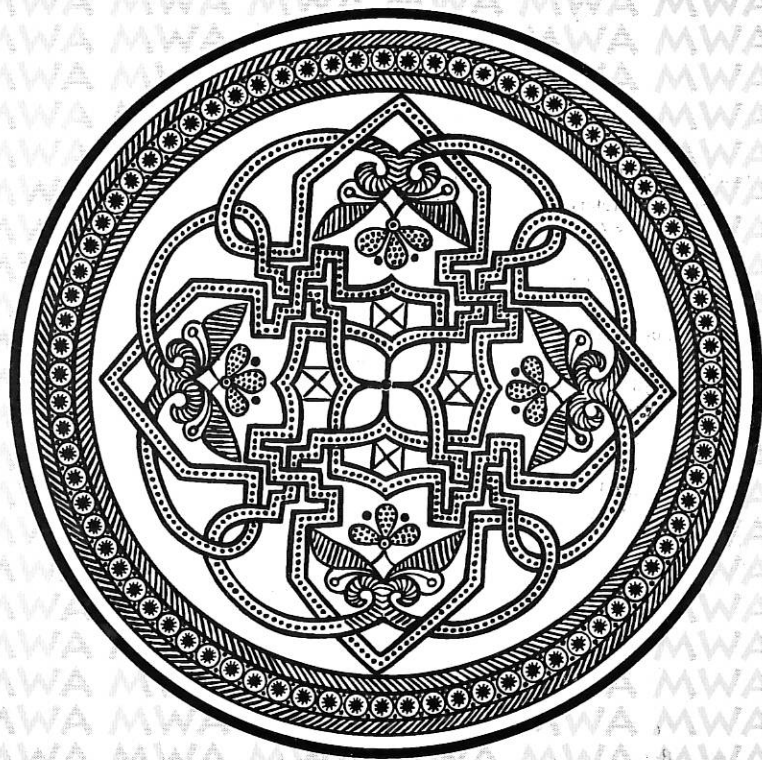


The **MUSLIM WOMAN**

VOLUME XXXIV No. 2

June 2001



A quarterly journal published by The Muslim Women's Association (Regd. Charity)

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TO NOVEMBER 2001

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❧ IN THIS ISSUE ❧

VOL: XXXIV No.2	JUNE 2001
Editorial	1
Arabic Calligraphy	3
The Political Status of Women ... Part 3	6
Do we really want the EU?	10
Poetry	16
Khamr—Alcohol and other Intoxicants in Islam	11
Juniors' Corner	23
Kitchen Talk	26

❧ MEMBERSHIP ❧

The Muslim Women's Association is open to all Muslim Women. Membership Fees (which includes the subscription to *The Muslim Woman*) are: Annual UK £15 Overseas £20 Life membership UK £100 Overseas £120. Meetings of the Muslim Women's Association take place on the second Sunday of each month

❧ ALL CORRESPONDENCE ❧

should be sent to our address, THE MUSLIM WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION, P.O.Box 100, London W5 2XU. Articles, letters and other matter appearing in this publication do not necessarily express the official views of the Executive Committee of The Muslim Women's Association.

BAZAAR

Sunday, 22nd July from 1.30pm–7.30pm
Islamic Cultural Centre,
146 Park Road,
London NW8 7RG.

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE BENEFICENT, THE MERCIFUL

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers

Assalamu Alaykum,

The tragic news from Nepal was shocking, to say the least. How can a son kill his nearest and dearest in such a brutal way? Of course as outsiders we shall never know the true background leading up to this event. But, by analysing what we have been told by the media, we, as Muslims, may reflect on two issues: alcohol/drugs and arranged marriages.

The Qur'an tells us that there is some benefit in intoxicants but much evil, hence prohibition. The evil is all too evident what has happened in Nepal.

On the highly emotive subject of arranged marriages one has to tread carefully. Most parents have the best interest in mind for their children. However, conflict can arise manifold for different reasons. Often the aspirations of the parents are not those of the young persons of today as has been the case in Nepal.

To address this problem the Metropolitan Police together with the Foreign Office held today (14th June) a consultation conference in London. Arranged, often forced, marriages is not just an issue for Muslims but also for Jews, Sikhs, Hindus, and others.

Let us ponder about this two issues. Why not make it the topic for one of our future monthly meetings.

THE MUSLIM WOMEN, published quarterly by The Muslim Women's Association, UK.
All articles and news for publication should be sent to the editor.
Typeset by Yahya El-Droubie, Croydon, TEL: 020 8654 8801



FORTHCOMING EVENT

Annual Bazaar

Sunday 22nd of July 2001

from 1.30pm—7.30pm

at the Islamic Cultural Centre, 146 Park Road, London,
NW8 7RG.

Admission: adults £1, children over the age of 12, 50
pence.

Early indication shows a great interest in this event. The variety of goods on offer will be mindboggling and last, but not least, delicious food from around the world to taste or even to take home is reason enough to bring your friends along. So don't forget to pencil in the date in your diary. If you have something to sell, why not hire a table for only £20. **See you there!**

All proceeds from the Bazaar are in aid of the MWA and Palestine Relief.

ARABIC CALLIGRAPHY AND ITS RELIGIOUS IMPACT ON MUSLIMS

Sultan-ul-Hasan Farooqui

The art of calligraphy has been a noble art through the ages. Until fifty years ago in China it used to be an important condition for a Government Minister to be a competent calligrapher. In India, during the days of the Mughal Empire, it was essential for all the members of the royal family to learn the art of calligraphy. Queen Victoria was a competent calligrapher and was good in drawing skills. Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw had beautiful handwritings. My father taught me and my brothers calligraphy when we were small children. To have bad handwriting was considered as something of bad character.

Unfortunately the advent of typewriters and ball point pens has damaged the art of calligraphy in both the aristocracy and the populace. The situation is even worse today with computers available in schools to young children. Handwriting as a subject is sadly no longer taught. One will find a world of difference, for example, between the handwriting of George Bernard Shaw (dramatist, 1865-1950) and Graham Green (writer, 1904-1991).

In this age of typesetting by computer when a number of different type faces are available, calligraphers are becoming increasingly an extinct species. Although Arabic books, magazines and newspapers are printed in various Arabic type faces, the Holy Qur'an is still printed from calligraphy. I haven't seen yet a Qur'an printed in type. Across the Muslim world the Holy book is calligraphed in various styles,

Thanks goodness, there are still calligraphers in the Muslim

world today. Although Arabic is not the official language of the modern state of Turkey, still some of the best Arabic calligraphers of the world come from there. Once every five years an International Arabic Calligraphy Competition is held in Turkey.

There are two basic styles of Arabic calligraphy as there are two families of English type faces, serif and san serif. The old style Kufic is written in square shaped letters lending itself well for ornamental/monumental writing and the later cursive writing of which there are six distinct styles, namely, Thuluth, Naskhi, Muhaqqaq, Rayhani, Tawqi and Rika.

These six styles are known as *al-aqlam al sittah* or *shish qalam* (the six pens, or calligraphic styles).

The Arabic script in North and North-West Africa as well as in Spain developed slightly different. Here we have Western Kufic plus the four distinct styles of Qayrawani, Andalusi, Fasi and Sudani.

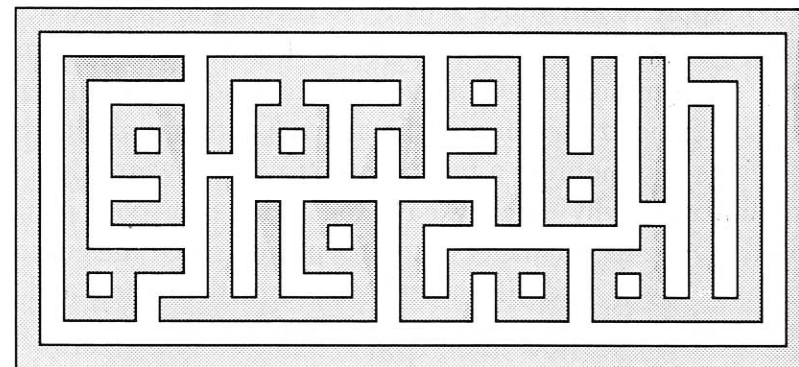
Arabic calligraphy in its highest form is more than just beautiful handwriting—an art form. It was the need to write down the Qur'an precisely and beautiful, worthy of its divine message, which is at its root. "Calligraphy in Arabic is referred to as *handasat al-khatt* (the geometry of line), 'line' meaning 'letters or writing'." All cursive scripts since the 4th century *hijra* have developed from the same geometric method based on the *alif* and the circle. It is an exact science.

Calligraphy has become a form of expression of the personality of the calligrapher; a student of calligraphy can spot the name of the calligrapher and the period the same way as an art student can recognise a portrait painted by Rembrandt, Van Gogh or Annigoni.

In many Muslim homes the walls are decorated with

calligraphic designs rather than paintings and photographs representing human beings. A beautifully calligraphed Qur'anic verse is an inspiration to the reader/viewer.

At the recent inauguration of 'Al Manar, The Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre', in North Kensington, HRH The Prince of Wales and other dignitaries, were presented with calligraphy paintings by the chairman of the Centre, Ali Omar Ermes.



Dear Members,

We, the Muslim Women's Association are trying to raise **ADVERTISING** for the newsletter. You can help by: calling attention to the adverts you see in 'The Muslim Woman' and asking your business acquaintances and family if they would wish to advertise. Please contact the editor for rates.

THE POLITICAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN CLASSICAL ISLAM

PART 3

...This *hadith* has so frequently been used as an impediment to appoint women to responsible positions that we have to discuss it in detail. In my opinion the women's alleged "deficiency of intelligence" in this *hadith* must be restricted in scope to the original context as it was used: the limited capacity of women to testify in certain well-defined legal cases (as *hudud*, e.g.) and it does not apply to any other activity. According to the Science of *Hadith*, a tradition is unacceptable if it is (i) against human reason; (ii) contradicts the Qur'an; (iii) contradicts the historical facts. An extended meaning of the above *hadith* has all the three weaknesses (To mention a few points: If women were "deficient in intelligence" why do they have the right to dispose of their property? Or be the manager or trustee of a trust? Or the guardian of orphans? Why had [Prophet] Muhammad himself and the rightly guided Caliphs sought out women's advice and gave importance to their opinion? Why are women acceptable as transmitters of traditions? Why did Imam Abu Hanifah conditionally, and Imam Tabari unconditionally permit women to be judges? Why did the Prophet approve, and even appoint female *imams* for group of women?)

Another frequently applied argument against women's leadership is that since they cannot be imams for a mixed gathering, they cannot preach to the people on Fridays, which is the right and duty of every ruler. To refute this argument recall that the classical Muslim Law defined three tokens of rulership:

the *khutbah* (preaching from the pulpit at the congregational prayer), the *sikkah* (right to issue coins with the ruler's name) and the *tiraz* (embroidering the name and symbol into the royal gown). The first Caliphs were imams of the Friday prayer themselves and they concluded the introductory part of the prayer with an invocation for the Prophet and an eulogy for his family and Companions. Also, they preached on theological or daily questions. The eloquence of some Caliphs was proverbial, Abd al-Malik, e.g., was remembered by a poet as "the day he died the minbars were morning/the minbars were mourning the death of their rider".

After conquering far-away countries and sending governors there, the governor became the *imam* of the Friday prayer in his own province, and he finished the introductory prayer with an invocation for the Caliph. (The first who did this was Abd Allah b. Abbas who ruled Basra in Caliph Ali's name). By the time of the Abbassids the power of the Caliphs had become so weak that the Caliph could not appear personally in front of the people of his capital city (Al-Radi 322-329/934-940 was the last who stepped on the minbar), and they had to be content with a mere inclusion of their name in the invocation. When Mawardi wrote his book a simple invocation of the Caliph's name had become the token of Caliphate instead of the right to preach personally, that is the Question whether a woman can or cannot be imam had nothing to do any more with her capacity to be a leader.

In the history of Islam there were very few examples of women delivering public speeches from the pulpit, like A'ishah the Prophet's wife did in Basra when calling the people against Ali, or the warrior-kahinah Umm Sadir Sajah bint Aws b. Hiqq, wife of the false prophet Musaylamah, who had her *mu'adhdhins* and

regularly preached from the minbar. The Muslim women rulers (Shejarata Durr, Radiyah Sultanah, Al-Hurra Sayyidah etc.), only had their names mentioned in the invocation. The traveller Ibn Battutah reports that Khadijah, ruler of [the] Maldives and daughter of the Sultan Jalal al-Din Umar, was mentioned by the *imam* of the mosque in the Friday prayers and on other days with these words: "O Lord, look upon, Thy Handmaid, whom Thou has made pre-eminent in knowledge of the two worlds, and hast made her a means of mercy towards all the Muslims, that is, the Sultanah Khadijah ..."

Women rulers in Islam were also entitled to the second token of rulership, the *Sikkah*: there are coins with Shejarata Durr's and Radiyah Sultanah's names. As for the *tiraz*, it was not only practised by the male ruler but—under the Spanish Umayyads—by their wives and daughters as well. The poetess Wallada, daughter of Muhammad III al-Mustakfi embroidered daring poems on the hem of her dress, and the custom has become so widespread that in Fra Lippo Lippi's Coronation of the Virgin (Uffizi Gallery, Florence) Arabic-looking calligraphic decorations on the sleeves of the Virgin and on the border of her dress are used to represent her royal standing.

There are some jurists who found in the Qur'an and the Sunnah the proof for the permissibility of women's leadership. With reference to the verse (IX:71), "Believers, men and women, are protectors one of another: *they enjoin what is right, and forbid what is evil, they observe regular prayers ... establish worship ...*" Mufti Usmani claims that the part in italics in this verse defines the basic duties of the state, what can only be executed by a person in authority. The symmetric role of men and women in the verse implies that both can be repository of state authority. (The

problem with this argument is the interpretation of the words *maruf* and *munkar* which do not mean "right" and "evil" generally but, in this context, they signify "true belief" and "polytheism or disbelief", respectively.)

According to Justice Hussain, as "there is no prohibition in the Qur'an against the election of a woman to the high office of head of state" (actually there is a positive example, that of the Queen of Sheba, called Bilqis in Arabic folklore), the *fiqh* rule that "lawfulness is inherent in everything unless there be reason for its unlawfulness or prohibition" should determine the question. Hussain's opinion must also be debated. As there is a solitary *hadith* (that of Abu Bakra, classed *sahih* by Tirmidhi) prohibiting this practice, we cannot say that "we do not have reason for its unlawfulness". On the other hand, by the Principles of *Fiqh*, a *hadith wahid* cannot make an action *haram* but only *makruh*, that is something which is better to avoid than to do.

A further objection, which, as we have seen in A'ishah's case, has frequently been used against women's leadership, is the obligatory seclusion, the prohibition of unaccompanied travel and intermingling with the other sex. But after the first Caliphs, this objection had lost its significance; being afraid of assassination, the rulers never went out without courtiers, bodyguards and secretaries (and even the male rulers received their less distinguished visitors from behind a curtain—as Caliph Umar received Abu Bakra who went to him to report Mughirah for adultery).

...to be continued in the next issue

Extract from "Women's Leadership through the History of Islam" by Dr Gabor Korvin, in Hamdard

Islamicus. July-September 1999 issue.

DO WE REALLY WANT THE EU?

Yahya El-Droubie

Although each man is born naked, he arrives with a vast inheritance, often in the form of baggage. Those of a mixed cultural background have a larger wardrobe with which to clothe their identity.

The cultural choices they make are therefore rather more personal. Labels such as English, Arab, Muslim, can be conflicting. They are far too narrow and limiting. The word British on the other hand has notions of a civic model of inclusion. What holds society together is not common religion, race, ethnicity, language or even culture, but common attachment to the rule of law and to the idea that we are all rights-bearing equals. Admittedly it is a romantic idea used to get the Empire to pull together in two World Wars, but the idea is still there all the same. Many of the old certainties, however, have been challenged through membership of the European Union, and a world-weary media.

Since the break up of the USSR and the Eastern European bloc, the communist threat is no longer a point of unifying reference in the political landscape.

This poses problems for the supporters of ever closer union, for in order for the EU to function as a successful political entity its members need a common sense of self. The surest way to do this is to have common enemies. Europe is cast as the heroic defender against American globalisation, an island of social justice besieged by the cut-throats of free enterprise, and a bastion of enlightened Christian values in conflict with the oppressive Muslim hordes of the East.

Earlier forms of ethnic, religious and national identifications are also re-emerging. Success for the EU relies on forging common European myths, symbols, values and memories. Hence the emphasis on a common European cultural heritage by the European political elite. Education and official ideology is urging us to turn our eyes inward, irrespective of trends towards globalisation.

The line separating us from them is reverting to that of Western Christendom on the one hand, from Muslim and Orthodox peoples on the other—a line that dates back to the Holy Roman Empire. Christian Democrats, who sided with the Church in the disputes between Church and State in days of yesteryear, dominate EU politics. The break up of Yugoslavia in 1991 was defined by Germany's support for Catholic Croatia as opposed to Muslim Bosnia, or Orthodox Serbia.

Recently in Italy the Archbishop of Bologna triggered a row over immigration by warning that Christian Europe was in danger of being overwhelmed by a Muslim invasion and that one should only allow Catholic immigrants to enter the country.

Despite Turkey's membership of Nato and its pro-western stance in the Gulf War full membership of the EU continues to remain only a distant possibility. British politicians recognise the democratic deficit within institutions of the EU and press for reform. They also press for expansion. In an expanded democratic EU Turkey would be the largest state, fundamentally altering the balance of power, pushing Britain politically and geographically even more to the periphery of the EU.

Europe's identification with Western Christendom does however provide a clear criterion for EU membership, which the

British supporters of European integration have found cosily attractive. Thus, Britain's referendum decision to stay in the Common Market was won principally on the grounds that Europe needed to club together to stave off the economic threat from the Japanese, the Americans and those fiendish Arab oil sheikhs, all of whom were perceived to be squeezing the life out of Britain in the seventies.

Even worse than the concern with its own uniformity is the fact that the European Union systematically discriminates against the countries from which many Britons originate. In effect a fortress Europe has been created in terms of the trading of agricultural and textile products within the European Union. High tariff and regulatory barriers have been erected against the very production upon which many third world countries depend.

In trying to forge a European identity the political elites have alienated vast swathes of the nation's ethnic communities and have marginalised our cultural links with the rest of the world. Many of the ethnic communities have become an all too visible reminder of an unfashionable past, or an exotic ingredient of the global village. It is all too easy to forget that there were more Muslims than Christians in the British Empire, and that over 1,500,000 Indians were mobilised during the Second World War.

We all like diversity and the EU's active support of a Europe of Regions may seem superficially like a good thing; but it not only undermines the national governments in Europe, it forces people into narrow interest groups based on ethnicity and culture. The black and Asian communities in Britain are not being asked about what they feel about British devolution. They resent the way the country is now described as consisting of four nations when

it is one nation made up of over 70 ethnically identifiable communities.

It took 50 years for these communities to describe themselves as British, and of belonging. British as a term has become so deflated that it is becoming flabby and meaningless—political correctness and striving to be a good European being the main cause.

Ethnic groups are now resisting marginalisation within host societies by reasserting vigorously their differences, none of which promotes understanding or tolerance.

If Europe continues to be defined by a common aversion to its neighbours, the implications need to be considered very carefully. If the price to be paid is to make every non-Christian and foreign resident in the Community feel that he or she is at best a tolerated alien, whose country of origin is a potential threat to Europe and its ideals, the price is too high.

The post-war world has shrunk and Britain has, ironically, become increasingly obsessed with its European backyard, rather than developing a global future which is a welcome legacy from its past.

This article was originally published, in its complete form, by THE BRUGES GROUP. For more information on THE BRUGES GROUP, including upcoming events and publications contact: THE BRUGES GROUP, Suite 216, The Linen Hall, 162-168 Regent Street, London W1R 51B. TEL: 020 7287 4414, FAX: 020 7287 5522

AN APPEAL

MADINA HOUSE

A MUSLIM HOME FOR CHILDREN IN NEED OF CARE IN LONDON

Madina House is a Muslim home for children in need of care, established in 1981 under the auspices of the Muslim Women's Association (a registered charity which has been functioning since 1962)

From its inception the organisers worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Security and all other Social Services Agencies in order to comply with the current guidelines on the running of Children's Homes. Subsequently Madina House was registered by the Department of S.S.I. under the Child Care Act.

Aim—The main aim of Madina House is to provide an alternative home for children who for whatever reason, are temporarily unable to live with their parent/s. At Madina House we provide a stable, caring background, founded on Islamic principles and practices. Since its founding we have cared for over 400 children.

The present home does no longer comply with today's regulations and we have been asked to find more suitable accommodation. Thus, we are in desperate need of finance to buy an appropriate building. Failing to do so, the future of Madina House is in question.

Please help us by giving generously to continue to care for our children in need.

Donations, whether by Cheques or Banker's Orders would be greatly appreciated.

AN APPEAL

MADINA HOUSE

"You shall not attain righteousness unless you spend on others of that which you love, and whatever you spend, verily God has knowledge of it."

The Qur'an 3:92

From.....

Name.....

Address

Telephone

I would like to make a donation/Zakat and enclose a cheque for the amount of £.....payable to **Madina House Trust.**

To be send either to:

Madina House Trust, PO Box 29891 London SW20 0SS

or direct to:

The National Westminster Bank, Royal Garden Branch, Kensington High

Street, London W8 5EQ

Account Number 77946405; Sort Number 50-30-101 a

POETRY

ISLAM

Muhammad the Prophet, God's servant was he.
Brought us a religion that had to be.
Islam's that religion that to be.
It's just the religion for you and me.
It is so simple and has great charm.
Belief in One God can bring you no harm.

We have no belief in the blood of the lamb
To wash away our sins;
For what man does he has himself to blame.
He can rise to fame or sink in shame.
We need no one but God alone.
To Him we turn, when we wish to atone.
We are not born sinners, Muhammad did say.
And for your sins no one did pay.
'Tis you alone who must atone.

Now Islam is just common sense.
It never leaves you in suspense.
It has advantages a hundred and one.
Obedience is taught,
Alcohol is naught.
But a dreadful curse that must be fought.
It is a curse which brings one shame
And blots out many a man's fair name.

From: Children's book on Islam by Olive Toto

KHAMR—ALCOHOL AND OTHER INTOXICANTS IN ISLAM

Harfiya Abdul Haleem

WHAT IS KHAMR?

In Arabia at the time of the Prophet Muhammad the only intoxicating substances known were alcoholic drinks made from grapes or dates, wheat, barley or maize. These were known collectively as *khamr*, i.e., that which mixes up (from the meaning of the Arabic verb *khamara*), covers or swamps the mind, disrupting its work. The word *khamr* is usually translated as 'wine'. The Caliph Umar bin al-Kattab said in a *khutbah* (speech):

'*Khamr* comes from five things: grapes, dates, honey, wheat, and barley and *khamr* is that which (*khamara*) infects/mixes up the mind'. (Bukhari)

A Yemeni asked about a drink made of maize and was asked: 'Does it intoxicate?' When he answered 'Yes', he was told: 'Every intoxicant is *haram*'. (Muslim)

There was also some discussion as to whether or not wine vinegar constituted *khamr*, but this seems to have been inconclusive.

Why does Islam prohibit *khamr*?

The Qur'an acknowledges that there is some benefit in intoxicants, but warns that the danger of misuse is greater. At first it warned the believers not to come to the prayers with their minds befogged:

'O ye who believe! Approach not the prayer with a mind befogged, until ye know what ye say.' (Qur'an 4:43)

It goes on to forbid prayer when one is *junub*—in a state of impurity, and prescribes a bath or dry ablution to purify the pollution. The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said:

'The wine drinker, when he drinks, is not a believer.'

The next mention of *khamr* in the Qur'an is stronger, but mentions the benefits of *khamr* as well as the sin:

'They ask thee concerning wine and gambling. Say: 'In them is great sin, and some profit for man, but the sin is greater than the profit.' (Qur'an 2:219)

The third and most forceful passage condemns *rink* as the tool of the devil, and a means to lead to greater sins:

'O ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones and (divination by) arrows are an abomination of Satan's handiwork: Eschew such (abomination) that ye may prosper.'

Satan's plan is but to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of God and prayer: Will ye not then abstain?' (Qur'an 5:93)

The Prophet explained this further, saying:

'Wine is the mother of all foul things', and

'It is the mother of all major sins and whoever drinks wine would leave prayer and might go so far as to have sex with his mother or his aunt.'

What is the evidence today to support this prohibition?

Thus it is not the use, but the abuse of intoxicants, and their potential for leading to greater evils, which Islam condemns. This

is supported by a growing body of medical and social evidence today, as the rate of abuse continues to rise more and more out of control in the world. Opium, for example, has been the cause of drug addiction for thousands of years, gaining recognition more recently when it was used by such well-known figures as Coleridge and Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. However, it did not become a widespread cause of addiction in the young until the late 1950s.

Although alcohol consumption by men is falling in the UK, that by women is rising. It is known to contribute to many physical diseases and disorders as well as to reduction of the mind's capacity for response to stimuli. Alcohol was responsible in 1987 for 80% of pedestrians killed on the roads in the UK between 10pm and 4am, and for half of car drivers, motor cycle riders and passengers killed in road accidents during the night. In 1994, according to a forthcoming report from the Royal Colleges of Physicians, Psychiatrists and General Practitioners, 25 per cent of all deaths in road accidents, 40 per cent of deaths from falls, and 15 per cent of drownings are alcohol related (The Independent Monday 5 December 1994). In 91,200 out of a total of 1.5 million UK road accidents in 1993—6%, there were convictions for drink driving.

Statistics on crimes committed under the influence of intoxicants are not available but it is clear that natural inhibitions are removed or dulled by intoxication, and so it is more likely that people will commit crimes when intoxicated. Wife-battering is a well-known example, for instance, and in many very brutal wars, for instance in Yugoslavia, and the Mau Mau insurrection in Kenya, strong intoxicants have been used on both or all sides to

give 'Dutch courage' to the troops. There is also a rapid recent increase in crime, often violent, related to drug trafficking and drug procurement in the USA which is also beginning to be reflected in Britain.

PUNISHMENT FOR DRUNKENNESS IN ISLAM

Although, as we have seen, Allah's prohibition on intoxicants in the Qur'an was not at first absolute, and no punishment is mentioned in the Qur'an for wine drinking, there are several *hadiths*—sayings of the Prophet—which do mention it, and the consensus has been to treat it as a punishable crime as it is in the UK. In the time of the Prophet such a punishment appears to have been more of a public disgrace, akin to putting people in the stocks:

Abu Hurairah said: 'When a man who had drunk wine was brought to God's Messenger, he told us to beat him, and some struck him with their hands, some with their garments and some with their sandals. He then told them to reproach him, and they faced him and said, "You have not respected God, you have not feared God, and you have not shown shame before God's Messenger". But when some of the people said "God put you to shame"! he told them not so say that and help the devil to get power over him, but to say "O God forgive him, O God show mercy to him".' (Abu Dawud)

On another occasion the Prophet did not exact any punishment:

Ibn Abbas told that a man who had drunk and become intoxicated was found staggering in the road, so he was taken to God's Messenger, but when he was opposite Al-Abbas's house he escaped and, going in to Al-Abbas, he grasped hold of him.

When the Prophet was told this he laughed and said, 'Did he do that?' and gave no command regarding him. (Abu Dawud)

The immediate successor of the Prophet, Abu Bakr, was said to have given 40 lashes for drinking wine:

Anas told that the Prophet gave a beating of palm branches and sandals for drinking wine and that Abu Bakr gave 40 lashes. (Bukhari and Muslim)

The next Caliph, only two years later, was Umar ibn al-Khattab, a younger and more vigorous man.

Umar sought counsel about the prescribed punishment for drinking wine and 'Ali said to him: 'I think you should give one who drinks it 80 lashes, for when he drinks he becomes intoxicated and when he becomes intoxicated he raves, and when he raves he makes up lies'. So Umar inflicted 80 lashes. (Bukhari and Muslim)

Ali is reported to have said this because the penalty for slander was 80 lashes. However, the same 'Ali (cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet and later the 4th Caliph) is reported as having said:

I am not one to have any feelings about a man who dies when I inflict a prescribed punishment on him, with the exception of one who has drunk wine, for if he were to die, I would pay bloodwit for him. That is because God's Messenger did not lay down any specific custom regarding him. (Bukhari and Muslim)

Another *hadith* explains the increasing severity of the punishments:

When a drinker was brought in the time of God's Messenger during Abu Bakr's Caliphate and in the beginning of Umar's caliphate, we beat him with our hands, sandals and cloaks. We inflicted 40 stripes, and when people were immoderate and excessively wicked he inflicted 80 stripes. (Bukhari)

There is even some support for the death penalty in severe cases, although the Prophet himself did not execute it:

Jabir reported the Prophet as saying 'Beat anyone who drinks wine, and if he does it a fourth time, kill him'. He said that after a man who had drunk wine four times was brought to the Prophet and he beat him and did not kill him. (Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud)

Thus it can be seen that drunkenness is viewed in Islam as a crime of considerable seriousness, though there are greater and lesser degrees of blame. Throughout the centuries, Islam has succeeded to a greater extent than most religions or philosophies in exterminating this evil from the societies under its influence. Christianity and Judaism contain no such prohibitions against drinking wine, in fact in moderation it is seen as a gift of God by the Jews, and similarly by the Christians, in the context both of miracle of Christ when he turned the water into wine, and in the sacrament of the Holy Communion where the wine 'is' the blood of Christ. The Qur'an is clear and unequivocal in its prohibition, and both the Qur'an and *hadith* provide logical and reasoned arguments why intoxication is such a great evil to society, and the punishments administered serve as a further deterrent to underline these for anyone who fails to see them for himself.

To be continued in the next issue ...



JUNIORS' CORNER

COMMONWEALTH QUIZ

1. WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION LIVE IN THE COMMONWEALTH?

A. 10% B. 50% C. 33% D. 60% E. 75%

2. HOW MANY COUNTRIES ARE IN THE COMMONWEALTH?

3. WHERE AND WHEN WILL BE THE NEXT COMMONWEALTH GAMES HELD?

A. SYDNEY IN 2001

B. MANCHESTER IN 2002

C. KUALA LUMPUR IN 2003

D. KINGSTON IN 2001

4. HOW MANY COUNTRIES IN THE COMMONWEALTH HAVE FEWER THAN 15 MILLION PEOPLE?

A. 30 B. 19 C. 23 D. 29 E. 50

5. WHEN IS COMMONWEALTH DAY?



SECOND MONDAY IN MARCH

ANSWERS: 1. C 2. 54 3. B 4. D 5. THE

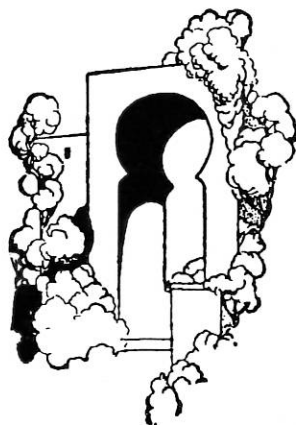
THE UK'S BIRTHDAY

It was on January 1, 1801 that the Irish parliament was absorbed into the British Parliament to create the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The full title was altered after Irish independence in 1921, to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Although the bicentenary took place this year there was no official recognition of the fact.

The Americans and the French organised lavish celebrations for their bicentenaries, we did nothing. There wasn't even an official stamp.

Labour's line was that any celebrations were a matter for the Foreign Office. The Foreign Office preferred to celebrate Australia's centenary, which falls on the same day with "Australia Week" instead.

As a country we are very bad at commemorating key dates in our history. Here is a list of dates some of you may feel are worth marking.



April 23rd

The birthday of William Shakespeare. It is also the day he died in 1616, aged 52, as well as St. George's Day.

May 1st

The United Kingdom of Great Britain was created in 1707 with the passing of the first act of Union.

May 7th

The Equal Franchise Act in 1928 in which women gained electoral equality with men.

May 8th

The end of the Second World War in Europe—VE Day

May 29th

The restoration of parliamentary government and the monarchy in 1660 after the English republic failed.

June 14th

Battle of Hastings, 1066

June 18th

The Duke of Wellington's decisive victory over Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815

October 21st

Trafalgar Day—Nelson's crushing blow on the French and Spanish fleets at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805.

December 16th

The passing of the Bill of Rights in 1689.

KITCHEN TALK

LEEK PIE

The emperor Nero made sure he had a bowl of leek soup every day in order to keep his voice clear and sonorous so that he might deliver even more stirring orations!

INGREDIENTS

125 g Butter

1 medium onion, peeled and sliced

375 g leeks, washed and sliced

125 ml double cream (or whipping cream)

1 tsp (rounded) flour

Salt and pepper

Puff pastry for your 9-inch pie/flan dish

Beaten egg to glaze

METHOD

Pre-heat oven to 220°C/425°F, Gas Mark 7

Melt half of the butter in a pan and add the onions; cook till softened. Add the remaining butter and cook the leeks. Cover the pan and leave the vegetables to stew for around 5 minutes, leaving the leeks to wilt. If there is excess liquid, do not drain, but rather raise the heat to try and evaporate it. Beat the egg gradually into the flour to make a smooth paste and stir it into the leeks. Cook for one minute then remove from the heat. Season with salt and pepper to taste and leave to cool.

Line your dish with the puff pastry. Fill with the room

temperature leek filling. Cover and make a small hole in the centre of the pastry. Brush with the beaten egg. Bake for 15 minutes to brown the pastry slightly before lowering the heat to 180°C/350°F Gas Mark 4 for another 20 minutes.

Tip: You may add some chicken left-overs to the leek mixture.

From: Abel & Cole Newsletter (5th February 2001)



THE CARROT: PRETTY WELL TRAVELLED FOR A GARDEN VEGETABLE

For a humble garden vegetable, the carrot has had a pretty exciting life. Through the ages, carrots have been from the wilds of Afghanistan, to the grandeur of the Stuart court and the folly of the Victorian cottage ornee.

The first colour to feature in the story is not orange as you might imagine, but purple. Yes, back in the 7th century, carrots were to be found growing in Afghanistan, and they were all purple! The orange carrot is actually a mutation, but for some reason took off and the purple carrot is no more.

Carrot seeds were first brought to Europe in the saddlebags of the Moors, via the coast of North Africa into Spain. For a long time, the carrot was considered an exotic delicacy. Carrots were valued as highly for their feathery green leaves as they were for their delicious taste. Ladies of the Stuart court wore the leaves pinned to their hairstyles, tucked into their amazing hats, and pinned to brooches on their sleeves, just like feathers! People also grew carrot tops in little saucers and used them to decorate the chimney pieces of their houses during the 19th century! Eating them in delicious salads or soups has been clinically proven to do more for your nutrition intake and your street cred.

From: Abel & Cole Newsletter (14th May 2001)

