah (1393-1410) — an Illyas Shahi ruler was himself a poet of considerable accomplishment and wrote in Persian. He was in correspondence with the great Persian poet Hafiz, Ruknuddin Barbak Shah, also an erudite Persian scholar himself and blessed with a long rule of twenty one years (1455-1476), patronized both Bengali and Persian writing. However it was during Alauddin Hussain Shah (1493-1518) that vernacular literature in Bengal came into its own. Still we do not find a Muslim poet of any repute venturing to write in Bengali. The reasons are not properly noticed always.

Persian was the language of the rulers and the aristocracy. Naturally Persian enjoyed court patronage. It was not easy to attract the attention of a Persian speaking court by writing in Bengali. Besides the Mongal devastations in Transoxiana and Khurasan had rendered hundreds of distinguished Persian intellectuals homeless who had entered into India and taken refugee in the

courts of Delhi, Lahore and other muslim cities. Bengal will also have received its share of these emigre intellectuals who set a very high standard of literary culture in India. These centres of Persian culture spread out all over northern and southern India and maintained communication with each other, and with the parent countries — as the example of Giasuddin Azam Shah's contact with Hafiz amply illustrates. Thus writing in Persian, ensured a readership going not only beyond the confines of Bengal but also beyond the confines of India. Persians was the cultural **lingua franca** of the medieval Muslim world. It was difficult for an intellectual of any calibre and aspiration to resist the temptation of addressing such an international audience. Isn't the position of English vis-a-vis the regional languages of India pretty much the same today?

Persian was closely linked with Islamic theological literature. If Arabic was the language of orthodox eschatology, Persian was the natural vehicle of expression for the ineffable Sufi experience. Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti and Ibrahim Kaki of Delhi wrote **diwans** in Persian and so did Nur Qutb Alam of Pandua. Another Sufi saint at Sonargaon Sharfuddin Abu Tawama also composed in Persian. There were others in Bengal which included Amir Shahabuddin Kirmani, Mir Syed Alavi, Mir Wahidi, Ibrahim Qawan Faruqi etc. Khan Bahadur Hamidullah who wrote a history of Chittagong in Persian in the seventeenth century was also a poet. A number of Hindu poets and writers in other parts of India in the sixteenth and seventeenth century also chose to write in Persian. The tradition of writing in Persian for the benefit of an all India audience remained alive even till early nineteenth century. Raja Rammohan Ray one of the pioneers of the nineteenth century Bengali Renaissance, thought it fit to write his early books on religion in Arabic and Persian. However things changed from 1835 — when Persian was replaced by English as the language of court and administration. The same Rammohan started writing in English. He is no exception. Nearly all of our

major writers and intellectuals of the nineteenth century like Kashiprasad Ghose, Rainarain Dutt, Kylas Chander Dutt, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Lal Behari Dey, and Hurish Mukherjee tried their hands in writing in English. Hence it would be simplistic to conclude that Muslims had no love for the vernacular. Persian actually was the vernacular of many of these writers. As for others who wrote in Persian, besides being propelled by the reasons given above, — also thought that Persian was the natural language of Muslim religious discourse, just as the Hindu pundits thought Sanskrit to be the natural language of Hindu religious discourse. With the development of Bengali literature in the sixteenth and seventeenth century more and more writers and poets, both Hindu and Muslim, started writing in Bengali. The earliest Muslim poet to compose in Bengali was Shah Muhammad Saghir during the reign of Giasuddin Azam Shah. He modelled his romance Yusuf Zuleikha on Firdawsi's poem on the same theme. Ruknuddin Barbak Shah patronized Maladhar Basu to write **Krishna Vijaya** and possibly Krittivasa to translate the **Ramayana**. The **Mahabharata** likewise was translated by Kavindra Parameshwar under the patronage of Paragal Khan, an **Amin** of Alauddin Hussain Shah. Other poets who enjoyed Hussain Shahi patronage were Jasoraj Khan, Damodar, Kaviranjan and Srikar Naudy. Thus the taboo about transferring Holy scriptures into profane tongues was broken among the Hindus as well.

There was an urgent pressure for translating the Sufi doctrines into Bengali since the clientele was increasingly the Bengalee populace. As a consequence a large corpus of theological literature grew up centering round the concepts of Sufi exercises by the early part of the seventeenth century. Shaikh Faizullah's **Goraksa Vijaya**, Syed Sultan's **Gyann Pradipa**, Hazi Muhammad's **Nur Jamal**, Mir Muhammad Shafi's **Nur Nama**; Shaikh Chand's **Talib Nama** — all these are as much exegeses on standard Sufi texts as they are adaptations of indigenous ideas. The indigenous influence is reflected even in the titles of the

following texts : **Hara Gouri Sambad** (Shaikh Chand); **Agam Gyan Sagar** (Ali Reza); **Adya Parichaya** (Sheikh Zahid); **Muhammadi Veda Tatwa** (Abdur Rahim). It is in these texts that Sufi syncretism found its best expression.

It is no more surprising that the orthodox Ulema's would be up in arms against such electic doctrines and **ba'-Sharia** practices. A rich harvest of polemic literature grew up in Bengali as an out-come of all this. Moulavi Rahamatullah wrote that he took up his pen 'to teach about proper Islamic ways and to enlighten the muslims.'[9] Ashraf Hussain another poet wrote in his **Kifayatul Muslemin,** 'I've taken all this trouble for the sake of Islam otherwise what is the point of reading panchalis (narrative poems)'[10] Shaikh Paran's **Quaidani Ketab,** Muttalib's **Kifayatul Muslemin,** Alaol's translation of Yusuf Gada's **Tohfa** are of this category.

Besides such polemical writings hagiographical literature in the tradition of arabic **tadhkirat** also made its appearance and became a flourishing genre. The Prophet and the saints and sometimes the exploits of local **pirs** and **qazis** were the subject matter of such writings. Syed Sultan's **Nabi Vamsha** and **Shab-e-Meraz,** Jainuddin **Rasul Vijaya** on Prophet Muhammad have justifiably won acclaim. Another subject which increasingly fascinated the muslim poets and writers was the conflict between the house of Ali and house of Muawiyah culminating in the tragic episode of the Karbala. Muhammad Khan, a poet disciple of Syed Sultan wrote a long elegiac poem **Moktul Hussain** on this theme in 1646. Hayat Mahmud's **Muharram Parba** is another successful poem among hundreds of poems on the same theme. A whole corpus of **Marsia** literature — elegiac poems, grew up on this theme. That the appeal of the subject was not exhausted even till the end of the nineteenth century is borne out by the fact that one of the best written Bengali prose romance of Modern times — the **Visadha Sindhu** was written on the same theme by Mir Musharraf Hussain in the 1890s. **Ismail Hussain Shiraji,** a bit belatedly, even

attempted an epic — **Maha Shiksa** in the early quarter of this century.

But ironically it was not in the religious literature but in the secular narrative romance poetry that Muslim imagination flourished and poets made their best contributions. This unique genre of narrative romance was introduced into Bengali poetry by the muslim poets. We have already mentioned the fifteenth century poet Shah Muhammad Saghir! The best poets of the seventeenth century Dawlat Qazi (1600-1638) and Alaol (1607-1680) flourished in this genre. Dawlat Qazi's **Sati Maina** was modelled on Sadhan's Hindi **Maina Sat** and Alaol's **Padmavati** on Malik Muhammad Jaisi's Hindi **Padumavat.** Alaol's other poems **Saiful Mulk Badiuzzaman, Haft Paikar** and **Sikandar Nama** were adaptations from Persian **mathnawis** of Nizami.

What is remarkable is that these poets and their successors borrowed quite uninhibitedly from both Hindu and Muslim traditions for their forms and subject matter. Shah Warid Khan imitated Sridhar Kaviraj to produce his **Vidya Sundar,** while Muhammad Khater and Karimullah modelled their romantic love narratives on Qutuban's **Mrigabati** an awadhi Hindi poem. On the other hand Bahram Khan modelled his **Laila Majnun** on the Persian poem by Jami. Nor was there any squeamishness about exploiting a typically Hindu religious theme — the mystical love between Radha and Krishna. Jasoraj Khan, during the reign of Alauddin Hussain Shah had composed a long love allegory on this theme in his **Krishna Mangala.** Scores of Muslim poets likewise made their mark in composing **viashnava padawalis.** Syed Murtaza, Shah Akbar, Nasir Mahmud, Gharibullah have touched the hearts of their readers through the poignance of their emotion matched by the consummate artistry of their language.

A good part of this literature was produced in the Roshang court in Arakan and in the court of Tipperah where the social pressure in favour of Persian was lacking.

Whatever patronage for Bengali literature there was with the Sultan's, after the Mughal conquest the patronage of indigenous literature declined. It was in the courts of the Bhuiyans and in the peripheral Kingdoms of Kamta, Kamrup, Kachar, Tipperah, Darang and Mallabhum that Bengali literature and language found its patronage.[11]

After the Hussain Shahi dynasty, between 1538 the year of Mughal Emperor Humayun's presence at Gour and 1575 the year of the conquest of Bengal by the Mughals, power changed hands in Bengal no less than sixteen times in thirty seven years. During the Mughal rule in Bengal between 1575 and 1716 there were thirtynine governors in hundred and forty years. This includes of course Shaista Khan's long rule of twenty three years — which means other rulers ruled for three years each on an average. The Mughal rule in Bengal has been beset with internal strife and external aggression, warfare and civil disorder, and loot, plunder and rape, that come in the wake of all these. One historian commenting on the first twenty years of the Mughal rule has written : "The history of Bengal under the Mughals between 1575 and 1594 is a sickening tale of recurrent rebellions and fruitless warfare."[12] The later years were equally bedevilled by the Ahom, Magh Firingee and Maratha incursions and internal rebellion of Shova Singh, Rahim Khan and others. Another historian writing about the last twenty five years has said : "Imperial administration was almost wiped out from Western Bengal and lawlessness reigned supreme."[13] Even during the intervening years Mughal authority was not terribly organized or effective. Thus even though the Mughal rulers had ultimately won all the wars in Bengal, had brought the country back under a unified rule, and had reorganised the revenue administration — the benefits of peace fell more to the share of the upper classes than otherwise. During the years of peace through financial corruption the Moughal officials — the diwans, the Bakshis, the Sarkars fattened themselves at the cost of the peasantry. The monetary

exactions of the Jagirdars, the Mansabdars and the Subahdars became staggering. Several hundred million rupees were syphoned out of Bangladesh as revenue and as personal collection. The decadence that had set in Delhi after the death of Aurangzeb came to affect social life at the periphery of the empire as well.

These mundane considerations had their effect on the spiritual life of the Bengali Muslims. At the same time there was also a theological disarray as a concomitant to it all. Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq had been out of sympathy with the Chistiya order and had their **Khanqas** suppressed. The **Chistiyas** decentralized and a section of them came over to Bengal. The **Suhrawardiyas** declined in influence in the northern India since the sixteenth century. The **Naqshbandias** were promoted by Babar and came to prominence in the seventeenth century by opposing Akbar's heterodox Din-i-Elahi. But Jahangir inspite of his sympathies for the orthodox Sunni position defended by the order was constrained to put its ardent champion Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi in prison for his excessive mystical egotism. Jahangir's personal attitude towards the syncretistic practices or towards the Shi'ites was however ambivalent. The **Qadiriyas** under the leadership of the Sufi saint Muhibullah enjoyed considerable prestige in the later Moghul court. But Dara Shikoh's connections with them in his eclectic formulations made their theological position suspect to Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb suppressed the **Qadiriya** and the **Qalandariya** orders which he felt to be deviating from the orthodox Sunni position and he also had the Qalandariya poet Sarmad sentenced to death for **bi-shara** practices. He had twenty Sunni ulemahs compile the Sunni juristic principles and edicts as **Fatwai-e-Alamgiri** for the guidance of his **Qazis** and administrators. These developments however more often had ironically opposite consequences in Bengal. Such Sufi orders as lost influence with or became suspect to the Delhi court migrated to Bengal and elsewhere and held influence there. The Shi'ites, frowned upon by

Aurangzeb, for example entered in larger numbers into Bengal during Murshid Quli Khan and became quite influential. The emergence and development of the **marthia** literature in Bengal is an example of the Shia influence. The news of alternative approaches in the Shi'ite systems and of '**Mahdawish**' also had their influence. Thus Bengal continued to be a haven for the heterodox expatriate Sufi intellectuals of every conceivable brand. The decline of Mughal power in the eighteenth century weakened whatever central authority there was in Bengal in matters of religion. As for the theological doctrines a confused and anarchic state must have ensued. And due to the civil disorders the **khanqas** must have been left all on their own. A process of disintegration of the Sufi orders started. As a consequence when Shah Waliullah appeared in Delhi (1703-1762) to synthesize the various Sufi disciplines and proposed to unite the orders — the orders in Bengal were too dissipated to respond. Nor was there any social or political authority to act as the catalytic agent.

The defeat of Nawab Sirajuddowla of Bengal at the battle of Plassey in 1757 decided the fate of political power in India in favour of the British. After the battle of Buxar in 1764 the East India Company had forced Emperor Shah Alam II to grant the diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in its name in 1764. Thus the Emperor of Delhi was reduced to a non-entity. The passing out of political power to the English in India was a traumatic experience for the Muslim nobility from which they never recovered. It was as unbelievable as it was tragic. The decadent way of life and complacent ineptitude of the rulers and the aristocracy was certainly a reason for their defeat. And their injured pride expressed itself in a peevish withdrawal from the new order, which was but another aspect of the general decadence. The muslim populace were mainpulated and prodded into conformity with this covert policy of 'non-co-operation'. But the new rulers had very little use for the old aristrocracy and their 'withdrawal'. The colonial mercantile order by-passed

them and created its own hierarchy in the new cities of Calcutta, Bombay, Madras etc. and through the Permanent Settlement of 1793 even created a new compliant rural hierarchy in Bengal. The decadent Muslim fendal class thus compounded the whole Muslim community into a path of irreparable retrogression. However through the Sepoy mutiny they made a desperate attempt at overthrowing the British and recapture lost power. But the collapse of the Mutiny shattered their hopes once and for all. How did the Muslims look upon this phenomenon of defeat and decline?

A probe into aristocratic decadence and ways of restoring it to power engaged the attention of Shah Waliullah even as far back as 1731. In the perception of the problem and in the dispensations suggested by Shah Waliullah and nearly all the Muslim thinkers after him, the legacy of theological thinking among Muslims come out most prominently. Waliullah was the second Indian to translate the Holy Quran into Persian in the face of bitter opposition from the Ulemas. He founded a school of theological studies especially **Hadith** in Delhi. In his eclectic attitude towards the **fiqh** he laid emphasis on Maliki jurisprudence. He also followed Ibn-Taymiyah in asserting the role of individual reasoning or **ijtihad.** But Shah Waliullah was not merely a religious thinker. He had seen the Mughal court at close quarters from his infancy. His father was one of the **Alims** connected with the compilation of the **Fatawai-e-Alamgirl.** In his lifetime he had seen the reign of no less than ten Mughal Emperors and the gradual collapse of the Mughal power. His concerns were ultimately political. He literally dreamt of an independent rule of the rejuvenated Muslims in India and dreamt that it would come about through a long period of revolutionary political struggle under his leadership.[14] Sultan Muhammad Shah took interest in his activities and made a generous grant for his school. Shah Waliullah had tried to bring the divergent groups of Sufi's and the Ulemas, the aristocrats and the populace together within the scope of his reformist reorganisation.

He established contacts with many of the theological centres of India. He also had a Central Committee formed to conduct the movement. He had watched the rise of the Marhatta power with apprehension and anxiety. It was possibly with his blessings that Nawab Najibuddowla — one of his ardent admirers, had invited Ahmad Shah Abdali into India to crush the Marhatta power.

After his death the leadership of the movement passed on to his son Shah Abdul Aziz who was a more practical organizer. He led the movement for sixty years. It was he who formulated the idea of India as **dar'-ul-harb** or enemy country and enjoined the muslim community of India either to offer armed resistance to non-muslim power of India and establish **Islami hukumat** or leave India and go to some other muslim country. The responsibility of organizing the armed struggle — **Jihad**, fell on Saiyed Ahmed Brevli (1786-1831) who by a quirk of history got embroiled in a conflict with the Sikhs and was killed in the battle of Balakot in 1831. Two other persons who worked in close association with him were Shah Ismail Shahid (1782-1831) and Muhammad Abdul Hai (d. 1829).

Shah Ismail formulated his ideas in his **Taquiat-ul-Iman** (Support of the Faith) which was mainly derived from Shah Waliullah's **Tuhfat-al-Muwahidun.**[15] (Gift of Theist). The stress was on purging Indian Islam of all intracultural accretions, demotic syncretism, superstition, poetic licence and indigenous rituals. He wrote : "If the Hindus have their Gyah, their Mathura and their Kashi, the Mohmmedans have their Makwanpur, their Bahraion and their Ajmer. The one set builds **maths** over their idols, the other, not to be behind them, raise domes over their saint's tombs. In the **maths** you will find **Mohantas** and **Gosains**; at the Mohammedan shrines **Khadims**, **Mujawirs** and **Pirzadas.**" And he concludes : "Follow no one be he mujtahid Imam, **Ghaus, Kuth, Moulavi, Mushaikh, King, Minister, Padri** or **Pandit** against the authority of the Quran and the Traditions."[16]

It is doubtful if there was any direct contact between Shah Waliullah and the ulemas or the Sufis of Bengal. But his ideas certainly percolated through successive generation of students of the Delhi school. In the early quarter of the nineteenth century a religious movement among the Bengali muslims was started under the leadership of Haji Shariat Ullah which had striking similarity with Sayed Ahmed Brelvi's programme of religious reform. The movement went by the appelation **Faraizi** since Shariatullah insisted on the observance of the **Farz** or obligatory duties enjoined by the Holy Quran. Shariatullah belonged to a **taluqdar** family in Faridpur and had lived for twenty years in Mecca before he started preaching his ideas on his return from Nejd in 1820. Possibly he had acquired many of his ideas from the fundamentalist Muhammad-ibn-Abdul Wahab's programme of Islamic revival and reform. Haji Shariatullah's formulation of the goal of a fundamentalist society based on equity and justice had an immediate appeal to the Muslim peasantry exploited and oppressed by the landlords. The movement spread far and wide in the districts of Faridpur, Dacca, Khulna and had at least fifty thousand peasants under its active influence at one time. Like Shah Azij's assumption of leadership after Shah Waliullah's death Shariatullah's son Muhsinuddin popularly known as Dudhu Miyan (1819-60) gave leadership to the movement after his father's death and like Shah Aziz again, gave a revolutionary content to the political message of the doctrine. Starting with local resistance to Zamindari extortions, he ultimately invited the peasantry to stop paying taxes to the landlords and to the Government with the concomitant enunciation that all land belonged to God. If the Zamindars retaliated by evicting the peasants — they would shift and squat on the government land. All these precipitated confrontation with the establishment. From 1838 onwards Dudhu Mia organized a number of peasant insurrections against the Zamindars and Indigo planters which culminated in the attack and demolition of one Mr. Dunlop's **Kuthi** i.e. indigo-factory

in 1846. The armed police sent by the English district administrator to quell the rebellion — surrounded Dudhu's village and after a few skirmishes broke through his defence and had him arrested along with sixty five of his men. The landlords both Hindu and Muslim helped the government in this expedition. Dudhu Mia subscribed to the idea of **darul harb** and prohibited **Juma** and **I'd** prayers among his followers and devised other gestures of non-cooperation and civil disobedience like abstention and withdrawal from the British courts of law. He instituted Faraizi courts of arbitration in the villages presided over by elderly man.

A similar series of peasant rebellions about the same time as the Faraizis also appeared as a religious movement and was led by another muslim fundamentalist Haji Nisar Ali alias Titu Mir (1772-1831) at Narkelberia, Barasat. Titu Mir was acquainted with Saiyed Ahmed Brelvi's **mujahidins** and possibly was a member of it. He had however also absorbed Wahàbi elements when he went to Saudi Arabia in 1826. Like Protestant movement under Martin Luther triggering off peasant rehellions in Germany, Titu Mir's reformist ideas exploded into radical insurrections that spread like forest fire to the districts of 24 Purgannas. Barasat, Nadia and Faridpur. Mr. Dampier, the Police Commissioner of Bengal reporting on the Wahabi's had estimated that Titu Mir had a following of roughly eighty thousand people among the peasants and lower classes of society. Hunter writes that at least one lowly caste of untouchable Hindus — the cobblers, joined the Wahabis.[17] Similarly a local Sufi saint Miskin Shah lent his weight in favour of Titu Mir.

The incident that sparked off the movement was a "beard tax" imposed by local Zamindar Deva Roy on the muslim tenants. After repeated harassment Titu Mir was constrained to launch his first attack on the Zamindar on 6 November, 1830 at Punra. This led to a chain of violent engagements with other neighbouring Zamindars and Indigo planters of Gobardanga, Gobra, Govindapur,

Mollahati and Khaspur successively. The Zamindar of Khaspur was a Muslim and at Mollahati the conflict was with a European Indigo-planter, one Mr. Davies. Titu's phenomenal success encouraged peasants in other areas to refuse indigo cultivation and to refuse paying taxes. Titu organised a system of embryonic government in this area. Being panic-stricken at the success of Titu Mir and at the swelling ranks of his followers the Zamindars of Satkhira, Gobardanga, Nadia and other places appealed to the collector of Nadia for help.

Under special instructions from the Governor General an army contingent of four hundred men, of which one hundred were white soldiers, with two cannons and a Colonel in command, was sent to Narkelberia on 14 Nov. 1831. Titu's men with hardly anything more lethal than bows and arrows were no match for them and their equally archaic bamboo fortification gave way to the shelling from the cannons. Titu died a hero's death. About eight hundred of his men were taken prisoner. After a long and protracted trial many were transported for life and Golam Masom, Titu's nephew, was given the sentence of death by hanging. Even though the leader was dead, resentment and resistance simmered for sometime and the Wahabi's hit the headlines once more by assassinating Mr. Norman the English judge in Calcutta in whose court the Wahabis were being tried.

After the debacle of Balakot and the death of Saiyed Ahmed Brelvi, one of his disciples Maulana Vilayet Ali organized an independent group centering round his Madrassa at Patna. Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan, Maulana Nazir Hussain were prominent members of this group. Maulana Ahmed Ali Saharanpuri was deputed to work for the group in Calcutta. It was through him that Saiyed Ahmed Shahid's ideas and activities came to be known in Bengal and possibly it was through him that the idea of Saiyed Ahmed Brelvi as **Mehdi** — the Messish, got currency. The circumstances of Brelvi's death lent credence to such a supposition. The influence of Zaidiya

order of Shias who for sometimes became sympathetic to and associated with Vilayet Ali's efforts might have contributed to this streak of **'Mahdawism'**. However once the idea was introduced it quickly caught the imagination of the populace and they were eager to foist it on whoever seemed to be a likely deliverer. Shariatullah and Titu Mir both were credited with magical powers and in many believed them to be the 'Mehdi.'

All the three movements we have described so far started as ecclesiastical reforms but ended up as political movements with economic programmes. As a matter of fact the dream of an independent muslim rule propelled all the three movements and whenever situation favoured the leaders had announced the formation of their own governments. This is nothing new in the history of religious movements nor is it unique about muslim mind or muslim community. Religious movements acquiring political dimensions or socio-economic tensions bursting through the seams of theological debates is a known phenomenon. We have seen it during the Diggers and Levellers movement in England or the Millenarian movements elsewhere. What is ironical is that these religious movements give expression to the social discontent but cannot understand or analyse it. The hidden reality remains unexplored. The movements are deluded by the mirage created by themselves. In this case, hoping to restore Muslim rule in India these people became victims of the delusion that they themselves constitute that rule. Ironically again, these reform movements which started with pious intentions of fighting **bi-shara** practices like **Pir-ism** ended up with an expectation of the Messiah or in the conviction of having found one.

These movements were archaic and the nature of the resistance offered was anachronistic. The leaders had little understanding of the source of strength of the new order. The administrative efficiency of the English, an aspects of the capitalist system. and the technological development that gave the system strength and momentum were beyond their experience.

Their understanding of the source of their own weakness was as moribund as their lack of understanding of the strength of the English since it was but the obverse of the same coin. Their diagnosis of the causes of the defeat of Muslim power as moral insufficiency of the Mughal nobility and/or weakening of religious conviction among the muslim populace. was confusing effect for the cause, and to say the least it was superficial.

Likewise their occasional belief in the appearance of a **Khane Dajjal** — the Grand Inquisitor, in the shape of demoniac Sikhs, idolatrous Hindus or perverse Englishmen was more symptomatic of anxiety and mass-hysteria than proper understanding of their adversaries. It was fitting facts to a given theory — a highly selective and emotionally charged reading of the phenomena rather than an objective analysis of what was happening.

In the someway the secret craving for a **Mehdi** betrayed their wavering conviction in the efficacy of the remedies suggested and a cadenced relegation of personal responsibility. Particularly at the moment of weakening or break-up of organization relying on such **Messiah** becomes the only refuge of hope for people. Charisma becomes the substitute for organization.

Social reform masquerading as religious movement, as in these cases, has the advantage of organizing co-religionists quickly; but has the disadvantage of hurting old loyalties and affiliations and thereby disturb people's sense of security. Sectarian and class interests then come forward to defend the **status quo** in the name of time-tested wisdom and sanity. Threat to the **Majhabs** i.e. denominations provoked opposition to these innovations however well-meaning they were and prevented even muslim people from coming together particularly if the innovations went against their class interest. Thus by definition these movements could not have reached all strata or all sections of the Bengali Muslim society. Upper classes and elite muslims were by and large against these

movements and had Maulana Keramat Ali brought from Jaunpur to preach against the Wahibi's. Thus at different levels of society different and often diamatrically opposite ideas were promoted and acted upon.

As in the Moplah riots, the Hindu landlords came to be a target of both these movements. Under the Permanent settlement of 1793 most of the Zamindaries large and small had passed on to the hindu **nouveau riche** who had amassed fortunes by collaborating with the English trading houses in the eighteenth century. Since the religious programme of these movements was to purge Islam of hindu influence — even though the movements were not directed against the hindus as such, it was possible for hindu landlords to excite hindu popular imagination and enlist their support in suppressing the Wahabis and the Faraizis. Thus the population got divided along communal lines into two halves. What could have been a combined class-struggle of the oppressed against the oppressors — the landlords, was cleft vertically to the detriment of the movement. Hence even when the movement died down bitter memories of communal distruct and animosities lingered contributing to future separation.

Though the movements ended in a welter of blood, they were not completely lost however. They achieved a few things as well. The movements glavanized the great peasant population and made them aware of their collective strength and raised their political consciousness. By a sudden thrust as though they were catapulted from the shadowy medieval world of inchoate dreams and make-belief to the modern world of political realities. The movements also made all aware of the limitations of religious movements and the necessity of a different style of movement at the political level. It was because of these two movements and the subsequent indigo riots and peasant rebellions in Pabna and elsewhere that the Zamindari extortions were curbed, laws govern-

ing the tenancy rights were revised and ultimately the Zamindary system was abolished.

The defeat of these two movements and more particularly of the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857 compelled the reflective section of the muslim society to take stock of the situation. The obvious and the inevitable conclusion they were led to was to leave archaic ways and come to terms with the new all-powerful system. This was the section which had come into contact with the new order and were somewhat benefited by it. Syed Ahmed Khan (d. 1898) was pioneer among them. He asserted the need for collaboration with the British and the need to master their knowledge and science. He endeavoured to achieve both the ends by establishing an institution of modern learning at Aligarh exclusively for the Muslims, in 1875 — the Mohammadan Anglo-Vernacular College. The aim of the College was defined as : "to educate our fellow countrymen in order that they may be able to appreciate the benevolence of the British ... to inspire them with loyalty." As for transferring European knowledge to vernacular he had taken steps even ten years earlier, by organising a Translation Society which was the nucleus for the later Aligarh Scientific Society. This was a great stride for him personally since as a member of the aristrocracy he had a rather traditional education with emphasis on theology. Later he claimed to be an intellectual disciple of Shah Ismail Shahid. But he was too imbued with the spirit of rationalism to remain rooted to any orthodox position. His spiritual quest led him to write an exegesis of the Holy Quran himself, along rationalist lines. He asserted that there can be nothing in the scripture contrary to the laws of nature — known to science. As for guidance in matters of society the Quran embryonically contained ideas that should be rationally developed. He rejected the principle of **ijma**, consensus among jurists as a sound basis of law since he doubted the anthenticity of many of the **hadiths**. Syed Ahmad's interpretations were contested in the theological

circles; but his role as a modernizer and his socio-political ideas left their mark far and wide.

He was much admired among the aristocracy in Bengal and was taken as a model for the muslim elite to follow. The archetypal role of the modernizer among the Bengali Muslims however fell on Nawab Abdul Latif, an amdirer of Sir Syed Ahmed. Like Sir Syed Ahmed he too was for synthesizing traditional lore of Islam with modern learning in the West. Like Syed Ahmed's Scientific Society he too organised the Mohammedan Literary Society in 1863 for free exchange and circulation of ideas among muslim elites and among those who addressed its sessions was Syed Ahmed Khan himself. Maulana Keramat Ali was another who was invited by Nawab Abdul Latif in one of its session to deliberate on the question : Whether India was **darul harb** and whether the muslims in India were bound by conscience to declare **jihad** on the British? It was at Nawab Abdul Latif's insistence that the Government was persuaded to make an additional grant of Rs. 50.000/- for the proliferation of Madrassah education for the Muslims in Bengal since Madrassahs according to him were the fountain head of Muslim consciousness where their law, the bed rock of Muhammedan society found its reliable interpretation and hence the Madrassahs answered to the need of the Muslim society best. It was because of his influence on the Commission that the Education Commission in 1882 recommended special encouragement to Muslim education in Bengal and had also recommended the use of Urdu as the principal medium of instruction at the Primary and Middle schools since Abdul Latif had deposed that Urdu was the language of the aristocracy and the learned class of Muslims. Nawab Abdul Latif had however conceded that Bengali could be used at the Primary level for the lower classes of Muslims — since that was unfortunately their vernacular.

The second most important figure in the modernization of Bengali Muslim society in the 19th century was

Sir Ameer Ali. He too like Sir Syed Ahmed came of an aristocratic family associated with the court in Delhi and later with the court in Oudh. Ameer Ali was one of the best educated men of his time. He was an M.A. in History and Political Economy. He joined the Inner Temple and was called to the Bar in 1873. He was made a High Court Judge in 1890. After his retirement in 1904 he went to England and settled there.

Ameer Ali too, like his other two eminent contemporaries, lamented "the general ruin which has overtaken all classes of mussalman community," particularly "the decadence of their principal families." He too, like the other two, felt the necessity of organising public opinion in favour of social change and founded the Central Mohammedan Association. There is almost a pathological compulsion in all three to make declaration of loyalty. About the political orientation of the Association Ameer Ali assured the government that : "It is founded upon the principle of strict and loyal adherence to the British Crown." The Association proposed "to work in harmony with Western culture and progressive tendencies of the age". It aimed at the "political regeneration of the Indian Mohammedans" and at obtaining "recognition of their reasonable claims." The Association did actually present a Memorial to Lord Ripon in 1883 for proper respresentation of Indians, particularly Muslims in the Indian Civil Service and other government jobs.

One immediately notices a change of style from insurgency to imploration, from an all out **jihad** to an all out loyalty — a change which had come about with the change of the class character of the leaders. All of them were out of sympathy with the **Wahabi's**. In conformity with Maulana Keramat Ali, Syed Ahmed too had written in 1871 : "Muhammedan be they dwellers in **darul harb** or **darul Islam** are prohibited from rebellion against a government which interferes in no way with the free worship of their religion."[18] Their associations were all asscciations of the aristocratic people. Hence when they

expressed an opinion about social matters it reflected the aristrocratic point of view. Even though the associations were separate from each other, yet one finds a striking similarly in their reflexes when confronted with a social problem. Latif, like his English contemporary Mattew Arnold, could see that society was divided into the wealthy aristocracy, the indigent elite and the populace for whom he had a barely concealed contempt. He advocated a different system of education for the upper and the middle class of Muslims from the education of the poorer classes. He assumed as eternal that the aristocracy and the elite should have a thorough knowledge of Urdu, a fair knowledge of Persian and some acquaintance with Arabic; and that Urdu should be the medium of instruction for Secondary education because that was the language of the Muslims worth the name. Ameer Ali too giving deposition to the Education Commission had facilely said : "Urdu should be to the Mohammedans what Bengali is to the Hindus of Bengal and Arabic and Persian should take the place of Sanskrit." On the class composition of the muslim society in Bengal two other writers of immense importance in the nineteenth century Bengal — Khondkar Fazle Rubbee and Delawarr Hossaen Ahmed Meerza though very different from each other would share attitudes and ideas because of the similarity of their aristocratic background. Fazle Rubbee's book **Haquiqat-e-Mussalman-e-Bangala** was a covert defence of the aristocracy. Delawarr Hosaen however was an uncompromising rationalist and much ahead of his time in many ways.

But dissimilarities among these leading people are as significant. On question of religion they hardly agree. Ameer Ali differed from Syed Ahmed Khan on the question of **Ijma**. Syed Ahmed rejected **Ijma** since it seemed to him a constraint to the development of jurisprudence, while Ameer Ali (and later Iqbal) interpreting as a consensus among the common people and the elite, welcomed it as a democratic principle.[19] On **ijtihad**-personal reasoning, they might agree though Syed Ahmed

Khan was a Sunni, while Ameer Ali was a Shia. The Ulemas of the orthodox school however would disagree with them both and none of the three had the absolute sway on the Bengali Muslim society. But all the modernizers have felt a compulsion to hark back on the Scripture and the Tradition trying to find a rationale for change. This was as though a kind of intellectual counterpart of the declaration of political loyalty. If one was the loyalty to the State which was secular and new, the other was loyalty to the **Ummah** which was theocratic and traditional. This was symptomatic of the incipient crisis in the minds of the elite being made aware of the fissure between the two worlds of the spiritual and the temporal which to the Muslim mind even till recently was seen as a unified field. Hence for sometime still we shall see attempts being made to interpret one in terms of the other, — to justify political programmes, say **jihad**, with reference to religious dicta and reconstruction of religious thought, say **ijma** or **ijtihad**, in the context of social and political need. But the unity had started breaking up inspite of their anxious hopes to the contrary. Even in the case of these modernizers as well we notice a shift in the sphere of their activities — from the theological to the social and political — the latter occupying their time and interest more and more. In no time there would be a demand for the separation of the two.

Delawarr Hosaen (1840-1914) also makes **Ijtihad** his point of departure but to a very different effect. Making a comparative survey of European and Islamic civilizations he comments : "For those nations who were able to assert and maintain the Liberty of Private Judgement have made continued progress in the arts and sciences and in civilization; while those nations that were unable successfully to assert the Rights of Private Judgement and succumbed to the authority of the Popes, Bishops and Inquisitions — have not only made no progress, but have declined." As a necessary condition for the realization of this liberty of thought he boldly asserts : "In

Europe the existence of two independent powers — the temporal and the spiritual — facilitated the progress of thought; while amongst moslem nations the combination of the two sources of power under one head prevented, the successful assertion of liberty of thought".[20] Not only for the liberty of thought but for other reasons as well "religion properly so called must be entirely dissevered from laws civil or political."[21] Among other things Delawarr Hosaen advocated changes in our laws of inheritance, in our idea of usury, in our institution of marriage, — laws and injunctions which are all derived from the **Quran** and the **Sunna.** Like Syed Ahmed Khan he invokes the laws of nature in favour of change : "It is absurd to suppose that the ordinances and institutions of Islam are not subject to the laws of evolution : nothing in this world is exempt from the operation of the laws of nature — nothing can therefore be exempt from the operation of the law of evolution."[22]

The orthodox among the reformists were under stress but the schools did not die out immediately. Even Shah Waliullah's efforts had failed to bring about any effective unity among the theologians and since his death differences in interpretations and affiliations proliferated. The establishment of The Deoband Madrassah, Nadwat-ul-Ulama, Farrangi Mahal and others are the institutional examples of this divisive trend. Being exasperated, Syed Nazir Hussain wrote his **Thabut-i-Haqq al Haqiq** (Establishment of the Truth) in which he repudiated all the schools of jurisprudence and laid emphasis on the truthfulness to the **Quran** and the authoritative Tradition. It became a new creed itself and was called **Ahl-i-Hadith** (People of the Prophetic Tradition). The asserted **Ijtihad.** Their view was that properly educated and intelligent muslim can draw his own conclusions from the **Quran** and the **Hadith.** They rejected all kinds of occultism (**ibn-ul-ghaib**) and **pirism.** This non-conformist (**ghayr muqallid**) but orthodox sect made inroads into the northern part of Bengal and under Abdullah-al-Baki and

Abdullah-al-Kafi in the twentieth century, (possibly owing to the influence of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad) subscribed to the Indian Nationalist point of view of the Indian Congress. The **Ahl-Hadith** floated a journal of their own in Bengali in 1915 edited by Abdul Hakim and Babar Ali.

Though they resided in Bengal few of the aristocrats and none of these nineteenth century leaders mentioned above were Bengalees, nor had they any acquaintance with Muslim Bengali literature or even with the richness of Muslim intellectual tradition in Bengal. But through an irony of history it is these people who became the spokesman for Bengali Muslim society. Because of their social pre-eminence they became the natural leaders of that society and the new middle-class that was emerging under the British rule took the cue from this aristocratic class in their attitudes and ideas. Thus in a way, at least a section of the new elite, was getting doubly alienated from their own society, — firstly, through the acquisition of English language and culture and secondly, and simultaneously, through an aspiration to aristocratic style and status. Or to put it differently, one could say that the true-born Bengalee elite was caught ambivalent at a ligature of the lingering feudal values and the emerging metropolitan ones. As a consequence we have the phenomenon of writers and journalists trying to persuade themselves that Urdu was their language and not Bengali or foist a **dobhasi** patoi in the name of 'mussalmani Bangala' and such other things. These tendencies were, to say the least, artificial if not perverse. From this follows, I presume, the celebrated "crisis of identity" of the Bengali Muslims.

But as the base of the Muslim middle-class widened with the swelling of the number of educated Bengali Muslims and as they gained in self-confidence, misgivings among them about the aristocracy begin to be voiced and the legitimacy of their leadership challenged. Syed Emdad Ali in his essay on the problem of **Paucity of able**

leaders in Bengali Muslim society wrote in 1903 : "Some may say that we have our Muhammedan Literary Society, Central Muhammedan Association etc. and that if the leaders of these associations would act unitedly, then the demand for a leader is met, a need filled. But is there truly speaking any such leader in these associations? If there is one let him come forward with bold confidence and take his seat amid cheers of the Bengali Muslim society. What sort of a leader is he who cannot mix with all and sundry, forsaking his inhibitions and with an open heart? We demand a Recognised Leader for Bengal."[23]

Ismail Hussain Sirajee an ardent Muslim revivalist in an essay in the same Journal the previous year had written : One's vernacular wells out from the depth of one's life. It is sacred and worthy of our religious devotion. Not to serve it is a grievous sin. In the present time Bengali has become the mother tongue of the Bengali Muslims. Dear brethren, the Bengali muslims! Do not be asleep any longer. Please devote yourself to the service of this language instead of neglecting it or showing it disrespect.[24]

Another writer in the **Nava Nur** wrote in 1903 : "What other language could be the mother tongue of the Bengali Muslims but Bengali. Those who are trying forcibly to impose Urdu as the vernacular of Bengali Muslims are attempting the impossible."[25]

Al-Eslam — a literary journal in 1915 looked at it as a class phenomenon. The writer Khademul Islam wrote : "Expressing hatred towards one's mother tongue, or being a Bengali to declare Urdu or Arabic as his vernacular or to say : 'I'm afraid I cannot speak Bengali' or 'I've forgotten it' — such insidious disease is only to be found among a certain class of muslims."[26]

It is a curiosity of history that a similar language controversy had arisen among the Bengali Muslims in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries under

similar circumstances. That was the time when Persian was the court language and the Afgans and the Turkish Mughals dominated the social hierarchy. But all the great Muslim poets like Syed Sultan, Muhammad Khan, Abdul Hakim and others unequivocally spoke in favour of Bengali language and wrote in Bengali. Abdul Hakim a seventeenth century poet scathingly criticised the imitative upstarts and the humbugs that advocated the use of any language other than Bengali. He wrote that he would even contest the legitimacy of the birth of those who having been born in Bangladesh hates the Bengali language. And he exhorts them to rather leave Bengal and go elsewhere[27]

On other issues as well we notice a gradual moving away of the elite from the theological mooring. There is a growing disillusion about the futility of theological hair-splitting and their divisive effect on the muslim community. In an essay in the **Saogat,** an influential literary journal the writer indicts the Mullahs : "The Mullahs as a class have never inculcated a broad liberal attitude about theological differences. On the contrary by giving inordinate importance to negligible divergences they are breaking up the Muslim society to pieces.[28]

Islam Darshan for example, commenting on the bigotry of the newly formulated **Ahle Hadith** sect wrote : "Its communal parochialism and inordinate aversion for the **Hanafees** is a fraught with dangerous consequences."[29]

But even more than reconciling the niceties of theological questions, and schools the problem of reconciling Islam with modern science caused urgent anxieties. Taking inspiration from Syed Ahmed Khan, Muhammed Muniruzzaman Islamabadi in his essay Religion and Science published in the **Nava Nur** in 1905 asserted : "No verse or **Passage** of the **Holy Quran** is contrary to logic or learning. No part of the authentic and recognised **Hadith** violates the conscience or consistency. True there are hundreds of such dicta — as taken to be the words

of the Prophet, but they do not record his words properly. Such Hadith as are contrary to logic and learning are not the words of the Prophet at all."[30]

Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah the great linguist, widely revered for his Islamic scholarship, echoed similar sentiments as late as in 1915 when he wrote that : "Even though the **Quran Sharif** is not a book of Science it is not contrary to Science either. There are many things said in the Quran expressing the Glory and the Grace of God which surprisingly correspond to the most modern Scientific developments. If there are one or two divergences here and there that is because of the incomplete nature of Science itself."[31]

Muslim literary journals since 1903 were fed with a steady flow of articles expatiating on the scientific tradition of Islamic civilization and contributions of the Muslim scientists that provided the basis of post-Renaissance European sciences.

Nearly hundred and sixty muslim journals and periodicals were published in course of hundred years from 1831-1930, all devoted to the regeneration of the Bengali Muslim society. Their names **Azizan Nehar; Al-Eslam; Islam Pracharak; Islam Darshan; Shariat-e-Eslam; Ahmadi; Mohammadi; Moslem Hitaishi; Moslem Darpan; Nava Nur;** and **Muajjin** bring this out. But the inevitable drift towards secularisation and rationalism, at least among the urban middle-class etites, had begun. Pressure was mounted in favour of modernization of society. By 1920 it was possible for a rather cautious journal like the **Al-Eslam** to be critical of the Madrassah system of education and by 1927 the **Sikha** demanded its total abolition.[32] This was reiterated by the **Saogat** two years hence. The **Saogat** continued to harp on the theme and in another article the next year wrote : "The infatuation (of muslims) with Arabic, Persian and Urdu and with Madrassah and Mektabs was causing much harm."[33] Another prominent intellectual of the time **S. Wajed Ali,**

a Cambridge graduate reviled Madrassah education in general and the practice of teaching Arabic and Persian in the Junior Madrassahs in particular. He suggested that Bengali alone should be the medium of instruction at the primary level. Even a revivalist periodical like **Al-Eslam** accommodated similar sentiments from Sheikh A. Gafoor Jalali when he wrote : "Persian and Urdu has no special use for us."[34]

But the writers of the **Sikha** group — Abul Hussain, Motahar Hussain Chowdhury, Qazi Abdul Wadud, Abul Fazl and others went much beyond the apologetics of the Islamic revivalists and gave a clarion call for the 'emancipation of the intellect' or **Buddhir Mukti** in their journal the **Sikha**. They were the **enfant terrible** of the muslim intellectual world of their time and subjected both religious and secular aspects of muslim life under relentless serutiny. The **Sikha** boldly wrote : "Though the Shariat is applicable to everybody, it would not be legitimate to expect it to satisfy everybody intellectually."[35] It ehoed sentiments we have already noticed in Delawar Hosaen. It concluded : "If it is seen that certain injunctions of Islam stand in the way of development of humanity, then one must be bold enough to reject them and replace them with laws made afresh."[36] **Sikha** was the boldest of the group of liberal and secular thinking. And there were others like the **Saogat, Jayati, Samyavadi, Dhumketu** and **Ganabani** which strengthened the liberal secular trend.

Though their ideas met with stiff opposition from the orthodox and the apologists alike — the younger generation enthusiastically responded to their ideas. Contemporary art and literature of Bangladesh amply record the abiding debt of our writers to the liberal, secular ideas and values of these men. During the initial years of Pakistan deliberate attempt was made to foster and create an Islamic Bengali literature through such journals as the **Naobahar** and the **Mahe Nau** by Golam Mustafa, Talim Hussain, Benazir Ahmed, Ibrahim Khan. Ali Ahsan and others and the example of the medieval

Muslim literature was invoked but the idea and the attempt withered for lack of social support. Ideas reflect the need of the men propagating them and since need of men vary according to their social situation the appeal of an idea cannot be the same for everyman. Hence no idea can touch men of all strata in the same way. At a given time therefore people of different classes and strata stand by the ideology that suits their interest. Thus to expect that Bengali Muslims were all won over by rationalism and science would be puerile. Other ideas, traditional and conservative ideas remained and there were no dearth of people to champion them. Apalling poverty and exceedingly low rate of literacy compounded to create a social situation that must be borne in mind while determining the clientele of an idea.

With the break-up of the medieval Bengali society the ideas and values supported by that society were in a disarray. The restructuring of the present day Bengali society brought about a restructuring in the world of ideas as well. As we have seen even in this inadequate survey, that there was a long contest of different sets of ideas which was but reflective of the contest between different groups or classes of people for supremacy in society. If we find medieval ideas of personal mystic flat or orthodox obeisance to authority and tradition existing side by side with urban secular ideas of rationalism, it is because vestiges of the medieval social order and character types subsist amid metropolitan technological changes that we are going through. There is no neat pattern to it.

However in the forties we were all caught in a political maelstrom in which communal separatist ideas swamped the counsels of reason. The inherent exclusivist tendencies of the Hindu society crystalizing into Hindu nationalism; the conflict of professional interest between the settled Hindus and the emerging Muslim middle-class — worsened by unequal competition; the propelling of the anxiety-ridden Muslim populace into a separate sense of

indentity through the orthodox Islamic purification movements of the ulamas and political manipulation of the aristocracy; the divide and rule policy of the British are the elements precipitating such separatist ideas. All these and other reasons gave rise to a highly tense and explosive situation which made the partition of India in 1947 seem to be the only solution. But disillusionment for the Bengali Muslims awaited just round the corner. Immediately after the Partition through the Language movement in 1949 Bengali distinctiveness was asserted within the Pakistani structure. The struggle for language drew fresh attention to the other tradition — both liberal and secular, the tradition of Bengali culture nurtured in course of two thousand and five hundred years, consecrated in its literature, music, folk-ways, arts and crafts. True economic and political questions caused this vast redirection of energy, but legitimacy was sought in the name of Bengali culture and nationalism. The Bengali Muslim mind had learnt the hard way to accommodate the experience of history and be wary of illusions.

NOTES

1. The Suhrawardiya order was founded by Shaikh Najibuddin Abdul Qahir Suhrawardi (d. 1169) and developed his nephew Shihabuddin Suhrawardi in Iraq.

2. The *Naqshbandiya* order was founded by Ahmed Ata Yaswi d.1116) in Iran. Emperor Babar patronized it. The principal doctorine of the order is *Wahdat ash-Shuhud* or God witnessing to Himself in the heart of his votary (*abid*). This union with God (*jani*) leads to a unification (*ittihad*) not of substance but of love. The doctrine, traceable to Al-Halla, was developed in Central Asia by Ala-addawla Simnani (d. 1336). (Aziz Ahmed, 1969).

3. The order originated with Khawaja Abu Ishaq at Chisht, a village near Herat in the twelfth century. Muinuddin Sijzi (d.1236) brought it to India. Nizamuddin Awliya (d.1323) was an eminent Chishtiya. Under the influence of Abu-al-Arabi's pantheistic ideas the Chistlyas developed the doctrine of *Wahdat-al-Wujud* or ontological monism. They practiced *dhikr*, regulation of breath, concentrated seance (*muraquiba*) and secluded worship (*chilla*). They wore coloured garments.

While the *Naqshbandiyas* rejected music as a spiritual stimulant the Chishtiyas organized sessions of collective singing (*Majlis-as-Sama*). (Aziz Ahmed, 1969).

4. The *Quadiriyas* trace their origin from Abdul Quadir-al-Jilani (d.1166) a Hambali mystic of Iraq. It was introduced into India by Muhammad Gaws in 1482. The order rose to prominance during the Mughals with Mian Mir (1550-1635) the spiritual preceptor of Shah Jahan's son Dara Shikoh and daughter Jahan Ara. (Aziz Ahmed, 1969).
5. The *Qalandarih* order was founded by Muhammad — ibn.-Yunus-as-Sawaji (d. 1232) — a refugee from Sawa which was destroyed by the Mongols in 1220. Khizr Rumi introduced it into India during the time of Iltutmish, though the order derives its name from Abu Ali Qualander another Indian Sufi of the fourteenth century. The Qulanders shaved their heads and facial hair. They perforated their hands and ears for the insertion of iron rings as symbol of penitence. They went about wrapped in blankets or stark naked like the poet Sarmad — executed by Aurangzeb. They refused to offer the ritual prayer. (Aziz Ahmed, 1969).
6. G. Saklayen (1982) lists four hundred and seven such Sufi saints in Bengal.
7. Nazmul Karim: Changing Society in India & Pakistan, pp. 31.
8. Tapan Roy Chowdhury: *Bengal Under Akbar and Jahangir*, Delhi.
9. 'Mussalmani dina kam
   Shikhayasta avisrama
   Mussalmani karanto uzhala'

— Quoted in Ahmed Sharif: Bangalee O' Bangla Shahitya (1979)

10. 'Dina Islamhetu etho yatna bhava
    Nohe panchalika koiley ki fala lava'

— Quoted in Ahmed Sharif: Bangalee O' Bangla Shahitya (1979)

11. Tapan Roy Chowdhury: *Bengal Under Akbar and Jahangir*, Delhi, p. 178.
12. Jadu Nath Sarkar, *History of Bengal,* Dacca, 1948.
13. Atul Ch. Gupta, *History of Bangal,* Calcutta, 1972, p. 307.
14. See Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi: *Shah Waliullah Aur Unki Siyasi Tahrik,* translated by Nuruddin Ahmed into Bengali as Shah Waliullah O Tar Rajnaitik Chintadhara, Dacca, 1969, pp. 28-29.
15. Rammohan Roy's first book in defence of unitarianism was also titled *Tuhfat-al-Muwahidin* (1801).

16. Quoted by J. N. Sarkar in *History of Bengal*, (ed. N.K.Sinha) Calcutta, Univ. 1967, p. 581.
17. W. W. Hunter: *The Indian Mussalmans*, pp. 107.
18. Letter to the Editor, *The Pioneer*, April 14, 1871. Quoted in Ram Gopal: *Indian Muslims*, 1964.
19. Abdul Aziz: *The Intellectual History of Islam in India*, London, 1969.
20. S. J. Salik: *Muslim Modernism in Bengal*, pp. 25.
21. Ibid, p. 19.
22. Ibid, p. 19.
23. Published in the journal *Islam Pracharak*, Vol. 5, March-April, 1903. Quoted in *Muslim Banglar Samayik Patra* edited by Dr. Anisuzzaman, Dacca, 169, p. 44.
24. In an essay entitled National Development and the Vernacular published in *Islam Pracharak* Vol. 4, Jan-Feb. 1902. Quoted in *Muslim Banglar Samayik Patra* edited by Dr. Anisuzzaman, Dacca, 1969, p. 38.
25. Ibid, p. 46
26. Ibid, p. 46.
27. "Jay shob Bangetey Jonmi hingshe Bangabani
    Shey shob kahar jonmo nirnoy na jani
    Deshi Bhasa Vidya Jar Mone Na Juaiy
    Nij Desh Tyagi Keno Videshey Na Jay." — Noor Nama.
28. Quoted in *Muslim Banglar Samayik Patra*: edited by Dr. Anisuzzaman, 1969, p. 39.
29. Ibid, p. 38.
30. Ibid, p. 96.
31. Ibid, p. 142. See also Muniruzzaman Islamavadi's article on the same theme a year later in the same journal. Ibid p. 154.
32. Quoted in *Bengali Muslim Public Opinion as Reflected in the Bengali Press*, edited by M. N. Islam, Dacca, 1973, p. 190.
33. Ibid, p. 193.
34. Quoted in *Muslim Banglar Samayik Patra*, edited by Dr. Anisuzzaman, Introduction, p. 48.
35. Ibid, p. 39.
36. Ibid, p. 39.

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