

for he wrote 'SUJHMANI' and completed the manuscripts of 'GURU GRANTH SAHEB' the most sacred book of Sikhs.

(e) From the 6th Guru, the principle of non-violence in the Sikh religion underwent radical change and Guru gave orders for wearing of 'arms'.

(f) the following UNIFORM is prescribed by GURU HARGOVIND for all Sikhs:

- i. KACHERA (knicker) to protect his morality,
- ii. KADA (iron ring) as a sign of sternness.
- iii. KIRPAN (sword) emblem of power and discipline.
- iv. KESH (hair) to signify saintliness.
- v. KANGA (comb) to keep the hair clean.

(g) The tenth Guru Govindsingh before his death, declared that there would be no Guru after him and the Sikh would have 'GURU GRANTH SAHEB' as their Guru.

(h) Sikhs pay Dasand (one tenth) from their income, as prescribed by their fifth Guru Arjan.

(i) Their Prayers time is 4 in the morning and 6 in the evening.

(j) The Sikh religion, does not believe in the person being of God that God has no incarnations, God was absolute. He was Absolutely in himself before any creation, but became manifest in creation.

S E V E N T H D A Y A D V E N T I S T S.

(a) Alijah Mohamedali H. Rashid explained at great length the origin, beliefs and activities of a sect of Christianity known as "Seventh day Adventists".

(b) The first Adventist was William Miller, claiming a Bible prophecy, chose the year 1843 for Christ's return, but as nothing happened, he corrected the date to 1844, and later confessed the mistake, and expressed regret when the year passed without any event. So out of Millerism grew the Seventh day Adventists.

(c) They call themselves "Seventh Day" because Saturday is their Sabbath - the hours between sunset on Friday evening and sunset on Saturday evening is their Sacred time when no unnecessary work will be done, and they spend the time in prayer and in Sabbath school of Church. "Adventists" because they believe the Second Advent of Christ is near.

(d) They are fewer than a million baptised members, in fact they number about six hundred thousand, and they are scattered over no fewer than 197 lands.

(e) They collect money from 'tithing' or the Tenth of income 'tax' which puts the equivalent of £ 12,000,000 to the credit side of their balance-sheet. Every good adventist gives one tenth of his income to the Church.

(f) Seventh-day Adventists belong to the ultra conservative wing of Protestantism, as to both doctrine and standards of living and thus, they make the Holy Scriptures the rule of faith and practice. Although they regard themselves not as one more church in the world, their moral outlook makes them look poles apart from the other Christian Denominations. For instance, "drinking alcohol and smoking" is considered by an overwhelming majority of Christians as a "sacred rites", and an Adventist has to give up smoking and drinking and eat no more 'unclean meats'.

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(g) They believe the Christ will return visibly, personally and audibly and that everyone will see Him and either be received by Him or be rejected.

(h) Their membership rules are very rigid; for example, complete abstinence from liquor and tobacco, and from theatre, dance, cardplaying, etc. The movement has made slow progress because of the prophetic mistake in 1844 and the fictitious stories of fanaticism told about them.

S P I R I T S, BOOK OF.

The following are a few extracts reproduced from a book called "THE SPIRITS" BOOK (By Allan Kaedic) published some 80 years ago which are in form of questions asked to the 'Spirits' and replies transmitted through various Mediums.

Some of these questions deal with subjects of Re-Birth Predestination, Free-will, etc., we may agree with all the contents of this book or not is another matter. Members will however find it very interesting study and therefore, are requested to preserve this Circular as the original book is rare to be available.

"Spirits have to pass through many incarnations, it follows that we have all had many existences, and that we shall have others more or less perfect either upon this Earth or in other worlds.

"The incarnation of spirits always takes place in the human race; it would be an error to suppose that the soul or spirit could be incarnated in the body of an animal.

"A Spirit's successive corporeal existences are always progressive, and never retrograde; but the rapidity of our progress depends on the efforts we make to arrive at perfection.

"The soul possesses its own individuality before its incarnation; it preserves that individuality after separation from the body.

"Incarnated Spirits inhabit the different globes of the UNIVERSE"

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: The book contains 1019 questions).

No. 1. What is God?

"God is the Supreme Intelligence - First cause of all things".

No. 9 What proof we have that the first cause of all things is a Supreme Intelligence, superior to all other intelligences?

"You have a proverb which says 'The workman is known by his work'. Look around you, and, from the quality of the work, infer that of the workman."

No. 11. Will man ever become able to comprehend the mystery of the Divinity?

"When his mind shall no longer be obscured by matter, and when, by his perfection, he shall have brought himself nearer to God, he will see and comprehend Him."

No. 19. Cannot man, through scientific investigation, penetrate some of the secrets of nature?

"The faculty of scientific research has been given to him as a means by which he may advance in every direction; but he

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cannot overstep the limits of his present possibilities. The farther man advances in the study of the mysteries around him, the greater should be his admiration of the power and wisdom of the Creator. But, partly through pride, partly through weakness, his intellect itself often renders him the sport of illusion. He heaps systems upon systems and every day shows him how many errors he has mistaken for truths; how many truths he has repelled as errors. All this should be a lesson for his pride."

- No. 20. Is man permitted to receive communications for a higher order in regard to matters which, not being within the scope of his senses; are beyond the pale of scientific investigation?

"Yes: When God judges such revelations to be useful, he reveals to man what science is incompetent to teach him. It is through communications of this higher order that man is enabled, within certain limits, to obtain a knowledge of his past and of his future destiny".

- No. 50. Did the human race begin with one man only?

"No; he whom you call Adam, was neither the first nor the only man who peopled the Earth".

- No. 51. Is it possible to know at what period Adam lives?

"About the period which you assign to him; that is to say, about 4,000 years before Christ".

- No. 55. Are all the globes that revolve in space inhabited?

Yes; and the people of the earth are far from being, as you suppose; the first in intelligence, goodness, and general development. God has peopled the globes in the universe with living beings, all of whom concur in working out the aims of His Providence. To believe that the presence of living beings is confined to the one point of the universe inhabited by us is to cast a doubt on the wisdom of God, who has made nothing in vain; and who must therefore have assigned to all the other globes of the Universe a destination more important than that of gratifying our eyes with the spectacle of a starry night".

- No. 132. What is the aim of the incarnation of spirits?

"It is a necessity imposed on them by God, as the means of attaining perfection. For some of them, it is an expiation; for others, a mission. In order to attain perfection, it is necessary for them to undergo all the vicissitudes of corporeal existence".

- No. 134. What is the Soul?

"An incarnate spirit"

"What was the soul before its union with a body?"

"A spirit"

Souls and spirits are, then the very same thing?

"Yes; souls are only spirits. Before uniting itself with the body, the soul is one of the intelligent beings who people the invisible world, and who temporarily assume a fleshy body in order to effect their purification and enlightenment.

No. 149. What becomes of the soul at the moment of death?

"It becomes again a spirit; that is to say, it returns into the world of spirits, which it had quitted for a short time".

Does the soul take nothing of this life away with it?

"Nothing, but the remembrance of that life and the desire to go to a better world. This remembrance is full of sweetness or of bitterness according to the use it has made of the earthly life it has quitted. The more advanced is the degree of its purification, the more clearly does it perceive the futility of all that it has left behind it upon the Earth".

No. 166. How can the soul that has not attained to perfection during the corporeal life complete the work of its purification?

"By undergoing the trial of a new existence".

No. 167. What is the aim of reincarnation?

"Expiation; progressive improvement of mankind. Without this aim, where would be its justice?"

No. 168. Is the number of corporeal existences limited, or does a spirit go on reincarnating himself for ever?

"In each new existence, a spirit takes a step forwards in the path of progress; when he has stripped himself of all his impurities, he has no further need of the trials of corporeal life."

No. 169. Is the number of incarnations the same for all spirits?

"No, he who advances quickly spares himself many trials. Nevertheless, these successive incarnations are always very numerous, for progress is almost infinite".

No. 170. What does a spirit become after his last incarnation?

"He enters upon the state of perfect happiness, as a purified spirit".

No. 171. What foundation is there for the doctrine of reincarnation?

"The justice of God, and revelation; for as we have already remarked as affectionate father always leaves a door of repentance open for his erring children. Does not reason itself tell you that it would be unjust to inflict an eternal privation of happiness on those who have not had the opportunity of improving themselves? Are not all men God's children? It is only among selfish human beings that injustice, implacable hatred and irremissible punishments are to be found".

No. 172. Do we accomplish all our different corporeal existences upon this earth?

"Not all of them for those existences take place in many different worlds. The world in which you now are is neither the first nor the last of these, but is one of those that are the most material, and the furthest removed from perfection".

No. 175. Does the soul, at each new corporeal existence, pass from one world to another, or can it accomplish several existences on the same globe?

"It may live many times on the same globe, if it be sufficiently advanced to pass into a higher one".

We may then, re-appear several times upon the earth?

"Certainly".

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Can we come back to it after having lived in other worlds?

Assuredly, you can. you may already have lived elsewhere as well as upon the earth.

No. 185:-Is the physical and moral state of the living beings of each globe always the same?

"No; worlds, like the beings that live in them, are subject to the law of progress. The races which now people the earth will gradually disappear and will be succeeded by others more and more perfect. Those transformed races will succeed the races now upon the earth, as these have succeeded earlier races still more gross than the present ones.

No.188:- Do the pure spirits inhabit special worlds, or are they in universal space without being attached to any particular globe?

"The pure spirit inhabit certain worlds, but they are not confined to them, as men are confined to the earth; they possess, in a higher degree than any others, the power of instantaneous locomotion, which is equivalent to ubiquity".

No. 192:-Is it possible for us, by leading a perfect life in our present existence, to overlap all the intervening steps of the ascent and thus to arrive at the state of pure spirits, without passing through the intermediate degree?

"No; for what a man imagines to be perfect is very far from perfection; there are qualities which are entirely unknown to him, and which he could not now be made to comprehend".

No. 199:- Why is it that life is so often cut short in childhood?

"The duration of the life of a child may be, for the spirit thus incarnated, the complement of an existence interrupted before its appointed term; and his death is often a trial or an expiation for his parents".

No.200;- Have spirits sex?

"Not as you understand sex; for sex in that sense, depends on the corporeal organization. Love and sympathy exists among them, but founded on similarity of sentiments".

No.201:- Can a spirit, who has animated the body of a man, animate the body of a woman in a new existence, and vice versa?

"Yes, the same spirits animate men and women".

No. 223:-Is the soul reincarnated after its separation from the body?

"Sometimes immediately, but more often after intervals of longer or shorter duration. On the higher worlds, reincarnation is almost always immediate.

No. 224:-What becomes of the soul in the intervals between its successive incarnations?

"It becomes an errant or wandering spirit, aspiring after a new destiny. Its state is one of waiting and expectancy".

How long may these intervals last?

"From a few hours to thousands of ages".

No.233:- Do spirits who are already purified ever come into worlds of lower degree?

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"They come into them very frequently in order to help them forward. Unless they did so, those worlds would be left to themselves, without guides to direct them".

No.258:- In the state of erraticity, and before taking on a new corporeal existence, does a spirit foresee the things which will happen to him in that new existence?

"He chooses for himself the kind of trials which he will undergo, and it is in this freedom of choice that his freewill consists."

It is not God, then, who imposes upon him the tribulations of life as a chastisement?

"Nothing comes to pass without the permission of God, for it is He who has established all the laws that rule the Universe, you would have to inquire why He has made such and such a law, instead of taking some other way. In giving to a spirit the liberty of choice, He leaves to him the entire responsibility of his acts and of their consequences. There is nothing to bar his future. The right road is open to him as freely as the wrong road. But if he succumbs, there still remains to him the consoling fact that all is not over with him, and that God in His goodness allows him to recommence the task which he has done badly.

No.612:- Can a spirit which has animated a human body be incarnated in an animal?

"No; for such an incarnation would be a retrogradation and a spirit never retrogrades. The river does not flow back to source.

No.622:- Has God given to some men the mission of revealing His law?

"Yes, certainly. In every age there have been men who have received this mission; spirits of higher degree, who have incarnated themselves for the purpose of advancing human progress".

No.654: Does God accord a preference to those who worship Him according to any particular mode?

"God prefers those who worship Him from the heart, with sincerity, and by doing what is good and avoiding what is evil, to those who fancy they honour Him by ceremonies which do not render them any better than their neighbours".

No. 658:- Is prayer acceptable to God?

"Prayer is always acceptable to God when dictated by the heart, for the intention is everything in His sight; and the prayer of the heart is preferable to one read from a book, however, beautiful it may be, if read with the lips rather than with the thought. Prayer is acceptable to God when it is offered with faith, fervour and sincerity; but do not imagine that He will listen to that of the vain, proud or selfish man, unless it be offered as an act of sincere repentance and humility".

No. 695:-Is marriage, that is to say, the permanent union of two beings, contrary to the law of nature?

"It is a progress arrived at by the human race".

No. 696:-

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No. 696:- What would be the effect upon human society, of the abolition of marriage?

"A return to the life of the beasts".

No. 698:- Is voluntary celibacy meritorious in the sight of God?

"No, those who live single from selfish motives are displeasing to God, for they fail to perform their share of social duties".

No. 814:- Why has God given wealth and power to some, and poverty to others?

"In order to try them in different ways. Moreover, as you know, it is the spirits themselves who have selected those trials, under which they often succumb".

No. 815:- Which of the two kinds of trials, poverty or riches, is the most to be dreaded by man?

"They are equally dangerous. Poverty excites murmuring against Providence; riches excite to all kinds of excesses.

No. 816:- If the rich man has more temptations to evil, has he not also more ample meaning of doing good?

"That is precisely what he does not always do. He often becomes selfish, proud and insatiable. His wants increase with his fortune and he never thinks he has enough even for himself.

No. 843:- Has man freedom of action?

"Since he has freedom of thought, he has freedom of action. Without free-will, man would be a machine".

No. 844:- Does man possess free will from his birth?

"He possesses free will from the moment when he possesses the will to act. In the earliest portion of a lifetime, freewill is almost null; it is developed and changes its object with the development of the faculties".

No. 860:- Can a man, by his will and his efforts, prevent events that were to have occurred from taking place and vice versa?

"He can do so if this seeming deviation is compatible with the life he has chosen. And, in order to do good, which should be, and is, the sole end of life, he may prevent evil, especially that which might contribute to a still greater evil."

No. 861:- Did the man who commits a murder know, in choosing his existence, that he would become a murderer?

"No; he knew that by choosing a life of struggle, he incurred the risk of killing one of his fellow creatures; but he did not know whether he would, or would not do so; for there is; almost always, deliberation in the murderer's mind before committing the crime, and he who deliberates, is evidently free to do or not to do. If a spirit knew beforehand that he would commit a murder, it would imply that he was predestinated to commit that crime. No one is ever predestinated to commit that crime; and every crime, like every other action, is always the result of determination and free-will.

No. 868:- Can the future be revealed to man?

"As a rule, the future is hidden from him; it is only in rare and exceptional cases that God permits it to be revealed."

No. 869:- Why is the future hidden from man?

"If man knew the future, he would neglect the present and would not act with the same freedom, because he would be swayed by the thought that, if such and such a thing is to happen, there is no need to occupy one's self about it; or else he would seek to prevent it. God has willed that it should not be thus, in order that each may concur in the accomplishment of the designs of Providence, even of those which he would desire to thwart; and thus you, yourselves, often prepare the way, without your knowing it, for the events that will occur in the course of your life".

No. 871:- Since God knows everything, He knows whether a man will not fail in a given trial; where then is the use of this trial, since it can show God nothing that He does not already know in regard to that man?

"You might as well ask why God did not create man accomplished, perfect; or why man has to pass through childhood before arriving at adult age. The aim of trials is not to enlighten God in regard to man's deserts, for God knows exactly what they are; but to leave to man the entire responsibility of his conduct, since he is free to do or not to do. Man having free choice between good and evil, trial serves to bring him under the action of temptation, and thus to give him the merit of resistance; for God though knowing beforehand whether he will triumph or succumb, cannot, being just, either reward or punish him otherwise than according to the deeds he has done."

No. 919:- What is the most efficacious method of ensuring one's own moral improvement in the present life, and resisting the attraction of evil?

"One of the sages of antiquity had told you:

"know thyself" Do what I myself used to do during my life upon the earth, At the close of each day, I examined my conscience, reviewed all that I had done, and asked myself whether I had not failed in some duty, whether some one might not have reason to complain of me. It was in this way that I succeeded in obtaining a knowledge of myself, and in ascertaining what there was in me that needed reforming. He who, every evening, should thus recall all the actions of the day, asking himself whether he has done ill or well and praying God and his guardian angel to enlighten him, would acquire great strength for self-improvement, for, believe me, God would assist him".

No. 920:- Is it possible for man to enjoy perfect happiness upon the earth?

"No; for corporeal life has been appointed to him either as a trial or an expiation; but it depends upon himself to lighten the evils of his lot, and to render it as happy as life can be upon the earth".

No. 924:- There are misfortunes which come upon men independently of their own conduct, and that befall even the most upright. Is there no way of preserving one's self from them?

"Such misfortunes must be borne with resignation and without murmuring, if you would progress; but you may always derive consolation from the hope of a happier future, provided you do what is need to obtain it".

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No. 925:- Why does God so often bestow the gifts of fortune of men who do not appear to have deserved such a favour?

"Wealth appears to be a favour to those who see only the present, but you must remember that fortune is often a more dangerous trial than poverty".

No. 931:- Why is it that, in our world, the classes that suffer are much more numerous than those that are prosperous?

"None of you are perfectly happy, and what the world regards as prosperity often hides the most poignant sorrows. Suffering is everywhere".

No. 933:- Men are often the artisans of their own worldly sufferings; are they also the artisans of their moral suffering?

"Even more so; for worldly sufferings are often independent of their action; but it is wounded pride, disappointed ambition, the anxieties of avarice, envy, jealousy, all the passions, in short that constitute the torments of the soul. Envy and jealousy. Happy are they who know not those two gnawing worms; where envy and jealousy exist, there can be no calm, no repose".

No. 990:- Does repentance take place in the corporeal state, or in 'The spiritual state'?

"In the spiritual state; but it may also take place in the corporeal state, when you clearly comprehend the difference between good and evil."

No. 992:- What is the consequence of repentance in the corporeal state?

"The spirit will advance even in his present life, if he has the time to repair his faults. Whenever your conscience reproaches you, or shows you an imperfection, you may always become better".

No. 1000:- Can we, in the present life, redeem our faults?

"Yes; by making reparation for them. But do not suppose that you can redeem them by a few trifling privations, or by giving, after your death, what you can no longer make use of. God does not value a sterile repentance, a mere smiting of the breast, easily done. The loss of a little finger in doing good to others effaces more ^{wrong} doing than any amount of self-torture undergone solely with a view to one's own interest. Evil can only be atoned for by good; and all attempts at reparation are valueless if they touch neither a man's pride nor his worldly interests".

No. 1012:- Are there, in the universe, any circumscribed place set apart for the joys and sorrows of spirits, according to their merits?

"We have already answered this question. The joys and sorrows of spirits are inherent in the degree of perfection at which they have arrived. Each spirit finds in himself the principle of his happiness or unhappiness, and as spirits are everywhere, no enclosed or circumscribed place is set apart for either the one or the other. As for incarnated spirits, they are more or less happy or unhappy, according as the world they inhabit is more or less advanced. "Heaven" and "Hell", as men have imagined them, have no existence; They are only symbols; there are happy and unhappy spirits everywhere. Nevertheless, as we have also told you, spirits of the same order are brought together by sympathy; but when they are perfect, they can meet together wherever they will."107.....

No. 1016:- In what sense is the word 'heaven' to be understood?

"Do you suppose that it to be a place like the Elysian Fields of the ancients, where all good spirits are crowded together pell-mell, with no other care than that of enjoying, throughout eternity, a passive felicity? No: it is universal space; it is the planets, the stars and all the worlds of high degree, in which spirits are in the enjoyment of all their faculties, without having the tribulations of material life or the sufferings inherent in the state of inferiority".

No. 1017:- Spirits have said that they inhabited the third, fourth and fifth heaven, etc.; what did they mean in saying this?

"You ask them which heaven they inhabit, because you have the idea of several heavens, placed one above the other, like the storeys of a house, and they therefore answer you according to your own ideas; but, for them, the words 'third', 'fourth', or 'fifth' heaven express different degrees of purification, and consequently of happiness. It is the same when you ask a spirit whether he is in hell; if he is unhappy, he will say 'yes' because, for him, hell is synonymous with suffering; but he knows very well that it is not a furnace".

S A L M A N A L F A R I S I .
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(a) He was a companion of the Prophet and one of the most popular figures of Muslim Legend. His original name was Rooz-bia. He was a Zoroastrian from the family side but he became a Christian in his youth.

(b) In course of his travels he came to Arabia seeking the Prophet who was said to have restored the religion of Abraham, the imminence of whose coming had been predicted to him by his Christian teacher on the latter's deathbed. Recognizing the marks of the Prophet which the monk had described to him, Salman became a Muslim and purchased his liberty from his Jewish master, after being miraculously aided by Prophet Muhammed himself to raise the sum necessary to pay his ransom.

(c) In siege of Madina, it was he who on this occasion advised the digging of the ditches (khandak) by means of which the Muslims defended themselves from the enemy.

(d) Salaman accepted Abu Baker as an able leader but he disapproved his (Abu Baker's) election as Caliph because he considered it was Hazrat Ali's right to Caliphate.

(e) Prophet Muhammad had expressed that Salaman was one of 'Ahl-al Bait'.

(f) No definite authority was available to decide how many years did Salaman lived. Some say he lived upto age of 36-; others put it to 251 years. More research be made for his birth and death dates.

(g) Read 'Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam' pages 500/501 and Noorum-Mubin part I, page 16 for detailed references.

SHABE BARAAT.

Historical facts about celebration of Shabe-baraat were discussed at length. Al Vaez Gulamali Shah said that;-

(a) According to Shias, it was the 14th Shaban, the marriage night of Hazrat Ali and Bibi Fatima. Sabeh means night and Barat means marriage. But this did not tally with 'Noorum-Mubin' which quotes

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the date of Hazrat Ali's marriage as Zil-Haj 1st.

(b) Sunnies say that this 14th Shaban was the night on which Sura of Tauba or Baraat (Sura IX) was revealed to Holy Prophet.

(c) According to Waez Series No. 6, pages 58/59, it is the night for prayers for salvation of Soul.

All these being conflicting, it was decided to make further search on this subject. Also about the significance of bringing eggs and distributing Wheat on Nawroz.

SULTAN MOHAMED SHAH'S AGE, Mowlana.

(1) (a) It was stated by some members that the famous Astronomer Ciro and another Mohamed Bay have predicted that our present Hazer Imam is to live a life of over 100 years.

(b) Farman on page no. 181 of Kalame-Imame-Mubin made at the time of Golden Jubilee in Bombay on 22.1.1936 was referred to which read

"તમે અમારી આપે પચાસ વર્ષ સુધી અમારા રૂહાની ફરજદો
તરીકે રહો છો અને આપે તમારા રૂહાની બાપુ તરીકે
રહો છો"

عنه الله ! انما پچاس وارف تمي ميمر رهبري وراي وني
دوام كرده اند

(2) SOME TITLES OF HAZER IMAM IN ARABIC.

MALIKUL MULUK

SULTANUS SALATEEN

SULTAN MUHAMMAD IBN ALY

WA AMMEERUL MU'MEENUN.

S E L I M, I

He was the third Ruler of Constantinople about A.D. 1500.

STATE OF SPIRITUAL INDIFFERENCE.

Q. 4. How can one end a State of Spiritual Indifference?

A. "You must not start that way. Say to yourself; 'I am here. I am here for some purpose'".

MOWLANA SULTAN MOHAMED SHAH IN AN INTERVIEW GIVEN TO MR. S. JETHA).

S U F F E R I N G S.

Q. 2. Why must there be suffering?

A. His Highness's answer to the problem of suffering was in the nature of vice existing to emphasize virtue. Suffering must be there because of happiness.

(MOWLANA SULTAN MOHAMED SHAH IN AN INTERVIEW GIVEN TO MR. S. JETHA).

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S U R - T A L - F I L.

(SURA 105: 1 to 5).

Al-V₂ez Dr. Walji explaining the Commentary written by A. Yusuf Ali on above Sura of Holy Quran said:

(a) This early Meccan Sura refers to an event that happened in the year of the birth of our Holy Prophet, say about 570 A.D. Yeman was then under the rule of the Abyssinian (Christians), who had driven out the Jewish Himar rulers. Abrah Ashram was the Abyssinian Governor. Intoxicated with power and fired by religious fanaticism, he led a big expedition against Mecca, intending to destroy the KA'BA. He had elephants in his train. But his sacrilegious intentions were defeated by a miracle. No defence was offered by the custodians of the Ka'ba as the army was too strong for them, but it was believed that shower of stones thrown by flocks of birds, destroyed the invading army almost to a man. The stones produced sores and pustules on the skin, which spread like a pestilence".

(b) George Sale in his commentary says:

"These stones were of the same kind with those by which Sodomites were destroyed, and were no bigger than vetches, through they fell with such forces as to pierce the helmet and the man through, passing out at his fundament. It is said also that on each stone was written the name of him who was to be slain by it".

(c) "Those points gave rise for discussion that perhaps these stones were what is in modern science known as 'atom' or these stones may be 'radio active' producing sores and pustules, ~~app~~ appearing like a pestilence".

SULTAN MOHAMED SHAH'S PHOTOGRAPH.

કલ્હાને દેખાને મુબીન ભાગ ૧૯૦ પાનું ૨૯૬)
 "અને મુબીન જઈ અમારા લી ફીરોગ્રાફ મોકલ્યું. એક જંગલમાં
 મારે અને એક રબામ્મ મારે આ ફીરોગ્રાફ ઉપર માનખા
 યસાવવાની નથી. અમારા રૂઆરની ચાલી પાસે છે. ફીરોગ્રાફ
 મેંઈને તમોને ચાહ આવે કે અમારી મહોબ્બત નમારા ઉપર છે"

T A Q D I R O R Q A D A R.

The Religion of Islam' pages 32-/321.

"The useless controversy as to whether God was or was not the creator of man's deeds divided the Muslim world at one time, into the three camps. The Jabriyya hold that God was the creator of Man's deeds whether good or evil, and man was entirely powerless in the matter.

"Another party want to hold that man, being the creator of his own actions had full control over them. This was the view adopted by the Mutazila. Their argument was that it was impossible that God should first compel a man to do a thing and then punish him for it. The general body the Muslims held that both these were extreme views. But in marking out an intermediate course, they adopted a position which was not very clear. They held that faith was the 'via media' between jabar and qadar, and to reconcile between these two views they introduced the theory of 'kasb' which means 'acquisition'. The gist of this theory was 'that man is neither absolutely compelled, nor absolutely free agent'".

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THIRD EYE.

Hoping that the members will find interesting reading, therefore, some passages from the Book called a 'THIRD EYE' an autobiography of T. Lambsong Rampa) are given below:

"It became necessary to have my studies intensified, because when I was seven years of age, I should have to enter upon training for whatever career the astrologers suggested. In Tibet everything is decided by astrology from the buying of a Yak to the decision about one's career".

"At last the day arrived. The day I dreaded, when my career was to be decided for me, with no choice on my part.

"In Tibet, two names are given, the first being the day of the week on which one was born.

"We Tibetans are of the firm belief that one's whole history is written on the palm of the hand.

The Head Lama saying to 7 years old boy who had just joined the lamasery (priesthood school):

"We have traced your previous incarnation and it was a good one. Now we want to redevelop certain powers and abilities you then had. In the space of a very few years, we want you to have more knowledge than a lama has in a very long life. All men must be free to choose their own path. Your way will be hard for forty years, if you take the right path, but it will lead to great benefits in the next life. The wrong path now will give you comforts, softness, and richness in this life, but you will not develop. You and you alone can choose".

"When a boy was accepted by a lamasery his pigtail was cut off and his head shaved, the pigtail would be sent to the parents, carried by a small acolyte, as a symbol that their son had been accepted. Now the Head Lama was taking my pigtail to deliver in person. That meant that he had accepted me as his own personal charge, as his 'spiritual son'. This lama was a very important man, one who had a most enviable reputation throughout Tibet. I knew that I could not fail, as his 'Chela', under such a man.

"We firmly believe in reincarnation, in Tibet, we believe that when one reaches a certain advanced stage of evolution, one can choose to go on to another plane of existence, or return to earth to learn something more, or to help others.

"It may be thought that Tibet was a peculiar country to be without glass, telescopes or mirrors, but people did not want such things. Nor did we want wheels. Wheels made for speed, and for so called civilization. We have long realized that in the rush of commercial life there is no time for the things of the mind. Our physical world had proceeded at a leisurely pace, so that our esoteric knowledge could grow and expand. We have for thousands of years known the truth of clairvoyance, telepathy and other branches of metaphysics. While it is quite true that many lamas can sit naked in the snow, and by thought alone melt the snow around them, such things are not demonstrated for the delight of the mere sensation seeker. Some lamas who are masters of the occult, definitely can levitate, but they do not display their powers to entertain naive onlookers. The teacher, in Tibet, always makes sure that his pupil is morally fit to be trusted with such powers. It follows from this, that as the teacher must be absolutely sure of the moral integrity of the student, metaphysical powers are never abused, as only the right people are taught. Those powers are in no way magical, they are merely the outcome of using natural laws.

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"In Tibet, there are some who can best develop in company and others who have to retire to solitude. These latter men go to outlying lamaseries and enter a hermit's cell. It is a small room usually built on the side of a mountain. The stone walls are thick perhaps six feet thick so that no sound can penetrate. The hermit enters, at his own desire, and the entrance is walled up. There is no light, whatever, no furnishing, nothing but the empty stone box. Food is passed in once a day through a light trapped, sound-proofed hatch. Here the hermit stays, first for three years, three months and three days. He meditates on the nature of Life, and on the nature of Man. For no reason whatever can he leave that cell in the physical body. During the last month of his stay, a very small hole is made in the roof to allow a faint ray of light to enter. It is enlarged day by day so that the hermit's eyes become used to the light once again. Otherwise he would go blind as soon as he emerged. Very often these men return to their cell after only a few weeks, and stay there for life. It is not such a sterile, worthless existence as one might suppose. Man is a spirit, a creature of another world, and once he can become free of the bonds of the flesh, he can roam the world as a spirit and can help by thought. Thoughts, as we in Tibet well know, are waves of energy. Matter is energy condensed. It is thought, carefully directed and partly condensed, which can cause an object to move 'by thought', controlled in another way result in telepathy, and can cause a person at a distance to do a certain action. Is this so very difficult to believe, in a world which regards as common place the act of a man speaking into a microphone guiding a plane to land in dense fog, when the pilot can see no ground at all? With a little training, and no scepticism, man could do this by telepathy instead of making use of a fallible machine.

"It may be of some interest to give here some details of our way of life. Our religion is a form of Hudhism, but there is no word which can be transliterated. We refer to it as "The Religion" and to those of our faith as "Insiders". Those of other beliefs are termed "outsiders". The nearest word, already known in The West is Lamaism. It departs from Buddhism in that ours is a religion of hope and a belief in the future. Buddhism, to us, seems negative, a religion of despair. We certainly do not think that an all-seeing father is watching and guarding everyone, everywhere.

"Tibetans who have studied the true teachings of Buddha never pray for mercy or for favours, but only that they may receive justice from Man. A supreme being, as the essence of justice, cannot show mercy to one and not to another, because to do so would be a denial of justice. To pay for mercy or for favours, promising gold or incense if the prayer is answered, is to imply that salvation is available to the highest bidder, that God is short of money and can be 'bought'.

"Man can show mercy to Man, but very rarely does; the Supreme being can show only justice.

"There is no death. As one doffs one's clothes at the end of day, so does the soul doff the body when the latter sleeps. As a suit of clothes is discarded when worn out, so does the soul discard the body when the latter is worn out or torn. Death is birth. Dying is merely the act of being born in another plane of existence Man, or the spirit of Man, is eternal. The body is but the temporary garment that clothes the spirit, to be chosen according to the task in hand upon earth. Outward appearance does not matter. The soul within does. A great prophet may come in the guise of a pauper - how better can one judge of man's charity to man? - while one who has sinned in a past life may this time be born to riches to see if he makes mistakes when there is no poverty to drive him on.

"We believe, firmly, that we are reborn time after time. But not merely to this earth. There are millions of worlds, and we know that most of them are inhabited. Those inhabitants may be in very

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different forms to those we know, they may be superior to humans. We in Tibet have never subscribed to the view that Man is the highest and most noble form of evolution.

"In Tibet we travel much by astral projection - not by levitation - and the whole process is within our control. The ego is made to leave the physical body, although still connected to it by the silver cord. One can travel where one wills, as quickly as one can think. Most people have the ability to engage in astral travel. Many have actually started out, and being untrained, have experienced a shock. Probably everyone has had the sensation of just drifting off to sleep and then without apparent reason, being violently awakened by a sudden powerful jerk. This is caused by too rapid exteriorization of the ego, and ungentle parting of physical and astral bodies. It causes contraction of the silver cord, and the astral is snatched back into the physical vehicle. It is a much worse feeling when one has travelled and is returning. The astral is floating many feet above the body, like a balloon at the end of a string. Something, perhaps some external noise, causes the astral to return to the body with excessive rapidity. The body awakened suddenly and there is the horrible feeling that one has fallen off a cliff and awakened just in time.

"This is not a textbook of metaphysics, so there is no point in giving instructions on astral travelling, but it should be emphasized that it can be disturbing experience unless one has a suitable teacher.

"We, Tibetans believe that everyone before the Fall of Man had the ability to travel in the astral, see by clairvoyance, telepathize, and levitate. Our version of that Fall is that Man abused the occult powers and used them for self-interest. Instead of for the development of mankind as a whole. In the earliest days mankind could converse with mankind by telepathy. Local tribes have their own versions of vocal speech which they used exclusively among themselves. The telepathic speech was, of course, by thought, and could be understood by all, regardless of local language. When the power of telepathy was lost, through abuse, there was - Babel !

"We believe that we learn on Earth, and that on Earth we get our 'roasting and racking'. The other Place, to us, is where we go when out of the body, where we can meet entities who also are out of the body. This is not spiritualism. It is instead a belief that during sleep, or after death, we are free to wander in astral planes. Our own term for the higher reaches of these planes is "The Land of the Golden light". We are sure that when we are in the astral, after death, or when asleep, we can meet those we love, because we are in harmony with them. We cannot meet those we dislike, because that would be a state of disharmony, and such conditions cannot exist in the Land of the golden Light.

"A considerable amount of training was now given to me in the art of astral travelling, where the spirit, or ego, leaves the body and remains connected to life on Earth only by Silver Cord. Many people find it difficult to believe that we travel in this way. Everyone does when they sleep. Nearly always in the West, it is involuntary; in the East lamas can do it when fully conscious. Thus they have a complete memory of what they have done, what they have seen and where they have been.

"Telepathy is another art which is easy to master. But not if it is going to be used as a stage turn. Fortunately, this art is now gaining some recognition. Hypnotism is yet another art of the East. I have carried out major operations on hypnotized patients such as leg amputations and those of an equally serious nature. The patient feels nothing, suffers nothing and awakens in better condition though not having to also suffer the effects of the orthodox anesthetics. Now, so I am told, hypnotism is being used to a limited extent in England.

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"To attain a state of invisibility one must suspend action and also suspend one's brain waves! If the physical brain is allowed to function (think), any other person near by becomes telepathically aware (sees) and so the state of invisibility is lost. There are men in Tibet who can become invisible at will, but they are able to shield their brain waves. It is perhaps fortunate that they are so few in number.

"We did much of what is termed Yoga in the Western world. It is of course, a very great science and one which can improve a human almost beyond belief.

"Breathing to a particular pattern is the main secret of many Tibetan phenomena. But there again, unless one has a wise and experienced teacher, such exercises can be extremely harmful, if not fatal. Many travellers have written of 'the racing ones', lamas who can control the weight of the body (not levitation) and race at high speed for hours and hours over the ground, hardly touching the earth in passing.

"There are three basic bodies; the flash body in which the spirit can learn the hard lessons of life, the etheric, or 'magnetic' body which is made by each of us by our lusts, greeds, and strong passions of various kinds. The third body is the spirit body, the 'immortal soul'

"Tonne dead body in particular I was attracted - some strange power held me facinated before it. It seemed to gaze at me with an all-knowing smile. Just then, there was a gentle touch on my arm, and I nearly dropped with fright. "That was you, Lobsang, in your last incarnation. We thought you would recognize it".

"My Guide led me to the next gold figure and remarked: "And that was I".

"Silently, both much moved, we crept from the Hall and the door was sealed behind us.

"Here also was my past history and that, too, I studied with my full attention."

THE THIRD EYE.

Under circular No. 54, the Members were sent (as above) certain passages from the book called 'The Third eye' said to have been the autobiography of one Tibetan Lama, called T. Lambsong Ramps.

Since above circular was issued attention was drawn to pages 32/33 of the Magazine 'TIME' of 17.2.1958 which reads:

"Since first publication in England 18 months ago, 'The Third Eye' has sold close to 300,000 copies. From all over the World fan mail poured in to T. Lambsong Rampa. Fans wanted to come in person, but the mysterious Tibetan might have been in a state of permanent astral pronection for all they could find him. Only a few insiders knew that Rampa was really Dr. Suan Sou, an egg balded, bearded sage living quietly with his English Wife outside Dublin.

In four weeks and 3000 miles of traveling, Detective Clifford Burgees announced that his name was neither T. Lambsong Rampa nor Kuan Sou but plain Cyril Henry Hoskin, and he is the son of a Devon plumber.

Last week whilst Hoskin lay ill in his Irish cottage, flocks of tourists, alerted by front-page exposure in the British press, trampled his lawn. he embarrassed publishing firm of Sicker and Warburg has suspended plans for publication of his next book "Medical Lama".

Agent Brooks said 'I am surprised he possesses extraordinary powers of telepathy', ..114..

Agent Brooks said: 'I am surprised that he possesses extraordinary powers of telepathy'.

Ailing Hoskin insisted that his book was all true - he had merely ghosted it for a ghost. He further said 'Some time ago, I had the strange premonition, the strangest urges, and even against my will I was compelled to change my name....I had a slight accident. I had concussion. And my body was actually taken over ^{by} the spirit of an Eastern."

TAXATION SYSTEM IN MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES.

Mr.A.J.M.S. Kanji said that he contacted the information bureau of American Consulate at Nairobi who have written to their counter-part in Egypt for information which has so far not been received.

It was decided that Mr. Kanji should also contact 'Islamic Review' of London and Mr. Mohamedali H. Rashid to write to Prof. Ivanhow and Arif Tamir of Syria on this subject.

(PLEASE ALSO REFER PAGE OF THIS BOOKLET).

(U)

U M A R K H A Y A M.

Noorum Mubih:- Pages 194, 209, 212 to 215, 289, 456.

History of Arabia: 377, 379, 386, 410, 459, 478.

ALSO SEE REF. MADE BY MOWLANA SULTAN MOHAMED SHAH IN MESSAGE PUBLISHED BY CHOTUBHAI.

U N A D P A N K H I.

THE BIRD WHICH NEVER SLEEPS.

"Gals yun"

(a) Arising out of a reference from our Holy Ginan, enquiry was made with the Coryndon Museum of Nairobi and the following reply from Dr. Leakey was read:

"There is no bird which never sleeps night or day. There are, however, a variety of birds, call persistantly through the night, and so probably stay persistantly awake during certain brief seasons in the year. These are birds belonging to the cuckoo family and in particular the Chestnut breasted Cuckoo of East Africa. Those may well be similar birds who, during season, of the year, do not sleep at night in other parts of the World, but I do not have any information on the subject";

(b) Mr. Akberali J.M.S. Kanji was asked to direct his enquiry to National Geography Magazine on this subject.

(2) There is a Stanza in one of Pir Sadrudin's Ginans which reads:

"Gira mar kamzali dani zara Gals yun du
gudu sat dani nijal n zeyan"

(W)

WOMEN IN ISLAM.

Arising out of a very controversial correspondence which is appearing in a local paper 'Mombasa Times' on the subject of 'Sex Equality', one of the Muslim Correspondents has given the following reasons, arguing why women cannot be equal to men:

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- i. In Holy Quran, it is said 'Arrijal Kawwamug Alan Nissa' meaning males are stronger than the females.
- ii. On the question of heritage, 'females shall have half the heritage of males'.
- iii. In law of evidence 'two females' evidence will be equal to one male's."
- IV. In Holy Prophet's time too, the women were seated behind the men in the Mosque.

It was decided that our 'Study Group' after making a proper study of the above arguments, should discuss at its next meeting the subject of 'STATUS OF WOMEN IN ISLAM' with further special references to

- (a) Parda system,
- (b) condition under which a divorced woman can re-marry to the same husband.

(2)

WOMEN UNDER ISLAM.
FROM HOLY QURAN.

- 4:3 Conditions under which a man is allowed to marry more than one wife.
- 4:11 Re: Inheritance
- 4:12) One is prohibited to
- 4:23) marry certain relatives.
- 4:34 Man is stronger than the woman.

(3) "POSITION OF WOMEN UNDER ISLAM".
BY SYED M.H. ZAIDI - FORWARD. (H.H. THE AGA KHAN III).

"I have not the least doubt that the whole spirit and teaching of the Holy Prophet whatever their temporary aspects may have been encouraged the evolution of women. The responsibility before God for prayers, for action, and for moral decisions is the same for men and women, according to the Prophet's Holy Message. Women already 1350 years ago, were made economically independent of men, while in England till as late as 1880 a woman's property belonged to her husband. The Prophet also broke with that system and made women financially independent and gave them their proper due in succession to their various relatives' estates.

"Pious and believing Muslims who really wish to understand the Holy message of the Prophet and not just its passing aspects would immediately set work with the object of bringing about the full and legitimate evolution of the Muslim women in Islamic society till such time as they can honestly hold their own with the men.

"The fact that in succession women get only one-half of what a man gets does not prove that they have not moral equality. But in the same way, women in Europe are paid less than men because they are not expected to keep a family, so in Islam in their independent property they are expected to maintain themselves and not their families. The fact that the family name goes through the boys makes it necessary that the wealth of the family should go more to the sons than to the daughters, leaving the daughters with 50% and in a position of real equality.

"Even in these days in Roman Catholic countries the women's property goes automatically to the husband, who becomes the owner of his wife's belongings. Under this system, women have very little real independence and are at mercy of their husbands. ...116...

"I firmly believe that in encouraging education amongst my religious followers, and in trying as far as possible to give them equality-women with men- I have carried out the spirit of the Holy Message of my Ancestor.

"Seclusion and purdah are purely Oriental customs which came into Islam, but have no relation with the spirit of that teaching though undoubtedly they became part of the social system which Islam carried on from its neighbouring countries such as Persia, Byzantium and Egypt.

"For these reasons, I heartily welcome Ayed M.H. Zaidi's book and wish it every success."

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AGAKHAN III.

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W A H H A B I F A I T H .

Missionary Gulamali Shah gave a short talk describing how the founder of the Faith, a Najdi from Al-Maynah named Muhammed ibn - Abd-al-Wahhab (b. 1792), after travelling in Hijaz, Iraq and Syria returned home impressed with the ideas that Islam, as practised by his contemporaries, had deviated widely from the orthodox practice and theory as prescribed by the Prophet and Koran and he therefore determined to purge it and restore it to its pristine character. His inspiration he apparently drew from ibn-Hanbal as interpreted by ibn-Taymiyah. The new prophet found in Muhammed ibn-Su'ud, an ally and son-in-law, resulting in the speedy spread of religion and of authority of ibn-Su'ud throughout Central and Eastern Arabia. The followers of Muhammed-ibn-'Abd-al-Wahhab were called Wahhabis.

(b) In their zeal to rid Islam of the cult of Saints (as Wahhabis believe there must not be any agency between any individual person and God) and other innovations, they sacked Karbala in 1801, captured Mecca in 1803 and Madina in 1804. In the following year they invaded Syria and Iraq and extended their domain from Pulmyrato Uman.

(c) Abdal Aziz Ibn Su'ud restored the Wahhabi state and Wahhabi dynasty. He put an end to the Rashid dynasty in 1921, occupied Mecca in 1924, Madina and Jeddah in 1925 and in 1932, created the Su'udi Arabia kingdom with himself as its Head

(d) In 1818 however, Muhammed Ali of Egypt defeated them and curbed the Wahhabi power and razed their capital Dir'iyah to ground. Wahhabi tanets, however, continued to spread, and their influence was felt from Sumatra in the East to Nigeria in the West.

(e) In Najd, under the rule of the Wahhabis, who have been called the Covenanters of Islam, laggards were whipped to go to the mosque. Today, under Ibni Su'ud is pursued the same method of enforcing the observance of the religious rites.

(f) The Wahhabis brand all other Moslems as unbelievers. They are far too much shariati and are therefore in absolute conflict with modern Moslems for progress and development.

(g) For references, see pages 740/741 of 'History of the Arabs' by Philip K. Hitti and pages 125, 356, and 357 of 'THE SPIRIT OF ISLAM'.

W A I L I N G W A L L .

Mr. Hassanali Panju said that only reference he could find was on page 114 of 'History of the Arabs' (By Hitti) that according to one belief amongst the Moslems, Holy Prophet Muhammed who is said to have been instantly transported from al-Ka'bah to Jerusalem preliminary to his ascent (Miraj) to the seventh heaven and this Wailing Wall is 117...

is considered to be the halting place of the 'BURAQ', the winged horse with a woman's face and peacock's tail.

It was decided to make further research about the importance of this place, also from Jewish and Christian points of view.

(Z)

Z O R O A S T R I A N I S M.

Hon. Missionary Husen Ali, who owing to indisposition could not personally attend, had sent the following notes on the above subject:-

(a) "Zoroastrianism was founded by Prophet Zorathustra, who was born in RAI, Iran, about 600 years before Christ. Of all the Prophets of Asia, Zorathustra's teaching was the first to be 'adopted' by West. It is believed his doctrine reached Greece four centuries before that of Christ was received there. It is said that it was even known to Plato. The teaching of Buddha or Confucius reached much later.

(b) Once upon a time Zoroastrianism was State Religion of Iran. At present, it is adhered by Parsee community who number about 150,000 in the whole world, mostly residing in East Coast of Bharat, whose ancestors had migrated from Iran. Their Sacred book is ZEND AVESTA, composed of religious poems by the Prophet. It contains the philosophy, laws and rituals of Zoroastrianism.

(c) In the pre-Zorathustra period Iran had many religions believing in various traditional nature-gods-heavenly gods with domain in sky of the stars, moon and sun, thunder god as his head quarters in atmosphere, between sky and earth; earth goddess, presiding over health and food. Through the teachings of Zorathustra these were all replaced by one God-a wise and righteous God-Ahura MAZDAH - with whose power all these natural phenomenon exist, he explained.

(d) Zorathustra was a priest by profession, and later declared himself as prophet of God. He already knew the prayers and poetry of the ancient times. To this he gave a new out-look of progressive society within the traditional frame-work which made him enemy of 'his own people, hence, had to flee for safety.

(e) Zoroastrianism do not believe in blood sacrifice and consuming of liquer as oil purifier as it was believed in ancient Indo Iranian faiths. Instead they believe in fire sacrifice. The fire has from time immemorial been a means of participating in the Universe. That the Universe itself is nothing but a vast sacrificial fire; that there is fundamental identity between the fire and cosmic law. Therefore, all Zoroastrians light fire while worshipping and keep it as symbol of God. Even when the Parsees migrated to India they brought with them burning fire from their ancient temples and installed these in certain temples in Bombay and Nausari, always fuelling it, to keep it ever-burning.

(f) As far as a decade back, and it is said at some places even now, they offer their dead bodies to vultures with a belief that charity can be extended, even by those dead. Since, such practices are not possible everywhere, they have also adopted the practice of burying their dead ones.

(g) They have priesthood also, who conduct their religious affairs. Such persons are either paid or honorary, according to the population and work involved in running the affairs of their religion. By subscription, they maintain their temples.

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Z I Y A R A T

After discussion, the conclusions were that:

- (a) No doubt that it is Islamic ceremony.
- (b) Such ceremony is also found in different shape in many other religions.
- (c) It is generally believed that after 3rd day, the soul goes in the higher sphere.
- (d) This ceremony generally indicates that the official mourning is now ended.

Also read question No. 241 in the book of 'QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS' published by Ismailia Association of Bharat and page 5 of Vaez series no. 6.

Z A K A T.

Mowlana Haizer Imam's guidance is quite clear that it was a state tax and nothing to do with poor, as is general belief amongst other Muslims today.

A book called 'REVIVAL OF ZAKAT' by Ata Ullah (Rippon Printing Press, Lahore) was found to be very interesting on this subject.

(PLEASE ALSO REFER PAGES . OF THIS BOOK LET).

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A D D E N D A .WHAT IS YOUTH INTELLIGENTSIA OF
ISLAM IS THINKING.

(BY M.I. KAMIL)

"Many of your readers, I am sure, will recollect that about three years ago, there appeared under the title of 'MUSLIM HERESY PUNISHED', the news of the dismissal of Abdul Hamid Bakheet, a lecturer in the faculty of Islamic teachings in Al-Azhar, Cairo, Egypt. It was the first time in the whole recorded history of the Ezhar - the oldest University in the world - that one of its lecturers wrote against the orthodox opinion, that fasting during the month of Ramadhan was not obligatory for devout Muslims.

Dealing with the subject, the Qur'an says:

"And those who find it extremely hard may effect redemption by feeding a poor man. So whoever does so spontaneously, it is better for him; and that if you fast it is better for you if you know".

(2:284)

(1) F A S T I N G .

The Qur'an is clear in its injunction that fasting is a spontaneous act, and not obligatory on all believers. Those who feel it 'extremely hard' are allowed compensation by feeding the poor; but those who do not find it 'extremely hard' must, of course, fast; otherwise they would be sinners in the sight of God. According to the established laws of Islam, nothing can be said against such a plain verse of the Holy Quran. Our ancestors were, of course, so good that they preferred fasting to redemption, but that cannot in anyway take away the generous choice of the Holy Qur'an from us. Still, many people differ on this point. The matter should, therefore, have been brought to the notice of the people through the press by al-Azhar, and to have let the Muslims freely express their opinion about it. Its disciplinary action shows that they, and supporters of the orthodox view, want the Islamic teachings to remain dogmatic, and that they cannot tolerate an opinion even of a member of their own institute.

It is strange that even in the twentieth century a university, itself a citadel of the intelligentsia of Islam, should have adopted such an intolerant attitude. All the orthodox 'Ulemas of Tanga (Egypt) India, Pakistan and other Islamic countries, along with their gigantic illiterate following, flared up against this heresy. But how many of them do fast in Ramadhan?

If Muslims are not afraid of the truth, I would suggest that medical opinion be invited on the question as to how far it is permissible for a man to fast in a certain country and climate. Should the poor, the underfed, the aged, the students and the labourers fast in the burning heat of tropical countries?

It is the duty of al-Azhar, a seat of learning and a citadel of knowledge, to establish a research department under able professors, for research on such problems. It should try to prove Islamic teachings rationally and scientifically, so that Islam may be acceptable to the educated peoples of the world. Ijtihad is a recognized practice in Islam, and was used and encouraged by our A'immas. Obviously, it is the duty of Islamic universities like al-Azhar (Egypt and Deoband (India) to teach and encourage ijtihad to the thousands of Muslim students they receive from all over the world. Unfortunately, the spirit of Ijtihad has been greatly suppressed.

Many intellectuals have already supported the Shaikh Bakheet's view, and have seized the opportunity to deride what they consider to be the hidebound and outdated opinions of orthodox Muslims. Protesting against al-Azhar, Mr. 'Ali Amin, one of the proprietors of al-Akhbar.

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wrote: "We want al-Azhar to be a citadel of free thinking, and not a cemetery of freedom of thought or a stronghold of ignorance and reaction".

If it is not a crime to express one's own opinion in Islamic theological matters, I would like to touch here on a few of the problems which have for long been arising in the minds of many Muslims.

(PLEASE ALSO REFER PAGE OF THIS BOOKLET)

(2) P R A Y E R S.

Muslims in general are finding it extremely inconvenient to carry out the practices of orthodox Islam - as for example the offering of congregational prayers in the mosques five times a day. Is it possible for a busy man of today? The Holy Qur'an has never inflicted on us such a hardship. It has only spoken of three prayers a day. Muslims of course had been offering their prayers five times a day, and I think that every Muslim should try to do this. But if he cannot, then he should at least offer prayer three times a day, as the Qur'an requires of him. If not, five prayers should be combined into three, as Muhammad 'Ali, an exponent of Islam in modern times on the authority of Islamic traditions says:

"The Prophet combined the Zuhr and 'Asr prayers when there was neither journey nor fear. When the Companions asked the Prophet why he did so, he replied, 'So that my followers may not be in difficulty'."

This combination was effected in Medina when there was neither fear nor rain, and is known as a problem of 'combination of prayers'. This can be offered both as early combination or late combination, and would make the whole problem of prayers so practicable and easy. And I think more Muslims would be offering prayers than they do now under the strict orthodox opinion of five times a day.

(3) LANGUAGE OF PRAYERS

The language of the prayers has also been for long in question: The non-Arab Muslims offer their prayers in the Arabic language, of which they understand nothing. They can neither concentrate with such alien prayers nor can they avail them. They just offer them formally like rituals without any practical gain. It is therefore better that they should be allowed to offer their prayers in their own language.

The orthodox opinion has never agreed with this longstanding question, in spite of the fact that the great Imam Abu Hanifah had allowed it in the second century A.H.

(4) SEGREGATION OF WOMEN FROM PRAYERS.

The Segregation of women from prayers is against the original practice of Islam. During the time of the Prophet the women visited the mosques and used to offer their prayers with the men.

Once, a certain Tradition says, men, women and children were assembled in a mosque and the Prophet was late in leading the night prayer. 'Umar called out, 'The women and children are going to sleep'. (The Bukhari, 9:22). Another Hadith121..

narrated by A'ishah says that women used to go to the mosques at early hours for morning prayers, and that when the Prophet heard a baby crying he would shorten his prayer lest the mother should feel inconvenienced (The Bukhari, 10:65). The Prophet used to wait a little after his prayers till the women left the mosque (The Bukhari, 10:52). He had given orders to his Companions. "Do not prohibit the maids of God from going to the mosques of God" (The Bukhari, 11:12). He is reported to have said "that if a woman wanted to go to the mosque at night, she should not be prohibited from doing so" (The Bukhari, 10:162). They were asked to join the men on special occasions, as the Prophet says "... on the occasion of the 'Ids, women should go out of the place where prayers are said; even women in a state of menstruation are to be present, though they would not join the prayer" (The Bukhari, 13:15, 20). In the mosques they were not separated from men by any screen or curtain, but they performed their prayers in a line behind the men (The Bukhari, 10:164). On the occasion of the great gathering which assembles for pilgrimage, a woman is expressly forbidden to wear a veil (The Bukhari, 25:23). All these evidences from the Hadith afford overwhelming evidence of the fact that women, just in the same way as men, used to frequent the mosques. It was late in 256 A.H. (881 C.E) that the Governor of Mecca is said to have tied ropes between the columns to make a separate place for women. Late, wooden barriers were erected in mosques to separate women from men, and the practice grew until the women were pushed out of the mosques and public activities, and gradually shut up within their houses against the spirit of Islam.

On segregation, all that the Qur'an says is: "And say to the believing women that they lower their gaze and restrain their sexual passions and do not display their ornaments except what appears thereof. And let them wear their head coverings over their bosom" (24:31). Thus, the segregation of men and women as practised in most Muslim countries today was never meant by the Qur'an.

(PLEASE ALSO REFER PAGE of THIS BOOKLET).

(5) THE PROBLEM OF INTEREST.

Another much-disputed problem among the Muslims is "interest". It is clearly prohibited in the Qur'an. But in all business transactions in the world of Islam interest forms as much an important factor in economic life as it does in Western countries. Muslims are compelled to ignore this injunction of Islam and go ahead. Has Islam become outdated and rejectable? My answer is 'no', if we are ready for a fresh and new interpretation of its teaching without fear of heresy in Islam. In fact the whole conception of 'interest' is entirely changed through the economic development of the modern world in which we have to live. What the Prophet meant by 'interest' was the multiplied profit on money which the poor were forced to borrow from the rich, for their bare necessities. This, of course, is an inhuman practice, and cannot be allowed at any time. Unfortunately, our orthodox 'uleman will never solve the problems in such an easy way, but would make a mess of the whole problem, leaving the Muslims in a Dilemma.

It is very encouraging that our younger generation is trying to understand Islam intellectually, as the daughter of the Rector of the Disciplinary Council of Al-Azhar stated that she disagreed with her father, the Shaikh al-Rahman Taj, on his views about matrimonial matters.

It is regrettable to know that the Shaikh Bakheet was at last compelled to withdraw his views about fasting. In the Arabic daily, Al-Akhbar, Cairo, he is reported to have said 'I am not infallible; every scholar, no matter how great his knowledge, may be liable to make some mistakes".122.....

However al-Azhar may rejoice on its success, the spirit of freedom of thought, once kindled in the minds of the Muslims intelligentsia, is not going to be extinguished.

(PLEASE ALSO REFER PAGE OF THIS BOOKLET).

(6) I J T I H A D.

Let us now see what Ijtihad, is, and how it is encouraged in Islam. Ijtihad is a method of deducing the laws of Islam from the original data of Islam, which is expressly recognized in the Holy Quran. It appeals to human reason again and again, and is full of exhortations like the following: "Do you not reflect? Do you not understand?" "Have you no sense?" "There are signs in this for a people who understand". "...deaf, dumb and blind, so that do not understand (2:171). "They have hearts with which they do not understand, and they have eyes with which they do not see, and they have ears with which they do not hear. They are as cattle; nay, they are in worse error" (7:179).

After the death of the Prophet Muhammad, the Caliphs used to hold a council to which every important case was referred, and the decision of this council was by a majority of votes accepted by the Caliphs as well as by the Muslim public. It was not exactly the legislative assembly in the modern sense, but the principle was almost the same. The decision of the majority was the method to solve disputed matters. Besides this, the decisions of individual teachers like Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn 'Umar and A'ishah and other great Mujtahids (the legists) of the day were highly revered. It was in the second century A.H. that the Imam Abu Hanifa, the great jurist, arose and condified the Islamic laws according to the needs of his time. It was the time when Kufah itself was not a great centre of learning of Islam, and the collections of Hadith had not become the vogue. Naturally, he received a few and accepted very few. The great trouble came in Islam when more and more unauthentic Hadiths were collected. Abu Hanifah was a man of highly independent character, and preferred imprisonment rather than lose his freedom of expression and thought. It was he who first directed public attention to the great value of the Qiyas, or analogical reasoning in legislation. He recognized the independence of judgment so much that his followers were called ahl al-ra'y (upholders of private judgment). The Imam Malik observed mainly the Traditions and practices of Medina, while the Imam Shafii, travelling from place to place, gained more traditional information and intimately acquainted himself with the Hanafi and Maliki systems. Unfortunately, the Imam Ahmad Hanbal made the least possible use of reason, and thus there came a marked falling off in the last of the four great Imams from the high ideals of the first - application of reasoning in religious matters. Thus, the system of Abu Hanifah himself has deteriorated on account of THE LATER JURISTS OF HIS SCHOOL, NOT DEVELOPING THE MASTER'S high ideal. Gradually, the development of law according to the changing necessities of the people stopped and now stagnation reigns all over the Muslim world. If anybody opens his mouth against the orthodox Islam, he is harassed, persecuted, removed from his office and compelled to take back his views.

(PLEASE ALSO REFER PAGE
58 OF THIS BOOKLET).

FROM "ISLAMIC REVIEW"
OCTOBER, 1957 ISSUE.

ABDUL MALIK BIN ATASH.

- (a) Al-Vaez Mahomedali H. Nurmahomed read out extracts from pages 211 and 212 of Noorun-Mubin.

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- (b) Abdul Malik bin Atash was a great Ismaili Dai (Missionary) in the time of our 18th Imam, Mustan-Sir-Billah. He was entrusted the mission work in Iran.
- (c) He also took part in State affairs and politics. He helped to conquer some forts in Syria.

ABU ALI SINA.

PHILOSOPHY OF ABU ALI SINA OR KNOWN AS AVICENNA.

- (a) For his life, see our previous Circulars Nos. 21 and 22.
- (b) He was one of the greatest and most original thinkers, Physician, Scientist and Philosopher produced by ISMAILIS (and Islam) - born in 980 A.D. and died in 1038 A.D.
- (c) Detailing but a few of his philosophies, Mr. A.J. Kanji said:-
 - i he accepted the doctrine of Prophetic inspiration.
 - ii believed in one God
 - iii he practiced on the oratical ground the ritual worship and religious obligations of his faith.
 - iv he based his philosophy on reasons and not on faith
 - v he rejected the resurrection of the body as the Christians maintain.
- (d) For further and detailed references read the book 'AVICENNA ON THEOLOGY' by Prof. A.J. Arberry Lit. D. and page 427 of AmeerAli's "SPIRIT OF ISLAM".

(PLEASE ALSO REFER PAGE 7 OF THIS BOOKLET)

A L - F A R A B I.

Al-Vaex Sultanali Nazerali gave the following details about his life and works:-

- (a) "Abu Nasr Farabi (Abu Nasr Mohamed bin Mohamed Turkhan al Farabi) so called from his native city of Farab in Trans-oxiana, was a distinguished physician, mathematician and philosopher. He is regarded as the most learned and subtle commentator of Aristotle. He enjoyed the patronage of Saif ud Dawla Ali Ibn Hamdan, Prince of Aleppo and died at Damascus in the month of Rajab 339 A.H. (Dec. 950 A.C.)
- (b) "Farabi, largely utilised by Rogen Bacon and Albertus Mangus, was his 'Commentary on Aristotle's Organon'. His "Tendency of the Philosophies of Plato and Aristotle", his treatise on Ethics, entitled 'as-Sirat ul-Fazila', and another on politics called 'as-Siyasat ul Medineyya', which forms part of a larger and more comprehensive work bearing the name of 'Mahadiul Moujudat," show a versatile character of his intellect. Besides Philosophy and medicine, Farabi cultivated Music, which he elevated into a science.
- (c) The famous Eastern historian Ibn Khallikan describes al Farabi as 'a celebrated philosopher, author of many works on logic, music and other sciences. He was the greatest of philosophers among Muslims, and no one among them attained a rank equal to his in the sciences. And the Chief

(of philosophers) Abu Ali Ibn Sina, derived benefit from his writings".

- (d) For further references refer to 'Legacy of Islam' and 'Literary History of Persia 'Vol I and II.

MOWLANA HAZER IMAM LETTER.

- (1) With deep gratification and joy the following communication was received from MOWLANA HAZAR IMAM from Bombay dated 18;3.58 offering comments on various subjects contained in Circulars of our "Study Group":-

CIRCULAR NO. 45 - JIZYAH TAX.

- (b) - What you say is probably correct, but for many years, these taxes were mixed up and intermingled.

(REFER TO PAGES)

CIRCULAR NO. 47 - MUTAZALITE.

They base their beliefs by reason and logic.

(ALSO REFER PAGE)

CIRCULAR NO. 50 - "CENTRE OF DAWA'T".

- (d) - This is doubtful
(e) - The Boys' and Girls' Hostel you mention is not to be established in Beirut.
(g) - It is much too early if this be the case.
(h) - This should not be taken into consideration until politics calm down.

(ALSO REFER PAGE)

CIRCULAR NO. 51 - AL-HALLAJ.

I do not think it is right. It is generally believed that he did say this, and he certainly made other comments to that effect. It has not been proved whether he did actually declaim 'An-al-haq'. See Louis Massignon's Doctoral Thesis on the subject.

I send my best blessings to all the members of the Religious Study Group for their devoted services.

Yours affectionately,

sgd. AGAKHAN.

- (a) Arising out of the above, it was decided to re-discuss the subjects of JIZYAH TAX AND AL-HALLAJ at our next meeting. and
(b) To obtain a copy of Louis Massignon's Doctoral Thesis on Mansur Al-Hallaj.

(PLEASE ALSO REFER PAGES & OF THIS BOOKLET).

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IBN KHALDUN - LIFE, WORKS AND THEORIES.

Alijah Mohamedali H. Rashid, in his very well studied subject, in course of his talk, said:-

(a) As a thinker, politician, jurist and historian, the name of Ibn Khaldun, in his time, it was said to be without a worthy predecessor. Khaldun was born in Tunis in May, 1332, A.C., and his family, which had entered Spain in the 10th century during Muslim conquest, claimed descent from a Yemenite tribe of Pro-Umayyad learnings.

(b) The Sultan of Morocco summoned him to Fez in 1354 to become a member of the Council of Ulama, and his Secretary and seal-bearer. From here, his career is one of political manouvering. His poetic ability, which had the manner of Sufi poets in dealing with spiritual love, made him a favourite man in the Court of Sultan. In 1381 he became weary of turmoil of politics and intended to settle in peace and research in literary field. In 1382 he came to Egypt and settled in Cairo and lectured in Al-Azhar Mosque, astounding his listeners with his logic, fluency and eloquence.

(c) Being of Maliki persuasion - one of the four orthodox schools of Sunni thought, he lectured on Hadith and Maliki jurisprudence.

A.D. He was appointed Chief Justice but due to intrigues of his rivals he was dismissed five times and when restored for the sixth time, he occupied the post only for a few weeks till his death on 16th March, 1406.

(d) His greatest literary works are 'Prolegomena' (Muqaddia) and Kitab al-Ibar. He propounded a new social theory, called Asabujah - vitality of State or dynasty.

(e) Ibn Khaldun has considered the problems of history and culture and founded a special science to deal with them on the basis of philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, and also Farabi, Avicenna and Averroes.

(f) Khaldun gives a very lucid explanation of the origin or birth of great religions. He says:- "In order to be able to found a great civilisation, or to conquer or build a great empire, they may need an additional force to eliminate their short comings and enhance their solidarity. This force is religion (Page 201 Ibn Khaldun).

(g) About IMAMAT, Khaldun says: "A temporal sovereign only enforces such orders as are promulgated by man, but the laws framed by a Divinely inspired legislator have two objects in view - the moral as well as social well-being of mankind. The Imam is the Spiritual Head, whilst the Caliph or Sultan represents the temporal power (Spirit of Islam p.p. 319).

(h) Khaldun died in 1406 at the age of 78 and is buried in Cairo in Sufi Cemetery, where he lived for 23 years. His works on Sociology and History are even today referred to by Western writers as comprehensive work of philosophy and Islamic history of mediaeval era.

JIZYAH TAX.

Arising out of Mowlana Nazar Imam's comments that "for many years these taxes were mixed up and intermingled", Rai Mohamedali H. Rashid at length explained (i) what is Jizyah tax (ii) who paid and method and rates (iii) how did Jizyah affect the non-Muslims and (iv) how these taxes were mixed up. He said:-

(a) This subject was discussed in our meeting of 26th January, 1957 (see page No.). It means "Tribute or Poll-tax" which in Muhamadan law, is levied on non-Muslims, viz., Jews, Christians, Samaritans and Magiars who were styled "people of the Book or Covenant".

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Jizyah is also known as capitation-tax, which along with KHARAJ or land-tax, was in existence in the Roman Empire, under the same designations, and the capitation-tax was universally in force under the Sassanides in the Persian Empire. In introducing these taxes in Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Persia, the Moslems followed the old Precedents and they were fixed on a mild and equitable basis.

In theory, Jizyah was a tax paid by non-Moslems for freedom of residence and worship, for the right of receiving protection of life and property in a Moslem territory and exemption from military duty.

(b) The non-Moslems were liable to Jizyah, but among them, only adult males.

The minimum was 1 dinar, but for those in better circumstances, the tax was 2 dinars and for the rich 4 dinars.

Men in different trades, professions and occupations were classified in their respective categories. The income from Jizyah was paid into the state treasury (bait al-mal) while the Kharaj or land-tax formed the revenue which belonged to the whole community.

(c) As explained, the JIZYAH (poll tax) and the KHARAJ (land tax) were in existence before the Holy Prophet in Roman Empire, and Jizyah originally meant the collective tribute levied on conquered lands. The Arabs regarded the revenues of the provinces as their Jizyah. The distinction which later became usual between Jizyah as a poll-tax and Kharaj as a land-tax did not at first exist, for the authorities frequently speak of a Kharaj from a poll-tax and Jizyah from land. The word KHARAJ occurs in the holy Quran in Sura 23 verse 72.

Kharaj as revenue from land-tax is interchangeable with Jizyah even in the oldest literature that has survived to us. The two terms must have been used in that early period interchangeably, both meaning tribute in general. In the holy Quran JIZYAH occurs only once (9:29) and in no legal sense; KHARAJ likewise occurs once (23:72) and in a sense different from land-tax. In fact no differentiation between the terms JIZYAH and KHARAJ was made till late Umayyad days (almost a hundred years after the Holy Prophet).

It can thus be seen that for the first hundred years of A.H. these taxes JIZYAH AND KHARAJ were mixed up and got intermingled. With the advent of Moghul rule in India, Aurangzeb, during his reign, imposed Jizyah Tax on the conquered people within the Moghul Empire. His son Bahadurshah later abolished Jizyah during his reign. ("SHIAS OF INDIA" by J.N. Hollister, p.p. 138/9).

(d) In the times of ABBASSIDES, the revenues of the empire were derived from (1) the land tax (2) tithes (ushr, zakat, sadakat) (3) the fifth of the produce of mines and pasturage (4) jizyah (5) customs due (6) salt and fishery tax (7) tax on shop keeper for the use of public places (8) tax on mills and factories (9) tax upon conveyance and luxuries (10) tax upon imports, Wasik, however, abolished tax upon imports with a view to reviving maritime trade (History of the Saracens p.426).

(PLEASE ALSO REFER TO PAGES 61 AND OF THIS BOOKLET).

EXACTLY WHEN WAS JESUS CHRIST BORN?

Dr. V.A. Lalani read out the following extracts from a Christian Magazine called 'SIGNS OF THE TIMES', December 1957:-

"Neither the day nor the exact year of Christ's birth can be determined from any historical sources yet known. We have not heard of any archaeological discoveries that provide any more exact information than existing histories give.

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The Gospel writers do not state the time of year when Christ was born, except that it was during the season when shepherds spent the night in the open with their flocks. It is not likely that they would do this in late December.

The Catholic Encyclopedia mentions March, 28, April 19 or 20, and May 20 as dates advocated by early writers. "Before the fifth century there was no general consensus of opinion as to when it (Christmas) should come in the calendar, whether on the 6th of January, or the 25th of March, or the 25th of December".

December 25 was adopted first by the Western Church, in Rome, as early as A.D. 336; and some authorities state that it was officially established under Pope Liberius A.D. 353 or 354. In Jerusalem January 6 was observed until A.D. 549 in commemoration of Christ's birth.

December 25 was celebrated as the birthday of the ancient Persian sun-god Mithras, whose religion was a rival of Christianity during the early Christian centuries. It was also connected with the Saturnalia, a holiday observed amongst the Romans in honour of God Saturn. The adoption of December 25 as the anniversary of the birth of Christ was one of the many concessions of the early Christian church to paganism, to make it easy for pagans to transfer their allegiance to Christianity. Not only the time but many of the practices associated with the observance of the Saturnalia and of the Birthday of Mithras were taken over by the Church. "

"SIGNS OF TIME".

December 1957.

JAMATKHANA.

LETTER RECEIVED BY COUNT PAROO DATED 23.8.1958 FROM MOWLANA HAZAR IMAM.

My dear Count,

"Would you kindly put the question to the "Study Group": - What is the definition of a Jamatkhana?"

"The definition given should be appropriate to a Jamatkhana anywhere in any country; for instance, each Jamatkhana has its Mukhi, Camadia and Treasury.

"I should like to receive a really comprehensive definition as soon as possible.

Yours affectionately,

AGAKHAN.

(WRITTEN IN INK)

"You will surely have to make a difference between Jamatkhanas attended by all my Spiritual children, and Jamatkhanas attended only by students, or orphans - i.e. institution Jamatkhanas."

After very lengthy discussions, the following points were noted and thereafter CONCLUSION arrived at:-

LITERAL MEANING.

"Jamat" is an Arabic word and its literal meaning is "gathering or congregation".

"Ahle-Jamat" means people of the Community.

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"Khana" is a Persian word meaning a "House".

(PLEASE ALSO REFER PAGE OF THIS BOOKLET).

EXTRACTS FROM THE JUDGEMENT OF SIR JOSEPH ARNOULD IN
"THE KHOJA CASE OF 1866."

"wherever a Khoja Community is to be found however small, its organization is the same: it has a Jamat, a Jamat-Khana, a Mukhi and a Kamadia.

"The 'Jamat' is the 'congregation of the people' the assembly in Council of all the adult male members of Khoja community of the place.

"The 'Jamat Khana' is the Council hall, or the guild-hall of the Community.

"The 'Mukhi' is the treasurer or steward, and the 'Kamadia' the accountant."

EXTRACTS FROM THE EVIDENCE GIVEN BY MOWLANA SULTAN MOHAMMED
SHAH IN 'HAJI BIBI' CASE OF 1908.

(a) "Wherever there are my followers there is a Jamatkhana and Mukhi and Kamadia. If number of followers are small, than Jamatkhana is in the house of one of them. If number is sufficient, then there is a separate building". (evidence page 13).

(b) "Some Jamatkhana are as old as 200 years. These are never distributed amongst the successors as they are not private properties". (evidence page);

(c) "I do not consider Khoja Burial grounds as my private properties" (evidence page).

EXTRACTS FROM "THE RELIGION OF ISLAM" (BY: MUHAMMED ALI).

(a) Page 332:- "Being a meeting place of all Muslims, the mosque serves as a training ground where the doctrine of the equality and fraternity of mankind is put into practical work".

(b) Page 383:- "Besides being its religious Centre, the mosque is also the cultural centre of the Muslim Community. Here the Muslim Community is educated in all questions of its welfare. In the time of Holy Prophet and his early Successors, it became necessary to inform the Muslim Community on any matter of importance, a lecture was delivered in the mosque."

(c) Page 384: "Almost every mosque to this day has, to some extent, arrangements for education of students, the 'Muktab' or the 'madrisa' (the school), being a necessary adjunct to the mosque. In later times, quite in accordance with the earlier spirit, library libraries were also kept in parts of the mosque, and some mosques had very large libraries attached to them, containing upwards of 100000 volumes".

(d) Page 384:- "In earlier times the mosque was the only Centre of all kinds of Muslim activities. The mosque also served as the Council-hall of the Muslims. In the time of 'Umar, when two Councils were appointed to advise the Caliph, it was in the mosque that these Councils met".

(e) Page 385:- "Indeed, once on an occasion of a festival, the Holy Prophet even allowed certain Abyssinians to give a display with shields and lance in the mosque".

(f) Page 385:- "The mosque was thus not only the spiritual centre of the Muslims, but also their political, educational and social centre".

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(g) Page 385:- "The carrying on of any business or trade in the mosque is expressly forbidden".

DR. DAUD POTA M.A. (BOM) Ph. D., (CANTAB) OF KARACHI
GIVES THE FOLLOWING DEFINITION OF A JAMATKHANA.

"Jamatkhana literally means a community House or Centre. It has the same signification which the Masjid (Mosque) had in the early days of Islam, where the prophet, besides leading prayers, used to preach, receive deputation and even hold discussions with Jews and Christians on religious subjects and carry out missionary and war consultations. The Mosque was the centre of every useful activity -except eating, drinking, making merry or doing other things which violate the Sanctity of the place.

However, a Jamat-khana ought to be the centre of every healthy social activity, besides prayers and commoration. It can also serve the purpose of a school or college, giving both mundane and religious instruction".

EXTRACT FROM "THE SHIA OF INDIA" (BY: J.N. HOLLISTER
B.Sc., M.A. Pl.D. Page 384).

"Khojas do not have mosques. Their place of worship is called a Jamatkhana. There are said to be somewhat similar to the Fatimid House of Wisdom where Majlises were held. The idea of using the mosque, not only for prayers, "but meetings, transactions with non-Muslims, receiving ambassadors, treatment of the believers wounded in battle, etc.". goes back to the time of the Prophet at Medina. The Khojas use their Jamatkhana for wedding, meetings of Khoja societies, for meetings in connection with offerings of tithes as well as for religious ceremonies".

"The largest centre in Bombay is at Dongri. It is built around a large open court, and includes not only the Jamatkhana but a school for girls and small boys, office rooms for the council etc."

FARMANS OF MOWLANA SULTAN MOHAMED SHAH.
(At Nairobi on 21.3.1926).

"Whenever there is any new opening of Trading Centre, you must inform people in India. Missionaries should inform Jamat of this in "Vaez" and you must inform wherever there is Jamatkhana".
(page 114).

"Once a week you should arrange lectures in Jamatkhana on Child Welfare (page 111).

At Mombasa on 22.1.1937).

You should lecture on child welfare in Jamatkhana. You must not think that Jamatkhana is only the place for prayers but in Jamatkhana you should lecture on child welfare and such other subjects".

CONCLUSION.

OUR CONCLUSION THEREFORE AS REGARDS TO DEFINITION OF A JAMATKHANA IS THAT IT IS A PLACE OR BUILDING FOR DAILY PRAYERS AND RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES AND RELIGIOUS PROPAGATION AND IT IS ALSO A SOCIAL, WELFARE AND CULTURAL CENTRE FOR ISMAILIES, AND INCLUDES ALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CHILD WELFARE HALLS, DISPENSARIES, DAFTARI OFFICES (TREASURIES), MUSAFARKHANAS AND EVEN SECULAR SCHOOLS WHICH ARE ATTACHED TO JAMATKHANAS OR ARE IN THE VICINITY OF THE SAME.

FOR EXAMPLES THE JAMATKHANAS OF LONDON AND PARIS WHICH ARE CALLED "ISMAILIA SOCIAL CENTRES" BUT IN OUR OPINION WOULD COME WITHIN THE DEFINITION OF JAMATKHANA.

WHEREAS SMALL SEPARATE ROOMS WHICH ARE ALLOTTED FOR PRAYER PURPOSE IN VARIOUS ISMAILIA BOARDINGS, ORPHANAGES AND SANITARIUMS

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CANNOT BE CALLED JAMATKHANAS.

(ALSO REFER PAGE)

OUR CIRCULAR NO. 56.

Mowlana Hazar Imam had most graciously sent the following comments on our Circular No. 56 by his letter dated August the 30th., 1958:-

"I have received your letter of 20th August with the Circular about the Mombasa Religious Study Group.

"I am happy to see that you have gone into the question of the Jizyah tax and the Kharaj tax.

"The Muslim taxation system has caused modern Islamic states some difficulty and it is correct that you should know about them.

"That you should have taken an interest in the life of Al-Hallaj is a good thing as he was the centre of an Islamic world somewhat removed from orthodox Islam.

"I have no objection to your starting an Ismaili Museum, but it must be under the Ismailia Association of Pakistan and should contain articles of historical interest but not current Ismaili arts. TO organise this Museum you should contact the Ismailia Association Headquarters in Karachi".

Yours affectionately,

SD/ AGAKHAN.

THE ISMAILIA MUSEUM

REF. ITEM NO. 9 of
CIRCULAR NO. 56.

It was decided to send photo copy of Mowlana Hazar Imam's above letter to the Ismailia Association of Pakistan, Karachi, with an assurance of our support and cooperation, individually as well as the 'Group', in their venture to start an Ismailia Museum as authorised by Mowlana Hazar Imam.

OUR RECORDS.

Our 'Study Group' has started from 4.7.1953 and there being great demand from all over for our past and present CIRCULARS, it was unanimously decided to have the records of all the subjects discussed by us printed into a booklet form and Mr. Mohamedali H. Rashid was requested to submit in due course manuscripts properly arranged.

(PLEASE ALSO REFER PAGE OF THIS BOOKLET).

MANSUR AL-HALLAJ.

(a) See our previous Circulars Nos. 33, 34, 36 and 51 on this subject.

(b) With further reference to Mowlana Hazar Imam's guidance in his letter of 18.2.1958 to refer to Louis Massingnon's Doctorial Thesis on above subject, a letter was addressed to L. Massingnon, 21, Rue Monsieur, Paris 7, asking him following two questions.

1. Did Mansur Al-Hallaj ever declaim 'An-al-hak' as is generally believed?

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2. Of what faith was Al-Hallaj i.e. was he Shia, Carmathian or Batuniya or any other sect?

To these, Mr. Massignon had kindly replied as under:-

Your first Question: "In the risals of Ibn al-Qarih Halabi (d.421 h.) published by Kurdaly (a.al-Maqtabas, Damascus, 1900, V-9.p.551), there is a mutilated early testimony on Hallaj saying "Ana-l-Haqq", in the qubbat al-Shu'ara of Jami'al-Mansur in Baghdad before Shibli. Shibli (not Junayd) told him "But you shall shed your blood, for this word, on the scaffold." Hallaj answered, putting his sleeve before his mouth (as if hiding), by the famous ruba'i (quoted by Ma'arri in the ghuffran): "Ya Sirra sirri tadiqu hatta takhfaa 'ala wahmi kulli hayy..."

Your question No. 2: "When Hallaj came to Basra, he settled in the Tamim rub, among Banu'l Amm (Karnaba 'iya), who were on the side of the Zanj rebellion, and some of them were Shi'a mukhammisa. That Hallaj then became a 'Salmani', of the Ismaili creed, is proved, not only by his technical terms (studied in my works in full: 'Ayn, Mim, Sin; Ya Hu (=Natiq), Ya Sin (=Qayim), Khatt al-istiwa, Ta Sin) but also by chronograms; for instance: in his Riways XXV, he says "by the balance of the year 290" in fact, 290= MARYM + FATIR: it is the year of Fatima Zohra, as "Maryam Kubra": see my "the Mubaha la of Medina, and the hyperdulia of Fatima, p. 29; pbl. at Paris, Besson, 198 blv. (St. Germain). - Your Cadi Abu Hanifa Nu'man, in his iftitah al-da'wa, gives prophetic verses on this year 290. It seems Hallaj took an allegorical interpretation of another chronogram i.e. 309 (in the Ahl al-Kahf sura). Your Ibn al-Walid says it is the year of the completion of Mahdiya, capital of Ubaydullah; but for Hallaj it was the year of his own witnessing, by his blood".

(L. MASSIGNON).

(c) According to 'TAZKRUTUL AULYA' by Faridu din Attar:-

Calif Muqtadar Abbasi in 309 Hijra was reported by some people regarding the open claim of Mansur Al-Hallaj saying he was God. He sent for Mansur and asked him in the presence of Kazi Abu Omar and Abu Jaffer.

Mansur replied:- 'I have never claimed that I am God' I am true Muslim and my belief is just similar to other Muslims".

(d) The writer of 'Tarikhul-Khulfa' states that Mansur was put to death Muqtadar Abbasi but Faridu Din states that Husein Mansur did not claim 'ANAL-HAKK' but some of his followers misunderstood him and called him more than human being. Mansur was from Iran and was companion of Khwaja Juned and Khwaja Sahel bin Abdullah. He was from the city named Beza.

(d) Faridu Din also adds that Mansur Hussein who claimed 'Anal-Hakk' was from Balakh and was magician and he also was put to death.

(PLEASE ALSO REFER PAGES & OF THIS BOOKLET).

BELIEF OF JAPANESE PEOPLE IN MIKADO.

"In order to understand the belief of Japanese people in Mikado", Rai Ramzanali H.M. Dossa said, 'it is necessary to understand the back-ground of the National Religion of Japan - SHINTO, as practiced upto the year 1945 i.e. until the end of the 2nd World War". He then outlined how there were over 100,000 Shrines maintained by the State and the local Authorities in Japan.

He again went on, tracing the origin of present Imperial Dynasty in Japan, said:- ...132...

(a) One Amaterasu, the un-Goddess was worshipped as the Model of Loyal and obedient self sacrifice is said to have proclaimed the following:

"The Luxuriant Reed Plain land of fresh rice ears (Japan) is the land over which my descendants shall reign. Do thou, Imperial Grandson go and rule over it, and the prosperity of Imperial Succession shall be as ever-lasting as Heaven and earth."

This Proclamation of Amaterasu is known among Japanese as the "Divine Edict" and is claimed as the Divine Sanction for the Imperial system of Japan.

One of the great grand-children of Amaterasu was Jimmu Tenno, who is claimed to be the first historical human Emperor and founder of the Imperial Dynasty. A traditional date is given for his conquest of Yamato the central province of Japan and the foundation of his capital there in 660 B.C. This is regarded as the date of Foundation of the Empire of Japan the 2600th Anniversary of which was celebrated in the year 1940.

To Jimmu Tenno, were entrusted three sacred Imperial Treasures, the Mirror, the Jewels and the Sword. The Mirror is said to be preserved at the holiest place of Shinto at 'ISE'. The Jewels are preserved in the Imperial household Shrine in the Imperial Palace in Tokyo and the Sword at the Atsuta Shrine at Nagoya.

(b) It is often stated that Emperor worship is the feature of Shinto but that statement needs qualification. It is interesting to note that out of 123 Emperors, who are said to have reigned from Jimmu Tenno 660 B.C. to Hirohito the present Emperor, only 12 Emperors and three Empresses are worshipped by the public in the State Shinto Shrine.

(c) In the years 1776 - 1843 A.D. a movement was started by Hirata, one of the greatest scholars of the time to purify shinto of foreign influences and reconvert the Japanese people to their own religion in its primitive form.

By this Movement, the claim of the divine descendants of the Imperial Line from Amaterasu was such strengthened. According to their view, Amaterasu became the Supreme Goddess, her instructions to her grandson became the sanction and charter for the Imperial System, so much so that Emperor Jimmu Tenno interpreted the instructions of Amaterasu to mean unification of the whole world under the Japanese Imperial throne. Since then, upto the end of the second World War, there was blind loyalty to the Imperial throne and the maintenance of the Imperial way.

(d) Great changes have taken place as a result of the last World war. The first is the defeat of Japanese and the failure of Gods, the Imperial way, and god-inspired spirit of Japanese to save them.

However, the Japan's faith and moral had been built on the legend of the invincibility of the Japanese spirit of absolute self sacrifice and loyalty. There is every sign again that the Imperial power which had ebbed after the War will regain its hold on Japanese people.

E V A N G A L I S T S.

Giving the definition of EVANGALISM, Dr. V. A. Lalani said that it was neither a cult nor a society nor a religion. It is a movement by individuals or a group of individuals. An Evangalist, it is believed amongst Christians, is a person who works in the name of God to propagate the principles of the religion mainly amongst his own fellow religionists.

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The difference between an Evangelist and a Missionary is that whilst the latter is in charge of a Mission, doing the work of conversion, conducting prayers and delivering sermons in Churches the Evangelist, mostly is a free person who preaches Christianity at all places, not necessarily indulging in conversion of non-Christians.

From early times in Christianity, since St. Paul and St. Peter, the propagation of Christianity was in the hands of confirmed religionists and authorised missionaries. No one else was allowed to speak in the name of Christ. Later, when Papal authority was established, Rome or Vatican was declared as the central office for all Christian affairs. The first known official break thereafter came with Martin Luther who openly started questioning the values of some of the ceremonies and integrity of some of the dignitaries. We have also just discussed, Dr. Lalani said, how Protestants separated from Catholics in the sixteenth century. (SEE PAGE 19).

Martin Luther or John Wellesly were Reformists and not Evangelists.

Arising out of these discussions, it was pointed out that one of the sub-committees of Ismailia Associations had recently sent a report to Mowlana Hazer Imam in which the sub-committee used the word 'evangelistic movement' to signify the 'tablig' activity of the said committee. Mowlana Hazer Imam, in reply, instructed them not to use this word 'evangelistic' in the place of 'tablig' - most probably the former word denotes Christian movement.

Billy Graham is in present days very famous in U.S.A. for his evangelistic work.

F A R I S H T A (ANGELS)

HOW CAN YOU INTERPRET EXISTENCE OF ANGELS (FARISTAS) IN MODERN WORLD?

(a) Al-Vaez Gulamali Shah said that literal meaning of malik is messenger and malaika are the medium between the creation and God. He then explained at length the philosophies of Ghazali and Razi on this subject matter. Continuing he said that very often we take words for their literal meaning, for example, Kabatulla, that is house of God but it does not mean that God actually lives in it. Expounding this point, he said that Yusufali interpreting Sura 2:34, calls Iblis a 'power of evil' and he also says that Iblis was one of the Angels. It seems from this interpretation that powers of "good and evil" are called Faristas.

(b) Quoting from Pages 99/100 of Life's Hidden Secrets (by E.G. Collinge), Dr. H.A. Walji said, "The Angels may be described as the Personification of one Divine Quality, created in Form for the purpose of radiating that one Quality to perfection at the astral and mental levels - and, occasionally, at the etheric levels. They are on effect, Divine Automations who act as 'artificial' stimuli to the Human Kingdom.

(c) Mowlana Sultan Mahomed Shah has written on page 177 of his Memoirs:- "Every individual, every molecule, every atom has its own spiritual relationship with the All-Powerful Soul of God. But men and women, being more highly developed, are immensely more advanced than the infinite number of other beings known to us. Islam acknowledges the existence of Angels, of great souls who have developed themselves to the highest possible planes of the human soul and higher, and who are centres of the forces which are scattered throughout the Universe. Islam also recognises the existence of evil spirits which seek by means of their secret suggestions to turn as from good".

FIRDAUSI.

"Supreme among the poets at the Court of Mahmud of Ghazna", quoting from 'History of Persia' (pages 60-61-62) Dr. H.A. Walji said, "Abdul Kasim, famous under his title Firdausi, was the author of the great national epic the 'SHAHNAMA'.

The poet completed his great epic after a quarter of a century of work in A.D. 999, and 10 years later took it to the Court of Mahmud. Owing to intrigues and imputation of lack of orthodoxy, he was given a beggarly reward of 20,000 dirhems, or less than £ 400 instead of a gold dinar for every couplet which he expected. In bitter disappointment he gave away his prize money to bathman and a sherbat seller and fled to Tabaristan.

Later, when Mahmud realised the greatness of this poet's work, sent 60,000 dinars' worth of indigo, but as the train of camels bearing the royal bounty entered Tabaran by one gate, the corpse of Firdausi was borne forth from another gate. The daughter of the poet refused the tardy gift, and as Jumi, wrote five centuries later:-

"Gone is the greatness of Mahmud,
Departed his glory and strunk to
"He knew not the worth of Firdausi,
his story".

CRUSADES. PART OF ISMAILIS

Although there had been several CRUSADES, (Cross against Crescent i.e. Christians vs. Islam), Al-vaez Dr. Walji explained that in the third Crusade towards the end of the 12th century, led by Richard the Lion Hearted, it can be amply proved by referring to the following records that the Ismailies under Abu Ali Sinna had played very important part on the side of Sultan Saladin to bring halt or peace with Richard the Lion Hearted:-

- i. History of the Ismailies by A.S. Picklay pages 49 and 50.
- ii. The Order of Assassins - page 189.
- iii. History of the Arabs by Hitti, page 448.

THEORY OF IJMA.

Besides quoting the references from page 278 of 'The Legacy of Islam' and Article 41 of 'Creed of the Fatmids', Al-Vaez Gulamhusein Juma said, "the word 'Ijma' is derived from jam, which means collecting or gather together and 'Ijma' carries the double significance of composing and settling a thing which has been unsettled, that is agreeing or uniting in opinion".

According to Sunni School of thought, the terminology of 'Ijma' means consensus of opinion -- some say consensus of opinion of Mujtahids only: whereas others say by agreement of all Muslims.

The Shias hold that only the descendants of Hazrat and Bibi Fatima are the rightful persons to make an Ijtihad.

(pages 106/107 - Religion of Islam
by MUHAMMED ALI).

FASTING AND PILGRIMAGE IN PRE-ISLAMIC TIME.

Al-Vaez Gulamhusein Juma quoted following references and said 'FASTING is an ancient institution. It was also enjoined in pre-Islamic times on the people of the Books, i.e. on the Jews and the Christians'.
....135.....

- (a) "O believers, Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, so you may guard against evil". (Sura 2, Ayats 179-183)
- (b) We have no evidence of any practice of fasting in pre-Islamic pagan Arabia, but the institution was, of course, well established amongst both Jews and Christians. (Page 133: 'History of Arabs' - BY: Hitti).
- (c) Moses' fasting for forty days -- which example was later followed by Jesus Christ. (Page 479, "Religion of Islam").
- (d) The month of fasting was probably borrowed by Prophet Muhammed from Christian Lent. (Page 107 - "Islam" by Samuel M. Zwemmer).

Explaining about PILGRIMAGE, Al Vaez Sulamhusein Juma continued, "the sacredness of the territory around Mecca and the fact of its being a centre of pilgrimage, can only have come down from time immemorial, for there is no tradition or record showing that it was introduced at any time within historical memory. Some of the ceremonial is undoubtedly due to Prophet Abraham, as-for instance running between Safa and Marwa. The Tawaf (circumambulation) of the Kaba, however, must have existed before Prophet Abraham".

MONOTHEISTIC RELIGIONS.

WHY JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM THE THREE MONOTHEISTIC RELIGIONS, WERE BORN IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

Al-Vaez Dr. Hassanali Walji speaking on above subject first traced the history of the beginning of civilisation in the Valley of the Nile. Then about rise and fall of Egypt, followed by some facts of second centre of Eastern civilisation in Mesopotamia.

- (a) The first monotheistic religion began with MOSES, the leader of the Jewish people. A small and unimportant group of Semitic shepherds had left its old home, which was situated in the land of 'UR' on the mouth of Euphrates to find new pastures within the dominion of the kings of Babylonia. This tribe of shepherds was known as the Hebrews or as we call them Jews. For more than five centuries they dwelt among the Egyptian but later were degraded to the rank of common slaves.
- (b) After many years of suffering, they were saved by a young Jew, called Moses, who escaped from Egypt leading his fellow tribesmen into the plain at the foot of Mount Sinai.
- (c) One day Moses disappeared from the camp of the Jews. He went on Mount Sinai with two tablets of rough-hewn stones. That afternoon the top of the mountain was lost to sight. The darkness of terrible storm hid it from the eye of man. But when Moses returned behold! there stood engraved upon the tablets the words which JEHOVAH had spoken unto the people of Israel amidst the crash of the thunder and blinding flashes of lightning. And from that moment JEHOVAH was recognised by all the Jews as the highest master and the only true God who taught them, through Moses, to follow the following 10 commandments:-

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- (1) to have no other Gods than Jehovah
- (2) to worship no idol or image of any kind
- (3) not to take the name of Jehovah in vain
- (4) to rest every seventh day in the week and call ^{that} day holy
- (5) to honour their fathers and mothers
- (6) never to commit murder
- (7) never to commit adultery
- (8) not to steal
- (9) not to swear falsely or give false testimony
- (10) and not to envy other people and covet what they have.

(d) The Jews then continued their journey through the desert and finally came to a land which seemed pleasant and prosperous. They settled down there, calling it PALESTINE. Thus Moses made the Jews the first of all nations to worship a single GOD.

(e) About 1571 years later, Christianity was established in near region, through the teachings of Jesus Christ. It is said that MOSES taught LAW while Jesus taught LOVE.

(f) Again some seven centuries later, a third monotheistic religion, ISLAM was born in Arabia through the teachings of Prophet Muhammad.

(g) On page 4 of "Glimpses of Islam" by Prince Aga Khan and Dr. Zaki Ali, it is very clearly explained why above Religions followed each other. It says:- "In spite of its great power, the Jewish monotheism has retained two characteristics. (i) God has remained, in spite of all, A NATIONAL AND RACIAL GOD for the children of Israel, and (ii) his personality is entirely separate from his supreme manifestation: the Universe. For the Muslims, Christianity lost its hold from the very moment when it had made of its great glorious founder not the perfect man, but GOD INCARNATED IN MAN. Then the absolute necessity arose for a final revelation to Prophet Muhammad himself, although a man like the others, by the Divine Word, that is of a detailed description of the person of the Almighty and of his relations to the universe created by Him".

(h) Holy Prophet Muhammad taught:- (1) Allah is the One God, and Muhammad is His Prophet (2) give up idolatry (3) do not steal (4) do not lie (5) do not slander and (6) never become intoxicated.

(i) It might be summed up that Judaism REVEALED monotheistic religion, Christianity IMPROVED upon it and Islam PERFECTED it.

UMMAYYADS AND HASHIMITES.

SOME HISTORICAL FACTS OF ANIMOSITY BETWEEN UMMAYYADS AND HASHIMITES.

Al-Vaez Mahomedali H. Nurmahomed quoting from Chapter II, pages 5 to 7 of "A short history of the Saracens" by Syed Ameer Ali said:-

(a) Abd ush-Shams who had administration of Mecca, transferred his authority to his brother Hashim, a leading merchant of Mecca and a man of consequence, noted for his generosity to strangers. Hashim died about the year 510 A.C. and was succeeded by his brother Muttalib and then in 520 A.C. by Abdul Muttalib bin Hashim.

(b) The grand sons of Abd udd-Dar were meanwhile growing rich. Jealous of the position Hashim's family occupied in the public estimation, they were trying to grasp the entire authority, and to make themselves rulers of Mecca. On their side was ranged UMMEYA, the ambitious son of Abdul ush-Shams. In spite of this, the high character of Abdul Muttalib Hashim enabled him to rule Mecca for 59 years.

(c) Jealousy and ambition for powers were the chief roots of animosity between above two families which lasted long afterwards.

(d) Holy Prophet Muhammad was from Hashimites family.137.....

NANDI. - २६९ -

ORIGIN AND SIGNIFICANCE OF BRINGING
"NANDI" IN JAMATKHANA.

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Al-Vaex Mahomedali H. Nurmahomed quoted from pages 120/121 of "Ismaili Dharmic Course" recently compiled by Al-Vaez Abu Aly.

METHODISM.

Count Paroo gave the following details by saying:-

(a) Methodism is the term given to a movement in the Church of England which had its origin in the Evangelistic activities of John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield. The name originally was applied in derision to a little group of Oxford students who were accustomed to meet together for spiritual fellowship. When John Wesley returned to Oxford as a fellow of Lincoln College in 1729, he became the recognized leader of the group. Later (1739) when he began to form his followers into "societies", the name was also applied to them. It was soon accepted by the Methodists themselves, and in the early official documents John Wesley usually used the designation "the people called Methodists".

(b) The purpose of the movement, as often stated by John Wesley, was to "spread Scriptural holiness over the land", and not to form a separate ecclesiastical body. The movement professed no new doctrinal position, but accepted the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England. Later, John Wesley's notes on the New Testament and 53 of his sermons were designated as setting forth the peculiar Methodist emphasis in religion. This stress was placed upon inner religion and the influence of the Holy Spirit on the consciousness of the believer; also upon the doctrine of assurance - that is, that a person could be sure of his acceptance as a child of God.

(c) In 1789 there were 56,195 members in the British Methodist Societies, and by 1815 the number had grown to 181,709. During this period other British religious bodies had remained practically stationary. Methodism found its largest number of adherents in the industrial and manufacturing countries and among the middle class.

(d) In 1932 the Wesleyan Methodists, the Primitive Methodists and the United Methodists united in London to form the Methodist Church with a membership of more than 800,000. Only a few small bodies remained apart from this main body - principally, the Independent Methodists and the Wesleyan Reform Union.

(e) By 1860 the Methodists had established 34 permanent colleges in the United States and at the close of the Civil War both Northern and Southern churches entered upon a new period of educational expansion.

(f) U.S. Methodism from its beginning was imbued with a Missionary purpose, and Methodist itinerants worked among Negroes and Indians before the formation of the Methodist Missionary society in 1819.

(g) The Methodists preached the gospel of universal redemption and the appeal of the love of God to the free will of men, as against the predestination of the Calvinists.

ISMAILI MUSEUM.

Count Paroo read a letter on him from one of our Group readers Vazier Ajabali Pirbhai Kassam of Brussels, who had met Prince Aly Khan in New York in May last when the latter made a suggestion to display Ismaili arts and ancient things, literatures, etc. like Jews and Christians do, in Universal Fair which was going on in Brussels.

Arising out of the discussions on this subject, it was felt to submit our humble suggestion to Mowlana Hazar Imam to inaugurate, in the beginning on a small scale, an Ismaili Museum in Karachi, either under the Ismailia Association of Pakistan or under a separate governing body, who could collect ancient and current Ismaili arts articles, literatures, manuscripts etc., and place them in such a museum to preserve our traditions for the future generations. For example, coins of Fatimite times, hand written ginans of our Pirs, the Chairs, Scales souvenirs, swords, caskets etc., used at Golden Diamond and Platinum Jubilees of our 48th Imam or various items of recent Coronation Ceremonies -- replica or pictures of Alamut and Alazar these were the things which the members had in mind which must be started to be preserved, which hithertofore are not available from any central place. Prof. Ivanow had recently given away some exhibits to Tehran museum which he found near Alamut which could have been stored if we had our own Museum.

(READ MOWLANA HAZER IMAM SHAH KARIM'S LETTER ON THIS SUBJECT ON PAGE 133 OR THIS BOOKLET ALSO).

WHY OTHER MUSLIMS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO COME TO OUR JAMATKHANAS.

Mr. Sherali Alidina, the Hon. General Secretary of Ismailia Association of Pakistan writes in his letter of 16.9.1958:

"When Vazir Dr. Peermohamed Hoodbhoy had gone to Europe in 1955 he requested Mowlana Sultan Muhammad Shah to give his guidance on the question as to why Ismailis do not allow other Muslims to come in their Jamatkhana. Mowlana Sultan Muhammad Shah said that in North Africa and in Iran there are some high types of Sufis, spiritually evolved, who have special houses of prayer known as "Khaneqas" where other Muslims are not allowed. Only Sufis who are spiritually evolved are allowed to pray there. In the same way we Ismailis who, though are part and parcel of Islam and Muslims, are distinguished from others in this sense that they have taken 'Bayat' of their Imam-e-Zaman and therefore others who have not done so cannot be in line with them who are different from them in this respect".

DEFINITION OF JAMATKHANA.

Further to our Circular No. 57, Prof. Jawad al-Masqati from Karachi says as under:-

"Jama-ah (Jamat) is a word that has always been used to refer to a Community, a party, a group etc., in a religious sense as Jama-atul-Muslimeen (Muslim Community), Jama-atul-Nasara (Christian Community), Jama-atul-Yahood (Jewish Community) so on and so forth".

"Khana means shop, house and thelike as

Khana-e-Ka'ba - Ka'ba, Khana-e-Khuda = Musjid,
Musafir-Khana = inn etc"

"Now, in the light of our explanation of Jama-ah (Jamat), Jama-at-khana will imply to the house where Jama-ah (Jamat) assembles for the purpose pertaining to Jamat and it will include all social and religious work. The present Jama-at-khana of the Ismailis functions on the same line as the Musjid used to function in the time of the Holy Prophet. The word Musjid means more or less the same that the word Jama-at-khana implies. Musjid means the place of discipline and it is derived from the word 'Sajada' to bow, to prostrate, to discipline, etc.

"In the time of the Prophet, Musjid was an assembly hall, a lecture hall, a training centre, etc. besides being a prayer place. The prayer also was held in such a way that it implied all the abovementioned ideas. For detail one may refer to the chapter of Al-Musjid in any classic books of traditions such as Al-Bukhari,

An-nasa-e-, Sahih-Muslim, etc.

"The name of Jama-at-khana is used as such all over the Ismaili world except in Syria where it is called Musjid, in Iran where it is called Panj-tan-gah, in Paris where it is called Centre Cultuer Ismailien and in London where it is called Ismailia Cultural Centre".

(READ PAGE 130 OF THIS BOOKEET
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

ISLAM IN WEST AFRICA.

Mowlana Sultan Mahomed Shah had shown great interest and concern organising indigenous Muslim population in West Africa. He had, in 1954, sent a deputation of Muslim Welfare Society of East Africa to visit West Africa and submit report.

Al-vaez ultanali Nazerali who had recently been to Congo and very near to West Africa said:-

(a) "The connections between Islam and West Africa are very old. They date back to the eleventh century. The history of the spread of Islam in these regions is very interesting and it was a great feat of the Muslims to introduce Islam among the savages and cannibals of this land. Islam was introduced in the Senegal towards the end of the eleventh century. The almoravides (1091-1148 A.D.) of Morocco the famous Berber tribes who stemmed the tide of Christianity in Spain, were foremost in this noble work. The Chief Abdullah ibn Yasir established his centre on an Island on the mouth of river Senegal. From this centre he used to send missionaries into the interior. He trained 1000 preachers for this purpose, and these preachers converted most of the Senegal and Sahara to Islam before his death. The King of Jenne, a city on the banks of Upper Niger, embraced Islam in 1200 A.D. He turned his palace into a mosque. As early as eleventh century the Princess of Ghana (Futa Jallon), the Rulers of Takrur, as well as the King of Malii on the Upper Niger, had already embraced Islam.

(b) "After the establishment of the Empire by 'Usman don Fadio, a glorious period of Islam was started in West Africa. 'Usman died in 1817 and his son Sultan Mohamed Bello succeeded to his throne. The Golden Period of Nigeria came to an end by the death of Sultan Mohamed Bello in 1837 and the great Fulla Empire was broken into independant and semi independent Emirates.

(c) "After the conquest of West Africa by France and Britain Islam continued to make headway among pagan tribes. European relations with West Africa date back to the sixteenth century when Dutch and Portuguese established their trading centres on the coast of Africa. European powers after discovering richness on the land, began their military conquests in the last quarter on the 19th. Century. French forces began their advance from the settlement of St. Louis in Senegal in 1880. Several years of fighting took place between Ahmadu son of 'Umar and the French. At last Ahmadu was defeated and his Capital, Segu, was captured by the French in 1890. The Upper Niger Basin and Guinea all these were conquered by French one by one between 1890 - 1898. Thus France was successful in breaking various Muslim Kingdoms into the region now known as French West Africa.

(d) The Population of Muslims in the various Territories can be estimated as follows:

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	<u>COUNTRY</u>	<u>ESTIMATED INDIGENOUS POPULATION (TOTAL)</u>	<u>ESTIMATED INDIGENOUS MUSLIM POPULATION.</u>
1.	Congo	12 million	150,000
2.	French Equi- torial Africa & Camerrons	5 million	1 million
3.	ANgola	?	very few Muslims.
4.	Nigeria	31 million	14 million
5.	French W. Africa (incl. Guinea)	16 million	13 million
6.	Gold Coast Chana	5 million	400,000
7.	Liberia	2 million	1 million
8.	Sierra Leone	2½ million	1.3 million
9.	Gambia	?	200,000

(i) Thus approximately in total population of 58 millions Africans, the Muslim population is 21 millions.

(ii) Except Sierra Leone and Southern Nigeria everywhere Muslims are extremely backward, educationally and religiously.

(iii) In Ghana, Nigeria and Legos, Ahamadias have organised Missions ever since 1914. They have prominent people in their fold: men like H.H. Oba Adelle II (Mayor of Lagos and Chief of Lagos County).

(iv) In Nigeria, Gold coast and other parts the strength of Muslim students does not even reach 1% of the total students in Colleges and Universities.

(v) Emirs and Rulers of the Mulsim masses are uneducated, orthodox and unorganised.

(vi) Muslims are far behind in industry, commerce, trade and banking.

(vii) Government is discriminating in granting aid to school to the advantage of the Christians.

(viii) Muslims are divided into several sects, units and societies, e.g. orthodox, Ahamadias, moderates etc. etc.

MUTA SYSTEM.

Mr. Tajdin Mahomedali Dhala, quoting references from several books, the gist of which was as under:-

"The term Mut'a, signifies what Persians call sigha, or contract marriage, or temporary marriage. It is recognized as legal by the Akhbari school and some of the Usuli among the Ithna-'Ashariya. Its validity is denied by the Sunnis, who consider its practice to be adultery. By Muta', 'A man and a woman may enter into a contract of marriage for any period they like', less than a day or as long as a hundred years. Such a contract is automatically terminated by the expiration of the time fixed, or it may end by mutual agreement, without divorce, and without right to maintenance beyond the stipulated period.

The following conditions govern in Mut'a marriages:-

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1. A declaration and an acceptance are essential. The declaration may be made in any of the two ways: zawajtu-ka or m'uttatu-ka meaning 'I have united myself to thee; or ankahtu-ka, 'I have married thee'.
2. It is declared abominable for a man to marry a virgin who has no father, but it is not prohibited. A minor girl required the consent of her father or guardian.
3. There must be mention of a dower, and of the period. To omit either makes the marriage operate as a permanent marriage even though the intention was to have it a temporary marriage.
4. The two parties to the contract do not inherit from each other.
5. Children born of such marriages are legitimate and inherit like the issue of a permanent contract.

Temporary marriage follows a practice said to have been common in Arabia before Islam, when apparently a special class of women was kept for this purpose. It receives the name Mut'a, meaning pittance, because the man gives to the woman a small gift "either in the shape of a piece of cloth, or a handful of flour, or dates". Before the hijra it was not countenanced by Prophet Muhammed or his companions. But conditions changed with life at Medina. Here there were frequent military expeditions, when men left their wives at home. So writes 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud:

"We represented (to Muhammad) whether we should emasculate ourselves. He prevented us from this (course) and then permitted us to res. a mut'a.....some of us used to marry a woman for a time by giving her a piece of cloth"

This type of marriage is sanctioned by the Qur'an in a verse reading:

".....and all (women) beside these are made lawful for you, provided that you seek (them) with your property, marrying (them) without committing fornication; then as to those by (marrying) whom you profit, give them their statutory gifts, and there is no blame on you about what you mutually agree after that which is stipulated".

The Sunnis maintain that this passage was abrogated by a tradition recorded in Muslim's Sahih:

"O people! - I had indeed allowed you to benefit by these women. But behold! God has prohibited it until the day of Resurrection. So if anyone has such women, let him allow them to go their way, and do not take aught of anything you have given them".

Prophet Muhammad is said to have forbidden the custom in A.H. 6 and after the victory of Mecca to have allowed it again for three days, after which it was never sanctioned. Both 'Umar and 'Uthman suppressed it. But holding that abrogation of a revelation can only be a counter-revelation, the Shias consider Mut'a marriage as still valid, and claim that it has been accepted by their Imams. Donaldson describes the practice among Shiite pilgrims.

(Extracts from Shi'a of India).

ISLAM IN SPAIN.

Mr. Mahomedali H. Rashid very elaborately and at great length explained the advent of Islam in Spain, the conditions prevailing in Spain at the time of Conquest, the conditions under Moslem rule and ultimately the downfall of Islam in Spain and its reasons.

(a) Less than one hundred years after the holy Prophet and within fifty years of the successful military campaigns of the great Moslem generals Khalid ibn Walid and Amr ibn Aas which conquered for Islam Iraq, Persia and Egypt and which are among the most brilliantly executed in the history of warfare, Islam made headway towards the Maghreb and North Africa and thence to Spain and other parts of Europe.

(b) The two cardinal events of late ancient times are the Teutonic migrations which weakened the Roman Empire, and the Arab conquests which demolished the Persian Empire and shook the Byzantine power. Of these two, the Arab conquests culminating in the occupation of Spain in the early part of 8th century marked the beginning of the Middle Ages.

(c) If some one in the closing years of seventh century had had the audacity to prophesy that within a decade some unheralded, unforeseen power from the hitherto barbarous and little known land of Arabia was to make its appearance, had itself against the only two world powers of the age, viz., in herit the Sasanids and strip the Byzantine of its fairest provinces, he would undoubtedly have been declared a lunatic. Yet that was exactly what happened. After the death of the holy Prophet, sterile Arabia seems to have been converted as if by magic into a nursery of heroes the like of whom both in number and quality is hard to find anywhere.

(d) The Ommeyyad Caliphate passed in 684 A.D. to Abdul Malik, a typical Ommeyyad and who became the undisputed master of the Islamic Empire in 693 A.D. and sent army to Berbery in Maghreb. Of him it is said he was much given to piety and devotion but after he came to power he put the holy Quran aside. He died in 705 A.D. and was succeeded by Walid. In 708 A.D. Musa, the Viceroy of West Africa whose authority extended from Egypt to the shores of Atlantic and included the Western Islands of Mediterranean (Majorca, Minorca and Ivica conquered by him and incorporated in the Islamic Empire) turned his eyes to Spain which was under the Gothic King.

(e) The impoverished citizen, the wretched slave, the miserable serf and the persecuted Jew all waited for the liberation. It was in the moment of their acutest agony that the deliverance arrived from an unexpected quarter. The Saracenic (Moslem) Province across the Straits of Gibraltar was regarded as the haven of safety and many Spaniards found refuge in Moslem Africa from their tyrannical kings and bishops.

It was at this time when Musa ruled over Africa that the Spanish Governor of Ceuta, dissatisfied by the wrong inflicted on him by the Gothic King Roderick, joined in the appeal of the Spanish refugees to Musa to liberate Spain.

In answer to their prayers with the sanction of Walid, Musa sent young and enterprising officer Tarick to make reconnaissance of the Southern Coast of Europe. The report was favourable and in the auspicious month of Rajab, Tarick, the son of Ziad, one of Musa's ablest lieutenants, landed with a small force of 7000 picked men on what is known after him as Gibraltar (Jabl-Tarick-Rock of Tarick), which was the base of his operations. The army was by now augmented to 12000. Roderick was engaged in settling disturbances in the North but on hearing of the invasion rushed to the capital and summoned his chiefs to join him at Cordove with their contingents. The Spanish army was immense, something like 100,000 men. They met on the banks of river Guadalete and the battle was fought on 19th. July 711 A.D.

(f) Leaving Tarick in Galicia in Spain, Viceroy Musa crossed into France and conquered the portion which belonged to the Gothic dominions. Standing on the Pyrenees mountains, the Moslem Viceroy conceived the project of conquering the whole of Europe; and in all human probability had he been allowed to carry his plans into execution, he would have succeeded. The West lay completely at his feet.

....143.....

(g) At this crucial moment, the cautious and hesitating policy the Caliphs' Court in Damascus turned the plan and the Moslems lost the golden opportunity with the result that Europe remained enveloped in darkness for the next eight centuries. An order from Caliph Walid stopped Musa whilst he was preparing to push further into France with the object of crossing into Italy.

(h) Moslem conquests and rule in Spain became established for many reasons. The tribute exacted by the new conquerors was even less than that exacted by the old, and the conquered people of whatever faith could now pursue their religious practices and worship as they liked. The Arabians themselves were fresh and fired with new enthusiasm and faith. But no small share of their success was due to their military technique in the use of cavalry and camelry -- which the Romans never mastered.

(i) Where the Arab conquerors got their talent for administration it is hard to say, for they came almost direct from the Arabian deserts and their rapid victories left them little leisure to acquire the art of managing foreign nations.

(j) During the first century of Moslem rule, Spain made tremendous progress in commerce and industry as the Saracens settlers who came from chiefly agricultural countries like Egypt, Syria and Persia, were endowed with commercial instincts, and were led towards industry by the teachings of the Prophet. They introduced measurers for fertilisation of land, repeopled the cities and ornamented them with beautiful monuments, traces of which are to be found even today in modern Spain. The Arabs turned Spain into garden, and organised a model administration and gave impetus to arts and sciences, and poetry.

(k) If anything ruined Moslem rule in Spain, it was the disastrous feelings of tribal jealousies which is shown by the historical study of the time. They could never put aside even in that distant land the old tribal jealousies of the desert. They were offered a glorious opportunity of founding a lasting empire but lost it from their own want of union. The Moslem empire in Spain lasted 7 centuries.

(l) It was during the reign of Fatimite Caliphs in Egypt and North African that Ismailism came in contact with Spanish Moslems which produced genius like Ibn-Rushd (Averroes of Cordova). Our 13th Imam, Mowlana Razi Abdulla was invited to North Africa by the Ismaili missionaries like Abu Abdulla, and Ismaili Caliphate flourished under the Fatimites, during which Ismailism was propagated among the Saracenic moslems. But the writers of Islamic history and of Islam in North Africa and Spain hardly make any mention of Ismailism. A recent book "Polemica on the Origin of Fatimide Caliphs" deals extensively with this subject.

SYSTEM OF TAXATION IN ISLAMIC COUNTRIES.

In reply to our enquiry, Mr. Arif Tamir of Salamieh (Syria) writes by his letter of 6.11.1958:-

"----- at present there is no tax called tribute of "Djiziya", as the Mohammedan Mission is ignored and undone by it. There is also no "Kharij" tax at present. These taxes were replaced by the modern laws and exchanged by taxes on products and advantages (such as income tax etc.)

(PLEASE ALSO REFER TO PAGE
OF THIS BOOKLET)

LIFE AND PHILOSOPHIES OF AVERROES.

Mr. Shamsudeen Alibhai Janmahomed quoting from "The Legacy of Islam (Page 275) said:-

(a) Averroes also known as Abdul Valid Ibn Rushd a Jurist, physician and philosopher was born in the year 1126, came of a family of Cordovan lawyers; his grand-father, his father and he himself were all qadis of Cordova. He devoted himself to the writings of philosophical works and commentaries during the leisure won from his legal duties. He was for a time in high favour at the Moroccan court, but the systematic opposition of the theologians brought about his downfall. He was accused of heresy and even of apostasy to Judaism and banished from Cordova, though he was restored to favour before his death and recalled to Marrakesh, where he died in 1198. His tomb may still be seen there.

(b) He belonged to Europe and European thought rather than to the East. In Italy his influence lived on into the sixteenth Century. Averroism continued to be a living factor in European thought until the birth of modern experimental science. Latin has preserved more than one of Ibn Rushd's works which Arabic has lost. In the West at one time Averroism could claim the attention of the first scholars of the age; in Islam Averroes never gained an authoritative position.

(c) For centuries Averroes has stood as the representative of the thesis that philosophy is true and revealed religion is false.

(d) In the Memoirs of Sir Sultan Mohamed Shah, on page 170, our 48th Imam has stated about Averroes as under:-

"Ibn-Rushd, the great Muslim philosopher, known to Europe as Averroes, established clearly the great distinction between two kinds of apprehensible human experience; on the one hand, our experience of nature as we recognize it through our senses, whence comes our capacity to measure and to count (and with that capacity all that it brought in the way of new events and new explanations), and, on the other hand, our immediate experience of something more real, less dependent on thought or on the processes of the mind, but directly given to us, which I believe to be religious experience. Naturally, since our brain is material, and its processes and all the consequences of its processes, are material, the moment that we put either thought or spiritual experience into words this material basis of the brain must give a material presentation to even the highest, most transcendent spiritual experience. But men can study objectively the direct and subjective experiences of those who have had spiritual enlightenment without material intervention".

HOW DO CHRISTIANS LOOK UPON THE INSTITUTION OF
MARRIAGE (AS ISLAM LOOKS UPON IT AS A SIMPLE
CONTRACT) AND WHAT ARE RELIGIOUS RESTRICTIONS
IN THEM

(a-) "From the enquiries conducted from Catholic and Anglican Churches, Mr. Huseinali Alimahomed said, it seems that there is not much difference in their opinion about marriage".

"They firmly believe that marriage is religious and holy contract. By officiating marriage ceremony in the Church before a priest and two witnesses, they believe, the couple is endowed with super-natural help to fulfil the duties of the new state of life.

"The act of marriage is a permanent contract in both the Churches - a life-long union of love and faithfulness and the couple becomes "ONE FLESH". The belief of "ONE FLESH" is derived from the Holy Bible: St. Mathews, Chapter 19, verses 3-12.

"It is very clear that Christian Marriage has to be taken as a bond of God and cannot be broken at all.

"Polygamy is not allowed at all, and re-marriage is permissible after the other contracting party is dead.

Due care is taken before a marriage is officiated. A PRENUPTIAL ENQUIRY is held in writing when both parties have to admit besides other admissions, that (a) they are "FREE", i.e. unattached to any marriage contract, civil or religious (B) that both are entering marriage freely with their own accord.

"On the day of marriage the matrimony is solemnized with blessings and the couple is explained their responsibility to each other and basic reasons of marriage:-

"Firstly they say, it is ordained for the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy Name".

"Secondly, it is ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body".

"Thirdly, it is ordained for the mutual society help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity".

Divorce is not allowed because they believe the couple has entered in a holy bond as "ONE FLESH" with command of God which cannot be broken as explained above.

(b) But the real position now prevailing about divorce, Mowlana Sultan Mahomed Shah explains on page 2 of his "Memoirs" by saying, "In no European Country is divorce looked upon as anything unusual as was the case when I was young. Today all over Europe men to whom the strictly legal term "guilty party" is applicable are to be found in the highest, most responsible position in the State. Indeed, the only penalty to which they are subject seems to be non-admission to the Royal Enclosure at Ascot - a privilege which, I daresay few of them care about anyway".

(c) Regarding Islamic concept of marriage, refer to Mowlana Sultan Mahomed Shah's Memoirs ", page 186.

AL - GHAZZALI.

Dr. H. A. Valji gave at great length the details of the life and works of Al-Ghazzali, famous theologian, Philosopher and writer of Khorasan, the gist of it was:-

"He did more than any one else to bring to an end the reign of philosophy in Islam, and to set up in its - stead a devotional mysticism which is at once the highest expression and the clearest limitation of the orthodox - Mohamedan doctrine -. This religious leader was born in A.H. 450 (1058) and attracted the notice of Nizam-ul-Mulk, who appointed him a Professor in his Baghdad College.

"After some years of absence he returned to Nishapur, and finally to his home at TUS, where he died at the age of fifty one, venerated by all and bearing the honourable title of HAJJAT-UL-ISLAM or "The Proof of Islam".

It is of special interest to note that in 1912 the authorities of the British Museum acquired what is believed to be a unique copy of his work on the doctrines of Ismailis and other esoteric and unorthodox sects, which should prove to be of great value to the student.

(taken from:

A HISTORY OF PERSIA -

BY: SIR PERCY SYKES - P age No. 65 - AL-GHAZZALI.

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OF
THE PARSEE RELIGIOUS STUDY GROUP OF MOMBASA

the Extracts from the book called "GOD TO MAN AND MAN TO GOD" being discourses of a Parsee sage of India known as MEHER BABA.

Master these extracts relate to the need, faith and grace of a Living what we Ismailies call HAZAR IMAM.

Hope Members will find this interesting, specially the Waezins.

O K.R.P.

G O D T O M A N A N D M A A N T O G O D .

Page 54.

When after several lives of search, purification, service and self-sacrifice, a soul meets a God-realized Master, after several lives of close connection with the Master, and love and service for the Master, he enters into his Circle. Those who have entered into the Circle have through their efforts acquired the right of God-realization, and when the moment for realization arrives, they attain realization through the grace of the Master.

Page 56.

The Master is on the look out for those who need his help and no spiritual yearning is overlooked. They foster the advancement of all aspirants in various ways, although these ways may not be intelligible to others.

The help of the Master consists in making the spiritual journey of the aspirant sure, and in shortening the time that he might otherwise take for arriving at the goal.

Page 57.

As the Master uses Maya to take the disciples out of Maya, and as he is himself beyond good and evil, he may often require things that are unacceptable to the good sense of his disciples. The disciple should none the less follow the instructions of the Master with implicit faith.

Page 59.

Faith in the Master nourishes faith in oneself and faith in life, in the teeth of set-backs and failures, handicaps and difficulties. Life as one knows it in oneself or in most of one's fellow-men, is narrow, twisted and perverse; but Life as seen in the Master, is unlimited, pure and self-contained. In the Master a Man's own ideal is realized; the Master is what his own deeper self would be; he sees in the Master the reflection of the best that is yet to be, which he will surely attain. Faith in the Master, therefore, becomes the chief motive-power for realizing one's latent divinity.

Page 70/71.

Living faith in the Master becomes a supreme source of inspiration and unassailable self-confidence for the disciple, and expresses itself primarily through active reliance upon the Master, not merely through the opinion held about him. Living faith is an active attitude of confidence in the Master, expressing itself not only through trustful expectation of help, but through the spirit of self-surrender and dedication.

Such fruitful and living faith in the Master is always born of some deep experience, which the Master imparts to the disciple. Just
.....2.....

as the disciple tests the Master in respect of his capacity to guide him, so that Master tests the disciple in respect of his integrity of purpose. The Master is unconcerned about whether the disciple doubts him or has faith in him; what he is concerned about is whether the disciple is or is not sincere and whole-hearted in his spiritual search. The Master is not interested in giving proof of his own divinity except when he feels that such proof is necessary for the spiritual benefit of one who has surrendered himself to him.

Page 72.

"The relation between Master and disciple is primarily a relation between the lover and his Divine Beloved, the most important relationship into which a person can enter. Earthly love in discipleship is the love of God-unconscious for God-conscious".

"The love the aspirant has for the Master is the response evoked by the love of the Master. Love for the Master becomes a central element in the life of the aspirant; because he knows the Master to be an embodiment of the infinite God, all his thoughts and aspirations are centered upon the Master. All other streams of love join this great river of love and disappear in it. Majnu loved Laila".

Page 73.

"When the disciple meets his Master, all he has to do is to love him; for loving the Master out of the fullness of his heart, the disciple's union with him is assured. He does not worry about the quality of his love. He loves in spite of weaknesses and does not wait till he can purify his heart. The Master is the source of purity and to set one's heart on the Master is the beginning of self-purification. When the disciple has whole-hearted devotion to the Master, he opens himself for the reception of the Divine Love, which the Master pours upon him; his weaknesses are consumed in this Divine Love".

"Complete Self-surrender and unquestioning love become possible when the disciple has faith in the Master. Once God is realized there is no question of faith, but, until realization, the faith that the disciple places in the Master is his guide. It is not for nothing that all religions are referred to as "faiths".

Page 74.

"Undivided loyalty to the Master does not introduce narrowness in the life of the disciple. To serve the Master is to serve your own self in every other self",

"Serving the Master is the quickest means of realising him.

Service of the Master is a joy for the disciple even when an ordeal is involved that tries body or mind. Service offered under conditions of discomfort or inconvenience is the test of the devotion of the disciple. The more trying such service the more welcome it is, and as he voluntarily accepts physical and mental suffering, the disciple experiences the bliss of spiritual fulfilment".

Page 100/101.

"The type of meditation necessary in a particular situation can often not be correctly ascertained by the aspirant of himself. He can get so addicted to one type of meditation that he finds it difficult to escape from the groove that has been cut into his mind. He fails to see the importance of any other meditation and is not drawn to it. The aspirant may, of course, himself come to feel his own deficiency, but like many medicines, the meditations indicated in a specific situation may come to the aspirant as distasteful, so that he is disciplined to take them. The help and advice of the Master are indispensable. Specific instructions from the Master supply necessary correctives for neglected aspects of personality".

.....3.....

Page 113.

Personal meditation is directed towards persons who are spiritually perfect. As a man who admires Napoleon and constantly thinks about him has a tendency to become like him, so an aspirant who admires some spiritually perfect person and constantly thinks about him tends to become spiritually perfect. A suitable object of personal meditation is to be found in a living Master, but it is important to have as an object of personal meditation a person who is spiritually perfect.

Page 114.

"Love for the Master leads to increasing identification of the aspirant with the Master, so that the aspirant desires to live in and for the Master and not for himself; this leads to the meditation of action. The initial modes of the meditation of action usually take the following forms (a) The aspirant mentally offers to the Master all that is in him, thus renouncing all that is good in him as well as all that is evil; this frees him from the good as well as the bad elements of the ego and helps him to find a lasting integration of being with the Master. (b) The aspirant volunteers for the service of the Master. Doing work for the Master in the spirit of selfless service is as good as meditation. (c) The aspirant does not allow the ego to seize upon any of his actions - small or great, good or bad. He does not think "I do this"; on the contrary, he develops the thought that through him the Master is doing all that he does."

Page 140.

UNION WITH THE MASTER THE REALIZATION OF THE
TRUTH.

"The Master is an affirmation of the unity of all life; allegiance to the Master, therefore, brings about a gradual dissociation from the ego-nucleus which affirms separateness. After this crisis in the life of man, all mental activity has a new reference in the light of its relation to the Master as the manifestation of the infinite Truth".

Page 145.

"The beginning of spiritual advancement is conditioned by the quest for that goal for which man lives - the goal for which he loves and hates, and for which he goes through joys and sufferings. But, though he may be moved by this incomprehensible divine destiny, it may take a long time before he arrives at the mountain top of truth-realization; and the path is beset by pitfalls and precipices. Those who attempt to reach this mountain top have to climb, and even one who has succeeded in scaling great heights may by a slight mistake fall from them. Therefore the aspirant is never safe unless he has the help and guidance of a Master, who knows the path, who safeguards him from a possible fall, and leads him to the goal.

Page 160/161.

"Once the aspirant has the bliss of the Darshana of a Master, even when he is unable to establish frequent personal contact with him, his mind turns to the Master. This process of establishing mental contact is essentially different from the imaginative revival of past incidents is not necessarily animated by a definite purpose. Owing to the directive power of purpose, imagination, ceasing to be a mere revolution of ideas, reaches the Master through the inner planes, and established contact with him. Such mental contact with the Master is as fruitful and effective as his physical Darshana. The inward repetition of such mental contacts is to construct a channel of communication between the Master and the aspirant, so that the aspirant becomes the recipient of the grace, love and light flowing from the Master, in spite of the apparent distance between them. Thus the help of the Master goes out not only to those who happen to be in his physical presence but to those who establish mental contact with him."

Page 162.

"By infinite ways the Master draws the aspirant into his own being, so that he may get disentangled from the mazes of the

universe and come to desire God. This longing for God is present in the aspirant from the beginning but the Master makes this longing more intense and articulate by opening the internal eye of the aspirant. When the internal eye is opened, God who is the object of search and longing is sighted. As the gaze is turned inward and fixed upon the supreme reality, the desire for union becomes more ardent than when groping for God through speculation or imagination. When the time is ripe, the Master opens this internal eye."

Page 193.

"When the good Karma has secured for the aspirant the benefit of contacting a Master, he should surrender himself to the Master and serve him. Through surrender the aspirant throws the burden of his Karma on the Master and through service of the Master he gets an opportunity to get clear."

Page 194.

"There are many pit-falls on the Path, and without the guidance of a Master, the aspirant is in danger of falling back."

Page 224.

"The Master often chooses to take his disciples under cover, for they are likely to be more actively useful for his work if taken blind-folded than if taken with open eyes."

Page 248.

"Human love is so tethered by limiting conditions that the spontaneous appearance of pure love from within becomes impossible. So, when such pure love exists it is always a gift arising in the heart in response to the descent of grace from the Master. When pure love is first received as a gift of the Master, it is lodged in the consciousness of the aspirant as the seed in a favourable soil, and in the course of time the seed develops into a plant, then into the fullgrown tree."

"The kind of love awakened by the grace of the Master is a rare privilege. The mother willing to sacrifice all for her child and the martyr prepared to give up his very life for his country are indeed supremely noble; but they may not have tasted of the pure love which comes through the grace of the Master. Even the great yogis, who, sitting in caves and mountains, are completely absorbed in deep samadhi, do not necessarily have this precious love."

Page 249.

"Pure love awakened through the grace of the Master is more valuable than any other method adopted by the aspirant, for it combines the merits of all the disciplines but excels them in its efficacy to lead the aspirant to his goal. When this love is born the aspirant has only one desire, to be united with the Divine Beloved".

"Human love is for the many in the One. Divine Love is for the One in the many. Human love leads to complications and tangles; Divine Love leads to integration and freedom."

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ISMAILI 'GINANS' IN SUPPORT OF
"EVER LIVING GUIDE"
HAZAR IMAM.

RELIGIOUS STUDY GROUP
OF MOMBASA.

The following are notes and references of the subjects discussed at the FORTIETH Meeting of the "Mombasa Religious Study Group" held at the residence of Al-Vaez Count Paroo on Monday the 18th May, 19 from 9.15 p.m. until 1 a.m. 14 Members were present. Mr. & Mrs. Habib V. Keshavji of Nairobi were also present by invitation.

K.R.P.

(1) O B I T U A R Y.

The 'Group' has lost one of its very active members in the passing away of Mr. Hasanali Panju. Mr. Hasanali had collection of very many old literatures and which had often proved useful in our deliberations. May his soul rest in peace! Amen.

(2) N E W M E M B E R.

Mr. Sadrudeen Karmali Shivji was welcomed as a new member.

With the demise of Missionary Kaderali B. Patel and Mr. Hasanali Panju and also two members having left Mombasa, the membership of the Group was considerably reduced but with this new member, it is now of 16 in all.

(3) COUNT & COUNTESS PAROO'S TOUR
OF MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES.

Count Paroo had already given details in his two speeches in Mombasa Jamatkhana, each one lasting over an hour, of the religious and historic places that he had visited in Cairo, Jerusalem, Hebron, Bethelham, Neblus, Beirut, Baghdad, Kazmain, Kufa, Nejfi, Kerbala and Tehran. His diary was also circulated amongst all members. A few more points arising out of his tour, were discussed at the meeting; and explaining about the WAILING WALL of Jerusalem Count Paroo said:-

(i) The explanation given to him at the spot was that prior to partition of Jerusalem the Jews used to come here and bang their heads against this wall, known as 'Wailing Wall' in repentance of their disobedience to Mose's commandments.

(ii) The 'ROCK' situated inside the Mosque of Omar in the old city of Jerusalem was the spot believed to be the halting place of Holy Prophet Muhamad prior to his ascent (MIRAJ) to the seventh heaven on the 'Buraq', the winged horse with a woman's face and peacock's tail.

(iii) Count Paroo further said that mountain villages of Aby and Bhandum, near Beirut, are the present head-quarters of DHRUES, the sect which followed with us until our 16th. Imam Hak Mowlana Shah Hakim-b-Ambrilla.

(4) WHAT IS 'GOOD FRIDAY'?

Mr. Huseinali Ali Mahomed said:-

"The friday before EASTER is called 'Good Friday' and the Christians of all denominations observe the day with special rites. It is the anniversary of the crucification of JESUS CHRIST.

The Christians profess and believe that Jesus came to the world for the salvation of humanity. During his life he was subjected to many difficulties, but he bore them with patience until he was crucified on a Friday and with his death the world was redeemed on that day. The day is called GOOD FRIDAY because the world was redeemed on that day, thus, becoming more auspicious than other days and therefore it is observed as a sacred day.

(5) WHAT DOES ISLAM SAY ABOUT CRUCIFICATION OF JESUS CHRIST? WAS HE REALLY CRUCIFIED?

Arising out of the previous subject and Count Paroo's visit to Bethalham, the birth place of Jesus Christ and various ancient churches in Jerusalem, Al-Vaez Sultanali Nazerali pointed out Suras IV: Ayats 157, 158 and 159 which read, in Yusufali's translation, as under:-

IV. 157 That they said (in boast), "we killed Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, the Apostle of God,"-
But they killed him not, nor crucified him,
But so it was made to appear to them,
And those who differ therein are full of doubts,
With no (certain) knowledge,
But only conjecture to follow,
For of a surety, they killed him not;-

IV. 158 Nay, God raised him up, Unto Himself;
and God is Exalted in Power, Wise: -

IV 159 And there is none of the people of the Book
But must believe in him before his death;
And on the Day of Judgement
He will be a witness against them;-

(6) SPREAD OF ISLAM IN CHINA AND FAR EAST.

"Islam first came to China" said Al-Vaez Mahomedali H. Nurmahomed, "during the Tang dynasty of China, A.D. 713 - 742. The Mughal conquest of Muslim countries resulted in rapid and vast immigration of Muslims of various nationalities, Arabs, Persians, Turks and others into Chinese Empire, says Bretschneider (Vol i, p. 78). Some came as merchants, artisans, soldiers or colonists; others were brought in as prisoners of war. A large number of them settled permanently in the country and developed into a populous and flourishing Community, which gradually lost its original racial peculiarities through inter-marriages with Chinese women.

Marco Polo who enjoyed the favours of Kublai Khan and lived in China from 1275 to 1292 notes the presence of Muslims in various parts of Yunan.

During the reign of Emperor Kien Lung in 1783, the activities of a Muslim Missionary Han-Fo-Yun were brought to light and later this Missionary was tortured and his possession of valuable books destroyed.

For further reference read the books (i) "SPREAD OF ISLAM" Vaez Series (in Eng) No. 1 published by Ismailia Association of Bombay and (ii) "ISLAM IN CHINA, A NEGLECTED PROBLEM" by Marshall Broomhall.

Out of 48 crore population of China, $2\frac{1}{2}$ crore are Muslims.

Most of the Muslims of Indonesia islands belong to Shaffi sect which predominates on Coromandal and Malabar coasts of India and a great traveller, Ibn Batuta tells us when he visited islands of Malaya in the 14th century, he found the inhabitants following the Shaffi sect. There was regular traffic of trade between the Indian coast and the Malaya coasts, hence to Veta (Vol. 1. p. 231), it is assumed that Islam was brought to Malaya and Indonesia by these traders.

90% Population of Republic of Indonesia are Muslims.

(7) SOME MUSLIM POPULATION.

According to Atlast of Islamic History, 1950 published by

Princeton University Press (U.S.A):-

Pakistan	7	crore	25	lacs.
Indonesia	6	"	62	"
India	3	"	50	"
China	2	"	50	"
U.S.S.R.	2	"	25	"
Turkey	2	"	10	"
Egypt	2	"		

(8) NAMAZ WITH OTHER MUSLIMS ON FRIDAYS

Our 48th Imam had very often stressed that our people should join in Juma Namaz with other Muslims. Our Hazar Imam himself it is observed has been setting example in this direction. It was after discussion decided that all members of our 'Group' should endeavour to go and pray with indigenous and Arab Muslims in Khonze Mosque on every Friday. This example is bound to be followed by others and will create much friendly relations with other Muslim Sects.

(9) T H E O S O P H Y .

Dr. V.A. Lalani began by saying "as a result of several stages of evolution on this earth man assumed the prewent human form and got endowed with intelligence. It was then and then only that he started taking stock of his surroundings. Man knew not the Creator but only his creations during its first stage of evolution of religions." Explaining at great length several stages of these evolutions, the learned doctor said "we are now in the last stage of the evolution of religion when man, with strong instinct, searches here and there for the truth."

Coming to the main subject which was under discussion, he said, "but Theosophy is a school of thoughts not a religion." He then detailed its origin and objects as under:-

The term "theosophy" has in recent years obtained a wide currency in certain circles as denominating the beliefs and teachings of the Theosophical Society. This society was founded in the United States in 1875 by Madame H.P. Blavatsky in connection with Col. H.S. Olcott and others. Col. Olcott remained president of the original society till his death of Madame Blavatsky (1891) a split took place which led to the formation of a separate organization in America under the leadership of William P. Judge. The main objects of this society, as originally propounded, were:

- (1) To establish a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity;
- (2) to promote the study of comparative religion and philosophy; and
- (3) to make a systematic investigation into the mystic potencies of life and matter, or what is usually termed "occultism".

According to Madame Blavatsky's original statements this wisdom has been transmitted through the ages as a secret doctrine or esoteric teaching by a brotherhood of adepts or Mahatmas scattered through the world but in close relation with one another. With a certain group of these in Tibet she claimed to be in communication. In such adepts the spiritual nature is supposed to have been so developed that the body has become the ductile instrument of the intelligence and they have thus gained a control over natural forces which enables them to bring about results that appear to be miraculous.

The most characteristic feature of this modern "theosophical" teaching is the belief in reincarnation, and here again the close connection with Indian thought is observable. The succession of earthly lives through which the spirit advances to its goal is interpreted in strict accordance with the Brahmanic and Buddhistic doctrine of Karma. First introduced in the Upanishads as the great secret which solves the problem of human destiny, Karma is in a sense the logical

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origin of all Indian thought. It expressed the inexorable law of moral causation - whatsoever a man soweth that shall be also reap - and this law is represented as fulfilling itself in the life-history of each individual agent. The consequences of a man's actions in his present life are reaped by the agent on earth in a fresh incarnation. Hence the saying, "A man is born into the world he has made." The theory of Karma is thus primarily an explanation of a man's lot in the present life as determined by his own actions in a series of previous lives. If it is true that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap, it must be equally true that whatsoever a man reaps that he must also have sown. The doctrine is thus in its essence a vindication of cosmic justice in face of the perplexities caused by the apparent disregard of moral considerations in the distribution of happiness and misery in the present life, and it is in this sense that it is accepted and applied by theosophists.

10) WHY ASWAN WAS CHOSEN BY MOWLANA SULTAN MAHOMED SHAH FOR HIS LAST RESTING PLACE.

Rai Mahomedali H. Rashid very elaborately put forward the facts, after his enquiries on the subject matter by saying:-

"According to Mata Salamat, Mowlana Sultan Mahomed Shah had a great liking for Aswan for its dry climate which could preserve the bodies for a very long time. It is known that he went to Aswan for its milder winter in January every year, and he first thought of building a mausoleum during the winter of 1948/49. The house "Noor-el-Salaam" was purchased in 1955 and he liked its site very much, and behind which on a hill the idea of a mausoleum was conceived. He spent six weeks in the house during the winter early in 1956 during which the Egyptian architects were consulted with the idea of making it a model in keeping with the Fatimid tradition and architecture. Its design has been inspired from the old Fatimid monuments in Cairo such as Mosque Giyushi on the Mokattam, and it took about 18 months to complete."

From a souvenir booklet published by the Tourist Administration of Egypt in February last entitled "Aswan", there appears the following paragraph in the first page:-

"Thanks to its dry climate, its lovely situation and its health-giving air under a sky that is brilliant and eternally blue, Aswan has justly acquired an international reputation. For those who love calm and repose, no better place could be found, and many prefer it to any other place in the world. As everyone now knows, among these was the late Aga Khan, who took refuge there from the troubles and confusion of our modern age. There he could meditate in peace, and there he acquired the villa called Nur-el-Salaam (the Light of Peace). It sits upon the West bank and looks down upon the quiet majesty of the Nile. Moreover, it was near his house at Aswan that he Aga Khan expressed the wish to be interred within his final resting place.

His mausoleum is on a hill behind the villa facing the Fatimid ruins known as Ma'azin Bilal (the Minarets of Bilal). It is a happy coincidence that this ancient Fatimid art should now keep company with its modern form, for the mausoleum is Fatimid in style and copied from the Giyushi Mosque on the Mokattam Hills above Cairo, a mosque that is itself the Mausoleum of a great 11th century vizier."

From purely aesthetic point of view, Aswan has that natural charm and beauty which is perhaps unique in the whole of Egypt. This fact should be immediately apparent to anyone viewing both the Villa Noor-el-Salaam and the dominating site of the Mausoleum from the terrace of the Hotel Cataract where Mowlana Sultan Mahomed Shah spent most of his time during his winter holidays.

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Sentimentally, Aswan is in Egypt which is the home of Mowlana Hazar Imam's illustrious ancestors whose glorious reign in the Fatimid period is a notable chapter in Islamic history and the greatest period in Ismaili history. (Hegira 359 to 566 i.e., 969 to 1171 A.D.) Aswan is said to have a 3000 year old civilisation, and has probably the largest number of mausoleums of old Egyptian nobles, some of them dating back to over 2000 years. Among them are 28 mausoleums of the Fatimid period, and this fact itself adds weight in favour of the above decision.

Climatically, Aswan is unrivalled in the whole of Egypt. Besides its peaceful atmosphere and dry climate and the eternally blue sky which is to be found all round the year, Aswan has no rainfall. Its red, grey and black granites peculiar only to Southern part of Egypt make the soil somewhat immune from elements that deteriorate the body, and this is perhaps one of the factors in considering that Egyptian mummies could be preserved for thousands of years.

Aswan's situation from geographical angle is very convenient and it was the important trade route and a centre from where expeditions went southwards over 3000 years ago. Today it is being developed as the vital source for the much needed power for Egypt's vast industrial and agricultural potential and in course of time may completely transform her economy and give her a position of pre-eminence. The Aswan Dam has already drawn the world attention.

It is difficult to say what political significance Mowlana Sultan Mahomed Shah's choice of Aswan may have. But the ceremony itself and the influx of a large number of Ismailis in February have at least served to revive the memories of the Fatimid era with which the Ismaili history is so closely connected, and a reaffirmation of the fact that it was Mowlana Sultan Mahomed Shah's ancestors who had ruled in Egypt.

- (11) THE QUESTIONS WERE - (A) ACCORDING TO ISLAM
HOW LONG 'MAYAT' IS ALLOWED TO REMAIN AT HOME
UNBURIED? (B) IS TAKING PHOTOGRAPH OF 'MAYAT'
RESTRICTED BY SHARIAT?

Having consulted a Sunni Fikkah book called "Gayatul - Awtar Durulmukhtar" pages 422/423 by Mohamed Asan Siddiqui, Al-Vaez Sul-tanali Nazerali replied to above queries as under:-

"It is explained in Fikkah that no delay be made in the last rites of a dead person and the sooner a dead person is buried the better (the maximum period allowed for the burial of a dead body is before it normally begins to get decomposed that is 24 hours).

It is also advised that the dead be buried at the place of his death. That is in the graveyard of the village or city of the deceased.

It is advised that the 'Gusal' or bathing of the deceased be in strict privacy and none except the persons usually giving bath be present. Nobody should pass any bad remark about the condition of the deceased's dead body - as to whether it was swollen, blackened or in improper posture. Only good points of the deceased's body be said.

The relations of the deceased are not allowed to scream, cry loudly, beat chests do any such actions. No food be cooked for others than the deceased's near relations while the body is in the house and even for first three days.

The house of the deceased may not be visited 3 days after the death for condolence. The exception for this is allowed for people coming from outside cantres or those who could not come within the first three days due to their own sickness.

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Women should not visit the grave yards.

There is a hadith of the Prophet to the effect that "Gusai, Kafan, and Dafan of a deceased be made as early as possible".

From the Shariat point of view no authority is available forbidding the taking of photograph of a dead body or his coffin but is observed that such practice also be not encouraged from (a) to have sad remembrance of a person and (b) undue waste of money.

12. SUBJECTS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE NEXT MEETING.

- (1) Origin, belief, traditions etc. of DHRUES.
(By: Mr. John M.S. Kenji).
- (2) Whose position is greater, Holy Prophet's or Imam's?
(By: Mr. Mahomedali H. Nurmahomed)
- (3) How revelations 'Vahi' can be explained from Islamic stand point of view.
(By: Dr. H.A. Walji).
- (4) What is the SUPERMENTAL known amongst Aurbindo's philosophy?
(by: Mr. Sadrudin K. Shivji).
- (5) Is it allowed, according to Islamic Sharia, to build tombs?
(by: Mr. Shamsudin A. Janmahomed.)
- (6) Any other subjects.

RELIGIOUS STUDY
GROUP - MOMBASA.

The following are notes and references of the subjects discussed at the FORTY FIRST Meeting of the "Mombasa Religious Study Group" held at the residence of Al-Vaez Count Paroo on Thursday the 18th June, '59 from 9.15 p.m. until 1 a.m. 12 Members were present. Al-Vaez Kassamali Mahomed Jaffer the Hon. Joint Secretary General of the Ismailia Association for Pakistan was also present by invitation.

K.R.P.

1. RE. IMAM'S SUCCESSOR.

Arising out of the questions asked at the T.V. Press Conference on 2.5.1958 to Mowlana Hazar Imam, Al-Vaez Gulamali Shah, who is presently on Vaez duty tour in Uganda wrote enquiring as to how should he reply to the inquisitive questioners about questions Nos. 29 and 30 viz:-

Q. "Have you designated your own Successor? I am not asking you who, but have you in fact written a document anywhere naming your successor?"

M.H.I.

Replied: "Well I have thought of that problem, yes."

Q. "Have you done it?"

M.H.I.

Replied:- "Yes, I have."

The question of Imam's successor was twice discussed before by our "Study Group". See our Circulars No. 3 of 4.7.53 and No. 33 of 16.7.55.

Mowlana Sultan Mahomed Shah's WILL (clause No. 8) makes the question abundantly clear which says - "EVER since the time of my ancestor ALI, the first Imam, that is to say over a period of some thirteen hundred years, it has always been the tradition of our family that each Imam chooses his successor at his absolute and unfettered discretion from amongst any of his descendants whether they be sons or remote male issue (notwithstanding that under Shia Moslem Law the issue of a son is not an heir if there be a son alive) -----".

The Imam himself knows the best in this matter and he only discloses it when the time for it is necessary.

2. ORIGIN, BELIEF AND TRADITIONS OF THE DRUSE SECT.

Basing his facts taken from Encyclopaedia Britannica, Short Encyclopaedia of Islam (page 94) and particularly from the history of the Ismailies (by L.S. Picklay pages 22/23) Mr. John M.S. Kanji said:-

DRUSES, the adherents of an esoteric religion founded in the 11th Century after Christ by the Fatimid Caliph of Egypt, AL-HAKIM DI'AMRILLAI, the son of a Russian mother and our 16th Imam (Imamat from 996 to 1021 A.). They take their name from his Dai (Missionary), Muhamud bin Ismail ad-Darazi, who preached the cult of Al-Hakim amongst the Syrians. Their origin is probably mixed; their traditions derive them from Arab colonists, but some of their chief families claim Turkoman or Kurdish descent.

French statisticians estimate their numbers at 48,000 in Hauran mountains, 7,000 in the Hermon area, 43,000 in the Lebanon, 7,000 in Palestine and unknown number overseas and in U.S.A. Druses' feminine dress is black with red slippers. The men usually wear a black under-robe with white girdle, and a white rod round the red fez, which is now almost the sole distinguishing mark of the Lebanon Druses.

The Dai Ismail Darazi was a 'Batinite'. He attached himself to

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Imam al-Hakim and wrote a book in which he taught that the Divine spirit which God had breathed into Adam had passed on in due succession from prophet to prophet, through Hazrat Mowlana Ali, until at length it found its abode in Imam Hakim bi'Amrilla. The orthodox Muslims looked upon this doctrine with disfavour and Ismail Darazi escaped from Cairo to Syria where he preached in the mountain territory, obtaining many disciples. Another staunch missionary of Dhruse faith was Hamza b. Ali b. Ahmed Hadi.

According to Ismaili history, Hak Mowlana Shah Hakim bi'Amrilla was murdered by some fanatic in 1021 A.D. (body never recovered) but Druses believe that he still lives in concealment and would reveal himself in due time when the world is ready for him.

We, Ismailis say, that this Divine spirit of Imam Hakim had passed on to his son to the son and today it is extant on earth in the person of our 49th Imam Shah Karim.

It was decided to write Mr. Arif Tamir who is in Beirut to enlighten us about the mode of Druses prayers and other traditions.

(3) PROPHET AND IMAM.

Refer to our previous Circular No. 33 and pages 151/152 of "Life and Lectures of Al-Muyyad-fid-din Sherazi".

Summing up this whole subject, al-Vaez Mohamedali H. Nurmahomed siad "Prophet and Imam are same in essence". Quoting from the book 'Ever Liging Guide' (by: Al-Vaez Kassamali M.J., the visitor in our today's meeting, pages 14/23):-

Prophet Mohammed has said:- "Preserve me through my descendants (Imams) Ali and I are from the same Divine Light. I am from Ali and Ali is from me."

Furthermore holy Quran's Sura 33:3 reads:-Verily God desires to purify you, O Ahl-e-bait, and always keeps you far from all impurities."

Quoting from Muslim Vol. II p. 230:- Prophet Mahommed has said "I am leaving behind me two things: the Book of God and my descendants". "O Ali! Your position with me is the same as was Haroon's to Moosa."

4. WHAT IS THE 'SUPERAMENTAL' KNOWN AMONGST AUROBINDO'S PHILOSOPHY?

In the absence due to indisposition of Mr. Sadrudin K. Shivji, Count Paroo submitted:-

This term 'Superamental' is very commonly used in the speeches and literature of Shri Aurobindo, the founder of the Pondicherry Ashram. IT MEANS THE DIVINE BODY.

A divine life in a divine body is the formula of the ideal that they envisage. But what will be the divine body? What will be the nature of this body, its structure, the principle of its activity, the perfection that distinguishes it from the limited and imperfect physicality within which we are now bound? What will be the conditions and operations of its life still physical in its base upon the earth by which it can be known as divine?

In Aurobindo's philosophy they say:-

"Light and bliss and beauty and a perfection of the spontaneous right action of all the beings are there as native powers of the SUPERAMENTAL TRUTH-CONSCIOUSNESS and these will be their very nature transform mind and life and body even here upon the earth into manifestation of the truth-conscious spirit. The obscurations of earth will not prevail against the Superamental truth-consciousness, for even into the earth it can bring enough of the omniscient light and omnipotent force of the spirit to conquer. All may not open to the fullness of its light and power, but whatever does open must to that extent undergo the
....3....

change. That will be the principle of transformation."

They further say:-

"It is not to be supposed that all humanity would rise in a block into the supermind: at first those only might attain to the highest or some intermediate height of the ascent whose inner evolution has fitted them for so great a change or who are raised by the direct touch of the Divine into its perfect light and power and bliss. The large mass of the human beings might still remain for long content with a normal or only partially illumined and uplifted human nature. But this would be itself a sufficiently radical change and initial transformation of earth-life; for the way would be open to all who have the will to rise; the SUPRAMENTAL INFLUENCE OF THE TRUTH-CONSCIOUSNESS WOULD TOUCH THE EARTH LIFE AND INFLUENCE EVEN ITS UNTRANSFORMED MASS AND A HOPE WOULD BE THERE AND A PROMISE EVENTUALLY AVAILABLE TO ALL WHICH NOW ONLY THE FEW CAN SHARE IN OR REALIZE".

Followers of Shri Aurobindo believed him to be the 'Supramental' and the same dignity is now given to the 'Mother'.

(5) WHY MUSLIM, CHRISTIANS AND JEWS BURY THEIR DEADS AND HINDUS CREMATE THEM?

Tracing the origin of burying the deads it was felt that it may have commenced from the time of ADAM when the story is that Hazrat Adam had two sons. Habil (in Bible 'Abel') and Qabil (in Bible 'Cain'). Cain was the elder, and Abel the younger (but righteous and innocent one). Presuming on the right of the elder, Cain was puffed up with arrogance and jealousy which led him to commit the murder of his younger brother. Then the problem confronted, what to do with the corpse - as probably this was the first death on earth -.

It is revealed in Holy Quran Sura 5:34 (Yusufali's translation):-

"Then God sent a raven who scratched the ground to show him how to hide the shame of his brother.....".

Presumably since Cain buried the body of his brother Abel taking the hint from the raven, the same tradition has since been followed amongst the monotheist religions.

About cremation, Dr. H. A. Walji quoted from the book 'The Beginning of Religion' (By: Rev. Prof. E.O. James):- "From a remote period fire has been regarded as a spiritualizing agent, and for this reason sacrificial offerings have been burnt to liberate the vital essence. In BRAHMANIC ritual in India, fire is the vehicle by which each organ and attribute is conveyed to the corresponding part of the universe."

Another reason can also be attributed for the system of cremation is that the remains of warriors killed in battle, for example, sometimes have been reduced to ashes for the sake of convenience in carrying home the relics to be deposited in the sepulchres of their ancestors.

(6) IS IT ALLOWED, ACCORDING TO ISLAMIC SHARIA TO BUILD TOMBS?

Quoting from "An Easy History of the Prophet of Islam" (pages 145/146), Mr. Shamsudin A. Janmahomed said:-

"No reference could be found in holy Quran for prohibiting to build tombs. There is reference in Quran in connection with Tomb Worship only and Prophet Muhammad four days prior to his death referring to the tomb worship current among the Jews and Christians said, "When any good man among them dies they adore his tomb and put up his statue there. Such men will be the worst people on the day of Judgement." Further he said, "Cursed are the Jews and Christians who have made their Prophets' shrines as places of worship."

....4.....

During the period of Prophet Muhammad many tombs were in existence and several were built. The Prophet is said to have visited regularly at al-Baki in Madina the tombs of Martyrs who fell at Uhud and paid reverence to them. Hazrat Osman Bin Mazun brother of Prophet Muhammad was with Prophet during the battle of Badar and when he died Prophet placed the stone slab as a sign and said "As a mark I am keeping this stone here and anyone who will die from my progeny will be buried near by him. "

Looking to all the Muslim countries we find everywhere many tombs and mausoleums. Even at some places we find tomb mosques which are built in memory of some Martyrs, Saints or Kings whose tombs are built outside the main prayer hall. A very detailed account of tomb mosques is given in short Encyclopaedia of Islam by H.A.R. Gibbon, page 333.

A mosque is recently re-erected in Mombasa near Sir Ali Street where in a corridor adjoining the main prayer hall a tomb of a Sheikh is built.

Tombs, Tomb mosques and Mausoleums would have never existed if in accordance to Islamic Sharia the building of these was forbidden.

(7) HOW REVELATION (WAHY) CAN BE EXPLAINED FROM ISLAMIC STAND POINT OF VIEW

Giving quotations from pages 20/25 of 'The Religion of Islam', Al-Vaez Dr. Walji said:-

"Revelation, we are told in the Holy Quran, is granted to a man in three forms: "And it is not for any mortal that Allah should speak to him except by inspiring or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger and revealing by His permission what He pleases" (42:51). The first of these modes is in the form of a hasty suggestion thrown into the mind of a man or a prophet. It is not a message in words but simply an idea which clears up a doubt or a difficulty. The second mode is described as speaking from behind a veil. This refers to sights seen when asleep or in a state of trance: what we may call dreams or visions. The third mode is that in which the messenger (i.e. the angel bearing the message) is sent to the recipient of the Divine revelation, and the Divine message is delivered in words, and this is the highest form of revelation. The first two forms of revelation, which compared with the peculiar revelation of the prophet, are lower forms, are common to prophets as well as to the righteous people."

As for the Holy Prophet Mahommed, it is said:- "The first that came to the Messenger of Allah of revelations were good visions which came out true as the dawn of the day." (Bu. 1:1.)

The Holy Prophet's first experience of the higher revelation was while he was alone in the cave of Hira. Before this he had, from time to time, seen visions, but when the angel came with the higher message he found himself quite exhausted: "He (i.e., the holy spirit) seized me and squeezed me to such an extent that I was quite exhausted", and this was repeated thrice (Bu 1:1). It was an equally hard experience when the second message came to him after an interval of some months.

Harith once enquired of the Holy Prophet, how revelation came to him, and the reply was: "It comes to me sometimes as the ringing of a bell and this is hardest on me, then he leaves me and I remember from him what he says; and sometimes the angel comes in the shape of a man and he talks to me and I remember what he says". (Bu 1:1).

(8) RE: MUSLIM CONCEPTION OF ANGELS.

Further to this subject discussed under Circular No. 60 (4) Dr. Walji read from the "Islamic Review" of June 1952:-

"Every passion, every moral impulse, and every phase of spirituality is a potentiality, and has an angel to work it out whenever

...5....

they come under conditions required for their revelation.

How stands it, then, with the human mind? Sometimes, without any association of ideas at all, we are impelled to do good. Some finer feeling in us, though dormant for the moment and without apparent reason for being aroused, becomes on a sudden impulse active and we are invited to do good. This impulse towards good, we Muslims ascribe to the angels. If we listen to such angelic calls, and follow their invitation, they in their turn are encouraged and begin to guard us against any evil step which we may be tempted to take. Thus every function becomes twofold. They invite us to good and warn us against evil. And further, if we are obedient to them, they become our guardians in the third stage. In this evolved stage of spirituality, man is visited by them; Sometimes they appear to him in human form, but more often in vision. This may seem to others only a species of hallucination or trick of imagination, but it is a reality to those who are spiritually advanced. Services which angels render to those who have acted submissively as wards under their guardianship are the measure of their ministry. Man becomes master and they his ministers, his servants."

(9) PIR SUBZALLY.

In our 48th Imam's time Al-Vaez Subzally Ramzanali was posthumously created a 'PIR'. His services for the Ismaili faith have been numerous, but no written records have so far been compiled. It was therefore unanimously resolved that enlisting cooperation of all Ismailia Associations, particularly of Pakistan and Bharat, the facts of his life and work be collated with a view to printing and publishing them in a book form. A Sub-committee consisting of Messrs. Mahomedali H. Nurmohamed (convener), Mahomedali H. Rashid and Sultanali Nazerali was appointed to submit script latest by the 13th December, 1959.

(D) SUBJECTS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE NEXT MEETING.

- (1) Life & Historic role of Khalid bin Walid
(By: Al-Vaez Dr. H.A. Walji).
- (2) Difference between Imamati and Khilafat
(by: Al-Vaez Sultanali Nazerali).
- (3) Judaism and its branches such as Spinoza
(by: Rai Shamsuddin A. Peermahomed)
- (4) What is that thing called 'Soul'?
(by: Dr. V. A Lalani)
- (5) Is head cover necessary in Islam at the time of offering prayers? If so, Why?
(By: Mr. Husein Ali Alimahomed).
- (6) Any other subjects.

RELIGIOUS STUDY GROUP.M O M B A S A .

The following are notes and references of the subjects discussed at the FORTY-SECOND Meeting of the "Mombasa Religious Study Group" held at the residence of Al-Vaez Count Paroo on Saturday the 24th October, 1959 from 9.15 p.m. until 1.45 a.m. 12 Members were present.

K.R.P.

(1) NEW MEMBER.

Mr. M.J. Rupani, the new member, was welcomed. The membership of the Group is now 17 in all.

(2) OUR CONSOLIDATED BOOKLET OF CIRCULARS 1 TO 60.

Several letters of appreciation, specially from overseas, for the cyclostyled booklet issued by us containing over 250 subjects discussed by our Group in course of last 6 years were read. This booklet has proved most handy 'reference book' to our Missionaries, teachers and religious students. Count Paroo said that he has entrusted the work for its revised edition to Mr. A.S.W. Dharsee of Dar es Salaam.

(3) THE DRUZE SECT:

(a) arising out of our last Circular No. 63 (2), Mowlana Hazar Imam has most graciously sent the following comments in a letter reading:

"Driahlt and Hittihave written the best books on the Druzes, but modern research still knows very little about the Dhruze people. Colonel Churchill has written quite a lot about the Dhruzes, but he was more of a tourist than a research scholar."

(b) Mr. Sheraly Aliaina, the General Secretary of Ismailia Association Pakistan, recommends a book in French called "Relivion des Dhruzes" by Silvestre de Sacy, but we were handicapped by none of our members knowing French.

(c) Count Paroo said that both groups of Dhruzess gave very high honour and respect to Mowlana Hazar Imam during the latter's visit to Beirut in the first week of August last. Referring to Druzes, Mowlana Hazar Imam is reported to have said in Beirut:- "I would welcome the return of religious splinter groups to the Ismaili sect if they wish to coalesce but you cannot force these things."

(d) Count Paroo said that he had asked Mowlana Hazar Imam on 25.8.1959 at Cannes about the traditions and method of prayers of these Druzes and Mowlana Hazar Imam said that Druzes guarded their traditions most secretively but they did not pray like other Muslims."

(e) Mr. Amir Arif Tamir writing from Beirut says:- "Druzes do not pray five times but three times like we Ismailies. It is called 'Dua' and it is a secret prayer. I have its copy which I shall translate into English and send it to you. The Druzes neither make pilgrimage to Mecca nor fast in Ramdhan. The Druzes are in fact a part of the Ismailies sect, but have seperated after the time of Mowlana Al-Hakim. They number about 400,000 in Syria and Lebanon. They call us cousins. I hope in future we will be able to establish a very good relation with them."

(f) Mowlana Hazar Imam has also said to Count Paroo that our Members, when studying a subject, should make more use of books by European authors rather than merely depending upon Islamic Writers.

(4) RE: PRINTING & PUBLISHING THE LIFE OF PIR SUBZALLY.

According to our Circular No. 63 (9) our Group invited information

with a view of publishing a book on 'life and work' of Pir Subzally. The response from various people was very good. But Mr. J.H. Lakhani (Chotu) of the Ismailia Society, Bombay, wrote saying that he has been working on this subject since a long time and has already collected large quantity of materials for above publication. It was, therefore, decided to forward all MSS collected by us to Mr. Lakhani and if he undertakes to publish this book, our purpose stands served.

(5) KHALID BIN AL-WALID.

Describing the life and historic role of that great General, Khalid bin al-Walid, Al-Vas Dr. H. A. Walji said:-

Abu Suleman Khalid bin Al-Walid, who received from the Prophet Muhammad the unique title of 'The Sword of God', came of a leading family of the Qureish of Mecca. His father was a well-to-do man who possessed several gardens, and his mother was a relative of the Prophet.

Khalid was brought up in an atmosphere of freedom, and in his youth received a training in riding, archery and other martial sports which enabled him to determine his vocation in life.

Before he embraced Islam, Khalid had been a great enemy of the Prophet Muhammad and the Divine Faith he preached. At the Battle of Uhud (625) he had commanded the right wing of the Meccan forces, and by his skill and gallantry had created a difficult situation for the Muslims. It was in that historic battle that he first displayed the brilliant talent for leadership which was so great an asset to him throughout his long military career.

Soon after his conversion in 629, he virtually became the 'Sword of Islam'. His daring and seasoned generalship saved the situation for the Muslims at Muta, near the Dead Sea, in the year 630, he succeeded in leading the remnant of the Muslim army back to Medina, and for this he was awarded by the Holy Prophet the great title referred to above.

Hazrat Abu Bakr, the first Caliph of the Muslims, recognized his military genius and held him in high esteem. He sent him first against Tolaiha and then against Musailama, two false prophets who were trying to lead the Muslims of Central Arabia into apostasy. Within six months Khalid was able to capture them both and reduce the tribes of Central Arabia to submission.

In 633 Khalid was sent to Iraq as the head of the Muslim army, to fight against the Persians. He defeated them and received the submission of Hirah in lower Iraq, some three miles from Kufa. Soon after this he occupied the whole of the Euphrates area. But for the orders received from Hazrat Abu Bakr, who directed him to proceed immediately to Syria, Khalid would have completed the conquest of Iraq.

Khalid received these orders while he was at Hirah. He immediately set out with a body of 8,000 veteran fighters and by forced camel marched across the trackless desert appeared with meteoric suddenness in the Syrian theatre of war. He defeated and routed about 100,000 Byzantines at Ajnadian and two weeks later stood before the gates of Damascus, the capital of Syria.

During the conquest of Syria (635-637), certain errors on Khalid's part had displeased Hazrat Umar, the second Caliph. In particular, he failed to send regular accounts to the Caliph. Hazrat Umar wrote to him, saying 'If you wish to continue as the commander of the Muslim forces, you must regularly submit accounts of the expenditure of the army'. Later this matter was clarified between them.

Khalid bin Al-Walid was a keen, diligent and intelligent man. He possessed great courage, initiative and knowledge, and was imbued with the spirit of self-sacrifice.

For further details please refer to the following volumes:-

- 1) 1) Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam Pages, 235 - 236.
- 2) History of Arabis, pages. 84, 118, 141, 147 to 155, 160, 213, 388 - CAMPAIGNS: - 380.
- 3) 'History of Syria' Pages, 412 - 414.
- 4) Khalid Ibn al-Valid. by Fazal Ahamad.
- 5) 'Spirit of Islam' Pages 216, 237, 273.
- 6) 'The Messenger' 125 - 127, 160-163, 165, 211, 213, 229, 238, 239, 240-246, 251-258, 265, 273 etc.
- 7) The above statement of Khalid has been taken mainly from "STORIES OF GREAT MUSLIMS" By: KH.A. HAYE, M.A., PL.D.

(6) IMAMAT & CALIPHATE.

Commencing to explain the difference between Imamate and Caliphate, Al-Vaez Sultanali Nazerali said that in 1952 Mowlana Sultan Mohamed Shah had graciously called him to Hotel Metropole in Karachi and in course of a private interview had said, "I am the Imam of the Shias and Caliph of the Sunnies. You should preach on this subject basing your arguments on historic facts."

For this reason, Al-Vaez Sultanali said that we must study all the facts correctly. Continuing he said:-

"The Holy Prophet Mohamed was 'temporal and spiritual Sovereign'. He had two sources of authority, one religious which was essential one of his life, and the other secular which by circumstances and accidents of his career became joined to his essential and divinely inspired authority. "While Divine inspiration ceased at the Prophet's death, the need of Divine Guidance has continued."

"At Ghadir-e-Khum just a little over two months before the Prophet's death, the Prophet declared 'Ali, his cousin and son-in-law, to be his successor. Thus by the institution of Ulu'l-Amr which can be interpreted as Imam and Caliph and by placing obedience to Ulu'l-Amr immediately after that to God and Prophet he ensured that the faith would ever remain living extending, developing with science, knowledge, art and industry."

"According to Sunni School-the majority of Muslims- the Prophet's religious authority came to an end at his death and he appointed no successor to his secular authority. According to Sunni teaching the faithfuls, the Companions of the Prophet, the believers, elected Abu Bakr as his successor and Caliph. But Abu Bakr assumed only civil and secular power. No one had the authority to succeed to the religious supremacy, which depended on direct Divine inspiration".

At this stage an ideological division took place among the Muslims. Syed Ameer Ali says: "The two great sects into which Islam became divided at an early stage are agreed that religious efficacy of the rites and duties prescribed by the Law (Shariat) depends on the existence of the vicegerent and representative of the Prophet, who as such is the religious Head (Imam) of the faith and the Faithfuls."

"The Sunnies who first elected Caliphs and then during the rule of Omayyads, Abbassides etc. were succeeded by their children and grand children saw great ups and downs, rises and falls, and extinctions in history. The last of this extinction took place in the dawn of this century when the last and the most sick Ottoman Caliphate deteriorated and was finally extinguished - marking a total end of the institution of Caliphate. Thus proving that the ideology of Caliphate as construed by the followers of Traditions - the Sunnies, was radically wrong as the rightful successor of the Prophet was not adhered to". But Imamate, in spite of torture, vicissitudes, murders and conspiracies inflicted upon it still lives.

The following are the differences between the two offices, Imamate and Caliphate:-

DIVINE OFFICE. (1) Imamate is a divine office while Caliphate was a temporal one. To some extent Imamate is the same as Caliphate but it is much greater than it.

EVER LASTING OFFICE. (2) Imam is a perpetual, continuous, and everlasting institution while Caliphate being a temporal institution was mundane and therefore contested and ended abruptly.

DESCENT. (3) Only rightful lineal descendant of the Prophet can be Imam while in Caliphate even adopted sons and remote cousins and nephews have succeeded as Caliphs at times.

The first Caliphs, as is known, were elected to their office by support of their parties, and thus, could not have claim to religious authority. The later Caliphs lost all their real power becoming mere puppets in the hands of their generals. While Imam is hereditary, its succession is unchallengeable, and, in principle, guarantees and uninterrupted authority independent from dynastic disputes and usurpation by outsiders.

AUTHORITY. (4) Imam has sufficient religious authority not to be bound head and foot by the letter of the ancient Law. He has full liberty to bring its practical application in accord with the changing conditions.

It was further recommended to read Pan Islamic Series No. 5, the statement made by Mowlana Sultan Mahomed Shah under the heading FINAL RECONCILIATION BETWEEN SUNNI AND SHIAH DOCTRINES in which he has concluded by saying:-

"That a spiritual succession to the Imam makes the Imam the Ulu'l-amr Menkum always according to the Quran and though he has his moral claim to Caliphate as well, always he can, like Hazrat Ali, owing to the conditions of the world accepted and support such worldly authorities. The Imam believes to help the cause of Islam."

(7) JUDAISM AND SPINOZA.

Adding to what has been previously discussed by our Group under Monotheistic Religions (see page 139 of consolidated circulars' booklet), Rai Shamsudin A. Peermohamed first quoted the following two paragraphs from pages 174 and 175 of MEMOIRS OF MOVLANA SULTAN MOHAMMED SHAH:-

(i) "IN SPITE OF ITS GREAT SPIRITUAL STRENGTH, JEWISH MONOTHEISM HAS RETAINED TWO CHARACTERISTICS WHICH RENDER IT ESSENTIALLY DIFFERENT FROM ISLAMIC MONOTHEISM. GOD HAS REMAINED, IN SPITE OF ALL, A NATIONAL AND RACIAL GOD FOR THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, AND HIS PERSONALITY IS ENTIRELY SEPARATE FROM ITS SUPREME MANIFESTATION, THE UNIVERSE".

(ii) "THERE IS A FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE JEWISH IDEA OF CREATION AND THAT OF ISLAM; THE CREATION ACCORDING TO ISLAM IS NOT A UNIQUE ACT IN A GIVEN TIME, BUT A PERPETUAL AND CONSTANT EVENT; AND GOD SUPPORTS AND SUSTAINS ALL EXISTENCE AT EVERY MOMENT BY HIS WILL AND HIS THOUGHT, ALL IS NOTHING, EVEN THE THINGS WHICH SEEM TO US ABSOLUTELY SELF-EVIDENT SUCH AS SPACE AND TIME. ALLAH ALONE WISHES; THE UNIVERSE EXISTS; AND ALL MANIFESTATIONS ARE AS A WITNESS OF THE DIVINE WILL".

Continuing Rai Shamsudeen said:- "According to Judaism God is one, and has His own uniqueness, all other beings depend entirely on Him. He is personal God, not in the sense that He has body, but that He deals with man at will - through Justice, anger and love.

"Judaism is a strongly earth centred religion. It looks to an after life, but its practice is not so much to prepare man for the next world as to guide him in this. TORAH is their book of laws. It sets down the ten commandments. It also sets down the right way to cook food, to give charity (tithe), to compensate for damage, visiting the sick, burying the dead, prayers etc.

"In Jewish law a Jew does not cease being a Jew simply because he lapses from religious observances. It holds anyone born of a Jewish mother to be a Jew.

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"In Judaism, religion and history are inseparable, and the whole of that history can be regarded as a continuing re-enactment of the drama of EXODUS. Countless times from Egypt to the Spanish Inquisition, from Babylon to Germany they were exodused.

"Jews argued about whether Judaism is a 'nation' or a 'religion' and their theologians say it is both always.

"There are about 5 sets amongst Judaism. Their total population is estimated to be 11.8 millions of which 5 millions are in U.S.A. and 1.5 millions in Israel."

Quoting a third extract from MEMOIRS of Mowlana Sultan Mahomed Shah, page 117:-

"NOW, I AM CONVINCED THAT THROUGH ISLAM THROUGH THE IDEAL OF ALLAH, AS PRESENTED BY MUSLIMS, MAN CAN ATTAIN THIS DIRECT EXPERIENCE WHICH NO WORDS CAN EXPLAIN BUT WHICH FOR HIM ARE ABSOLUTE CERTAINTIES. - I HAVE NOT DISCUSSED EXPERIENCE OF THIS ORDER WITH NON-MUSLIMS, BUT I HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT BUDDHISTS, BRAHMINS, ZOROASTRIANS, AND CHRISTIANS - I HAVE NOT OFTEN HEARD IT OF JEWS, EXCEPT SPINOZA - HAVE ALSO ATTAINED THIS DIRECT MYSTICAL VISION. I AM CERTAIN THAT MANY MUSLIMS, AND I AM CONVINCED THAT I MYSELF HAVE HAD MOMENTS OF ENLIGHTENMENT AND OF KNOWLEDGE OF A KIND WHICH WE CANNOT COMMUNICATE BECAUSE IT IS SOMETHING GIVEN AND NOT SOMETHING ACQUIRED."

Rai Shamsuddeen tried to explain that Baruch SPINOZA (born 1632, died 1677) was a philosopher and his philosophy was against Judaism. He rejected Talmudical Judaism and regarded Bible as the work of man. Rabbis privately offered to Spinoza substantial yearly pension on condition that he should take no hostile step against Judaism and visit synagogue often. But money could not entice him against his convictions.

Spinoza recognized that the whole universe, all individual things and their active power are not merely FROM God but OF God.

(8) WHAT IS THAT THING CALLED 'SOUL'?

"In these days of materialism, "Dr. V.A. Lalani began explaining, "we are so much accustomed to believe in things that we can experience with the help of any one or all of our physical senses that we are not ready to accept the presence of any subject, object or power that only our mental sense can grasp but cannot describe. Such things are either non-existent or imaginary to most of us. Soul is one of such things. We know there is something like soul, but we cannot prove it, because we cannot see it, feel it, palpate it, observe it, smell it or hear it. It is an abstract thing, and so far, we have had to take its presence for granted.

"Almost all religions accept the presence, or existence of soul as without soul and its complement (physical body) there would be no religion, salvation, Karma, or any such thing. But even religion has not been able to define soul fully. According to Islamic concept soul is "Hookme Khuda" or an order of God. Just as God said "Let there be light and there was light", so also God ordered "Let there be soul and there was soul". It is described in religious scripts that Adam was created out of clay and into this statue of clay Allah breathed a soul. From that angle we can best describe soul as a breath of Allah. You must have seen a child taking a drop of soapy fluid and blowing bubbles, putting a little of his breath in it. We are all like these bubbles being blown about carrying within us breath of Allah which makes us look a little more alive and independent.

"Now what happens if a bubble is burst? The outer covering disintegrates and the gas within escapes, which then mingles with other gases of similar chemical nature in atmosphere. Similarly, at the end of predestined period of activity, the bubble of our body bursts and the breath of Allah escapes. The individuality of gas or breath in respective cases remains intact.

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"To me this seems to be most logical answer to the question "What is that thing called Soul". As it is also in conformity with our age-old belief in religion and God. But we shall also discuss what others think about it.

"In the streets we find electric wires which for all practical purposes look like ordinary wires, hung on wooden poles. But through these wires flows an energy strong enough to do tremendous amount of work. These wires do not seem any different from an ordinary cloth line wires and yet they are live and energetic. Can anybody describe the nature of this current? Even the scientists have not been able to do so, so far. A bulb attached to the ends of these wires is just like an ordinary bulb and yet when the switch is put on the bulb becomes live and bright. Put off the switch and the bulb once again becomes cold dead and dark. What is it that brings about these changes in a bulb? Electricity of course. And what is Electricity? No body knows. It is an undescrivable energy, the source and nature of which has remained an engima to a scientist even upto today. Life is like an electrical energy and God is the controller of the central power station. The day he decided to switch off the current, hot and hopping body becomes cold, dead and mute. Energy is gone and bulb of our body has once again become an ordinary clay stooage.

"Phylosophically soul is something that we have only to believe in and imagine. For an instance we shall take a gramophone record. A record is like an ordinary disc. Play it on the radiogram and we will hear the music, but can one describe in which part of the record this music is stored? No, and yet the music is there in the record. Break the record, cut it into pieces but we shall not be able to find where music is stored. Play these bits and each of these pieces will emit music. Music is supposed to be covering the whole record so also soul is spread all over the body. Like music in the record you can but feel the presence of soul by its activity through physical body."

(9) THEOSOPHY.

Al-Vaez Chit Shwe of Rangoon had kindly sent the following extract being an interview given by Mowlana Sultan Mahomed Shah to a correspondent of the "Daily Mail" (London):-

".....I do not believe in a union of all religions. That would destroy them all. I am an anti-mixer. Let each Church give its witness and its message. I gather that theosophy is a mixture, tolerating all Creeds; I know nothing about it, except that it is neither a religion nor a science.

"It is true that, Like Theosophy, Islam has Christ and Buddha and the other messengers in its Pantheon. But Theosophy has remembered messengers and forgot the message."

(NOTE:- The account of this interview appeared in "AINA" of July, 1950, under the heading, "Is Religion Something special"?)

10. SUBJECTS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE NEXT MEETING.

1. How was Byzantine Empire destroyed by the Muslims?
By: Dr. H.A. Walji.
2. Purdha system, when was it introduced in Islamic Society.
By: Al-Vaez Sultanali Nazerali.
3. Who was Hindu Bhagat Jalaram? (It was reported that some Ismailies are having faith in him)
By: Mr. M.J. Rupani.
4. Is head cover necessary in Islam at the time of offering prayers?
If so, why?
By: Mr. Husseinali Ali Mohamed.
5. Meaning any significance of last line of Pir Imam Shah's Ginan which reads:-

By: Al Vaez Gulamali Shah.
B

...7....

6. Did Hazrat Abu Talib embrace Islam?
By Al-Vaez Gulamhusein Juma.

(11) SPECIAL MEETING.

Count Paroo was asked to invite Mr. M. Aslam Awan, B.Sc., to address our Study Group Members sometimes next week on the subjects of (i) Meditation (ii) its Experiences and (iii) Re-birth. Mr. Aslam Awan is the son of Mr. M.A. Alavi and who is a well read person, having recently arrived from Lahore (Pakistan).

TO MEMBERS.

The SPECIAL MEETING of the Religious Study Group will be held at Count Paroo's residence on FRIDAY the 30th October, 1959, at 9 p.m. when Mr. M. Aslam Awan B.Sc., will address the Members as decided under Circular No. 64 (11).

RELIGIOUS STUDY GROUP,
M O M B A S A.

Following are but a few letters of appreciations received in connection with our cyclostyled booklet consolidating our Group's Circulars No. 1 to 60.

ALIJAH SHERALI ALIDINA - HON. GENERAL
SECRETARY, ISMAILIA ASSOCIATION, PAKISTAN.

It is so very kind of you to have sent us one copy of consolidated cyclostyled Circulars 1 to 60. I shall, however, thank you to send us two more sets, as lot of people in our side are taking great interest in the discussions which are so ably conducted by your goodself. I may also remind you of our request to send us 5 copies of your Circulars every time.

PROF. AL-VAEZ KASSAMALI M. J. OF KARACHI.

Thank you very much for kindly posting me a copy of Study Group Circular No.64. All the subjects have been most interesting and they speak of real hard labour by those who have contributed the same.

The book compiled by the Group has been of tremendous help to me. I have carried this enormous treasure with me for every day reference and I am able to get ready material on various topics. Thanks every so much. This is a perpetual kind of service rendered by the Group.

AL-VAEZ SALIM E. MOOSA OF DAR ES SALAAM.

I shall always be turning the precious pages of well-bound study Group Circular Book with immense feelings of gratitude. For a budding al-vaez of my category it is a treasure house of unsurpassable value. Brilliant indexing has rendered reading more richer and has proved like a stem to a rich perfumed flower of great diversity - every petal contributing in its own unique manner towards the ultimate beauty of the flower.

When I showed it to Akber, he said, "It is an intellectual cream of ceaseless efforts of Countsaheb to present our belief in a more scientific manner. Like an embalmed mummy in an impenetrable pyramid, he added, this research achievement for generations will vividly reflect Al-Vaez's most notable attempt in raising and heightening the glory of Islam and Ismailism in a field of comparative study of religions.

AL-VAEZ ABU ALY OF DAR ES SALAAM.

To say in few words the booklet is EXCELLENT.

AL-VAEZ U. CRIT SEWE OR RANGOON.

I received yesterday the copy of the consolidated notes of Circulars Nos. 1 to 60 of your Study Group, which you have been so kind to send us.

Please accept my sincere thanks for the copy, which is priceless and the appreciation of the labour any study gone into the research in various interesting subjects done by your Group cannot be described adequately in any words.

The alphabetically arranged Index of subjects will be really very helpful.

I am sure our Study Group will have quite a lot of well documented and detailed facts from your notes for study in fact it is something of a storehouse built with detailed study for an impressive number of years. As such it is going to be a source of inspiration for all of us, and I cannot help thanking you again for such a wonderful gift.

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Now that we have already received it we shall actively start our Group. I shall send you the names and other details as soon as we get started.

CHAIRMAN, BURMESE ISMAILIA CULTURAL INSTITUTE.

Please accept our most sincere thanks for sending us a very valuable book containing consolidated Minutes of the Meeting of your Study Group since 1954. This is presently the most valuable book we have in the Institution. Just after receiving this book, Prince Sadruddin visited Rangoon and our Institution had an opportunity to meet and submit our report. During the discussion this book was shown to Prince Saheb with the information that this has been recently received from you. A separate letter has been posted giving information interview with Prince Sadruddin.

MR. AMIRALI A.H. GANJI OF BOMBAY.

I am extremely thankful to you for your sending me the booklet containing the subjects discussed in your Study Group (Circulars No. 1 to 60) and also for the subsequent circulars.

May I venture to forward an humble suggestion? I hope you will agree with ~~the~~ my views that the sermons of our most of the missionaries with all their devotion and knowledge about our faith - have become out-of-date. The youth of the present day with advanced education and progressive outlook is not ready to accept the centuries-old-theories based on semimythological basis. To pacify his turbulent mind which is ~~xxxxxx~~ constantly disturbed with heterogeneous subjects and implicit doubts there must be some such literature amongst them which will create interest in them and kindly spontaneous urge to study and practice the high ideals of our Faith. Let me say candidly that your circulars go a good length to satisfy most of their needs. But as the circulars as well as the booklet are "private and confidential" one would hesitate to show them to some youths - although inquisitive - with infirm faith. I think, it will be worthwhile if you will screen the subjects and delete the themes which may be objectionable and improper to divulge and publish the rest for unrestricted circulation.

RELIGIOUS STUDY GROUP,
MOMBASA.

The following are notes and references of the subjects discussed at the FORTY-THIRD Meeting of the "Mombasa Religious Study Group" held at the residence of Count Paroon Saturday the 9th January, 1960 from 9.15 p.m. until 1 a.m. 13 Members were present.

K.R.P.

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(1) NEW MEMBER.

Mr. Mansurali A.C. Satchu (Bar-at-Law) was welcomed as a new member in the place of Mr. John J.M.S. Kanji (Bar-at-Law) who has left to take up residence at Dar es Salaam. Total membership still remains 17.

(2) MOWLANA HAZAR IMAM had graciously sent the following letter:-
"I have received a copy of Circular No. 64 of the Religious Study Group. Kindly convey my best loving blessings to all the Members of the Religious Study Group for their good work".

(3) HOW WAS BYZANTIUM EMPIRE DESTROYED BY THE MUSLIMS?

Please refer to page 17 of the consolidated booklet to know how Byzantium Empire came into being and expanded.

"At the beginning of the seventh century", Al Vaez Dr. H.A. Waljee commented, "the Near and Middle East was divided between the great rival Empires of Byzantium and Persia."

The history of the previous three centuries was largely a record of their struggles. The Byzantine Empire with its great capital of Constantinople was Greek and Christian in culture and religion and to a large extent still Roman in its administration. To the South lay the provinces of Syria and Egypt. In these, Byzantine authority was threatened in a number of ways. The population-Aramaic in the one, Coptic in the other was alien by race and to a lesser extent by culture to the Greeks, and their resentments against Byzantine rule and the crushing burden of taxation which it imposed were expressed in the heretical Monophysite churches which were at daggers drawn with the Orthodox creed of the Empire. In Palestine, the Jews had suffered even more grievously than the heretical Christians from Byzantine repression, and had little love for their masters. The Persian Empire presents a certain general resemblance to Byzantium. Here too, the core of the Empire was a plateau - Iran-inhabited by a people speaking an Indo-European language, and ruling as a dependency province of Iraq. But the culture of Persia was Asiatic. The state religion was Zoroastrianism. The internal structure of the Persian Empire was far less stable than that of the Byzantines.

Between 602 and 628 the last of the series of Perso - Byzantine wars were fought. It ended in a Byzantine victory, but left both parties exhausted and weak in the face of the un-suspected danger that was about to burst on them from the Arabian desert.

The short Caliphate of Abu-Bakr (632-4) was mostly occupied with the so called riddah (SECESSION, APOSTASY) Wars.

Many such tribes in Al-yaman, Al-Yamamah and 'Uman felt reluctant to pay the Zakaht to al Madinah. The death of the Prophet provided the excuse for active refusal. Jealousy against the rising hegemony of the Hijaz capital was one of the underlying motives. The old centrifugal forces characteristic of Arabian life were once more in full operation.

Abu-Bakr, however, was adamant in his insistence on unconditional surrender from "the Seceders" or war into destruction. Khalid-ibn-al-walid was the hero of these wars. Within some six months his general-

ship had reduced the tribes of central Arabia to submission.

The Peninsula was now united under Abu-bakr by the sword of Khalid. Arabia had to conquer itself before it could conquer the world. The momentum acquired in these internal campaigns which transformed Arabia for a number of months after the death of the Prophet into an armed camp, had to seek new outlets, and the newly acquired technique of organized warfare had to be applied somewhere.

If some one in the first third of the seventh Christian century had had the audacity to prophesy that within a decade some unseen power from the barbarous and little known land of Arabia was to make its appearance, hurl itself against the only two world powers of the age, fall heir to the one the SASANID (PERSIANS) - and strip the other the BYZANTINE of its fairest provinces, he would undoubtedly have been declared a lunatic. yet that was exactly what happened.

After the death of the Prophet sterile Arabia seems, to have been converted as if by magic into a nursery of heroes the like of whom both in number and quality is hard to find any where. The Military campaigns of Khalid ibn-al Walid and Amr-ibu-al-As which ensued in al-Iraq, Persia, Syria and Egypt are among the most brilliantly executed in the history of warfare and bear favourable comparison with those of Napoleon, Hannibal or Alexander.

Khalid's journey through the desert presents many historical and geographical problems. for different authors have given us different routes and conflicting dates.

With dramatic suddenness Khalid appeared in the neighbourhood of Damascus and directly in the rear of the Byzantine army after only eighteen days journey. Here he began marauding expeditions in the course of one of which he encountered and defeated the Christian forces of the Ghassanids at MARJ-RAHIT on their Eastern Sunday. Thence Khalid continued his triumphal march against Busra. Damascus, soon to become the capital of the Islamic empire, surrendered in September 635, after six months' seige, through treachery, on the part of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, abandoned by the Byzantine garrison, the civilian population of Damascus capitulated, the terms served as a model for future arrangements with the remaining Syro-Palestinian cities.

Between 633 and 640 all Syria from South North was subdued.

A chapter on 'Al-Iraq and Persia Conquered' is to be read from History of Arabs. Pages 155-156. 157-158 and 159.

The above notes should be read and studied with the help of Maps facing the pages No. 150-154 in the Text book called History of Arabis by Hitti.

References:- Arabs in history By: Bernard Lewis.
History of Arabs By: Hitti.

(4) PURDAH SYSTEM, WHEN WAS IT INTRODUCED INTO ISLAM.

"In pre-Islamic times the women's shirt and jacket were worn open over the chest", said Al-Vaez Sultanali Nazerali, "therefore the Prophet Muhamed recommended for outdoor the use of long robe. And hence arose under the later Abbasides, the custom of complete envelopment of body which we see now a days in many Muslim countries." (Spi. Is. p.p.69).

"O Prophet, speak to thy wives and to thy daughters and to the wives of the Faithful, that they let their wrappers fall low. Thus will they more easily be known and they will not be affronted. God is indulgent, merciful." (XXXIII: 59).

"And speak to the believing women that they refrain their looks and observe continence. And they display not their ornaments except those which are external, and they draw their kerchiefs over their bosoms." (XXIV: 31).

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Various Ayats are found in Holy Quran similar to the ones quoted hereinabove. Lot of discussion has also taken place in our previous meetings of our group.

In 1935 Mowlana Sultan Mohamed Shah wrote, "Seclusion and PURDAH are purely oriental customs which came into Islam, but which have no relation with the spirit of that teaching though undoubtedly they became part of the social system which Islam carried on from its neighbouring countries such as Persia, Byzantium and Egypt." ("Position of Women under Islam" by Zaidi").

This is collaborated by Howland Mohamed Ali the famous commentator of Holy Quran: 'Islam never enjoined veil or covering of the face' (Commentary Page 685).

In 'Spirit of Islam' Sayed Sir Ameer Ali says, "It cannot be denied that several institutions which the Musulmans borrowed from the pre-Islamic period 'the Days of Ignorance' and which exist simply as so many survivals of the older growth have had the tendency to retard the advancement of the Mohamedan nations. Among them the system of the seclusion of women is one. It had been the practice among most of the nations of antiquity from the earliest times.

Sir Ameer Ali goes on to prove that Purdah did not exist among the Moslem women at the time of the Prophet and the time immediately after the Prophet's death. Ayesha the daughter of Abu Bakr, who was married to Mohamed on Khadija's death, personally conducted insurrectionary movement against Ali. She commanded her own troops at the famous 'Battle of Camel'. Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet, often took part in the discussions regarding the succession to the Caliphate. The grand daughter of Mohamed, Zainab the sister of Husein, shielded her youthful nephew from the Ommeyyads after the butchery of Kerballa. ("Spirit of Islam" p.p. 250).

"In the early centuries of Islam, almost until the extinction of the Saracenic Empire in the East, women continued to occupy as exalted a position as in modern society. Zubaida the wife of Harun, plays a conspicuous part in the history of the age, and by her virtues, as well as by her accomplishments, leaves an honourable name to posterity. Sakina the daughter of Husein, and the grand daughter of Ali was the most brilliant, most accomplished and most virtuous woman of her time. Herself no mean scholar, she prised the converse of learned and pious people." (Spirit of Islam p.p. 255).

All this proves that women were not secluded from men and were not confined in the veils. They moved about freely and dressed properly to distinguish themselves from their slaves and non-Muslim sisters.

The practice for women to be present in the mosques at the time of prayer seems to have continued long enough after the Holy Prophet's time. Within the mosque they were not separate from men by any screen or curtain; only they formed into a line behind the men. They did not wear a veil. On the occasion of the great gathering of the pilgrimage a woman is expressly forbidden to wear a veil. (The Religion of Islam p.p. 391).

Mowlana Mohamed Ali in his "Religion of Islam" mentions that women were not wearing veils at the time of prayers and pilgrimage, even in the prophetic times. He says, "Women did not wear a veil when the two sexes intermingled on religious occasions, when the very sacredness of the occasions called for a veil; if the veil was ever a necessity." (Religion of Islam p.p. 656).

According to Sayed Sir Ameer Ali in the time of Khalif Walid II (Ommayyad A.D. 743) some foreign and un-Islamic customs were introduced in his domains. Along with these customs the custom of female seclusion and purdah was brought in among Moslems.

This state of affairs was worsened in the time of Abbaside Khalifat

specially in the time of Kadir Billah (A.D. 991) who by stressing on the seclusion of women by vigorous methods and emphasizing on purdah 'did more to stop the progress of the Moslem world than any other sovereign'. (History of the Saracens p.p. 455).

(5) WHO WAS HINDU BHAGAT JELARAM?

"He was born of Lohana parents", said Mr. M.J. Rupani, "in the village of Virpur near Rajkot (India) in A.D. 1800 and died at the age of 81".

The cult consists in the faith that Jelaram, because his piety and devotion to God, was so beloved of God that God gave him powers to help those in difficulties who prayed for his help.

The cult is not a religion. There is no efforts towards spiritual or moral advancement of the believers, except the 'bhajan-kirt n' that goes on in the Ashram at Virpur. A book published in Gujrati gives account of several hundreds of miracles performed by Jelaram during his life time. Also miraculous help received by people, through faith in him, during his life and after.

"Certainly", Mr. Rupani continued, "Jelaram Bhagat was a saint but many miracles attributed to him may be exaggerations or conscious or unconscious later inventions."

The work of Jelaram's Ashram is similar to that of Mira Datar and Ajmer Sharif, places of two great Muslim Saints in India.

After relating at great length the life stories of Jelaram, from childhood until he attained fame, Mr. Rupani asked --- "now there arises a question that needs to be answered. How does this cult of belief and faith like Jelaram work? Does it really bring desired results to believers seeking divine assistance in their problems and difficulties"? Giving his own views, Mr. Rupani said: "all prayers, all acts of submission to and faith and belief in the Divine -for good intentions- do reach God and are accepted by Him, whether offered to Him directly or through faith in idols, holymen or Saints. Believers who in their spiritual weakness cannot raise themselves inwardly so as to pray direct to God with strength of confidence, find it easier to believe in and rely on the help of some palpable agencies, because these are more within their understanding than the abstract God."

(6) IS HEAD COVER NECESSARY IN ISLAM AT THE TIME OF OFFERING PRAYERS? IF SO, WHY?

Answering above question, Mr. Huseinali Alimohamed said that there is no command in holy Quran for putting the head cover when reciting prayer. Then, the question arises - "why some Muslims are particular to cover their heads while praying?"

All commands specified in Quran are taken as FARZ (duty) and those advised by the Prophet or any custom followed by him have been taken as SUNNAT (obligatory).

The Prophet himself covered his head while praying, officiating religious and temporal ceremonies, taking meals, etc. The faithfuls, besides practising religious commands, endeavoured to practice what the Prophet did and such habits were ultimately taken as semi-religious (SUNNAT) and have been reverentially followed. With the passing of time the rigidity of covering head while taking meals or officiating temporal duties are fading, or, have nearly faded. Even, while witnessing funeral procession it is observed that the custom of covering head is vanishing. In one London mosque the practice of covering head while praying is also not rigidly followed.

From a real respectable cover, we observe in many mosques out here that it has turned into an artificial cover of handkerchief which hardly

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covers even half head and which cannot be considered as respectful if we are presenting ourselves before Almighty.

The devout try to explain that the Prophet practised such acts because they emphasize seriousness and reverence for holy act of presenting ourselves before Almighty because physical pause, action and behaviour have great connection with inner feelings.

(7) REF ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT OF "TORAH" AT NABLUS.

Arising out of Count Paroo's travel diary of last February when he had visited Nablus (40 miles from Jerusalem) where a small Community of Samaritans claim to possess an original manuscript of "Torah" said to have been written 3600 years ago, the Study Group of Kisumu wrote a letter to the curator of British Museum, London and the reply that they have received says -----

"The Samaritan scroll you mention is still in the possession of the Samaritan Community of Nablus. It is called the Abisha Scroll, and contains the Torah, or Five Books of Moses, in Hebrew, in the Samaritan Script. Much has been written as to the age of this Scroll. But, so far as I can discover, the general opinion of scholars is that the Abisha Scroll is not likely to have been written before the XIII Century of our era. According to Sir, A. Cowley, the Samaritan historian Abulfath says that the scroll of Abisha was "discovered" in 1355 ----- Probably its real date is not much earlier than that."

(8) The following is an extract from a MESSAGE from Mowlana Hazar Imam dated 1.5.1959 to the Presidents of Ismailia Association of Arabia:-

"There are two points which you should keep in mind when carrying out your good work in Africa. The first of these is that there is an ever-increasing interest of Western scholars in the general Shia, and more specifically the Ismaili movements in Muslim history. More and more evidence is being brought forth that these movements played major parts in the developments of the Umayyad, Abbasid and Seljuq caliphates. Not only did these movements have great importance in the political field, but also in the development of art and science, and the general culture of the caliphates. It is therefore, important that you should know all these facts."

(9) SUBJECTS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE NEXT MEETING.

1. The Origins, customs and beliefs of Parsees
By: Mr. Sadrudin K. Shivji.
2. Attitude of Islam towards music.
By: Mr. Tajdin Mahomedali Dhala.
3. Did Hazrat Abu Talib embrace Islam?
By: Al-Vaez Mahomedali H. Nurmohamed.
4. Meaning and significance of last line of Pir Imam Shah's Ginan which reads:-
"
By: Al-Vaez Gulamali Shah.
5. Meaning of the following Ginan.

....6....

By: Al-Vaez Gulamahusein Juma.

6. Origin & Beliefs of Rosicrucianism
By: Mr. Mansur Satchu.

7. Significations of: "Samavate Sub ve Arzine Sub".
(That is, 7 layers of earth and 7 skies).
By: Mr. M.J. Rupani.

8. Ayubite & Seljuq Caliphates.
By: Mr. Mahomedali H. Rashid.

NOTE:-

Outside readers are kindly requested to give us the benefit of their views on the subjects which have been discussed or which are to be discussed at our next meeting. Thanks.

K.R.P.

RELIGIOUS STUDY GROUP
M O M B A S A.

The following are notes and references of the subjects discussed at the FORTY-FOURTH Meeting of the Mombasa Religious Study Group held at the residence of Dr. Lalani On Friday the 26th February 1960 from 9.15 p.m. until 12.30 a.m. 13 Members were present.

K.R.P.

(1) FRIENDS' CIRCLE DAR ES SALAAM.

Their two circulars were read and their NOTES on various subjects which were for discussion on our "Study Group's" agenda today were very much appreciated.

(2) ELIMINATION OF RAMZAN FASTING.

Mr. Sherali Alidina, Hon. General Secretary of Ismailia Association of Pakistan very kindly sent us a paper cutting from "Evening Star" of Karachi dated 18.2.1960 which read:-

"The Grand Mufti of Tunisia, Sheikh Abdul Aziz Djaiti, said in a Radio broadcast to Muslim citizen that he approved President Habib Bourguiba's proposal to eliminate Ramzan fasting if it would interfere with the Country's development.

He authorised the non-observance of the month-long holy fast by young Muslims who must nourish themselves to maintain their work and health, by those such as doctors of religion whose work required strength and by those "fighting for the defence of our homeland's independence and for the triumph of truth". - Reuter.

(3) TRANSLATION OF DRUZE DUA.

Translation sent by Mr. Arif Tamir from Beirut was read with great interest.

(4) THE ORIGIN, CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS OF PARSEES.

In the absence of Mr. Sadrudeen Shivji, Mr. Husenali Alimohamed read his notes, firstly drawin attention to page 120 of our consolidated booklet wherein we had already discussed previously the subject of ZOROASTRIANISM. Continuing he said; "Once upon a time Zoroastrianism was the State religion of Iran. At present, it is adhered to by Parsee Community who number about 150,000 in the whole world, mostly residing in the West Coast of India. They emigrated to India from Iran on the conquest of their country by the Arabs in the 8th Century. They first landed at DIU in Kathiawar (A.D. 766); and later moved to Sanjan on the coast of Gujarat, where the Hindu ruler received them. To this day their vernacular language is Gujarati. The exact date of their settlement at Bombay, which is the principal centre of Parsee community in India, is not known.

The Parsees of India are divided into two sects, the SHAHANSHAIS and KADIMS. They differ as to the correct chronological date for the computation of the era of Yazdegerd, the last king of the Sasanian dynasty, who was dethroned by the Caliph Omar about A.D. 640. This led to the variation of a month in the celebration of their festivals.

The Parsees compute time from the fall of Yazdegerd. Their Calendar is divided into 12 months of 30 days each; the other 5 days, being added for holy days, are not counted. Each day is named after some particular angel of bliss, under whose special protection is is passed.

There are only two distinct classes among Parsees @ the Priests (DESTOURS, or high priests, MOBEDS, or the middle order; and her herbads or the lowest order) and the people (Behadin, Behdin, or ..2...

"followers of the best religion"). THE PRIESTLY OFFICE IS HEREDITARY, AND NO ONE CAN BECOME A PRIEST WHO WAS NOT SO BORN.

The secular affairs of the Parsees are managed by an elective committee, or "Panchayat", composed of 6 destours and 12 mobeds, making a council of 18.

Among the ancient Aryans, if we may use so indefinite term, AGNI (Latin ignis) was the chief GOD. Even today fire-worship is a notable feature of Hinduism, which is an offshoot of the old Aryan cult, and is the dominant facts in the religion of the ZOROASTRIANS or Parsees who still survive in the parts of Persia near Yezd and Kirman (they are only 10,000 to 15,000) and among many more primitive people, it is considered most irreverent to throw into the fire anything impure or disagreeable or to spit into it. The modern Parsees do indeed regard fire as merely a symbol, but in the beginning fire itself was probably the real object of Worship.

Fire is kept burning perpetually throughout twenty four hours of the day. Fire, the natural emblem of light and Energy, forms as important part in the Zoroastrian worship and kept at the holy altar as the celestial medium between the worshipper and the all Pervading Creator.

It being the fundamental principle of Zoroastrian Religion to maintain the purity of all elements of nature, like fire, earth, air and water the Parsees neither burn nor bury their dead, nor consign them to water. Zoroastrian mode of disposing of dead body, is to expose them to the burning and scorching heat of the sun on top of high hills or elevated places, in the Tower of Silence: and simultaneously allowed to be immediately devoured by the carnivorous birds, who are capable of absorbing the putrefying and contagious flesh of the dead body, by the heat within their organism.

ZEND-AVESTA, the original document of the religion of Zoroaster (q.v.), still used by the Parsees as their bible and prayer book.

(5) ATTITUDE OF ISLAM TOWARDS MUSIC.

"In holy quran there is no direct indication that music is forbidden" said Mr. Tajdin Mahomedali Dhala. He however said that there is Sura XXV (Farqan), Ayat 72 which is translated by A. Yusuf Ali as under:-

"Those who witness no falsehood
And, if they pass by futility,
They pass by it with honourable (avoidance)"

Commenting upon this Ayat, A. Yusuf Ali says: "Vain random talk, unedifying jokes, useless shows etc.-are all condemned. If a good man finds himself in such an affair, he must withdraw from it in an honourable, dignified way, not in a fussy arrogant way".

Mr. Tajdin said that some orthodox Muslims quote Nabi Saheb's Hadith, meaning: "Singing and dancing invite trouble on people". It is perhaps in the same way as Mowlana Sultan Mohamed Shah had said in Zanzibar on 31.8.1899. (Vide page 102 Kalame-Imame-Mubin):-

"Many of you take pleasure and waste their life in Music which is not good".

We cannot say that music as such has been condemned in Islam. But when some forget their own existence and everything else or waste their whole time after music, then it distracts one's mind from the righteous path.

Music as an art had attained a high standard in the early days of Islam. While speaking on the subject of "Future of Muslim States" Mowlana Sultan Mahomed Shah had said: "Again we know what high standard of music and art had been attained in Mecca and Medina as early as the Halifat of early Ummaids and compare it with the disdain with which art is looked upon by some misguided Muslims today".

What music meant to the Arabs is illuminatingly revealed in the ...3...

Thousand and one Nights. The best insight, however, into the Arabs' intense appreciation of the art is to be gained from such works as Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi's "Unique Necklace", at Isfahani's "Greatest Book of Songs". Here we see that music accompanied the Arab from the cradle to the grave, from the lullaby to the elegy. Every moment of his life seems to have had its particular music. Almost every citizen of substance in those days had his singing girl, who appears to have been as much in evidence in the household as the pianoforte is with us today.

Vocal music has always been more keenly appreciated by the Muslims than purely instrumental music. Their ardent taste for poetry determined this to some extent, although the pressure of legal opinion which frowned on instrumental music also contributed to the preference.

In the reign of Umayyad dynasty one of the caliphs, Walid II, the love of music grew almost into a craze and enormous sums were spent on famous singers and musicians, who were summoned to court from the most distant parts. The large influx into the capital of the servile classes in pursuit of their vocation of dancing and singing naturally demoralised society and gradually led to the segregation of the respectable section of the female community.

Abbaside Caliph Wasik distinguished himself both as a composer and performer. Before the music was placed under the ban by theologists of Islam, people of the highest rank, both men and women cultivated it. It is noted that Princess Olaiyeh, a devout and pious woman, was one of the most accomplished musicians of her time.

In conclusion from the historical evidence it seems that music as an art was encouraged and it attained a very high standard. There is not much objection to vocal music as there is towards instrumental music. But when music degenerates into an orgy or when people indulge in music for the sake of pleasure, only then it seems that Islam's attitude towards music is unfavourable.

The FRIEND'S CIRCLE of Dar es Salaam sum up the evidences of Islam's attitude towards music by saying:-

(1) Quran is recited in music (2) Kawalis are sung in music. (3) Our Ghazals are also sung in music. (4) Safia, Hazrat Omar's daughter was a great musician and (5) Imam Shamsudin Muhammed was supposed to be a great musician.

(6) DID HAZRAT ABU TALIB EMBRACE ISLAM?

The following extracts from Ameer Ali's "Spirit of Islam" page 20, explains this whole question:-

"In the beginning Prophet Mohammed opened his soul only to those who were attached to him, and tried to wean them from the gross practices of their forefathers. After Bibi Khadija, Hazrat Ali was the next disciple. Often did the Prophet go into the depths of the solitary desert around Mecca, with his wife and young cousin Ali, that they might together offer up their heartfelt thanks to the God of all nations for His manifold blessings. Once they were surprised in the attitude of prayer by Abu Talib, the father of Hazrat Ali. And he said to Mohammed, "O son of my brother, what is this religion that thou art following?" "It is the religion of God, of His angels, of His prophets, and of our ancestor Abraham," answered the Prophet. "God has sent me to His servants to direct them towards the truth; and thou, O my uncle, art the most worthy of all. It is meet that I should thus call upon thee, and it is meet that thou shouldst accept the truth and help in spreading it." "Son of my brother", replied Abu Talib, in the true spirit of the sturdy old Semite, "I cannot abjure the religion of my father; but by the Supreme God, whilst I am alive none shall dare to injure thee". Then turning towards Ali, his son, the venerable patriarch inquired what religion was his. "O father," answered Ali, "I believe in God and His Prophet, and go with him."

Well, my son, "said Abu Talib, "he will not call thee to aught save what is good, wherefore thou art free to cleave unto him." ...4....

(7) MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF LAST LIFE OF PIR IMAM SHAH'S
GINAN WHICH READS:-

The FRIENDS' CIRCULE of Dar es Salaam gave the following meanings:

- (a) Pir Sadrudin and Pir Hasan Kabirdin were in the 13th century of Hindu era, 'Savant' when they had promised the Ismailies in India that one day Imam will come India (Jampu Dip).
 - (b) This promise was fulfilled by advent of Maulana Hassanali Shah - our 46th Imam - who came to India in the 13th Century of Hijra.
 - (c) Moulana Hassanali Shah's official 'ZAHURAT' in legal calls was made in what is known as "Khoja Case" - also in the 13th Century of Hijra.
 - (d) Moulana Sultan Muhamed Shah was born in the 13th Century of Hijra and his longest Imamatus with three Jubilees have fulfilled the 'Kole' (promise) of the 13th Century.
- (8) ORIGIN AND BELIEFS OF ROSICRUCIANISM.

In the absence of Mr. Mansur Satchu, Tai Ramzanali H.M. Dossa read out the notes prepared by the former and said:-

"Very little is known about the origins of Rosicrucianism. What we know about its origins comes from various letters and these written by individual practitioners of the cult of Rosicrucianism during the early and middle seventeenth century in those provinces of Europe which are now known as Germany. In one such pamphlet written by Figulus in 1607, it is mentioned that the cult of Rosicrucianism was in existence in the early 15th Century mainly in Germany and that part of the then Hapsburg Empire now known as Switzerland. Indeed, one writer, Ominis Moriar mentions that there was a Rosicrucianism Lodge in Germany in 1115. Although another writer has doubted such an early origin of the cult, there is little doubt that Rosicrucianism flourished in the centres of commerce and learning in Northern Germany that is, mainly in Prussia, Switzerland, Denmark and some parts of France in 16th. and 17th Centuries. It is interesting to note that this belief found very little favour with the Papacy at Rome and with the strongly Catholic administration of the Inquisition in Spain. Perhaps their somewhat agnostic beliefs were not approved by the Roman Catholic Church of the time.

"Rosicrucianism is not a religion in the ordinary proper sense of the word. But as its beliefs were not regarded with much favour in some European Countries, there is during the course of the 17th Century a parallel to be drawn between this cult and non-conformist sects of the Protestant religion such as Methodists. It is mainly in North America that the cult survives today although there are small groups all over Europe, but mainly in the Scandinavian countries and Western Germany where Rosicrucianism is still practised today.

"The administration of Rosicrucianism is governed by bodies of elders in each district, with the Supreme Elder, the Imperator, as the head. This body acts as an advisory council to the community of that district. The body of elders of a district in its turn comes under the jurisdiction of a world-wide International Rosicrucian Council which now has its headquarters in the United States of America.

"Rosicrucianism literally means a rose and a Cross. The original symbol of this belief consisted of one red rose placed in the centre of a cross. The early practitioners of this cult were mainly alchemists (chemists).

"This cult is not religious. In their attitude towards God they are nearer to agnostics than to atheists. Whilst they are not prepared to accept the existence of God, they at the same time do not denigrate his existence as Atheists do. They do not say that God is not the Creator of human life and the Earth around us, but instead they try to find a logical and a scientific answer and solution to this question. In this

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respect, the belief is closely associated with science and it is not surprising to find some scientists sharing this belief. Their beliefs are those one would expect of any good clean living member of a civilized society. Their aim first of all is to live as good citizens, contribute to the community in which they live "and change the grosser elements of human nature into higher spiritual qualities."

(9) AYYUBITE CALIPHATES.

"One of the several Moslem dynasties that came in power during the Caliphate was the AYYUBITE", said Rai Mahomedali H. Rasid, "who ruled at the end of the 12th and first half of the 13th Century in Egypt, Syria upper Mesopotania and the Yemen".

The real founder of the dynasty was Salah al-Din b Ayyub (known in Europe as Saladin) from 1169-1193. The assumption of power by Salah al-Din took place in Egypt under the Fatimide Caliph, and as was common with all the Turkish princes of Moslem Aisa, he represented the same orthodox militant tradition inherited from the Seljuks. In 1171, he succeeded in suppressing the Fatimide Caliphate and proclaimed the return of Egypt to the Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad, and for the first time in two centuries, Egypt became officially Sunni again.

The history of this dynasty can be divided into three periods:-

- a) That of Salah al-Din himself, a formative period bearing the imprint of his personality which was the strongest in the family: 1169-1193.
- b) The period of his early successors, a period of organisation: 1193-1238.
- c) The period of long drawn-out decline: 1238-1250.

The Middle and Near East were already threatened by the Crusades and there were early signs of disintegration of the Caliphate. Taking advantage of the weakness of his predecessors, Salah al-Din began to re-organise his army. He embarked on the policy of holy war and this led him to claim for himself the unified command of the Moslem armies, to win a large share of public opinion for his cause, and extend the kingdom in a more solid manner.

In 1183, Salah al-Din accomplished the task, and the power formed in this way enabled him to utilise the internal crisis of Jerusalem, the difficulties of the Byzantine Empire and thus undertake to drive the Latins (crusaders) out of Palestine and Syria. In 1187, they were crushed at Hattin and Jerusalem became Moslem again after eighty years, and in the ensuing months, almost all the Christian territories fell including a large part of the coast.

Salah al-Din's power was founded on the strength of the army and his whole policy required a strong army. He reconstituted the Mediterranean navy of the Fatimides and was able to resist and drive the crusades by offensives. The fall of the holy city aroused Europe and Frederick Emperor of Germany, Richard I Coeur de Lion and king of England, and Phillip king of France, took the cross, and with them the third crusade began, with Salah al-Din and Richard Coeur de Lion as its chief figures. Salah al-Din made all preparations to meet the attackers; he sought but received no aid from the Caliph, and finally the garrison surrendered. After exchange of terms, peace was finally concluded in November 1192 upon the restoration of the holy cross.

In 1249 al-Salih on his death-bed received the news that Dimyat was again threatened by Louis IX King of France and his chevaliers of the 6th Crusade. The town surrendered without resistance and the French army marched on Cairo in a region intersected by the canals while Nile was at its height: disease spread in its ranks and the line of communication was cut off. The army was entirely destroyed, and King Louis with most of his nobles was taken prisoner. The succession passed to Turan-Shah and then to Al-Ashraf Musa but in 1252, the Ayyubite rule came to an end with Mamluks in power.

The Ayyubites were strictly orthodox as behoved the champions of

Islam against Christianity, and majority of them were Shafi'is. They built and endowed many theological colleges. They also built dykes, dug canals and founded schools and mosques. Among surviving architectural monuments is the citadel of Cairo.

The organisation of the yyubid states followed in several respects the Fatimide pattern and so did their institutions. The Ismaili adherents were so powerful that they were a source of fear to Salah al-Din who, in 1176, laid seige to Masyad, headquarters of Rashid-alDin Sinan, the Old man of the Mountain. He however raised the seige on receiving a promise of immunity against future attacks. It was Sinan's followers who, later, struck awe and terror into the hearts of the Crusaders, and who played an important part in driving them out.

(References from: History of the Arabs, Philip K. Hitti.
The Encyclopaedia of Islam, new edition).

(10) SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING.

- ①) Was Shithraj Jaisi, a Hindu King of Gujrat, converted to Islam?
When, by whom and then what happened.
By: Al-Vaez Dr. H.A. Waljee.
- (2) Parsees: Some of their customs.
By: Mr. Hasenali Alimohamed
- (3) Significations of: "Samavate Sub ve Arzine Sun"
(that is 7 layers of earth and 7 skies).
By: Mr. M. U. Rupani.
- (4) Seljuq caliphate.
By : Mr. Mahomedali H. Rashid.
- (5) Meaning of the following ginan which commences with:-
By: Al-Vaez Gulamhusein Juma.
- (6) What part did Ismailies play in Crusades?
By: Al-Vaez Sultanali Nazerali.
- (7) What are the main principles of Ismailism?
By: Mr. Husenali Alimohamed.
- (8) Life and History about Rabia al Adawiya, that is Rabia Basri.
By: Shamsudin Alibhai.

RELIGIOUS STUDY GROUP,
MOMBASA.

The following are notes and references of the subjects discussed at the FORTY-FIFTH Meeting of the "Mombasa Religious Study Group" held at the residence of Dr. Lalani on Wednesday the 6th April, 1960 from 9.15 p.m. until 1 a.m. 15 Members were present.

K.R.P.

(1) MESSAGE FROM MOWLANA HAZAR IMAM.

The following three messages most graciously sent by Mowlana Hazar Imam pertaining to our 'Study Group' were read:-

(i)

Dated 29.2.1960.

I have read your circular No. 65 about the subjects discussed at your 43rd. Meeting with reference to the Byzantine Empire, its internal weaknesses and the causes for its destruction.

Two books are of the greatest importance for those who wish to study the problem in detail:-

History of the Byzantine Empire - 324-1453 by A.A. Vasiliev, and the second book is a History of the Byzantine Empire by G. Ostrogorsky.

The latter has only recently been translated from Russian, but it would be a difficult task to understand the development, life and fall of the Empire without having read these books.

One other point is extremely important: The Members who are presenting papers on various subjects should aim at reasonable but independent interpretations of the subjects they are discussing. I do not want to read your reports and to be able to tell you from what book a particular sentence has been taken. To avoid this, I advise your members to read at least 4 books on any one subject before presenting it for discussion.

(ii)

Dated 7.3.1960.

I have received your letter of 2nd March, with the Religious Study Group's Circular No. 66 which I read with interest.

(iii)

Dated 16.3.1960

I have received your letter of 9th March. I suggest that every year or every month according to which is most convenient, your Study Group should submit an agenda to me and where possible, I will suggest reference books which your members could read about each subject.

Two books are of the greatest importance for those who wish to study the problem in detail:-

As Count Paroo was shortly proceeding to Switzerland to see Hazar Imam, it was decided to seek guidance of Mowlana Hazar Imam for our future deliberations and study.

(2) FRIENDS' CIRCLE, DAR ES SALAAM.

The notes of their meeting held on the 16th March, whereat Count Paroo was also present, were read with great interest.

(3) ONE SOUL ENTERING INTO ANOTHER DEAD BODY.

Rather an unusual case was reported in today's "Kenya Daily Mail".

"One 3 years old boy Jasvirsingh died in Merath (India). He was being taken for cremation. The father felt to see his face for the last time and found body warm. The dead boy, after a while got up and claimed that in him was the soul of a 24 years youth called Tayagi who had met with an accident some 16 miles away and had died just five hours ago. Official investigations were instituted and the boy recognised

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all members of Tayagi family whom he had never seen before".
 (4) WAS SHITHRAJ JAISI, A HINDU KING OF GUJRAT, CONVERTED TO ISLAM?

Al-Vaez Dr. Walji said that in "Nurun Mubin" by Chunara (first edi. page 338) in "Ismaili Virlo" and in our Ginan "Satgur Nurna Putla" give the following story:-

"In 462 A.H., our Pir Satgur Nur came to India and after passing through various places, he visited Patna and performed many miracles amongst which one was that he made the idols in the temple dance.

Shithraj Jaisi, the king of Patna, was convinced of the truth of the religion and embraced Islam.

In "Gulzare Dawoodi" by Mian Bhai Mulla Abdul Hussein, it is claimed that before our Pir Satgur Nur, other two dais of Mustansirbillah (the 18th Imam) called Ahmed and Abdulla came to Patna, after landing at Cambay in India and due to their performing miracles that Shithraj and his successors Kumarpal, Ajayapal (Yakub) and his Jain teacher Hamacharya Tarmal all embraced Islam, that is, Ismailism.

Bohra historians further claim that the descendants of this first Hindu King converted, whom they called Bharmal were patronised and called to Yemen, trained in Arabic and some of them were given the posts of local "Amils". They also claim that their 34th Dai, Syadna Ismailjee Badrudin was one of the descendants of Shithraj Jaisi.

The Urdu book "Mazhabe Islam" by Moulve Najmul Ghami supports the Bohra claim that Abdula and Ahmed converted Shithraj to Islam.

It was decided to seek references from the Western authors such as Todd (author of Western India) and others.

(5) PARSEE - SOME OF THEIR CUSTOMS.

Further to Circular No. 66 (4), Mr. Huseinali Alimohamed said that on landing in India from Iran, the Parsees were subjected to accept certain Hindu customs, for example, CHANLO on the forehead, wearing of bangles by non-widow women, keeping a small curtain between the bride and the groom at the time of marriage ceremony, etc.

The marriage ceremony amongst Parsees is performed by two priests. The bride and the groom have to sit on the either side of the curtain parting them, both dressed in entirely white clothes. The ceremony must be witnessed by two married persons besides the parents of the couple marrying.

When a Parsee dies, within an hour of his death, the dead person is generally taken to the Parsee Hall, given a bath and clad with white clothes, including, Sudreh and Kusti. If the body can be disposed or buried before sunset it is done so, but not during the hours when the sun is not visible in the sky. In the Parsee populated centres in India, they have Tower of Silence where the dead are carried by four ironstretcher bearers who are dressed in white and who do not talk or even open their mouth lest some germs from the dead body may be inhaled. The body is kept in the Tower of Silence for vultures to devour it. In places where there are no Towers, specially, due to slender population, the dead are reluctantly buried.

The Parsees are forbidden to smoke, but, not forbidden to consume liquor to the state of soberness. They have divided a day in five periods for prayers, i.e. 6 (morning) - 12 (midday), 12 - 3, 3 - 6 (evening), 6 - 12 (midnight) and 12 - 6. Once during each period a Parsee is supposed to recite his prescribed prayer. One has to untie his KUSTI and re-tie with usual four knots during the prayer.

A Parsee is baptised at the age of either seven or nine. The ceremony is called the "Navjot Ceremony" when the child has to drink 'Taro' (urine of a particular white cow which is well looked after). From that day, the parsees must all the time wear 'sadro' (a white garment). It has a small pocket in front and according to their belief,

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the good deeds, which they perform during their life time, are stored in it. They must also tie a string called 'Kasti' round their waist. This string is made from 72 threads woven together to represent the 72 lessons in their prayer book.

(6) SAMAVATE SAB'A WA ARZIN SAB'A (SEVEN EARTHS & SEVEN SKIES).

In holy Quran, in our Gineans as well as in Hindu scripture, frequent references are found indicating the existence of "seven earths and seven skies (or heavens)". Discussing this subject in the "Friends' Circle" in Dar es Salaam, Missionary Abu Aly explaining its meaning had said that the Scientists have numbered seven layers of strotosphers and that the rays of the sun have to pass, through these seven layers before reaching the Earth.

But Mr. M.J. Rupani when dealing with this subject at a greater length said "the seven earths and seven heavens" must be something that contains the whole creation, the whole cosmos, the whole universe, all that exists, visible or invisible". He first explained this subject on physical ground saying that the Earth is surrounded by seven substances or layers such as (1) solid (2) liquid (3) gaseous (4) etheric (5) super-etheric (6) sub-atomic and (7) atomic.

Taking his references from Nasiruddin Tusi's "Tasawwur" pages 6 - 32, 190 (translated by W. Ivanow) and others, Mr. Rupani stressed that the meanings of "seven earths and seven heavens" must be taken spiritually, the seven planes, namely (1) physical (2) astral or emotional (3) mental (4) intuition (5) spiritual (6) monadic and (7) divine which separate man from God.

In "Nakalanki Gita", the seven Patals (earths) are described but were found not to be very comprehensive.

(7) PRINCIPLES OF ISLAM AND ISMAILISM.

Mr. Huseinali Almohamed began by saying that Ismailism is absolutely a part and parcel of Islam. There are 5 main principles in Islam, namely:

(1) Oneness of God, (2) His unfaltered justice (Adal) (3) Prophethood (4) Book (Quran) and (5) the last day of judgement (Kiyamat). We Ismaili replace the "Book" by "Imam".

Mowlana Sultan Mohamed Shah, continued Mr. Huseinali, in his preface to the book "Muhammed the mercy of Nations" has stated:- "We (Muslims) maintain that the Prophet only ordered prayer, fasting and gentleness in all human relations, kindness and consideration for all beasts and animals from the smallest worm to the largest mammal. By the institution of the Ulu'l amr immediately after that to God and Prophet, he ensured that the faith would ever remain living, extending, developing with science, knowledge, art and industry."

Hence, Ismailies believe, the most important principle for them is COMPLETE SUBMISSION TO IMAM-E-ZAMAN.

(8) LIFE OF RABIA AL ADAWIYA (RABIA BASRI).

She was a famous mystic and a saint, said Mr. Shamsudin Ajibhai. She was born in Basra in 713 A.D. Quite a few of her verses are recorded and her teaching is quoted by very many Sufi writers and biographers of the Saints.

Born into a poor home, she was stolen as a child and sold into slavery, but her sanctity secured her freedom, and she retired to a life of seclusion and celibacy, at first in the desert and then in Basra, where she gathered round her many disciples and associates, who came to seek her counsel or prayers or to listen to her teaching.

Her hand was sought in marriage by a number of pious men, but she declined all offers, declaring, "The contract of marriage is for those who have a phenomenal existence. But in my case, there is no such existence, for I have ceased to exist and have passed out of self. I

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exist in God and am altogether His. I live in the shadow of His command. The marriage contract must be asked for from Him, nor from me."

Her life was one of extreme ascetism and other worldliness. Asked why she did not ask help from her friends, she said, "I should be ashamed to ask for this World's goods from Him to whom it belongs, and how should I seek them from those to whom it does not belong?"

Miracles were attributed to her as to other Muslim Saints. Food was supplied by miraculous means for her guests, and to save her from starvation. A camel which died when she was on pilgrimage, was restored to life for her use; the lack of a lamp was made good by the light which shone round about the saint.

It was related that when she was dying, she bade her friends depart and leave the way free for the messengers of God Most High. As they went out, they heard her making her confession of faith, and a voice which responded, "O soul at rest return to thy Lord, satisfied with Him, giving satisfaction to Him. So enter among my servants into my Paradise." (Sura LXXXIX. 27 - 30).

Rabia differs from those of the early Sufis who were simply ascetics and quietists, in that she was a true mystic, inspired by an ardent love, and conscious of having entered into the unitive life with God. She was one of the first of the Sufis to teach the doctrine of pure love.

She died in 801 A.D. and was buried at Basra.

(References from:- Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam Pages 462-463 and Sufism by A.J. Arberry. Pages 42-43).

(9) SUBJECTS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE NEXT MEETING.

- (1) Origin and significance of "Janai" amongst Hindus.
By Mr. M.J. Rupani.
- (2) To look up references from the Western Authors about Hindu King Shithraj embraces Islam.
By: Hon. Missionaries Dr. Waljee and Sultanali Nazerali).
- (3) "Samavate Sab'a wa Arzin Sab'a"
What do the Scientists and geologist have to say about this?
By: Dr. Waljee and Mr. Mansur Satchu),
- (4) The Fatimide literature. When it existed and how and when it was destroyed?
By: Mr. Tajdin Mahomedali Dhala).
- (5) Seljuq Caliphate.
By: Mr. Mohamedali H. Rashid.
- (6) What part did Ismailies play in Crusades?
By: Hon. Missionary Sultanali Nazerali.
- (7) Were the same names of Muslim months pre-Islamic or were they named later?
By: Hon. Missionary Sultanali Nazerali.

TO ALL MEMBERS.

FORTY-SIXTH MEETING of the "Mombasa Religious Study Group will be held on Saturday the 25th June, 1960 at 9.p.m. at Count Paroo's residence. You are requested to attend.

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- (1) Report of Count Paroo about his discussions with Mowlana Hazar Imam about our Study Group.
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- (9) Any other matters.

Hoping that MEMBERS might find it interesting and informative, a copy of a letter written by Sri. A.B. Patel from Aurbindo Ashram, Pondichery to a lady in Mombasa is reproduced. It is a personal letter and therefore be treated as confidential.

K.R.P.

શ્રી અરવિંદાશ્રમ, પોંડીચેરી

તા. ૩. ૬. ૧૯૬૦

ચિ.....બેન,

.....ના અવસાનની ખબર તમે અતિઘાય સાંતિથી સાંભળી હોય અને પ્રભુ ઈચ્છા તરીકે સ્વીકારી લીધી હોય ત્યાં માતૃરૂઢય ઉપર દુખની ઠાયા ન પસરે એ બનવા જોગ નથી. અને તમે તેમાં અપવાદરૂપ બન્યા હો તો તો તમારી સમતા માટે તમને ધન્યવાદ આપવા રહે. પણ હું રૂઢી અનુસાર આશ્વાસન પાઠવવા પ્રયાસ કરવાને બદલે મારી સુલોચ્છા પાઠવું છું કે આ દુખદ પ્રસંગોમાંથી એ તમારો આત્મા વિકાસને પથે એક ડગલું આગળ ભારે અને વિકાસ વેગવાન બનાવવા નિશ્ચયાત્મક બને અને માતાબી કૃપા તેમાં તમને સહાય આપે.

.....મે માધવ પડીતને પુછ્યું કે તમારો પત્ર માતાબે મલ્યો છે કે નહિ. તમારા મારા ઉપરના પત્ર ઉપરથી મને એમ સમજાયું હતું કે તમે માતાબે.....ના અવસાનના ખબર આપ્યા હશે અને અહિં આવી રહેવા માટે માંગણી કરી હશે.....બીજે દિવસે નોલીનીને મલ્યો ત્યારે તેમણે કયું કે તેમાં.....ના અવસાનની ખબર છે પણ તમોએ અહીં આવી રહેવા માટે માંગણી કરી નથી. તેમણે તે પત્ર માધવને જવાબ આપવા અને બ્લેસીંગ પેકેટ મોકલવા મોકલી આપ્યો.

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માધવ અને હું એવા મતના હીએ કે તમારી વાત માતાજીની આગળ રજુ કરતી વખતે તમારો પાસપોર્ટ સાઈઝનો ઉમ્મરનો પડાવેલ ફોટો હોય તો માતાજી નિર્ણય લેતાં સુગમ પડે. તેજ પ્રમાણે.....તમારા બીજા ૩ બાળકોનો ફોટો ફોટો અથવા જુદો જુદો મોકલી આપો તો ચારેય માટેની વાત માતાજી આગળ રજુ થાય. અહિંના જીવનને તમે અનુકુળ બની શકશો કે કેમ આધ્યાત્મિક જીવનનો લાભ લઈ શકશો કે કેમ? કે reaction યવા સંભાવ છે અને પાછળથી પરતાવવાનું રહે તેમ છે માતાજીના કહેવા પ્રમાણે ૧૯૬૦, ૧૯૬૧ અને ૧૯૬૨માં અહિંનું આધ્યાત્મિક કાર્ય એવું દખાણવાળું વાતાવરણ ઉભું કરશે કે કેટલાકને સહન નહિ કરી શકે અને આશ્રમ છોડી જવા સંભાવ તેમને માટે ઉભો થશે. એટલે તમારા ચારના ફોટાઓ ઉપરથી તમારે માટેનો ચોકસ નિર્ણય માતાજી આપી શકશે.

હવે તમે અહિં આવો તે પહેલાં નિચેની બાબતો ધ્યાનમાં લેવા સલાહ આપું છું.

૧- એપ્રિલ માસના "મધર ઈન્ડિયા"માં પહેલા પાના ઉપર "An answer to a request" ના મથાળા નિચે માતાજી તમારા જેવાને તા. ૩૦. ૩. ૧૯૬૦ના રોજ આપેલો જવાબ કાળજીપૂર્વક વાંચી સમજ લેશો.

૨. બાળકો આ જીવન અપનાવી શકશે તેમ જાણે તોજ તેમને અહિં લાવવા સલાહ બારેલું મને લાગે છે. કારણ કે નહિ તો મોટી ઉમરે અહિંના જીવનની ભાગી છુટવાનો બળવો યવા સંભાવ રહે. અને તે વખતે તમારું જીવન ડામાડોળ સ્થિતિમાં આવવાનો સંભાવ ઉભો થાય.

૩. આવતાં પહેલાં પૂર્ણ રીતે અંતર તપાસી આખરી નિર્ણય કરી લેવો સલાહ બારેલું છે. પછી દુન્યા ડોલે કે આકાશ તુટે તો એ ડગવાનું ન રાખવું.

તમારો નિર્ણય અંતરના સાચા અવાજથી લેવાય એવી મારી સુભોચના પાઠવું છું. માતાજી રજા આપશે અને તમે અહીં આવશો તો તે તમને અનુકુળતા રહે તે જરૂર હું જોઈશ.

MOTHER INDIA

April 24, 1960.

AN ANSWER TO A REQUEST.

It is not from disgust for life and people that one must come to Yoga.

It is not to runaway from difficulties that one must come here.

It is not even to find the sweetness of love and protection, for the Divine's love and protection can be enjoyed everywhere if one takes the right attitude.

When one wants to give oneself totally in service to the Divine, to consecrate oneself totally to the Divine's work, simply for the joy of giving oneself and serving, without asking for anything in exchange, except the possibility of consecration and service, then one is ready to come here and will find the doors wide open.

I give you the blessings given to all my children wherever they are in the world and tell you, "Prepare yourself, my help will always be with you."

30.3.1960.

THE MOTHER.

RELIGIOUS STUDY GROUP,
M O M B A S A.

The following are notes and references of the subjects discussed at the FORTY SIXTH Meeting of the "Mombasa Religious Study Group" held at the residence of Count Paroo on Monday the 27th June, 1960, from 9 p.m. to 12.30 a.m. 13 Members were present.

K.R.P.

(1) (a) Count Paroo reported that he had the honour to discuss our Study Group matters with Maulana Hazar Imam in London on the 4th May, 1960. Maulana Hazar Imam appeared to be pleased with our activities. In fact, he had been recommending the Ismailia Association of Burma and Mr. J. H. Lakhani (Chotu) of Bombay to contact our Study Group for formation of similar Group in Rangoon and Bombay respectively.

(b) Maulana Hazar Imam said that if we sent him our Agenda, he would try to recommend us relative reference books on those subjects.

(c) On our request to him to suggest a few subjects, with corresponding reference books, for us to study and discuss those subjects in course of six or twelve months, he had graciously condescended to do so in due course.

(d) In course of above audience Maulana Hazar Imam did casually suggest one or two subjects which our Study Group should discuss and it was decided to place these subjects for discussion on the agenda of our next meeting.

(e) Maulana Hazar Imam highly recommended the new volumes of Encyclopaedia of Islam which have so far reached only B in prints.

(2) P O P E.

The following extract appeared in the "NEWSWEEK" of 9.11.1959:-

'What is it like to be Pope?

On the first anniversary of his election, Pope John ~~XXIII~~ gave a gloomy appraisal. He greeted 162 townspeople from his birth-place, the North Italian village of Sotto il Monte, with an apology for not showing them the sights of Rome. "Unfortunately, I am a prisoner", he said. "I cannot do what I want to do. Every time there are 40 people who tell me what I have to do" Later that day, the Pontiff was more cheerful in his address to more than 15,000 in St. Peter's. Reflecting on the busy months of his pontificate, he said: "It passed like a day".

(3) ISLAM'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS MUSIC.

(5). This subject was discussed by our Study Group, vide Circular No. 66

Newly formed Study Group in Rangoon also discussed this subject at their first meeting held on 5.5.1960 and their notes, elaborating on this subject were read with great interest.

(4) T A S B I - R O S A R Y.

Dr. V.A. Lalani had given a very erudite discourse on this subject in Mombasa Jamatkhana on Friday the 24th June, 1960. The gist of it was as under:-

In Islam and specially in the East, Tasbi is the name given to a number of beads stringed together in form of a circle. At one point of this circular object, there is a loop, and the two ends are passed through a little bitter and decorative bead, where they are tied or woven into a knot. This is the starting point of TASBI. Although differing a little in size number and the arrangement of beads almost all the religions in the world to day possess some form of this object. Calling it by different

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names, they make use of it for the purpose of reciting the name of Allah, the Almighty, or for recalling the name of Incarnation or Deity in whom they believe.

Although a constant companion and an object of daily use by all true believers, the origin, the transformation and the purpose of TASBI has remained so obscure to most of us that our Study Group decided to go into the details of this small but most important article and make a little comparative study of similar objects in different religions.

In ordinary Islamic TASBI the number of beads varies widely from 99 to 102, numbers 101 and 102 being the most favoured numbers specially in the East. Why this should be so will be presently explained as we proceed further with the discussion of origin of TASBI and its transformation from time to time. Number 33 is also finding favour these days which although rare can also be considered in conformity with Holy Prophet's original conception of TASBI.

It is said that the first TASBI was presented by the Prophet to his beloved daughter Bibi Fatima, the wife of Hazeat Ali. This comprised of three different holy names in praise of Allah, namely Allah-O-Akbar, Subhanallah, Alhamdullilah. Each of these holy names was to be recited thirty three times in succession. This is known as Tasbi-e-Bibi-Fatima. In the beginning in absence of any circular object like present day Tasbi it is said that Bibi Fatima used to recall these holy names, taking help of thirty three stones of dates or thirty three pebbles. Every time she would start with one name and finishing all thirty three stones she would go on to the second and then to the third name every time taking help of thirty three stones to count the right number. It was very inconvenient to keep loose stones or pebbles in safe custody or to collect them when needed. Also counting loose stones was very cumbersome. It was probably decided therefore to collect three time thirty three stones of dates or some such object and string them together giving it a circular appearance.

There is a second belief and that is that two of these three holy names had to be recited thirty three times each and the third holy name for thirty four times, thus making a total of one hundred beads. This belief is also very strongly favoured by some. So much then for 99 and 100 beads.

Later on at the point where the knot was tied a little more decorative and an imposing larger bead was added and the present day appearance of the Tasbi was complete. This big and imposing bead or stone is given the name of Imam. Imam means a leader. Since all the recitals of different names of Tasbi start at this point, we call it Imam. Imam leads and all the other ordinary small beads follow.

There are two extra beads which are introduced to inform the believer when the requisite number of beads are finished, are called Mooazzin in Arabic the exact meaning of which in English would be "An Informer". In the East these beads are called the name "Banga" "Bangi" or "Bango" which all mean the same thing.

Of late some people have started to use a small Tasbi of 33 beads only. Since according to original belief Prophet had ordered each name to be recited 33 times, this small Tasbi or 33 beads is quite in conformity with that order, but to have two breaks at 11 and 22 in this small Tasbi of 33 beads does not convey any meaning.

The last and the most important point about Tasbi is its purpose. One is likely to remark that the purpose of Tasbi is quite evident and that is to recall, recite or remember the name of our Lord the Creator. It is not quite so simple as it seems. Out of various purposes that one can easily enumerate two particular ones need strongly to be stressed are:

- 1) Congregational Uniformity
- 2) Individual Discipline.

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(5) ORIGIN AND SIGNIFICANCE OF "JANOI" AMONGST HINDUS.

"A Brahmin is supposed to have 16 SANSKARS or Initiations to take at various stages of his life and JANOI is one of these Sanskars", said Mr. M. J. Rupani.

In the JANOI there are three threads and three knots. These signify that the boy has taken a threefold vow to practise righteousness in Thought, Word and Deed. When JANOI is tied MANTRAS are recited.

When he marries his JANOI is changed for another with six threads and six knots. This is to signify that now he is responsible for the progress of two lives, his own and his wife's.

At the time of JANOI he is also given a GURU-MANTRA called GAYATRI-MANTRA (), which translated into Gujarati reads thus:

Mr. Rupani said that above Mantra very much resemble the wordings in Islamic Namaz or our new Dua.

It is obligatory to keep the JANOI clean. That is why one has to lift it and hand it on the ear to keep it off the ground while sitting to answer the call of nature.

Each year on full moon day of the month of SHRAVAN the old JANOI is changed for a new one with appropriate religious rites.

If through mischance the JANOI breaks, the man must stand still here he happens to be without moving. A new JANOI is brought to him and he wears it there and then repeating the MANTRA.

The observation of this rigid rule is enjoined to serve as an ever present strong reminder to the wearer of the JANOI that he has taken an important vow to progress by following the path of righteousness in thought, word and deed.

Besides Brahmins, Hindus of the Luhana and Suthar casts also wear JANOI. The Bania caste Hindus wear it in another form called KANTHHI.

Mr. Rupani concluding said, "As is evident from what is given above, the JANOI is meant to help the spiritual or moral progress of its wearer but few understand its meaning and purpose. When I approached a graduate Brahmin friend of mine for some information on JANOI, I was surprised to hear him tell me regretfully that he knew nothing about it, although he himself wore one.

(6) "SAMAVATE SAB'A WA ARZIN SAB'A" WHAT DO THE SCIENTISTS AND GEOLOGISTS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THIS?

Dr. Waljee said that he could not find any reference except on Pates 43/46 of "Marfatna Ful" Part II:-

It was decided that Mr. Sadrudin Shivji to write to some Scientific Research Institution in U.S.A. and find out more about it.

(7) THE FATIMIDE LITERATURE, WHEN IT EXISTED AND HOW AND WHEN IT WAS DESTROYED.

Prof. Ivanow in his 'Guide to Ismaili Literature' has dealt extensively on this subject", said Mr. Tajdin M. Dhala". He has divided the Ismaili literature into following periods:-

1. Ismaili literature from the beginning of the movement till the rise of the Fatimides in North Africa.
2. The next period coincides with the Fatimide rule.
3. The post-Fatimide period, i.e., the period of satr, first continues the earlier tradition. But very soon, with probably the next generation, the character of literature changes, and the chief feature of it becomes the tendency to epitomize the earlier knowledge.
4. The next period begins with stagnation and decay.
5. The latest phase of the evolution brings us to a still greater degree of the decay, i.e. the disappearance of Arabic studies, and the loss of the ancestral culture.
6. The transfer of the religious centre of the Nizari branch to India, under the protection of the British Government, helped to a great extent the revival of Ismaili literature in Persia and Central Asia. Several interesting works were produced and improvement of educational facilities may cause a great revival in future.

Taking his references from several other books such as (i) "History of the Arabs", By Hitte, (ii) "Rise of the Fatimides" by Prof. Ivanow (iii) "The History of the Assassins" by Von. Hammer and (iv) "The Literary History of the Arabs" by Nicholson, Mr. Tajdin continued:-

The Fatimide dynasty ruled in North Africa for about two hundred years from the time of Imam Shah Mahedi till the Imamate of Mowlana Shah Nizar. This was a great age of enlightenment and learning. The world famous and the oldest university Al-Azhar - was established in the city of Cairo. During this period numerous volumes were written on philosophy of religion, science medicine, astronomy, mathematics, history, jurisprudence and other subjects. It is of importance to note that most of the works were accomplished by Persian Ismailies e.g., Nasir Khushraw, Abu Ali Sina, Qazi Noman etc. The latter is apparently the most famous of all the Ismaili authors. Originally a Maliki, he joined the service of the Fatimides when he embraced the Ismaili religion under Imam Shah Mahedi and produced a great number of works of dogmatical and few of historical content, which are very interesting because he was contemporary with the events described in them.

Practically nothing is known about the Ismaili literature from the beginning of the Imamate till the rise of the Fatimides in North.....

Africa. After this period it attained great brilliancy. Ibn-Killis was the first outstanding patron of learning in Fatimide Egypt. He established an academy and spent on it a large sum. Imam Shah Aziz was himself a poet and a lover of learning. It was he who made the Azhar Mosque an academy. One of the most remarkable foundations of the Fatimides was the Dar-al-Hikmah (hall of wisdom or science), established by Imam Shah Hakim in 1005 A.D. for the teaching and propagation of the Shia doctrine. In conjunction with it he instituted a fund whose income was to be spent for copying manuscripts, repairing books and general maintenance. The Hall was connected with the Royal Palace and contained a library and a room for meetings. Its curriculum comprised, in addition to the especially Islamic subjects, astronomy and medicine.

In the days of Imam Mustansirbillah the downfall which resulted in the dissipation of his treasures brought about an even greater loss in the dispersion of the royal library started by Imam Shah Aziz and said to have contained at the time 200,000 books. It treasured 2400 illuminated Korans. Among its rarities were manuscripts in the hand of Ibn-Muqlah and Al-Tabari.

In the 100 to 1068 A.D. a reporter witnessed twenty five camels carrying away books. Valuable manuscripts were used for lighting the fires in the homes of Turkish officers, the mercenaries, and exquisite bindings served to mend the shoes of their slaves. Imam Shah Mustansirbillah's successors built up new collections. When a century later Salah Din made his triumphant entry into the royal palace its library still housed over a hundred thousand volumes, some of which were distributed among his men.

The Abbasside caliphs who usurped the rule of the Fatimide Imams saw that every trace of their existence was extinguished. Thus whenever they came across any literature in the possession of royal libraries or Imam's followers these were destroyed instantly; more so since those works on the philosophy of Ismaili religion were secretly guarded.

Whatever Fatimide literature was discovered came from private collections. It is however believed that WESTERN Ismailis (that is the Ismailis of al-MUSTALI have preserved a considerable number of works belonging to their religious literature in YEMEN where, after the fall of Fatimide they enjoyed more safety and security.

(8) WERE THERE SOME NAMES OF MUSLIM MONTHS PRE-ISLAMIC OR WERE THEY NAMED LATER?

Al-Vaez Sultanali Nazarali said:-

The pre-Islamic Arabs had their own calendar. According to different authors different names are given to months then known. Al Biruni mentions these:- Al Motamir (= Safar I) Nadjir, Khawwan Bussan, Hantam or Hunam, Zubba or Zubbi, al Asamm, Adil, Nafiq, Waghil, Huwa, Buraq.

The Encyclopaedia of Islam says that "the names of the months were already fixed (in the later period of Jahiliya) as we know them in Muslim Period. Except that Muharram latter on took the place of Safar I; they were Safar I, Safar II, Rubi I, Rubi II, Djumada I, Djumada II, Rajab, Shaban, Ramadhan, Shawwal, Dhu Ikada, Dhul Hijja.

The Mohamedan calendar was established by Calif 'Umar. The Calif discussed the matter with his officers and who, after investigating the customs of the Greeks and Persians, decided to establish an era. Some proposed the date of the Prophet's birth, but this date was not certain. Hazrat Ali is then said to have proposed to take the Hijra as the beginning of the era, as it marked the date when Prophet began to assume Sovereign Power. This decision came to be taken in the year 17 or 18 Hijra. Some however say 16 but the general view is 17. The year of Hijra was thus chosen as the year 1.

(9) T H E S E L J U Q S.

Taking his reference from several books, Mr. Mahomedali H. Rashid dealt at great length on their origin, development and Ismaili relations and influence during Seljuq PERIOD.

The advent of Seljuqian Turks is a notable epoch in Islamic history, and it coincides with what is known as the peak of Fatimide period in Egypt, the reign of the Caliph al-Mustansir (1036-1094) under whom the Fatimide Empire included the whole of North Africa, Sicily, Egypt, Syria and Western Arabia.

At the time of the appearance of Seljuq Turks who, by eleventh century, were entering the world of Islam, the Empire of Caliphate sustained from Baghdad had nearly vanished. These Turks came by the migration of whole tribes of free nomadic Turks who were cut off from expansion into China and were thus forced to expand westwards. These Turkish invaders of Islam belong to the Oghuz tribes usually known as Seljuqs after the name of the military family that led them.

With the death of Sultan Mahmud Ghaznawi in 1040, the power of Ghaznawis in Persia came to an end and in 1055, Tughrul, founder of the Seljuq dynasty entered Baghdad and took the Abbaside Caliph under his protection. The important names among Seljuqi descendants are: Tughrul (1037 - 1063) who was founder of the dynasty, Alp Arslan (1063 - 1072) Sultan Malikshah (1072 - 1092) and Sanjar (1117 - 1157). With Sanjar's death in 1157, the epoch of the 'Great Seljuqs' came to an end.

The Seljuqs were Sunni Moslems and they were rigidly orthodox. Their grand munificence towards scholarship and science rivalled that of the golden days of the Abbaside rule, and under them learning and arts flourished abundantly.

Sultan Tughrul himself was a follower of Imam Abu Hanifa and under him followers of Al-Ashari were suspected of unorthodoxy and persecuted. But on his death and with the accession of Alp Arslan and the rise of Nizam ul-Mulk, Asharism became the dominant sect.

The new rulers of the Empire relied largely in administration of Persians and on Persian bureaucracy. One of the most notable figures was the great Persian minister Nizam ul-Mulk, who developed and systematised the trend towards feudalism.

Nizam ul-Mulk was born in 1017 A.D. He was the Minister of Alp Arslan and after his death of Sultan Malik Shah. He was a most capable administrator, an acute statesman, a devout and orthodox Sunni, harsh towards heretics and especially the Shi'ites and Ismailis.

The Seljuqs were nomadic Turks who depended on Persians in the administration of the country; Ismaili influence was so great that some of them became converts of the faith (see p.p. 71 of the "Order of the Assassins"). The Ismaili da'wat was conducted by skilful and devoted dais sent from Egypt and Fida'is were carefully trained not only in the use of arms, the endurance of fatigue and the arts of disguise, but also in some cases in foreign and even European languages, and this enabled Hassan as-Sabbah to organise a formidable force in Alamut to face the extremely anti-Ismaili movement of the Seljuqites who were Sunnis.

It was during this period that the great Fida'i, Hassan as-Sabbah, having come under the influence of dai Abdul Malik Attash embraced Ismailism. He went to Egypt and met the Imam al-Mustansir Billah who was so impressed by his faith and devotion that he was entrusted with the difficult task of upholding the succession of Nizar, the Imam's eldest son as against the claim of Musteali, a younger one who was backed up by powerful relatives from his mother's side.

Hassan returned to Persia but as the rulers then were extremely anti-Ismaili, he thought of erecting an impregnable fortress on the top of Alamut mountain. When Alamut was properly organised, he sent his trusted men to bring the eight year old Imam Shah Razi from Egypt who was in the hands of his enemies. Although the Imam was restored to the Ismailis, Alamut the headquarters, was not safe for quite a long time. Nizam ul-Mulk, the Prime Minister fearing the rapidly growing power of Hassan prevailed upon his king to invade Alamut. When the news reached Hassan as-Sabbah, he held a Conference of leading Ismailis in the fort and it was resolved that instead of fighting the enemy against heavy odds, the root cause of the trouble be removed. Though every Ismaili in the fort was ready to

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fight to the last man and give every drop of blood for the Imam; Hassan was averse to cause needless bloodshed. He therefore decided to remove Nizam ul-Mulk whose evil advice had made the Seljuqi king to undertake the invasion. This was accomplished by one of the Fidais or devoted Ismaili. This incident had the desired effect on the enemy and the invading army returned to its country.

Almut was threatened a second time by Sultan Sanjar, but Hassan again averted the open encounter by sending a warning to the invader. When Sultan Sanjar was asleep in his tent, a Fiday entered the tent quietly and striking a dagger in the ground near the royal bed, left a note. The Sultan on waking up was startled by the sight of dagger and picked up the note which read: "Sultan Sanjar, beware! had not thy character been respected, the hand which struck this dagger into the hard ground could, with greater ease, have struck into thy soft bosom". Apparently, the threat and the desired result, for the Great Seljuqi king abandoned his undertaking.

(10) SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING.

- (1) Is Quran a complete Book applicable for all times and all places?
(ALL members were requested to study this subject and bring their view points with authoritative references and examples).
- (2) What were the difference between Hazrat Ali and Mavja?
(Dr. H. A. Waljee and Mr. Mahomedali H. Nurmohamed).
- (3) What part did Ismailis play in Crusades?
(Al-Vaez Sultanali Nazarali)
- (4) Is there any Quranic reference about Bibi Fatima's marriage with Hazrat Ali?
(Mr. Huseinali Alimohamed).
- (5) "Samavate Sab'a wa Arzin Sab'a"
Scientific and geological proofs about this.
(Mr. Sadrudin Shivji and Mr. Mansur Satchu).

RELIGIOUS STUDY GROUP,

M O M B A S A.

The following are notes and references of the subjects discussed at the FORTY-SEVENTH meeting of the "Mombasa Religious Study Group" held at the residence of Count Paroo on Friday the 9th September, 1960 from 9.15 to 12.30 a.m. 14 Members were present.

K.R.P.

(1) GUIDANCE FROM MOWLANA HAZAR IMAM (LETTER DATED 19.7.1960).

"I have received your letter of 4th July concerning your Religious Study Group with the Circular No. 68 which I have read with much interest.

"I will not write subjects for you to discuss, but that you may certainly submit your advance Agenda and when I have time and wherever possible, I will guide you to suitable authorities on the subjects under discussions.

"For example, the article "Ali" in the new edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam is very sound.

"Remember however, that when outstanding Professors come up with new theories to explain the great problems in history, they tend to over-emphasize their theories, and you should not accept what is said in the books I recommend to you, or the Encyclopaedia of Islam as meaning that that the books or the Encyclopaedia are correct in everything they say, or that we should necessarily agree with the author's views.

"In general, if you are looking for authorities on the subjects you are discussing, you should look up the subject in the new Encyclopaedia of Islam, and at the end of every article, you will find listed the most important sources."

A G A K H A N.(2) RE: RE-BIRTH IN ISLAM.

MOWLANA HAZAR IMAM in his letter to Mr. Chotu Lakhani of Bombay has graciously written as under:-

"I have received your letter of 27th June, 1960 with the summary of the talk on "Re-Birth in Islam" by Mr. M.I. Qadri.

"The only point which I find correct in Mr. Qadri's talk is that Muslims are very divided on the question of rebirth.

"If you wish to go into the question in detail, I suggest you read the Quran, taking particular note of references to rebirth, and to the life hereafter and if after that you cannot make up your mind, I suggest you read any collection of Hadith which you can get. Of course many of the Hadith will be apocryphal, but they do in the general sense represent Islamic thinking at the time of the Prophet.

(3) AL-VAEZ GULAMALI SHAH'S TOUR TO PUNJAB (WEST PAKISTAN).

Al-Vaez Gulamali Shah gave very informative talk and narrations of his recent Vaez tour in Punjab.

(4) THE ORIGIN OF KHOJA COMMUNITY.

Gist of the talk given by Mr. Mohammed Omar Kokil on above subject before the Study Group of Bombay was read and circulated.

(5) A V T A R & I M A M A T.

Count Paroo, quoting from the book called "A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO

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INTEGRAL YOGA" published by Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry said:-

"An Avtar, roughly speaking, is one who is conscious of the presence and power of the Divine born in him or descended into him and governing from within his will and life and action; he feels identified inwardly with this divine power and presence.

The Avtar takes upon himself the nature of humanity in his instrumental parts, though the consciousness acting behind is divine. That does not prevent the Avtar from acting as men act and using the movements of Nature for his life and work.

The Divine puts on an appearance of humanity, assumes the outward human nature in order to tread the path and show it to human beings, but does not cease to be the Divine.

When the Divine descends, he takes upon himself the burden of humanity in order to exceed it - he becomes human in order to show humanity how to become Divine. There is therefore in him a double element - human in front, Divine behind. It acts according to the need of the Lila, not according to men's ideas of what it should or should not do.

The Divine Manifestation, even when it manifests in mental and human ways, has behind it a consciousness greater than the mind and not bound by the petty mental and moral conventions of this very ignorant human race - so that to impose these standards on the Divine is to try to do what is irrational and impossible.

The Avtar is not supposed to act in a non-human way - he takes up human action and uses human methods with the human consciousness in front and the Divine behind. If he did not, his taking a human body would have no meaning and would be of no use to anybody. He could just as well have stayed above and done things from there.

There are two sides of the phenomenon of Avtarhood, the Divine Consciousness and the instrumental personality. The Divine Consciousness is omnipotent but it has put forth the instrumental personality in Nature under the conditions of Nature and it uses it according to the rules of the game.

The Divine does not need to suffer or struggle for himself; if he takes on these things it is in order to bear the world-burden and help the world and men. The Divine bears them and at the same time shows the way out of them; otherwise his assumption of human nature has no meaning and no utility and no value.

The Divine Grace alone has the power to intervene and change the course of Universal Justice. The great work of the Avtar is to manifest the Divine Grace upon earth. To be a disciple of the Avtar is to become an instrument of the Divine Grace.

The chief purpose of avtarhood is to give to men a concrete proof that the Divine can live upon earth.

To believe or not to believe in the possibility of avtarhood can make no difference to the bare fact. If God chooses to manifest in a human body I do not see how any human thought, approval or disapproval can affect in the least His decision; and if He takes birth in a body, the denial of men cannot prevent the fact from being a fact, and if He decides not to incarnate in a human body, the faith, certitude and belief of all humanity cannot in the least alter the fact that He is not incarnate."

Continuing, Count Paroo said, PAUL BRUNTON in his book "THE INNER REALITY" also supports similar theory - He says:-

- (a) "The Divine Spirit is everywhere present, but must be concentrated through some outlet to be effective. Electricity exists, but unless you can convert and concentrate it through the generator it will not flow through the wires and light your lamp.
- (b) "If Spirit is to help human beings it must find an outlet through another human being. So when God chooses to make His Presence felt, He usually does so by using some individual as His channel".

Count Paroo then compared the above Hindu belief with ours about Imamats and quoted the following extracts from "KALAME PIR" By Nasir Khushraw:-

- i) The 'Light' of Prophethood existed before the creation of the World. The same is the case with the 'Light' of Imamats.
- ii) Imam is always present in the world, which cannot exist without him even for a moment (as the Prophet said), it is to be assumed that he was ever present in the period of other Prophets.
- iii) He is superior to all Prophets and saints. He is to complete his preaching of religion, supplementing the lacuna left by the Prophet in his system. To him the faithful must swear allegiance (Bayat).
- iv) Imam can completely disregard the Shariat; can cancel it or alter it. He can at any time cancel his own earlier commandments or any prescription given by his predecessors. His followers, therefore, have no right to judge him by his actions, or to follow comprehension of ordinary mortals.
- v) PERSONALLY, AS INDIVIDUALLY, EXCEPT FOR THE DIVINE POWER WHICH IS CONNECTED WITH THEM, THE IMAMS ARE ORDINARY MORTALS SUBJECT TO ALL THE INFIRMITIES WHICH ARE INSEPARABLE FROM OUR OWN PHYSICAL BODIES.

SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING.

- 1) Gist and comments to be obtained on Hazeat Ali from new edition of the Encyclopaedia Islam.
(By: Messrs. Mahomedali H. Rashid, Mahomedali Nurmohamed and Dr. H.A. Walji. All three to prepare their comments separately).
- 2) What was "Ikhwan-as-Safah"
(By: Al-Vaez Gulamhussein Juma).
- 3) Is Quran a complete book applicable for all times and all places?
(ALL Members are requested to study this important subject and to bring their notes).
- 4) What were the differences between Hazrat Ali and Maviya?
(By: Al-Vaez Dr. H.A. Waljee and Mr. Mahomedali H. Nurmohamed).
- 5) What part did Ismailies play in Crusades?
(By: Al-Vaez Dr. H. A. Waljee and Mr. Mahomedali H. Nurmohamed).
- 6) Is there any Quranic reference about Bibi Fatima's marriage with Hazrat Ali?
(By: Mr. Huseinali Alimohamed).
- 7) "Samavate Sab'a wa Arzin Sab'a".
Scientific and geological proofs about this.
(By: Mr. Sadrudin Shivji and Mr. Mansur Satchu).
- 8) Other subjects.



