

M U S L I M M I N O R I T I E S
I N T H E
W O R L D T O D A Y

by

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This book is dedicated to my parents

Imām Muntasir Kettani
and Oum-Hani' Fassi-Fihri

It is also dedicated to my wife Nuzhah and children, Ḥasnā', Ḥasan, Ḥamzah and Ḥussein, hoping that they will carry on the same tradition of concern for the Muslims in the world.

It is dedicated, moreover, to all those Muslims across the centuries and continents who are soldiers in the defence of the Ummah and who have struggled and continue to struggle in the way of God by word and deed, or at least keep the spirit of struggle ablaze in their hearts.

The Author

Dr. M. Ali Kettani is Director General of the Islamic Foundation for Science, Technology and Development in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He was born in Fes (Morocco) on September 27, 1941 (Ramadan 5, 1360 A.H.). At the age of 16, he followed his parents to Syria and at the age of 18 went to study Electrical Engineering in Switzerland. He graduated in 1963 from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology at Lausanne. He then went to the United States for higher studies and received the Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering from Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1966. After two years on the faculty of the University of Pittsburgh and one year on the faculty of the University of Riyadh in Saudi Arabia, Dr. Kettani joined the University of Petroleum and Minerals in 1969 where he was Chairman of the Electrical Engineering Department and Professor until 1982. In 1975-76, he spent his sabbatical leave at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology near Boston, U.S.A.

Dr. Kettani has written eight books and more than one hundred scientific papers in his field, mainly on new energy resources. For the last several years he has been concentrating on solar energy in which he is deemed an acknowledged authority.

Since his years as a student Dr. Kettani has had an intense interest in the plight of Muslims all over the world, especially those living as minorities. In the 1970's he travelled extensively all over the world to study their problems. His first major study tour was undertaken in 1973-74

at the behest of the late King Faisal and covered all the Muslim communities of Western Europe and the Americas. In recognition of his knowledge of the Muslim minorities, Dr. Kettani became the adviser on Muslim minorities to the Muslim World League of Mecca and to the Saudi Government. Later, he travelled extensively to almost all other areas of the world to visit Muslim communities. Dr. Kettani has developed a strong feeling of identity with the Muslim minorities and a commitment to help them in their struggle to survive and grow into strong, self-reliant communities. Since 1976, Dr. Kettani became the adviser to the Secretary General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, in Jeddah, on Muslim minorities.

Dr. Kettani has written several books in Arabic on the subject of Muslim minorities, and a multitude of reports. This is his and perhaps anyone's first comprehensive book on the Muslim minorities of the world.

MUSLIM MINORITIES
in the
WORLD TODAY

by

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In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

Preface

Minorities are those groups of people who for one reason or another become the first victims of the despotism of the state or of the community that constitutes the majority and thus the human base on which the state rests. Quite often they are relegated to the obscurity of insignificance. They are the ones whose history remains unwritten, their condition of existence remains unknown, and their ideals and aspirations remain unappreciated. They are those whom the Holy Qur'an seems to refer as "Al-Mustad'afin fi al-Ard" (the despised through the land):

"Call to mind when ye
Were small in numbers
Despised through the land,
And afraid that men might
Dispoil and snatch you;
But He (God) provided a safe asylum
For you, strengthened you
With His aid, and gave you
Good things for sustenance:
That ye might be grateful". (Chap. 8, Verse 26)

Most of these minorities are inclined to degenerate and lose their identity. Few care to support their struggle for survival. When they vanish, hardly anyone cares to shed a tear at this tragedy. Some of these minorities try to compensate for their weakness in

numbers by the strength of their ideals. If their dedication to their ideals and values is a deep and sincere one and is coupled with maturity, constructive vision and energy, then it is likely that those ideals would ultimately triumph.

Islām, which embodies the Message of God to humanity in its perfect form through His last Messenger Muḥammed ibn 'Abdallah, itself started as a minority religion. It attracted the "Mustad'afīn fī al-Ard" (the despised through the land) in a world that was ruled by the forces of evil and darkness. Its roots are deep with those "few in numbers" who, across the centuries, had to carry the burden of being the victims of despotism in its myriad forms. Across the centuries and across the continents, Muslims have formed a single world brotherhood, an indivisible Ummah irrespective of whether they were living in countries where they were in majority or in minority.

While many books have been written about minorities in general, or one or another minority in particular, no book has been written about the Muslim minorities of the world. True, there are a multitude of books written about Muslims in one country or another or in one continent or another, but often these books were written by special categories of people: anthropologists, Christian missionaries, European colonial officers, Communist propagandists. All of these have one characteristic in common: a complete lack of identity of feeling between the writers and the subjects of their writing. Thus, it seemed worthwhile to this writer to see, and subsequently to present the

situation of the Muslim minorities as it appears to a Muslim, to someone who quite professedly shares their world-view and beliefs, and identifies with their desire to carve for themselves a meaningful future. The author who grew in a Muslim country while it was under colonial rule, went to colonial schools and has been subjected to anti-Islamic propaganda from his early age, experienced during the first years of his life the same feelings that the members of minority communities experience. In his adolescence and early youth, he continued his studies in Europe and America, to discover more about the distortion Islamic ideals receive at the hands of the media in these countries. This enabled him to gain greater empathy with those Muslim communities which had to live in similar situations. After completing his studies, he embarked on studying the situation and problems of the Muslims across the globe. The experience was a fascinating one and it increasingly became a passion with him, becoming the major pre-occupation after his professional work as a scientist and engineer. As time has passed, he has felt more and more a duty toward his people. The sorry state of affairs prevailing in the Muslim countries in general has also driven him growingly toward the Muslim minorities. He has felt inspired and thrilled by the idea that some of these minorities might one day produce those sons and daughters of Islām who might change the whole course of events of the entire Muslim Ummah. This dream has sustained him in his study, and above all, in his striving to extend a helping hand to those who, if not taken care of, might be cast aside in complete obscurity.

The aim of this book is, therefore, to present the truth about these minorities, to depict the epic of their struggle against oppression, injustice, cruelty and of their longing to live as self-respecting men and women, and as Muslims. The book has been written primarily for them for two purposes: to help them realize the fact that the minority status is limited by space and possibly by time as well. It has also been written to help them recognize that as members of a world community of more than 1000 million persons scattered over all the continents of the world they should not feel alone in their struggle for survival. The book is addressed to all enlightened and sensitive human beings, regardless of their racial, geographical and religious affiliations. It is addressed especially to all members of the Muslim Ummah who happen to live in states where they form a majority. One would wish that they are able to see the importance of the Muslim minorities and the importance of the role of the Muslims living in majority areas as the guarantors of Islamic universality. It perhaps need not be emphasized that any Muslim majority might become reduced to a minority if it forgets the basic rule of allegiance to the Ummah and its loyalty to God, to His Messenger (peace be upon him) and to the ideals of Islām. Finally, the book is written for all those in the world who care to know the truth and to free themselves from the stereotypes and from the ignorance which underlies the intolerance, the racism, and the oppression which make this world unnecessarily a worse world to live in. At the end, if this book helps in building bridges between minorities and majorities, in converting hatred and

rancor into respect and sympathy, and in dispelling, even if partly, the fog of falsehood which blurs and distorts our vision, then the effort would not have been in vain.

The book has been divided into ten chapters, each chapter being subdivided into ten sections. From the beginning, it was found that the subdivision of the world into regions, as far as Muslim minorities were concerned, was difficult. However, after careful thinking, it was found that the best division would be that which took account at once of the numbers involved in the minorities as well as of the geographical divisions of the world. Thus, the first chapter attempts to define certain terms, followed by a study of the problems relating to the genesis and survival of minorities in general and of Muslim minorities in particular. It includes also a plan of action for the minorities to follow in order to help them in their struggle for survival. This is combined with an effort to point out the forces which eat at their vital rights. The eight following chapters deal with minorities in different parts of the world from those in Europe to those in the Pacific. In each of these chapters the history of each major minority community has been traced; its numerical strength has been assessed, as well as its present situation, in terms of organization and the treatment meted to it by the majority. Chapter 10 gives a general view of the distribution of Muslims in the world, as well as a sketch of the basic ideals of Islam, stressing those ideals which are scarcely known in the secular or communist media. These are meant to provide an introduction to those open-minded readers who might want to seek the Truth on their own.

The different chapters include a number of tables and maps. A list of footnotes & references has been added at the end of each chapter, but it is not basic in the gathering of the information. In fact most of the information gathered is a first hand information obtained from the minorities themselves by the author. The author, during the last ten years, has visited extensively Muslim minorities in Europe, Asia, Africa, the American continent, Australia and the Pacific islands. He sat with their leaders and discussed their problems. He also developed a bank of information which is being continuously updated. The author met also a great number of the leaders of refugees from countries where Muslims are oppressed and discussed with them their situation in their respective countries.

One aspect of the Muslim minorities most difficult to come by is their numbers. Official censuses usually underestimate the numbers of minority communities. Often Muslim communities are completely ignored. When official censuses are reasonably reliable their figures have been used. Sometimes, official censuses are corrected on bases explained in the text. When official censuses are inexistent or obviously erroneous, other means have been resorted to in order to obtain the necessary data. For instance, to estimate the Muslim population of Sao Paulo, the author found no other way but to ask the caretaker of the Muslim cemetery how many Muslims were buried each year. Another example is the deduction of the number of Muslims in Sweden from the census of the different foreign immigrants by their countries of origin; and so on and so forth.

The author's professional field of specialization is Electrical Engineering. More specifically, he has been interested in problems relating to energy, particularly solar energy and more recently in establishing the Islamic Foundation for Science, Technology and Development. The writing of this book has been a spare time activity which was possible only because of the encouragement of many persons. First of all, my wife Nuzhah and children Hasna, Hasan, Hamzah, and Hussein who sacrificed a very great part of the time which I owed them. Thanks and acknowledgement are also due to my dear friend, Dr. Zafar I. Ansari, of the University of Petroleum and Minerals who read the entire manuscript, corrected almost every page, and gave encouragements at the end of every chapter. Thanks are also due to Mr. Rustoom Sadri of IFSTAD for his suggestions on the two chapters dealing with the Soviet Union and China, and to Mr. Chennur M. Azmatullah who carried the typing of the different versions of the manuscript, both with a sense of mission that equals only that of the author. Finally, thanks are due to all the friends around the world who supplied me with information and encouragements and those friends at the Organisation of the Islamic Conference who showed continuous interest in the subject. But for their assistance and encouragement, and above all, without God's help and succour, the writing of this book would have remained an unfulfilled dream.

Praise be to God the Lord of the Worlds.

Ali Kettani

CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

1- What is a Muslim Minority?

In order to ensure conceptional clarity from the very beginning, it seems necessary to define first the terms "Minority" and "Muslim" separately, and then the appellation "Muslim Minority".

The Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary defines a "minority" as "a part of a population differing in some characteristics and often subjected to differential treatment". However, this definition is not enough to explain the coming into existence of a new minority. For instance, it is clear that the factor that leads to the formation of a minority is the existence among a group of people of "different characteristics". However, if those who possess these "different characteristics" are not aware of them, nor have achieved any solidarity because of their awareness of them, such a group of people can hardly be termed a minority merely because of the existence of those "different characteristics". Nevertheless, if the majority becomes aware of their different characteristics and starts meting out "differential treatment" to those who share them, the chances are that such an action on the part of the majority would induce an awareness among them of the "different characteristics" that they possess, leading to the coming into existence of a minority. The characteristic might be a physical one such as the "color of the skin". For instance, since a differential treatment was meted out by the

majority in the U.S. to those who share the blackness of the color of their skin, a Black minority has indeed come into being. The same characteristic is considered completely irrelevant in a Muslim environment and a black minority in Morocco, for instance, does not exist, although many Moroccans are black. Similarly, that characteristic might be a "linguistic" one. In a truly Muslim environment, the difference in language too is irrelevant. For instance, in the early days of the Ottoman Empire, this principle was strongly adhered to and hence there could be no talk of "linguistic minorities". However, as the European-inspired nationalism started competing for the allegiance of Muslims with the "Islamic identity", linguistic minorities began to emerge, leading eventually to the break-up of the Muslim Ottoman State. On the other hand, a group of people might still be considered a minority even though it possesses numerical majority in a country or region if somehow it has become overwhelmed by others and is "subjected to differential treatment" by a smaller but more influential group which has characteristics different from its own.

In this study the word "Muslim" is used to denote all those who affirm Muhammad, the son of Abdullah (peace be upon him) to be the last messenger of Allah and hold his teachings to be true, irrespective of the extent to which they know about those teachings, or the extent to which they are able to live according to them. This affirmation naturally engenders a feeling of identity with all who share the same beliefs. For the purposes of this discussion a person

would be considered a "Muslim" as long as he feels, even vaguely, to be part of the overall Muslim Ummah wherever he might be. There is no other possible definition of Muslims in a study dealing with Muslim minorities, especially in view of the extremely severe conditions which have confronted these Muslims in the past and are confronting them now.

Going back to the Webster Dictionary definition, one may say that a "Muslim Minority" is "a part of a population differing from it in the fact that its members affirm Muhammad, the son of Abdullah (peace be upon him) to be the last messenger of Allah and hold his teachings to be true, and is often subjected to differential treatment by those who do not share the above-mentioned belief". Or in a shorter form and retaining the definition of the word "Muslim", one may say that a "Muslim Minority" is "a part of a population differing in the fact that its members are Muslims and is often subjected to differential treatment". Therefore, for such a minority to be in existence it is necessary that those who share the "different characteristic" of being "Muslim" should be aware of such difference and should have attained a degree of solidarity because of it. Otherwise there can be no "Muslim Minority". Finally, one should conclude that a Muslim Community might be numerically inferior but superior politically, or socially. Such a group is not a minority. This would apply, for instance, to the Muslims of Moghul India. On the other hand, a Muslim Community might be numerically superior to the non-Muslims but might be relegated to a position of insignificance and ineffectiveness by the more powerful

non-Muslims even though the latter might be numerically inferior. In this case, the Muslims should be considered a minority. Today, many countries of the world fall in this category: Albania, Lebanon, Ethiopia, Tanzania, are some of the examples.

2- Genesis of a Minority

Islam itself began as a minority, a minority of one person, namely that of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). But the quality of that Allah-chosen man made that minority grow despite all resistance, and even persecution. This minority has already turned into a majority in Arabia before the death of Muhammad (peace be upon him) in a span of about a quarter of a century.

Islam discourages a Muslim to acquiesce wilfully to a state of minority if he cannot exercise his right to worship the One True God. In this case the Muslim is required to emigrate to a land more congenial for the practice of his faith, with the intention of returning to his original homeland and securing his right to live according to the teachings of Islam. Emigrating for the protection of one's belief is an act of religious merit; in some cases it is even a religious duty. Such a man is a muhājir, but not a refugee. He is required to work hard to prepare for his return, and the Muslim Community at large is required to help such muhājirs even if there might be no other way for them to return except by resorting to force. This is the case of the first Muslim wave of emigrants from Mecca to Abyssinia during the Prophet's lifetime. This is a case in a more drastic way of the emigration of the Holy

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) from Mecca to Medina with the entire Muslim Community. So important was this event for the Muslims that it became the starting point of the Muslim Calendar. The Prophet (peace be upon him) returned to Mecca with the Muslims when they were able to fight their way back to their homeland. Therefore, when the right of a Muslim to practice his faith is denied by any power, he must either fight back in self-defence, and become a mujāhid; or if he cannot fight or fails in this fight, he should emigrate and become a muhājir. If he can do neither the one nor the other, he should keep his faith, even secretly if he has to, and try his best to pass it on at least to his descendants. A Muslim may also emigrate either in search of knowledge or of material benefits, etc., as long as his faith is not endangered. In this case he should try to present the example of a good Muslim and should also be the carrier of the Message of Islam to the people around him.

The first Muslim minorities came into being as a result of the Muslim merchants settling down in foreign port-towns for commerce. In the beginning these merchants were ambassadors of a strong state and carried all the prestige that it implied. These were the first Muslim Communities on the coast of India, Sri Lanka, China, East Africa, the Indonesian and Philippines archipelago, and the Islands of the Indian Ocean. In course of time these merchants married local women and already the second and third generations became a part of the land. Often local populations were converted to the new faith giving numerical

strength to the Muslim Community. In several areas these conversions went on on such a large scale that what appeared in the beginning to be insignificant minorities, became, in course of time, full-fledged majorities as in the case of Malaysia and Indonesia.

The Muslim state expanded dramatically after the death of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). For over a century the Muslims remained organized as one political entity, but later this broke into several fragments. Despite political fragmentation, the Muslims were held together by a common religious outlook, a common standard of moral evaluation and a common legal system. Moreover, their religious idealism provided them with the impetus to develop one of the greatest civilizations of human history so that for many centuries they remained the leaders of all mankind in all branches of life. But the success of no nation abides for ever, and eventually the civilization of Muslims was also subjected to decline. This manifested itself, among other things, in the shrinking of the Muslim states and the conquest of Muslim territories by non-Muslims. The result was that many Muslim majorities were brought under non-Muslim powers. The development usually follows the following pattern. First a community is reduced to ineffectivity despite its numerical majority because of non-Muslim occupation, and when the occupation lasts long enough, the majority is transformed into a numerical minority because of large scale expulsion of Muslims, immigration of non-Muslims, and low rates of natural increase among Muslims owing to abnormally difficult conditions. In this category fall the "minorities" of the Soviet Union, Occupied Palestine, Thailand, Ethiopia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina in Yugoslavia, etc.

There is another type of Muslim minority which is slightly different from the one mentioned above. This is the case when a Muslim rule in a land does not last long enough, or the efforts to propagate Islam are not vigorous or effective enough to transform the Muslims into a numerical majority in the lands which they ruled. As soon as their political power collapses, the Muslims find themselves reduced to the status of a minority in their own country. This applies to the case of India and the Balkans.

A third type of Muslim minority might come into existence. And this is by the conversion of a certain number of non-Muslims in a non-Muslim environment. If these new converts become aware of the importance of their Islamic beliefs and assign to it priority over other characteristics and attain solidarity with each other because of sharing those beliefs, a new Muslim minority comes into being. Usually, the immigrant stream and the converted stream fuse together to establish a Muslim minority well adapted to the local culture and yet well attached to the Muslim Ummah. An example of such a case is the Muslim Community of Sri Lanka which is actually the fusion of Muslim immigrants from South Arabia and converts from the island. Culturally, however, these Muslims adopted the Tamil language which is also used by Muslims of South India, rather than the Singhalese language, but kept the Shafi'i madh-hab of the Arab immigrants.

3- Organizational Problems

As mentioned above, many Muslim minorities came into being by individual actions; either by the emigration of an individual Muslim to a non-Muslim land, or the conversion to Islam of a non-Muslim in a non-Muslim land. By such an individual action a "different characteristic" comes into being: that of not following the religion of the majority. However, the existence of Muslims in a country does not imply the existence of a Muslim minority, unless an awareness takes place leading to an extent of solidarity among them as a result of trying to keep this "different characteristic" in existence. Organization can be defined as indeed such a solidarity inducing action. Without organization, in one form or another, there can be no Muslim minority, and the Islam of the different individuals is likely to be eroded with the lapse of time and would die out with the death of its carriers.

Therefore, the fact that Islam has no clergy should not create any misunderstanding. Islam is a way of life as well as a religion. When Muslims find themselves outside dār-al-Islām, it becomes their duty to organize themselves in order to be able to safeguard as much as possible of this Way of life. Most Muslim minorities have done this by electing their own qā'id and nominating their own qādīs.

The organizational action has, per force, to start with the initiative of certain individuals. Such leaders of the community emerge

usually from among those Muslims who have some leadership qualities and a higher perception of the need of solidarity-inducing action for survival. The quality of the organization depends on the quality of the leaders and on their knowledge of Islam and its principles.

Once a Muslim finds himself in a non-Muslim environment it becomes his Islamic duty to get organized with other Muslims. The Prophet (s.a.w.) commanded organization by stressing that even if two Muslims go on a journey, they should choose among themselves an amīr. The Prophet (s.a.w.) is also reported to have said that if a Muslim dies without binding himself in loyalty and obedience of an amīr he would have died a Jāhili death. Of course, the choice of the amīr is to be understood as an organizational set-up for the Muslims in a given land, and this will naturally be in consonance with the circumstances in which they have to take solidary-inducing action as Muslims.

Islam is a "social religion" in the sense that a person cannot become a Muslim unless he actively cares about his Muslim brothers. In this respect, many sayings are reported from the Prophet (s.a.w.): "None among you can become a [true] believer unless he desires for his brother what he desires for himself"; "Muslims are like one body; if a part of the body hurts, the whole body becomes sick"; "If any of you sees a wrong being done, he should change it with his hand; if he cannot, then with his tongue; if he cannot do that, then with his heart, and that is the weakest state of faith". Therefore, it is the Islamic duty of every Muslim, especially in a non-Muslim environment, to become organized with other Muslims.

The organizational set-up should be aimed at establishing a viable Muslim Community. For this, the set-up has to be based on Islamic principles. It should also be effective and efficient. The general principles on which such an organizational set-up should be are the following:

1. The organization should express the Islamic identity of the Community, and this identity alone should underlie their collective identity and organization.
2. The Islamic principle of shūrā (mutual consultation) should be fully observed.
3. The limit of the organization should be a given political entity.

The first condition implies that the organizational set-up should be open to all those who are Muslims (as defined above). The organization should not be an elitist gathering consisting of those who are of high quality Muslims. Neither should it be a partisan gathering consisting only of those who have identical or similar political views. It should not be a sectarian gathering consisting only of those who follow a certain Madh-hab (theological or legal school). It should not be a national or ethnic gathering consisting only of those who have the same national origin. It should not be a racial gathering consisting only of those who belong to the same race. It should also not be a professional gathering consisting only of those Muslims who belong

to the same profession. It should be an organization that would throw its doors wide open to all Muslims in recognition of the fact that they are Muslims and disregarding everything else.

However, talking about organization implies sub-grouping within an overall system. What should then be the basis of the sub-grouping? In principle, the only Islamically acceptable basis would be geographical. What we mean by this is that all the Muslims of a town, or part of a town, or a county, would form one jama'at (association), all the jama'ats within a State or a region would form a Council and all the Councils of a given country should form a Federation. Each association would have its Mosque (as defined in the time of the Prophet (s.a.w.)); the Mosque being a full-fledged Community Center, a place of worship, of education, etc.

The Muslims within each association could be divided into several chapters if the Community comprises several linguistic groups. There seems nothing objectionable from the Islamic viewpoint if people sharing the same language decide to form a chapter in the association, or even a full-fledged association within the Council.

The second condition is that the principle of shura (mutual consultation) should be fully observed. In this connection we have to bear in mind the following directive of the Prophet (s.a.w.). "There may be no obedience to any creature if that entails disobedience of

the Creator". The shūrā must be implemented within the limitation of the safeguard of Islam. In other words, the Muslims should have complete freedom to choose their leaders and decide upon policies and courses while remaining within the limits set as halāl or jā'iz by the Quran and the Sunnah. Therefore, the Muslims should elect among themselves their office bearers and leaders, and should be able to change them whenever they wish to do so. For this, constitutions which are not in contradiction with Islamic principles should be framed for the local Jamā'at, the Regional Council and the National Federation. These constitutions should put in the written form the consensus of the Muslims regarding the means of handling their affairs. They should be changed with the change of such a consensus.

The third condition is that the organizational set-up should be effective. To be effective an organization should gather all those Muslims who find themselves under similar conditions represented by a given non-Muslim establishment. In other words, this implies the gathering of all the Muslims living within a given non-Muslim political entity.

4- Economic Problems

The differential treatment to which the minority is subjected is often of an economic nature. If the Muslim minority considered was part of a Muslim majority, then the differential pressure of the invading power usually tends towards confiscations of awqāf property,

elimination from position of influence of members of the Muslim Community, nationalization of business from which the minority draws its strength, expropriation of property, especially land, etc. As for the Muslim minority that came into being as a result of the gathering of Muslim immigrants and converts, such a minority should start everything from the scratch by resisting such an economic encroachment.

In both cases, the minority should make an effort to resist such an economic deterioration. In order to achieve this, it should increase its solidarity-inducing action and support its organizational set-up.

No organizational set-up can be successful without financial backing. Muslims have been urged in the Qur'ān and also by the Prophet (s.a.w.) to "spend in the Way of Allah". Allah in the Holy Qur'ān commands the Muslims to "strive with their properties and their selves". Striving in the Way of Allah as exemplified by the Sīrah (life-example) of the Prophet (s.a.w.) implies giving one's money, time, energy, and when necessary even life for the furtherance and defence of Islam and for the protection and advancement of Muslims. For a Muslim minority this implies that it is the duty of Muslims to contribute with money, time, knowledge and experience to the functioning of their Organization, the establishment of their Mosques, the building of their schools, and in extreme conditions, the support of their mujāhids. Such financial contributions are over and above the Zakāt, and are limited by

the needs of the Community. These are indispensable since without them, the very existence of the Muslim minority would be in jeopardy, and the survival of Islam in that part of the world would be endangered.

However, most of the individuals who are "Muslims" as defined above, are unaware of this duty or are unwilling to know about such matters because of the weakness of their "Islamic Identity". It becomes, therefore, the duty of those who are the leaders of the community to create this awareness in their members. To do this, the "Organization" should have some financial means to start with. In this respect, the help of Muslims of "Dar-ul-Islam" becomes necessary, but such a help should be so geared as to make the community independent of any help in the future as soon as possible. The best help would be the one that is based on cooperation. In such a case, the Muslim countries should take due note of the support needed by the Muslim minorities so as to offset the effects of "differential treatment" to which these Muslims are usually subjected in such countries. This support should not be limited to the fields of employment, business, exchanges, etc.

To be financially sound, the "Organization" should make sure to protect itself against the danger of corruption and of misuse of Muslim funds. To do this, it is necessary that those elected as office bearers at all levels of the organizational set-up be completely prohibited from receiving payments for their services to the community.

The hired staff in the "Organization", however, should be remunerated but its function should be solely of an executive character and will consist of carrying out the directives of the elected office bearers. In this way, the competition for "office" would be based on the desire and the ability to serve the Community and not the attraction to any financial gain.

A healthy Muslim minority should be able to receive enough contributions from its members to establish all its Mosques and schools, to pay the salaries of its teachers and imams, etc. This minority should be in a position to provide Islamic education for all its children and to remind the grown-ups of their Islamic duty.

5- Social Problems

The most serious problem that can face a minority is social absorption by the majority. Such an absorption is usually the result of a long assimilation process that nibbles at the Islamic characteristics of the minority until it disappears altogether. The process of assimilation is particularly effective and fast when the Muslim Community is badly organized, has no special schools for its children and does not have an adequate number of Mosques (as community and religious centers) for its adults.

The cases of wilful conversion of Muslims to other religions are usually rare. However, as the community starts to absorb un-Islamic

traits which influence its sense of Islamic identity, mixed marriages with non-Muslims conspicuously increase and instead of being a means of growth of the Muslim Community as a result of outsiders embracing Islam, they become a strong means of social and cultural assimilation. The most ominous sign of social absorption is the dropping of Muslim first names, a phenomenon quite common among the offsprings of such mixed marriages. Many of these become only remotely linked to Islam or even neutral as far as their religious affiliation is concerned. However, if they marry again in the majority community, the chances are that their offsprings would follow the religion of the majority. Therefore, the process of assimilation takes usually the span of three generations.

The process of assimilation becomes more widely diffused when the Muslim minority is deprived of its elite. Most often, the elite deserts the minority by emigration to Dar-ul-Islām. This emigration is often induced by special and constant persecution by the majority, as it is clear that a leaderless community is much easier to assimilate. Sometimes the elite deserts Islām altogether by following the policy and the way of the majority thus eroding any confidence that the Muslims might have in them. When either of these occurs, the community becomes unable to face the changed circumstances in such a way as to retain the former hegemony of Islam in their lives. This in turn leads to a continuous erosion of its organization with the result that the Muslim Community becomes more and more confined to people who lack influence and social status. Such a community would disappear in course of time, if it is not helped effectively by Dar-ul-Islām.

Islamically, it will not harm the Muslim Community to absorb the characteristics that are not contrary to Islamic Principles. One of these characteristics is the learning of the language of the majority (which will not be harmful if the Muslims are able to keep on learning Arabic, the language of the Qur'ān); the wearing of its dress, provided it does not violate the decency of dress advocated by Islam; and the absorption of minor social habits which are Islamically unobjectionable. However, members of a Muslim Community should refrain, and teach each other to refrain from absorbing non-Islamic characteristics. These are the dropping of Islamic names, the adoption of promiscuous habits; the absorption of alcoholic beverages, and above everything else, the belief that all religions are equally valid in the sight of the Creator. On the contrary, Muslims should continue to believe that Islam is the only true religion and that all other religions, as stated in the Holy Qur'ān will be rejected by the Creator. Believing that all religions are equally valid is the first sign of religious assimilation.

It is the "Organization" of the Muslim minority that can help it resist the different assimilative trends. In order to be able to do so, the Community should have, geographically speaking, some area or areas of concentration. For the Muslim Schools and Mosques to be efficient, they should be able to serve the largest number of Muslims within the shortest possible distance. Moreover, social communication between Muslims should be kept at a maximum all the time, not only in the Mosque, but also by exchange of visits by families, mutual cooperation in professional work, in community affairs, at play, etc. This

can only be possible when specific areas within the overall country have higher Islamic concentrations so that Muslims can feel at home.

However, Islamically speaking, a Muslim Community cannot be enclosed in a ghetto-like mentality. It should be capable of interacting with members of the non-Muslim community so as to fulfil its duty of da'wah. Therefore, the two requirements of 1) maximum desirable interaction between members of the Muslim Community; and 2) reasonable interaction between Muslims and members of the non-Muslim Communities should lead to the development of areas of high - but not exclusive - Muslim concentration.

A Muslim Community should try to move from a position of mere defensive concerns, and try to spread the message of Islam outside the community. If successful, such a community would grow constantly in influence and numbers so as to become in course of time a majority community. To become a "successful community" should be the aim of every "Muslim minority". This is an ideological necessity without which the very presence of the minority becomes Islamically unacceptable.

6- Political Problems

One of the most serious problems facing a Muslim minority is the gradual denial of political rights to the Muslims as a Community and the persecution of its members, not to mention the fear of genocide in some cases.

In the case of the denial of political rights of the Community, the situation may take the form of the non-recognition of an "islamic entity" on one ground or the other. This leads automatically to the application of laws specially made for the non-Muslim majority to the Muslim individual. This lends strength to the process of assimilation initiated by the majority which would tend to destroy the Islamic presence. Sweden can serve as an example. The official Church of Sweden is the Lutheran Church; this means that the Government supports financially that Church by taxing 1% of the income of the population and strengthens it by introducing the teaching of the doctrines of that Church in the school curricula. To protect religious minorities the State recognizes some religious bodies such as "Roman Catholicism" and "Judaism". Such recognition means that these religious groups receive collectively their share of the religious revenue and their children receive the teachings of their own religion. Until recently, Islam whose followers number more than 30,000 people, was not recognized, meaning that while the Muslims had to pay taxes to the official Church, their children were exposed in public schools to the proselytism of other religious bodies. In the most extreme cases, the majority might go to the extent of denying the right of citizenship to the members of the Muslim minority and even proceed to obliterate them by expulsion and mass killings as it happened in Burma in 1978.

The second case, viz. the denial of political rights to Muslims, has the effect of putting tremendous pressure on the most active members of the community. They would sometimes react in one of the three following ways which are all harmful to the future of the

community: 1) they will emigrate; or 2) they will water down their Islamic identity, eventually isolating themselves from the Muslim Community; or 3) they will join extremist alienated groups in different walks of life, expressing their complete frustration with the majority as well as with their own community.

Once the community is well organized, its leaders should strive to seek the recognition by the authorities of Muslims as a religious community which has the right to maintain its characteristics. Once recognized, the community should continue to request the same rights as the other religious communities enjoy in the country. Eventually, the community may seek to gain political rights as a constituent community of the nation. Once these rights are obtained, the community should seek to disseminate its characteristics throughout that land.

Many communities succeeded in reaching several levels of these stages. For instance, the Muslim Community in Finland is recognized as a "Religious Community". In Yugoslavia, it is recognized as a "Nationality". The Muslims of Fiji, Trinidad and Guyana were capable of persuading the authorities recognize Muslim Holidays such as 'Id Al-Adha and Al-Mawlid as national holidays.

Muslim Individuals who are politically ambitious should seek the votes of the Muslims so that they can be truly their representatives. The Muslim Community should realize this and establish accordingly

the mechanics of political Islamic representation. Otherwise, Muslim politicians would be put in office by non-Muslim forces and would consequently be used to the detriment of the interests of the Muslim Community.

7- Example of an Extinguished Muslim Minority

Christianity, in its European version, has been the chief persecutor of Muslim minorities. This is due to the inherent difference in attitude between Islam and Christianity towards proselytism. Islam wants people to come to its fold of their free will. The Qur'ān categorically states: "There is no compulsion in religion" (Holy Qur'ān 11;256). Hence, Islam often spreads slowly, but having been spread as a result of genuine change of conviction, it endures. There are scarcely any instances of forced conversion to Islam and whenever these occurred they were frowned upon, even strongly opposed by the Muslim 'Ulamā'. In European Christianity, the attitude has been different. People have been expected to follow the religion of their rulers. If they resisted, they were converted forcibly. The only exception has been the attitude of Christianity towards Judaism, because of the historical link between the two religions. Jews, in spite of all forms of discrimination, were allowed to survive as a group all over Europe except Christian Spain. The Muslims were given no such chance. The following Andalusian example is revealing.

Before the arrival of the Muslims, the Iberian Peninsula was overrun by Germanic overlords, the descendants of the Vandals. They persecuted the local population to the extreme. After a call for help by the Iberians, Mūsā Ibn Nusayr, the Arab Muslim General of the North African armies sent his lieutenant, the Berber Tāriq ibn Ziyād at the head of an army of 30,000 people, made up mostly by Muslim Berbers. The liberation of the Peninsula was accomplished quite speedily, between the years 711-713 C.E.

The territory opened up for Islam included almost the whole of the present-day Portugal and Spain, as well as the south-eastern corner of France. It did not include, however, the extreme north-western strip of Iberia. These territories were organized in a sub-province and were placed administratively under the Province of Al-Maghrib which had its capital at Qayrawān (in Tunisia today). A small stream of Muslim immigrants kept moving to al-Andalus and a much bigger population movement set on from Northern Morocco. But most of the strength of Islam was in the conversion en masse of the Iberian population.

When 'Abd al-Rahmān (al-Dākhil), the Umayyad prince came to al-Andalus, the Muslims constituted already a sizeable percentage of the population of the Peninsula. The year was 756 C.E. (6 years after the fall of the Umayyads of Damascus). 'Abd al-Rahman founded the Umayyad state of the West, and with it al-Andalus became an independent Muslim state with its capital at Qurtubah (Cordoba). During the

Umayyad era, the Muslim population became an overwhelming majority in the Peninsula, and al-Andalus reached the highest levels of refinement and civilization in the world. The Christians became a tiny minority which gradually lost a great many of its cultural characteristics, became thoroughly arabized, even in names. But they were never to develop any sense of loyalty to the Muslim state and were ready to strike at its roots as soon as any opportunity presented itself. Most of the Christian resistance was organized in the mountainous territories of the North-West which had been overlooked by the Muslims.

The Umayyad State reached its height of power and influence under 'Abd al-Rahmān III (al-Nāsir) during his long reign 912-961 C.E. However, the dynasty lost much of its hold during the regency of al-Mansūr ibn abī 'Āmir over the grandson of al-Nāsir. Al-Mansūr was himself a great statesman and an able soldier. He once again united the Iberian Peninsula under Islam, but he committed a terrible mistake which eventually did great harm to the future of al-Andalus. He destroyed the Umayyad dynasty without bringing anything to replace it. After his death the collapse seemed to be complete and for all practical purposes Islam would have been finished in al-Andalus, if it were not for the holding intervention of the Moroccans. The Muslims of al-Andalus were deeply divided along racial lines: the Arabs, the Berbers, the Iberian Muslims forming the mass of the population, and the Sicilian Muslims forming the officer corps. Because of these divisions the Umayyad dynasty collapsed, al-Andalus lost its unity and became

divided in a multitude of small states broadly organized along racial lines and known as the group (Ī'īfah) kingdoms. It became, therefore, easy for the Christian reconquest to proceed at a fast rate at the expense of these tiny states. When the Christians swept over the Muslim territories, the Andalusians were quick to call for help from the growing al-Murābiṭ (Almoravid) power of Morocco. The great Murābiṭ Yūsuf ibn Tāshfīn checked the Christian advance at his memorable victory of Zallāqah in 1086 C.E. He united what was left of al-Andalus to North Africa. The same scenario was repeated by the Moroccan Muwaḥḥidūn (Almohades) 59 years later.

The Muwaḥḥid power collapsed in 1212 C.E. at the battle of Al-'Uqāb (Las Novas de Tolosa) where they were defeated by the Christians. The Marinids intervened again from Morocco, but the Muslims of al-Andalus were then already a spent force. Most of the Muslim territories were taken by the Christians including the great metropolises of Ishbīliyah (Sevilla) and Qurtubah (Cordoba). The Muslim power survived only in a small territory in the South Eastern corner of Iberia until 1492 C.E. when Gharnāṭah (Granada) fell to the enemy after a heroic resistance. No help came from the Muslims abroad this time, whereas the whole of Christian Europe was helping the Castellans.

Until 1492 C.E. there remained large Muslim communities in the territories annexed by the Christians. These were called as al-Mudajjanīn (the tamed ones!). They lived as Muslims for centuries. They were tolerated as quasi-slaves. They were subjected to continuous pressure.

Slowly they started losing their majority, first by a continuous stream of Muslim emigration to territories left in Muslim hands, then by continuous colonization of the conquered Muslim lands by the Christians coming from Galicia in North-Western Spain and from Southern France.

This policy of continuous annexation and persecution was changed after the fall of the last Muslim stronghold, Gharnātah (Granada). By the turn of the sixteenth century [1502 for Gharnātah and 1525 for Balansiyah (Valencia)] Muslims were forcibly converted to Christianity in Spain. This act opened an era of Muslim heroism, unparalleled in Muslim history. For about 120 years, the Muslims of Spain fought to keep their faith against extremely heavy odds. These baptized Muslims, called Moriscos by the Spaniards were subjected to the Spanish Inquisition. They were ceremoniously burnt alive at the stake or tortured as soon as they were discovered to be Muslims. They fought hard, sometimes militarily as they did in 1568-1571 in al-Busharāt (Alpujaras) mountains south of Gharnātah under their leader Muḥammad ibn Ummayyah, who has been baptized by the Christians under the name of Fernando de Valor. Finally they succeeded in winning the right to emigrate to the Muslim lands of North Africa. By a royal decree of September 22, 1609, they were expelled from their beloved land with barely their clothes on their bodies and under most inhuman conditions. The exodus lasted for five years. But they were happy, happy to be free in the land of Islam. Their numbers amounted to somewhere between 600,000 and 2,000,000 people in a country that at that time had no more than 8,000,000 people.

Since 1979, Islam witnessed a revival in the South of Spain, more specifically in the Region of Andalucia. More than 2,000 people returned to Islam and they established Islamic societies and centers in Granada, Cordoba, Sevilla, Malaga and Jerez de la Frontera.

8 - Example of a Nascent Muslim Minority

The best example of a nascent Muslim Community in recent times is that of Korea. Indeed, the Korean Muslim Community is an integral part of the Korean nation and is not the result of any movement of population.

Until the Korean War in the early 1950's, there were very few scattered Muslims in Korea. The first presence of Islam as a Community in modern times in Korea was due to the arrival of the Turkish forces under the banner of the United Nations during the Korean War. With the Turkish soldiers there was an Imam. The soldiers built a makeshift mosque in their headquarters for their own usage. Many Koreans who established contacts with the Turkish soldiers were impressed by their Islamic lifestyle. Several of these Koreans adopted Islam and became the first elements of a Muslim Community which was soon to grow in numbers.

When the Turkish contingent left for home, the first Korean Muslims started an effort of Islamic propagation among their compatriots. They also established contact with Muslims all over the World from Malaysia to Morocco. By 1963, the number of Muslims reached to about 1000, all converts. Then they felt ready to organize into a Community. They did so in 1963, by

establishing the Korea Muslim Federation, whose first chairman was Haji Sabri Su Jung-Kil.

The work of organization continued all along the 1960's with a reorganization of the Federation in 1966, the creation of the Korea Islamic Foundation (corresponding to *Awqaf* in Muslim Countries) in 1967 and the establishment of the Korea Muslim Students Association. Apart from the regular religious and social functions, the Federation also takes special interest in providing Islamic education of the youth so as to strengthen the Islamic faith of the community, and concerns itself with the establishment of the Islamic institutions. By December 1976, about 53 young Muslim Koreans were receiving Islamic education in Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Libya and Morocco.

Since the early 1960's, Korean Muslims have been trying to build their first mosque. Their efforts with the Korean Government started in 1961 and culminated in 1969 when President Park Chung Hee formally donated 5,000 square meters of land in the city of Seoul for the construction of the Mosque and Islamic Community Center. The planning for the construction of the complex started in October 1972 and construction was completed in May 1976. It cost about US\$400,000 a good part of which was borne by the local Muslims and the rest was covered by donations from Muslims overseas. The Mosque and the Community Center have a total floor space of 2,900 square meters. They include the main prayer hall, two conference rooms, two office rooms, an Arabic Language Institute, the office of the Korea Islamic

Foundation, the Missionary Workers' room, etc. Another mosque, the Fellagh Mosque, was opened in 1980 in Pusan. In 1980, the entire village of Sang Yong, near the town of Kwangju, converted to Islam. They built the third mosque of Korea in 1981. The Korea Islamic University was launched in 1980 and may be completed soon.

The construction of these institutions and the education of the youth in the Islamic faith gave new impetus to the community. By May 1976, the number of Muslims reached 4,000 people, which rose to 7,050 in July 1977, 11,000 in January 1980 and 22,000 in 1982. The imbalance between the male (5,141 Muslims in 1977) and female (1,909 Muslims in 1977) ratio shows that the Muslim population is in a state of dynamic growth, mainly by conversion. Indeed, most of the Muslim males are young and will certainly increase the numbers of the Community by conversion through marriage.

The dynamism of the community shows in its initiation of triennial master plans of growth. During the first plan (1974-1976), the Federation launched an Islamic propagation program through the mass media, started its own publications, intensified Muslim students activities, Arabic language diffusion, established a scholarship foundation, student exchanges between Korea and Muslim countries, founded a Muslim Institute, achieved the translation of the meaning of the Holy Qur'an in the Korean language, etc. The second plan (1977-1982) established Muslim Communities around the three Mosques as well as the launching of an Islamic University, an Islamic Library, a Muslim Orphanage and medical facilities. The third plan

will see the establishment of local mosques in other areas of Muslim concentration in the country.

The birth of this Muslim Community seems to be well accepted by the Korean population. The Muslim Community is treated by the Government on an equal footing with other religious groups. Korea itself became closer to the Muslim world by the existence of this community. The latter seems, under the circumstances, guaranteed sustained growth.

In a country where there were no Muslims thirty years ago, we see now in existence a full-fledged well-organized Muslim Community which has the optimism and the dynamism of the young.

9 - Overall View of Muslim Minorities in the World Today

It would be more appropriate to list the number of Muslims by country after we finish the study of the different communities around the world. To know the importance of the subject, however, it seems appropriate now to estimate the number of Muslims, making up these minorities. Based on the censuses of 1982, and the estimations of the minorities themselves, we reach the values shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 : Muslim Minorities in the World(1982)

Continent	Number of Muslims in Minority Communities
Asia	228,000,000
Africa	116,000,000
Europe	34,000,000
America	4,000,000
Oceania	300,000
Total	382,300,000

Thus, in 1982, there were about 382 million Muslims in the world living as minorities. In 1971 this number was 290 million people.* The increase is due to three effects: 1) natural increase; 2) emigration from Muslim countries; and 3) conversion to Islam by non-Muslims. This figure represents more than one third of the entire Muslim Community (Ummah) of the world, which is estimated at about 1 billion persons. This third of the Muslim Ummah often lives under the most tragic circumstances under direct or indirect efforts of assimilation by the majority communities.

10- Conclusion

In general, the future of a Muslim minority depends on two important factors. First of all, it depends on the quality of the founding fathers of that community in terms of their attachment to Islam, their enthusiasm and capacity to propagate it, their social influence, etc. In the second place it depends on the conditions under which they have to live. It is perhaps not enough for the Muslims constituting a minority to be just 'good' Muslims, in the narrow sense of the term, to ensure the survival of the community. If those Muslims do not have the means and the desire to transmit their religion to the forthcoming generations, the community is likely to stagnate, then dissipate and ultimately disappear altogether.

Maintenance of ties with the main body of Islam (dār-al-Islām) is a very potent factor in the efforts to counteract these developments.

Historically speaking, the Hajj played a major role in the maintenance of these ties and in the nourishment among Muslims all over the world of a sense of mutual belonging, let alone strengthening and activating their faith in Islam. In addition to that, education of the Muslim children, both religious and cultural (i.e. Arabic, Muslim history, geography of Muslim lands, etc.) should be the first priority of the Muslim Community.

Practically, one can see that the odds against the survival of a minority are numerous. Many communities fail in their struggle to survive and only a few do become "successful" minorities. The chances of survival for a minority would be greatly enhanced, however, if Muslims in minority countries behave as true members of the Muslim Ummah by keeping Muslim solidarity working. Muslim countries in dealing with the non-Muslims of the world should never lose sight of the manner in which those countries treat their Muslim minorities. Muslim countries should also consider it a matter of first priority to support morally, culturally, politically and otherwise Muslim minorities who are in need of help. Last of all, Islamic solidarity is a necessity for Islamic survival in general. Without it the future of Islam as a whole is endangered.

In summary, if Muslim minorities are allowed to disappear, Muslim majorities would sooner or later follow the suit. Supporting Muslim minorities is, therefore, not a matter of opinion for a Muslim; it is an Islamic duty and a necessity for the survival of the entire Muslim Ummah.

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