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# YEMEN TIMES

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Tel: 275026/9/30 - 275129/30/20

17th through 23rd March, 1993



Volume: III, Issue # 11 • PRICE: 10 Riyals •

## OUR VIEWPOINT

### Let Us Walk the Last Mile

The Constitution calls for secret casting of the ballots; yet the arrangements being made by the SEC today ask illiterate voters to bring along a "trusted companion" to fill in the voting form on their behalf. The companion is expected to dutifully apply the wish of the voter. This system involves a risk of not really putting in the name of the candidate chosen by the illiterate voter, since there are no means of verification. More importantly, it effectively abrogates the secrecy of the choice. What can be done?

We don't need to re-invent the wheel because there are countries that have tackled this problem before. It is very easy to put together a system of colors, symbols, etc., according to which each symbol or color would represent a political party or a candidate. The Supreme Electoral Committee would approve the choice of colors/symbols, etc., and then inform the public of it. During the media campaign, each candidate would also inform the voters of his/her sign.

We have come a long way in our democratization process, notably in gaining world credibility and respect that we rightly deserve for working towards free elections. A sympathetic foreign friend told me that Yemen has done almost 90% of the job in preparing for free elections. Is it not wise to master the remaining 10% through the full enforcement of the secrecy clause of the vote stipulated by the constitution?

All those Yemenis who care about the credibility, fairness, and decency of our coming elections must push for the full enforcement of the secrecy clause, especially for the illiterate voters. This step will also put to rest the accusation that the regime is using soldiers to "help them see light" regarding the best candidates to vote for. It is easy to design and implement a system that will uphold the constitutional right for full secrecy for each voter. Shouldn't we strive towards perfection as much as possible?

It is one more challenge Yemen must face, and overcome. Let us go for it!

The Publisher  
عبد العزيز

# 26 BILLION DEFICIT IN 1992 STATE BUDGET!

Well, we got the numbers, and the deficit in the government budget for 1992 is a staggering YR 26 billion. The uncontrollable state of affairs in the finances of the government is the most frightening aspect of the mismanagement of our government.

The 1993 budget is a prorated monthly allocation based on the 1992 numbers as there is no sight of a budget for 1993: This is the first time since 1973 that the government of Yemen works without a budget plan approved by the House of Representatives. Thus, the guidelines for 1993 are the 1992 numbers. This is optimistic, however. Given the costs of holding the parliamentary elections and the local elections planned for August 1993, the total expenditures for 1993 could easily exceed YR 80 billion. Don't hold your breath.

#### GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES IN 1992

Payrolls/Salaries	YR. 32,734,671,168
Purchases of Goods/Services	5,587,467,819
Transfer payments	9,767,947,411
Repayment of Loans, etc.	5,546,972,011
<b>Total Current Expenditures</b>	<b>53,637,058,409</b>
<b>New Project Investments</b>	<b>4,423,305,587</b>

**Total Gov't Expenditures YR 58,060,363,996**

**Total Government Revenue 32,007,714,733**

**Budget Deficit in 1992 YR 26,052,649,233**

#### Sources:

- IMF, Memos;
- Central Bank of Yemen, Government Account records;
- Ministry of Finance, Internal Records;
- And compiled by the nosy Yemen Times reporter from internal (limited circulation notes of government officials.)



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تتقدم أسرة صحيفة «يمن تايمز» بأحر التعازي والمواساة للأستاذ عبدالعزيز عبدالغني بوفاة والده داعية المولى العلي القدير أن يتغمد الفقيد بواسع رحمته وأن يلهم أهله وذويه الصبر والسلوان وإنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون

### CONDOLENCES

The Yemen Times family present their deepest condolences to H.E. the Honorable Abdulaziz Abdulghani on the passing away of his father. May God have mercy on the soul of the deceased.

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# YEMEN TIMES

An Independent Economic & Political Weekly

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## Plant to Manufacture/ Repair Gas Cylinders

Yemen Times learned that several local companies, in collaboration with the Yemen Petroleum Company, are considering a US \$10 million investment to construct a plant that will manufacture and repair gas cylinders.

In 1992, Yemen exported as compressed scrap metal some 700,000 cylinders (that were ruined beyond simple repair), with each cylinder earning roughly \$2. In the same year, the country imported some 600,000 cylinders at the cost of \$20 per cylinder. Repairing each cylinder would cost around \$6. Yet, a shortage of cylinders haunts consumers as misuse forces the segregation of 300 cylinders daily.

The plant has the capacity of producing 40 cylinders and repairing 25 cylinders per hour. Meanwhile, the privatization of cooking gas filling stations has allowed many investors to build regional filling stations in various cities. In two weeks, the filling station of entrepreneur Tawfeeq Abdul-Rahman Mutahhar, with the capacity to fill 200 cylinders per hour, will be inaugurated in Taiz.

## A Yemeni Team to Observe French Elections

A five-man Yemeni team heads for Paris on March 26th to observe the second ballot of parliamentary elections. Jarallah Omer, Abdul-Malik Al-Mikhlaifi, Mohammed Ali Haitham, Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf and Hamood Munassar will spend three days in meetings with French officials in the aim of learning about election systems and the French experience.

The present two-ballot majority election system is being applied in France since 1958, which marked the birth of the Fifth Republic and the return of General de Gaulle to power (except for the 1986 elections).

## Yemen's First Field Tennis Tournament

On Saturday, March 13th, the first field tennis organized in an official way was kicked off at the Police College compound in Sanaa. There are twenty athletes competing in the singles and doubles matches which will last for two weeks. The sponsor is the Al-Mutawakkil for General Trading and Oil Agency, while the patron behind the idea is Colonel Husain Al-Daffe'e.

Captain Mansoor Moh'd Alazy, considered the number one tennis player of Yemen, explained that arrangements are underway to hold other tournaments in the future, and that they are in search of sponsors. "We hope to see tournaments open to both Yemeni and expatriate players," he said.

Read more details in the French Pages, page 10.)

"Yemen's foreign policy must be based on the concept of an Arabian Peninsula as a single entity."

A seminar on Yemeni-Gulf relations was held on Tuesday night (16/3/1993) at Sheraton Hotel. Speakers representing the People's General Congress, Yemeni Socialist Party, Rabitat Abnaa Al-Yemen (League of Sons of Yemen), Attagammu Al-Wahdawi: Al-Yamani, Attagammu Al-Yamani Lil-Islah, Hizb Al-Ahrar Ad-Dastoori, among others, stressed that Yemen cannot afford to be isolated from its immediate neighbors in the Arabian Peninsula.

Academics and parliamentarians who spoke at the seminar presented various options for ways to overcome the current stagnation in the relations, and offered scenarios for cooperation.

Relations between Yemen and the Gulf countries have been strained since the Gulf Crisis, as Yemen's position was seen by the Gulf countries as tilting towards Iraq. The economic and political consequences of that position were nearly catastrophic for Yemen and continues to place a heavy burden on the nation, irrespective of the quixotic claims of certain elements in the Yemeni political apparatus.

"There are strong indicators that Yemeni relations with the Gulf countries are warming up. The seminar is a good tool to help speed up the healing process."

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ترقبوا فروعنا في المكلا، عدن، تعز، إب

**LACK OF ORDER  
BLOCKS ADOPTIONS  
IN SOMALIA**

Their hearts have been melted by the Somali children who lost their parents to famine and civil war. But soldiers and civilians who have tried to adopt orphans are frustrated in a country without a government. Domestic relief officials say that perhaps it's better that way.

Statistics are scarce, but aid agencies estimate tens of thousands of children have been orphaned by the war that broke out in 1991 and by the famine that killed hundreds of thousands.

"All I remember were bombs," Abdirahim Abdullahi Mahmood, 12, said in a grimy orphanage housing about 200 children near Afgoi, 32 kilometers south of Mogadishu. "My house was destroyed and we ran." Abdirahim, who lost both parents in the war, says with little emotion.

The buildings are filthy, the pink and blue walls are covered with dirt. The classroom has a dirt floor and no chairs. The kids wear tattered and soiled clothes, and many run around barefoot.

As with other natural and manmade disasters, foreigners have sought to rescue children from misery, but UNICEF spokesman Ian MacLeod says that adoption "... should be a last resort. We need the exact opposite. We should be working with children in their own countries," MacLeod said. "One thing that has to be understood is the trauma that the children faced here. They saw their parents die. To suddenly uproot them could cause many psychological problems."

But Cheryl Shotts, founder and managing director of Americans for African Adoptions, Inc., said that her organization brought out a six-year-old Somali boy in February for adoption in the United States. "It's not easy, but it can absolutely be done," said Shotts, whose Indianapolis-based, non-profit agency works with African orphan children.

Shotts said the legal difficulties in adopting Somalis can be surmounted since US immigration officials accept secondary evidence in lieu of official documents for certain countries where official papers are hard to secure.

Armando Barucco, first secretary of the Italian government office in Mogadishu, said that some Italians, including soldiers, have expressed interest in adopting, "...but it's been impossible." Marine Col. Frederick Lorenz, senior legal adviser of the US forces in Somalia, said it can be difficult to establish a minor's ties to his parents, or even to his country.

US military and diplomatic officials say that they have received adoption requests from soldiers and civilians. The legal snarls will plague Somalia until rival factions can agree on a government. Peace talks were held on March 15, but they were not conclusive, and officials hold little hope of forming an interim government soon.

Another complication is the lack of embassies that can

approve visas for children. Without a government agency, the US liaison office is Wahsington's only diplomatic entity in Somalia, and it lacks consular services.

Many Somalis look down on adoption, especially by non-Muslims. Extended families and clan ties provide a social network for children who lose their parents.

Ahmed Ibrahim, 13, says he has suffered hard times and might want to be adopted by another Muslim, but "...I don't know how it would be different from now."

"Instead of adopting a child, foreigners should help the extended families, take in orphaned relatives," said Sterling Abdi Arush of the Somali women's relief group IIDA.

**DROUGHT THREATENS  
SOUTHERN ROMANIA**

Farmers in the districts of Tleorman and Giurgiu in the far south of Romania could hardly believe their eyes when it suddenly began to snow in early March. They had seen neither snow nor rain since the start of the winter.

Nevertheless, meteorologists quickly dampened everybody's hopes. "Even if there was an extraordinarily high amount of precipitation in the first half of the month, this would do little to replenish the moisture lost by the soil," they said.

Experts warn that southern Romanians were threatened this year by the biggest drought known in the past 130 years.

The fields have now dried out to a depth of up to one meter. Half of the 2.2 million hectares of winter wheat planted last autumn is already drying up, and the situation in the barley fields is even worse.

The government recently adopted an emergency program which foresees the investment of 65 billion lei (roughly US\$ 140 million) for the immediate rehabilitation of irrigation systems which have been allowed to deteriorate during the past three years, which service one million hectares of land. Yet when the first requests reached Bucharest, not one lei could be found.

The disaster is also affecting the large cities. Brasov and Sibiu, in southern Transylvania, have been suffering from lack of water for several years. The promised new pipes, linking them with reservoirs in the Carpathian Mountains, have simply not been completed. In mid-February, the Mayor of Brasov estimated that the water reserves in the Rarlung reservoir - the city's most important - would suffice for a mere 25 days if no further rain or snow fell. Bucharest's water reserves are somewhat larger, but even they would only last for 60 days. The capital city takes its drinking water out of two rivers - the Dimbovita and the Arges.

The dam reservoir on the Dimbovita is virtually empty, while the water level in the Arges is at only 40% of its average for this time of year.

At the moment, about one-third of the precious liquid seeps out through broken and leaky pipes. If anything

at all does eventually flow out the taps, it is usually a dark brown, unappetizing liquid.

Acting on his own, Halaicu has obtained credit from the city of Paris, which will be used this year to repair the first 26 km of Bucharest's main water conduit.

**NEW DEBATE ON  
MERCY KILLING**

The Netherlands has already passed a controversial law regulating euthanasia at a patient's request. Now the Dutch are tackling an even tougher question: Is it ever legal for a doctor to kill a patient who has not requested death?

Two years ago, a baby boy was born here, two months premature and underweight. He developed a brain haemorrhage and the pressure in his skull damaged his brain so severely that if he had survived he would have been a mentally retarded epileptic.

Doctors tried but failed to help him. They stopped all treatment and the baby continued to suffer.

Finally, at his parents' request, they gave him ever-increasing doses of morphine and sedatives until he died, at the age of four weeks.

The doctors kept the case a secret, fearing that they would go to prison for murder, but recent studies show that around 10 babies every year in the Netherlands die by active mercy killing.

"If I'd been the main doctor, I would have done the same," said Dr Richard De Leeuw, a neo-natal expert at the Amsterdam Medical Center and a member of the team that killed the child.

"When all your efforts at treatment fail and the prognosis is so bad... then it seems death is the only option."

From now on, doctors must report every instance and face prosecution as part of a nationwide debate to determine the precise point at which good, humane intentions become murder.

"I think in the Netherlands we are holding a public discussion you wouldn't see abroad - but the practice abroad may not be so different from here," said Dr Ron Beghman, a researcher at the Institute of Medical Ethics in Maastricht.

"For approximately 300 cases each year, Dutch doctors stop treating newborn infants with such a poor future they are believed to be beyond medical help," said De Leeuw.

The issue has caused international outrage, fueled by erroneous reports which suggest that the Dutch are legalizing the mass elimination of handicapped babies and the mentally ill, in a revival of the Nazi's genetic selection program.

This image has sickened Dutch doctors who must put their careers on the line for the sake of celerity in a dilemma they face more frequently than they would hope.

"Since the end of last year, we have agreed to report every case, even though you stand a chance that you'll be charged with murder," said De Leeuw.

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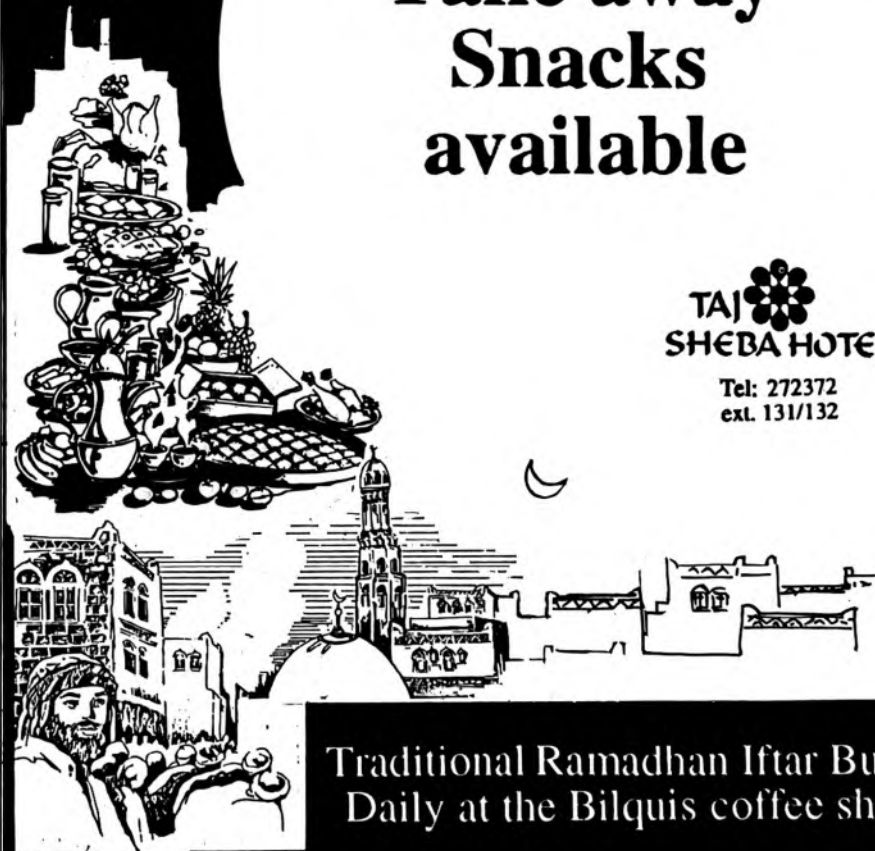
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**DECENTRALIZATION IS THE ONLY WAY TO GET OUT OF THE CRISIS?**

The problem of authority does not lie in the personalities of those ruling the country, for these might be much better than others. If a new group comes to power, it is likely that they will be corrupted as well because "power to corrupts" as the poet Al Baraddoni emphasizes all the time. The problem lies in the over centralization which makes democracy impossible. This over-centralization will cause a lot of problems and confusion. There is no way to strengthen the foundation of democracy without mass participation. To do this, we need a decentralized system. The first step in the decentralization of authority is through the election of local officials directly by the people. This action will strengthen our democracy, otherwise totalitarianism is just around the corner lurking to bounce back. At the same time, the system will continue to suffer from confusion and crisis.

**By: Hassan M. Zaid, Al-Shoura, Sanaa, 11/3/1993**

**A NEW PARKING LOT?**

Al-Mustaghal paper learnt from informed sources that an armed group kidnapped the head of the bodyguard unit of Garallah Omar, member of the Polit- bureau of the YSP, along with the vehicle last Friday. The incident is said to have taken place at Dhooran, Anis, on the way from Aden (?) to Sana'a.

Meanwhile another group, also of Anis tribesmen, kidnapped the driver of Abdul Wasi Sallam, Minister of Justice, alongwith his vehicle, while on the way from Sana'a to Aden.

Informed sources pointed out that the group later released the two men while holding on to the vehicles which are "parked" at Sheikh Ali Abdullah Al miqdad's premises.

**Al-Mustaqbal, Sanaa, 7/3/1993**

**DEMOCRATIC INTER-ACTION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE SEC**

Any differences regarding the proper democratic steps cannot be dealt with except through more democracy. Experience shows that the credibility of our system lies in our democratic behavior. Thus, the case filed with the Supreme Court by the government concerning its disagreement with the SEC case to be seen as a manifestation of real democracy. Such a democratic step represents a historic milestone in our political evolution and it embodies for the first time a democratic practice that shows respect for the law. In this light, we should be optimistic about what the future holds, and the possibilities of progress in Yemen.

**Al-Mithaq, Sanaa, 8/3/1993**

**YEMENIS SHOULD RECONSIDER THEIR LIFE PATTERN**

We must all seize the opportunity of this blessed

month (Ramadhan) to reconsider our calculations in order to pursue a new path in our lives.

It is evident that any hasty decisions, without sufficient consult will lead to more confusion and mistrust and thus is will lead to more chaos and turmoil which has no end.

The examples are too many at the Arab level as well as at the local Yemeni level. One example is our policy towards Gulf crisis from which we still suffer until this day.

It is essential for our senior officials to think deeply over and over before taking a resolution which may have crucial and long-lasting consequences.

Let us remember that all our wealth is from this homeland and the citizen. Let us ask ourselves, "What we have committed against the homeland and the poor citizens?" Let's do something good for our people.

**By: Mohammad Alnuu Al-Tas-heeh, Sanaa, 9/3/1993**

**TRIBALISM... FIRST, FINAL**

In Yemen, the government, the people, the parties and even the press - all endeavor to develop tribal or pseudo-tribal affiliation in the Yemeni society.

Actually, the Republic of Yemen - after unification - began a policy aimed at the restoration of tribalism. The state turned into a tribe and the sheikh's authority began to eclipse any other authority. The confusion, violation of the laws, or simple crimes increasingly being handled through the tribal system and the "traditions". This has given more prestige and power to the sheikhs at the expense of the civilian authorities. The adoption of tribal entities has transformed the tribes into mini-nations that interact with the state with parity and independence.

The reality of our situation imposes on us to work to minimize tribal affiliation and to fight against the encroachment of the state authority by the sheikhs. Violence spread not only in the countryside, but it also in the cities and the state watches by either as a neutral party or one taken by surprise.

**By: Abdulbari Tahir, Al-Thawri, Sanaa, 11/3/1993**

**EDUCATION IN RAMADHAN?**

The Ministry of Education decided to proceed with its programs during Ramadhan though it knows that this is a futile effort. The schools and institutes are supposed to be on vacation during this month as no education really takes place. This was the decision of Sanaa University which simply ended all educational programs during this month. The step has its positive side as far as the students are concerned.

During Ramadhan, most students come to school drowsy, lazy and fatigued. and absenteeism is high, aby way. Field studies tare even harder to execute and lead to have more negative aspects. Thus, education is less productive during this

month, given the effort and resources. To complicate things even further, teachers are absent in large numbers thus addingto the confusion. Another problem is that the periods (lessons are much shorter - i.e., 35 minutes, interrupted by a break for noon and afternoon prayers. Such an educational environment is so confusing that education in the real sense does not take place.

**By: Gameel Ahmad Ashargebi, Al-Gumhuriyyah, Taiz, 11/3/1993**

**WHAT ARE WE GOING TO SAY?**

A leader of an opposition party went to a polling station to register his name, as any other citizens who dream of democracy. All of a sudden, he found himself facing a number of military men pushing him in many directions with their guns points towards him as if telling him that it was easy to kill him if they wanted. Just think about this incident. And think about another incident. When a group of military men surrounds the house of a parliamentarian and shoot him, what are we going to say? And when they break through a hotel by force kidnap the owner and threaten him with death if he refuses to pay them a ransom... What can we say? We are told that the police is in the service of the-people protecting them from any dangers and not the contrary.

It is true that the majority of the police are honest patriots, unfortunately, there are certain elements which behave badly.

In society, it is normal that certain elements deviate and breakthe laws, but among the police, this is a dangerous phenomenon.

**By: Saeed Awlaqi Raay, Sanaa, 9/3/1993.**

**OUR SAY !**

Our nation today is at crossroads facing its greatest ever challenge - to hold the first parliamentary elections which will help chart the course of the foreseeable future.

It has become evident that holding the elections is a necessary prerequisite for our country to overcome its crises, or at least, to start in the path of reform. The elections also represent a challenge for the two ruling parties in as much as they are forcing them to live up to the slogans they have been raising for so long - notably the ones about the peaceful transfer of power and full acceptance of the elections results. That is why we believe certain circles will attempt to tamper with the elections, and to create artificial obstacles in order to "navigate" the results in directions favorable to them. But these efforts should not stop the people from forcefully opposing such efforts.

That is also why we call on all the righteous citizens of this country to unite against efforts aimed at cheating in the elections.

**Al-Sahwah, Sanaa, 11/3/1993**

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## DOES LIFE EXIST BEYOND EARTH?

By: Amjed Abdul-Hamid,  
Science Editor,  
Yemen Times.

Throughout the ages, humans looked up to the stars and wondered about the possible existence of worlds other than their own. The search for other planetary systems has been going on in earnest for more than half a century, during which time astronomers have edged tantalizingly close to their goal. Finding another planetary systems is a first step to direct the big radio antennas towards them and listen.

Efforts to search for other planetary systems employ either direct or indirect methods. Direct methods involve detecting reflected light or infrared radiation (heat) from the planets themselves. The primary difficulty with this approach is that emission from a planet tends to be drowned out by the vastly brighter emission of its nearby parent star.

Indirect methods involve scrutinizing a star for signs that it is responding to the gravitational tug of an orbiting planet. As the planet moves from one side of the star to the other, it pulls the star back and forth. This pull

manifests itself as a slight wobble superposed on the star's overall motion across the sky when records of the position are kept for years. Any motion toward or away from Earth causes the star's light waves to be slightly compressed or stretched. When light, so to say, is compressed, it becomes slightly bluer; when stretched, it becomes slightly redder a phenomenon known as the Doppler effect.

A number of stars were scheduled to be listened to based on the above qualifying conditions. But most of the stars were listened to according to their resemblance to our Sun. For scientists this is all about needed for a planetary system to be suspect for having some kind of life aboard. The list of suspect stars has grown over the years, but we probably won't hear the results until the very end of this century.

NASA has picked Columbus Day (the 500th anniversary of the Columbus voyage) to turn on the most advanced radio receivers ever built for SETI - the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence, at a cost of about US \$100 million.

But why radio? Because space

travel is very expensive and the distances between stars are vast. The nearest stars to Earth Alpha-Centauri and Barnard's star are as far as 4.3 and 6 light years or  $4.1 \times 10^{13}$  and  $5.6 \times 10^{13}$  kilometers respectively. To appreciate more these figures, let us suppose that a spacecraft could travel at a speed of 50 kilometers per second, then the nearest stars could be reached after 26,500 and 35,000 years respectively. On the other hand radio waves travel at the speed of light and are far cheaper than spaceships. Scientists involved in the search are pretty sure something is out there. A lot of numbers, some high and some low, are thrown around to express the probability of intelligent life. Here are some figures that are middle-of-the-road. There are an estimated 400 billion stars in our galaxy, the Milky Way. Planets may be fairly common, so one can figure out from existing data that one out of every ten of these stars has planets, which equals 40 billion stars with planets. If every such star has ten planets, that is 400 billion planets. But how many of these places are suitable for life? If life elsewhere is

similar to our own form of life, then one needs a planet with an atmosphere that is not too hot or too cold, and with water. In our solar system only Earth qualifies, though Mars and Venus come close. So let's be conservative and estimate that only one planet in each solar system will qualify. That gives us 40 billion habitable planets. How many of these actually develop life?

We can take a one-in-ten estimate, a fairly high degree of how difficult life is to start. That is 4 billion planets would support life.

The key question, though, is how many of these have intelligent life?

That's even tougher to pin down. There's no scientific yardstick. Let's say it happens one in 100 times. That's 40 million civilizations.

How many of these civilizations are technologically advanced enough to communicate over great distances?

If they don't have radio, the SETI project won't find them. But the laws of physics are evidently the same all over the universe, and intelligent creatures will presumably discover some of the same laws we have

and build devices, such as radio, to exploit them. Let's say one civilization in ten does this. That's 4 million groups we could communicate with. But it's an awfully old universe, and how long do these communicative civilizations last? Suppose that the average age of a planet is 10 billion years (our young planet is a bit less than half of that) and its civilization is communicative for a thousandth of that time - 10 million years. That would mean a thousandth of the advanced civilizations, or 4000 words, could be detectable right now.

What happens if something is detected? Michael Klein, the program manager for SETI says the system contains a lot of highly automated filters. "There are lots of checks in there to

say: Is this the kind of signal we're looking for? Is it possibly interference? Is it a satellite? Is it somebody's microwave oven? "than the signal has to be confirmed by another observatory to prove that it is really from a cosmic source.

The implications of success are stunning to contemplate. It would change our view of ourselves, our civilization, and our own planet in something like the way the Copernican revolution overthrew the view that Earth was the center of the universe. Indeed if one could hear only a real "wooo" in SETI microphones then the minds of this generation and the next generations of scientists would be set aflame to only tell this other intelligent civilizations, "Hello, we are here."

### Aden Hotel Starts a New Tradition

"We have introduced the 'Cordon Noir' tradition at the Aden (Movenpick) Hotel as a signal of the quality service and good food our customers can expect of us," explained Robert Friez, General Manager of the hotel.



In a ceremonial evening on March 11th, Aden Hotel adopted the Cordon Noir tradition, prevalent in southeast Asia. The idea is to get first quality service, excellent food, and good drinks. The hotel also used the occasion to honor some of its outstanding staff. Awards were distributed to the excelling employees.

This step will not only enhance business for the hotel, it will also help tourism in Yemen as well as the city of Aden.

The event was attended by prominent public figures, and guests who flew in from neighboring countries.

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**Title:** Full-time Administrative Support Assistant for USAID assisted Options for Family Care (OFC, and Accelerated Cooperation for Child Survival ACCS) projects.

**Location:** The Logistical and Administrative Support Office (LASO), USAID, Amran Road.

**Reports to:** OFC/ACCS Team Leader.

Incumbent will act as the OFC/ACCS Team Leader's principal Administrative Support Assistant and will be responsible for routine word processing, typing, filing, and record-keeping under the Team Leader's general supervision.

Candidates should be bilingual, have a typing ability of 50 w.p.m., must have had some introduction to an IBM/WANG PC, have the ability to use the latest versions of Word Perfect and Lotus 1-2-3, and must have basic working knowledge of MS-DOS operating systems.

Interested applicants should apply directly to the LASO Manager at USAID or contact the Manager by telephone at 231-526/7, or by FAX at 231-528.

Letters to the Editor Letters to the Editor Letters to the Editor Letters to the Editor Letters to the Editor Letters to the Editor

ILLEGALLY OCCUPIED HOUSES IN SOMALIA

I would like to draw the attention of the U.S. led Unified Task Force (UNITAF) which is engaged in "Restore Hope" operation in Somalia, to the residential areas which have been unlawfully invaded and occupied by some of lawless clan-based militiamen. The legal owners of those houses have fled from the killing, raping and looting which were taking place before the arrival of the UN Forces. So, the militias, associated with the USC (United Somali Criminals) have taken this opportunity to enrich themselves by occupying the residences of the people who had fled from their atrocities. However, by the grace of the almighty God, the efforts to maintain law and order are effectively underway in Somalia. As a result, the Somali people who are refugees in Kenya and Yemen are prepared to go

back home. Unfortunately, their houses are under occupation by the same lawless bandits who are responsible for all the misery of the country. Therefore, I urge the international authorities to order their troops to make house-to-house search for arms and ammunition and then to eject those armed gangs out of the residences they occupy illegally. Moreover, the criminals and their warlords must be put on trial. Only thus will the innocent civilians, refugees today, be able to go back and settle down. The New World Order needs to show it is a force to be reckoned with and that thugs and bandits cannot get away with their atrocities. I conclude by expressing appreciation to UNITAF.

By: Sheikh Nour Qassim Al-Barawi, Hodeidah.

THE COST OF PRAYING

One of the main worries of people going to the mosque to perform their prayers in this country is how to avoid having their shoes stolen by fellow worshippers. By custom and out of respect for the sanctity of mosques, Muslims often leave their shoes by the entrance door and go inside the mosque barefoot. After prayers, it is often the case, however, that some worshippers walk out of the mosque earlier than others. Some of those who finish earlier are sometimes faced with the difficult task of choosing from a collection of shoes of different styles and qualities and of different sizes. Those who wear old tattered shoes or slippers find it tempting to replace them by new high quality leather shoes at no cost to themselves. This issue, unfortunately, is not a new problem. Any person who frequents mosques will tell you one or two stories of how they once had their shoes stolen. This issue was brought vividly to my mind recently as I witnessed a frustrated person coming out of a mosque in Tahrir Square barefoot. He was looking in all directions in vain to spot his shoes or the person who walked away with them. There is no doubt that many preachers have done their bit by preaching to their congregations on the disgrace of such behavior and on the punishment which awaits the perpetrators in the hereafter. But preaching alone, unfortunately, is not enough. What is needed is a system, perhaps, of labelling whereby the mosques appoint someone at the door to receive the shoes of the worshippers who would be given numbered slips as receipts. A fee of one or two riyals, for example, towards the service of safe-keeping would not be a bad idea. It is a system worth considering if we are to ensure a steady flow of worshippers to our mosques. Almost twenty years ago, I remember a conversation I had in Little Aden with one of Yemen's most famous poets; the late Mohammad Saeed Geradah. He told me that he used to be a regular worshipper in the mosques at one time in his youth, until his shoes were stolen one day in a mosque. This incident left a deep mark on Geradah's life afterwards and drove him away from attending mosques for good. His character then took an opposite direction in its search for self-satisfaction and truth. Let us hope that those who have had their shoes stolen do not react in this way. But why should we try them?

By: Dr. Nabil Ahmed Sultan, Member of the British Institute of Management - U.K.

A YEMENI POET AND A POEM

The Arabs are people interested in writing and reading poetry more than any other genre of literature. So in order to get a good view about the Arab mind, it is important to read Arab poetry. Abdulkarim Arrazihi is a Yemeni poet, a short story writer and a dramatist, who has influenced public opinion visibly through his literary works. Here is an example.

"Testimony Of Coward Blood"

Oh my country,  
Oh dust that fills my nostrils,  
Oh injury that feeds me  
with fresh wounds and recurrent pain.  
Oh disturbed dreams and turbulent nightmares  
You are a thorn in my eye and a bone in my mouth,  
oh my country.  
\* \* \*  
I love you when you even as you take away my safety  
and when you give me fear.  
When you block my mouth with cudgels  
and fill my stomach with stones.  
When you shrink my space  
and my body becomes a jail cell  
and when the gallows rise high to torment my soul.  
\* \* \*  
I come down from you and to you  
I rise up to you.  
From your extremities I was born  
and in your extremities I shall end  
I trust you and to you I belong.  
I belong to the mud of your roads,  
to the stars of your sky  
and to your mad dogs, oh my country.  
My fear is to belong to you and I fear for you.  
\* \* \*  
Oh my country  
Oh painful stab in my heart, hemorrhage in my brain.  
Oh flames burning skin, fires glowing in my head  
I loved you oh wretched land  
and to this my coward blood is an eye witness for me.

Poem by: Abdulkarim Arrazihi,  
Translated by: Soheil Najm,  
Sanaa.

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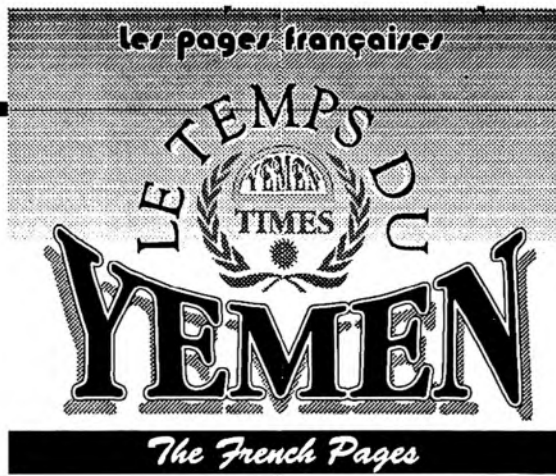
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Une situation aggravée par une grève des éboueurs

## Aden sous la boue et les immondices

Un mois après les terribles inondations qui ont sinistré Aden et les gouvernorats du sud, la ville portuaire ressemble toujours à un gigantesque bourbier parsemé d'immondices qui ne sont plus collectées. Au delà des dommages causés (de nombreuses maisons se sont partiellement ou totalement écroulées sur le passage des coulées de boue), les risques d'épidémies sont de plus en plus manifestes. Des tas d'immondices et des flaques d'eau moisie et nauséabonde se sont accumulées dans les rues, infestées également par les insectes, depuis que des centaines d'éboueurs municipaux ont considérablement ralenti leurs activités, en raison du retard de plusieurs mois dans le paiement de leurs salaires. Ils ont entamé mercredi 10 mars dernier une grève illimitée.

L'ancienne capitale du sud était déjà considérablement insalubre

avant les pluies torrentielles et les inondations de février dernier qui ont tué douze personnes et détruit 560 maisons. En effet, depuis l'unification, la discipline du régime socialiste qui avait fait d'Aden une ville "propre" au delà de ce que l'on peut observer dans la région (selon des personnes qui y vivaient alors) s'est quelque peu relâchée. Les dépôts d'ordures en pleine ville qui servaient de garde-manger aux chèvres et aux moutons étaient alors courants.

Aden a récemment été le théâtre d'un début d'épidémie de choléra et le paludisme s'y développe. Sans compter les maladies endémiques qui sévissent dans tout le pays, qui se communiquent principalement par les eaux souillées. A l'approche des grandes chaleurs de l'été, des mesures d'urgence s'imposent pour la salubrité de cette ville.

E.G.

## PRECISION M. Omar Al-Gaoui est le chef de file de l'opposition

Dans un article de notre précédente édition intitulé "Cinq partis s'entendent sur 260 candidats uniques", la rédaction malheureuse d'une phrase a pu laisser penser que M. Omar Al-Gaoui, secrétaire général du parti d'opposition Al-Tajammu et personnalité importante de la Conférence nationale des partis de l'opposition était associé aux négociations sur le futur partage des sièges au Parlement par cinq partis, dont le PSY et le CPG. En fait, la "réunion" entre ces partis et d'autres de l'opposition, comme nous l'avons dit, n'a pas abordé les questions d'accords électoraux, déjà réglés. M. Al-Gaoui a été désigné par ses collègues de l'opposition pour les représenter dans les réunions politiques. Nous prions M. Al-Gaoui de bien vouloir nous excuser si l'interprétation de nos propos ont pu prêter à confusion.

E.G.

Pour le second tour du scrutin le 28 mars prochain

## Des observateurs yéménites aux élections législatives françaises

A un mois près, les élections législatives en France coïncideront avec celles du Yémen, prévues pour le 27 avril prochain. A cette occasion, le gouvernement français a invité cinq personnalités yéménites à venir observer les élections entre les deux tours de scrutin.

MM. Jarallah Omar, membre de la Haute Commission Electorale (HCE) et responsable des relations extérieures du Parti Socialiste Yéménite, Abdel Malik Al-Mikhlafi, président du Comité d'Information de la HCE, Mohamed Ali Haitham, membre du Comité Général du CPG et

de la HCE, Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf, rédacteur en chef de ce journal et Hamoud Mounassar, membre du Comité d'Information de la HCE, quitteront Sanaa pour Paris le 26 mars prochain.

Ils visiteront l'Assemblée Nationale française et des bureaux de votes dans certaines circonscriptions. Le soir du 28 mars, ils assisteront au dépouillement et au traitement des résultats au Ministère de l'Intérieur ainsi qu'à l'organisation de la couverture médiatique des élections au Département de Presse du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères.

La victoire de la droite aux élections législatives françaises ne fait plus de doute. Dès dimanche prochain, à l'issue du premier tour, on pourra avoir une idée de son ampleur. Un dernier sondage accorde au RPR (héritier du gaullisme) et à l'UDF (droite libérale) 42 % des intentions de vote au premier tour contre 20,5 % au parti socialiste, actuellement au pouvoir. A l'Assemblée nationale, la droite recueillerait entre 430 et 449 sièges et les socialistes obtiendraient de 88 à 109 sièges.

Pour ces élections, les partis politiques ont tenu à perpétuer le clivage traditionnel droite-gauche. Pourtant, il ne correspond plus aux mutations de la société. Le premier tour des élections législatives devrait confirmer les lignes de fracture apparues lors du référendum sur le traité d'unification européenne en septembre dernier: une France du 'oui' concentrée dans

les villes et parmi les classes les plus aisées, face à une France du 'non' majoritaire dans les campagnes et parmi les catégories les plus défavorisées.

Cette ligne de partage a traversé les partis politiques de part en part. Les rebelles s'appelaient Jean-Pierre Chevènement pour le parti socialiste, Charles Pasqua et Philippe Séguin pour le RPR, et Philippe de Villiers pour l'UDF. Ils ont appelé à voter 'non' au référendum, rompant ainsi avec la discipline de leurs partis qui avaient milité pour le 'oui'.

La recomposition du paysage politique français devrait avoir lieu après les élections. Les centristes, tiraillés entre leur appartenance historique à la droite et les appels du pied des socialistes, et les écologistes, empêtrés dans leurs divisions internes, sont au centre de ce futur remue-ménage.

A gauche, Michel Rocard, ancien premier ministre socialiste

de 1988 à 1991 et "candidat naturel" des socialistes aux élections présidentielles de 1995, a commencé à défricher le terrain. Il a lancé il y a quelques semaines son idée de "big bang". Prononçant un violent réquisitoire contre le parti socialiste, il a appelé à un vaste mouvement de type social-démocrate, réunissant socialistes, communistes rénovateurs, centristes sociaux et écologistes.

Michel Rocard remet ainsi en cause plus de vingt ans d'union entre le parti socialiste et le parti communiste, une stratégie lancée en 1971 par le président de la République, François Mitterrand. Il y a dix ans déjà, Michel Rocard avait reproché au chef de l'Etat son "archaïsme". Sans succès. Cette fois-ci, il semble plus en phase avec les militants socialistes. Déboussolés par les "affaires", ces derniers réclament une grande lessive.

Jérôme BERNARD

Premier tournoi sponsorisé à Sanaa

## Le tennis yéménite veut sortir de l'anonymat



Ci-contre: treize jeunes joueurs de Sanaa. Aden compte également d'excellents joueurs, du fait de la présence britannique par le passé, mais qui n'ont pu venir disputer le tournoi, faute de moyens financiers. Ci-dessous à gauche: le Colonel Hussein Al-Dafi, l'un des "mécènes" du tennis yéménite, a ouvert le tournoi. A droite: les numéro un et deux du tennis national, Mansour Mohamed Alazy (à droite) et Basel Al-Koumiati.

Le tennis n'a pas la cote au Yémen. Pourtant, ils sont une poignée de passionnés à vouloir le sortir de l'anonymat. Depuis samedi, le premier tournoi de tennis sponsorisé par une compagnie yéménite, EUNAFT, a démarré sur les courts du Club des officiers de police de Sanaa. Dix-huit joueurs vont s'affronter pendant deux semaines en simple et en double.

EUNAFT (Al Moutawakil for

general trading and oil agency) a accordé 60 000 ryaals au colonel Abdul Aziz Farah, l'organisateur du tournoi. "Cette somme nous a permis d'acheter des balles et des prix pour les vainqueurs", explique Mansour Mohamed Alazy, considéré comme le joueur numéro un au Yémen. "Mais cela ne suffit pas pour inviter des joueurs de l'extérieur", ajoute-t-il.

Mansour regrette que le mi-

nistère des Sports ne soutienne pas le tennis. S'équiper coûte très cher. Une boîte de balles vaut 350 ryaals.

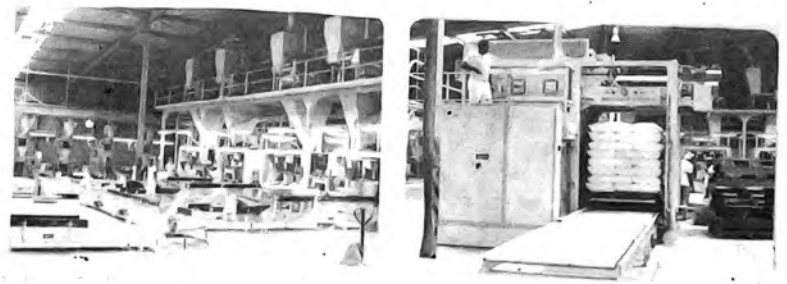
Dans quelques semaines, un autre tournoi devrait être organisé. Cette fois-ci, Mansour aimerait qu'il soit ouvert aux joueurs de tennis étrangers. Mais il faut encore trouver de l'argent pour l'organiser.

J.B.



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# Précisions sur l'Islam

par Najib Banabila\*

## Deuxième partie : Islam et progrès économique

Dans son verset XIII.11. le Coran dit: "Dieu ne change pas les conditions d'un peuple avant que celui-ci ne les ait changées lui-même". Ce verset implique la nécessité d'intégrer les valeurs dynamiques du progrès économique sans pour autant déstabiliser les valeurs statiques culturelles et éthiques de l'Islam.

Mais justement, comment définir le progrès économique ? On retiendra comme définition l'aptitude que trouvent les sociétés à engendrer un idéal social. Selon nous, quatre forces motrices engendrent cet idéal social et concordent avec les valeurs fondamentales islamiques, à savoir: la connaissance, le travail, le progrès scientifique et technique, la redistribution de la richesse.

En dehors des matières de la foi et des éléments intangibles de la Loi (*Shariah*), l'Islam n'assigne aucune limite à l'exercice de la Raison. Selon Mohamed Aijazul Katib, de l'Université de Damas, cité par Marcel Boisard dans son livre *L'Islam aujourd'hui* (1): "Rien ne peut mieux faire comprendre l'importance de la science dans l'Islam que la remarque suivante: alors qu'il n'y a dans le Coran que 250 versets qui traitent des questions juridiques, on en compte quelques 750, presque le huitième du Livre Saint, qui exhortent les croyants à étudier la nature, à réfléchir, à utiliser au mieux la raison et à faire de l'entreprise scientifique une partie intégrante de la vie de la communauté".

Il est notoire de constater que le premier verset révélé du Coran qui commence par ces mots: "Lis au Nom de ton Seigneur qui a créé!" (XCVI, 1) est une recommandation de lire car la lecture est le symbole de l'étude et de la recherche scientifique.

Bukhari a rappelé le titre élogieux d'"héritiers du Prophète" que le Prophète Mohamed a donné aux hommes de savoir: "Les savants ne sont que les héritiers du Prophète". Il n'y a

d'ailleurs qu'un seul mot, *Ilm*, pour désigner la science.

Dans cette perspective il n'y a pas lieu de séparer l'éducation religieuse des autres disciplines. Citons à cet effet les propos pertinents d'Albert Einstein (1879-1955): "La science sans la religion est voiteuse, la religion sans la science est aveugle".

### Le travail facteur d'autonomie

Le travail est d'abord une contrainte vitale pour l'homme. Il est en même temps facteur d'autonomie parce qu'il assure à l'homme la satisfaction de ses besoins élémentaires.

Le travail n'est pas perçu par l'Islam comme dévalorisant. Citons à ce propos un *hadith* (récit) du Prophète: "La meilleure nourriture que vous mangez est celle que vous gagnez avec vos mains". Le travail est une ressource indispensable pour élever le niveau de bien être général.

A ce propos le Coran est explicite: "L'homme ne possédera que ce qu'il aura acquis par ses propres efforts," (CXXXII, 39). Il faut entendre par là des efforts récompensés par un travail honnête.

### Progrès scientifique et technique

La diffusion de la formation et de l'information semble stimuler les exigences à l'égard du contenu et du sens du travail. Notons cependant qu'un véritable humanisme consisterait à concilier les contraintes d'une organisation globale complexe et les désirs d'autonomie qui ne peuvent aboutir sans elle.

Il faut observer que le Livre Saint accorde autant d'importance à la connaissance qu'à son application. Le Coran,

dans les versets XXXIV, 10 et XXI, 80, nous rappelle l'exemple de David et Salomon, qui connaissaient bien les techniques de leur temps: "Nous avons amolli le fer à son intention". Les versets évoquent l'utilisation de l'équipement lourd de l'époque, grâce auquel l'homme construisait des palais, des barrages et des réservoirs. Le Livre Saint évoque aussi le souvenir de Dhul Qarnain (Alexandre Le Grand), "construisant des défenses à l'aide de blocs de fer et de cuivre fondu; il souligne ainsi l'importance de la métallurgie, des grands travaux, des techniques qui assuraient la maîtrise des vents et des moyens de communication". (1)

A ces grands travaux d'infrastructures matériels on peut assimiler tout projet économique contribuant à élever le niveau de bien être de la société. Si les innovations scientifiques et techniques sont le quasi-monopole occidental depuis les années 1780, il n'en reste pas moins qu'aujourd'hui d'autres pays ont le *know how* tels que le Japon et Israël. Cela n'empêche de concilier tradition et modernité.

Par conséquent, suivant l'expression de Jacques Berque: "L'Islam est apte à relever les défis de l'Occident industrialisé à condition de s'opposer à toutes les évolutions dispersantes et divergentes du progrès".

Un exemple fort honorable de modernisation économique dans les pays musulmans nous est donné par l'Etat musulman le plus peuplé, à savoir l'Indonésie, qui compte 180 millions d'habitants soit à peu près la population de tous les Etats arabes réunis!

### Redistribution de la richesse et "droit d'insertion"

L'Islam confère de la consi-

dération à la richesse sous différents angles; 70 versets la mentionnent. Cependant cette richesse a, dans l'Islam, une fonction sociale: "Dans leurs biens il y avait une part de droit au mendiant et au désérité". (Coran VI, 19).

C'est un droit d'"insertion" pour utiliser un terme consacré en France depuis l'adoption à l'unanimité par les députés, le 30 novembre 1988 du Revenu Minimum d'Insertion (RMI). Des mécanismes presque similaires existaient déjà à l'aube de l'Islam au VIIème siècle, avec l'institution du Trésor Public (*Dar al Mal*) qui redistribuait l'argent des riches aux pauvres.

Cette injonction du Coran a été faite à La Mecque alors qu'aucune société musulmane n'existait encore et concernait principalement des incroyants. Voilà le véritable humanisme! Ceci nous amène à l'élargir la portée de ce verset au niveau transnational, sans discrimination de race ou de religion.

La richesse globale de quelques pays arabes (Pays du Golfe et Libye) a fait l'objet d'estimations statistiques (2). Celles-ci évaluent à 1.500 milliards de dollars US les sommes encaissées depuis le premier choc pétrolier jusqu'en 1990. C'est là un trésor plus

fabuleux que celui d'Ali Baba!

L'aide bilatérale ou multilatérale, même si elle n'a pas une rentabilité politique et économique immédiate (slogan: *Trade, not Aid*) doit être considérée comme une "cause sacrée" dans l'établissement du Nouvel ordre mondial. Faut-il rappeler que d'après la Conférence des Nations Unies sur le Commerce et le Développement (CNUCED), 42 pays ont été catalogués, en décembre 1991, comme "les plus pauvres parmi les pauvres". Avec une population cumulée de 440 millions d'habitants, ils ne récoltent qu'une fraction dérisoire du Produit Intérieur Brut des pays donateurs: 0,15%. (3) Nous résumerons en disant que l'Islam est non seulement apte à relever les défis du progrès économique mais est également générateur d'un élan social régulateur inscrit dans la matrice de sa religion.

On peut dire que le rôle historique du Prophète Mohamed a été incommensurablement plus déterminant que celui d'Alexandre Le Grand ou de César.

Citons le vibrant hommage au Prophète par Alphonse de Lamartine (1790-1869) dans son *Histoire de la Turquie*: "Philosophe, orateur, apôtre, législateur, conquérant d'idées

, restaurateur de dogmes, fondateur de vingt empires terrestres et d'un empire spirituel, voilà Mohammed. A toutes les échelles où l'on mesure la grandeur humaine, quel homme fut plus grand?"

La personnalité du Prophète Mohamed a été caractérisée d'après Ibn Qutaiba (4) par les trois traits suivants: "Riche, modeste et généreux". Voilà, à notre avis, les qualités essentielles pour un équilibre harmonieux!

Nous terminons par la louange du Très Haut.

\* Najib Banabila est un économiste attaché au secrétariat de l'Organisation des Nations Unies. D'origine yéménite, il vit aujourd'hui en Suisse.

- (1) Marcel A. Boisard: *L'Islam aujourd'hui*, UNESCO 1984.
- (2) Revue *Expansion*, novembre 1990.
- (3) Paris, *Declaration and Program of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990's*. UNCTAD, United Nations, New York, 1992.
- (4) Ibn Qutaiba: *Le Traité de Divergence du Hadith*, traduction Gérard Lecomte, Institut français de Damas, 1962.

### Ramadan

## La Nuit du Décret

par Jean Moncelon\*

Dans la nuit du 26 au 27 Ramadan 612, tandis qu'il s'était retiré, pour méditer, dans une caverne du mont Hira, proche de La Mecque, le prophète de l'Islam reçut la visite d'un ange, en qui la tradition musulmane reconnaît Gabriel (*Jibril*), qui l'avertit de sa mission et lui enseigna la première *sourat* du Couran (Le caillot de sang), lui ordonnant: "Lis! Au Nom de ton Seigneur qui a créé!" (XCVI, 1).

Le 27 Ramadan commémore la "Nuit bénie" (cf XLIV, 3) où la Révélation parvint pour la première fois à Mohamed. Il marque aussi le retour, chaque année lunaire, de cette Nuit du Décret (*Laylat al Qadr*), avec toutes ses bénédictions: "Comment pourrais-tu savoir ce qu'est la Nuit du Décret? La Nuit du Décret est meilleure que mille mois! Les Anges et l'Esprit descendent durant cette nuit, avec la permission de leur Seigneur, pour régler toute chose" (XCVII, 2-4). Et c'est ainsi que le 27 Ramadan compte parmi les anniversaires liturgiques du calendrier musulman en tant qu'une nuit de Paix "qui dure jusqu'au lever de l'aurore".

Il reste que la date exacte de la Nuit du Décret demeure cachée: "On m'a montré cette nuit, raconte le Prophète, puis on m'en a fait perdre le souvenir." Et encore, d'après Aïcha:

"Cherchez la Nuit du Destin parmi les nuits impaires de la dernière décade du mois de Ramadan." Ainsi, à l'imitation de Mohamed, certains pieux musulmans consacrent-ils les dix dernières nuits du Ramadan à une retraite, afin de ne pas la manquer. La plupart, cependant, suit la tradition qui la fixent au 27 du mois.

### Une expérience de célébration commune au Christianisme et à l'Islam

Et c'est à cette date que l'Islamologue Louis Massignon attendait de ses coreligionnaires chrétiens qu'ils s'associent, par des veillées de prières, aux croyants musulmans. L'expérience fut tentée avec succès, à plusieurs reprises, à Paris, dans les années 50. Depuis sa disparition, en 1962, il se trouve encore quelques Chrétiens dispersés en France, au Maroc, en Turquie, à poursuivre cette expérience: comme un témoignage de leur foi dans le Seigneur des Mondes (Al Alamin), commune au Christianisme et à l'Islam.

\* Jean Moncelon est Docteur d'Etat en Philosophie et professeur de français à l'Université de Sanaa

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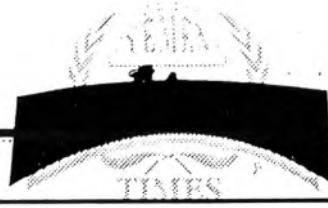
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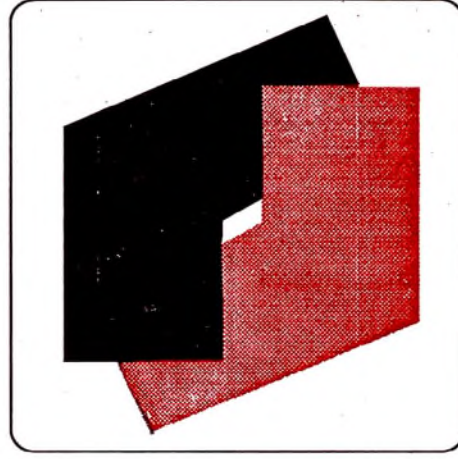
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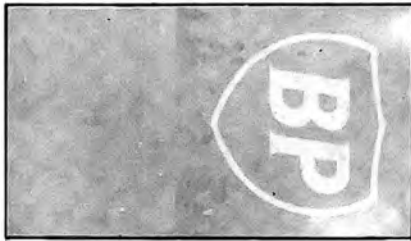
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**EID AL-FITR: The Holiday of Breaking the Fast**

Eid Al-Fitr written in Arabic (عيد الفطر) comes after the month of Ramadhan when Muslims conclude the fast and resume normal eating habits. This is one of two major religious holidays observed by Muslims worldwide. The occasion of Eid Al-Fitr is reflected in the rituals associated with it. The first signs of Eid Al-Fitr start the night before, as families embark on preparations of elaborate dishes, especially in the sweet side of food. First in the morning on Eid day, Muslims get cleaned and wear new (or at least clean) clothes, and go the Mash-had; a special place designated for a special prayer in which large crowds participate. People

greet each other with Eid Saeed (Happy Eid) or Eid Mubarak (Blessed Eid), and the typical answer is: Alaina wa Alikum (For all of us). Those who have gone to prayer are asked to take another route on the way, the intention being to meet many more people and greet them. Eid Al-Fitr is almost the counterpart of the Western Christmas holiday. It is a time of reunions, for families to be together, and above all, for feasts. In every home, delicious meals are prepared, and all kinds of delicacies are served. Poor families receive (they often demand, or at least solicit) financial support as well as donations and contributions in kind (often of clothes, food, etc.).

Yemeni cities are almost evacuated as people of rural origin go back to celebrate the Eid Al-Fitr in their villages. Thus the Ministry of Housing and Urban is often forced to order some shops, groceries, bakeries, restaurants, etc. (in a system of rotation) to remain open to serve the people. Eid Al-Fitr lasts for three days. However, Yemenis have taken the habit of prolonging the festivities for an additional few days. Thus, it effectively lasts for about a week. What this means is that the lethargic pace of Ramadhan will continue for another week into the following week. Enjoy yourself and happy Eid.  
**By: Fatmah Rawah, Social Editor.**

**Learning How to Get There: Dabbab Sign Language in Sanaa City**

**By: Douglas Anke, English Editor/Peace Corps, Sanaa**

In a city the size of Sanaa, it is vital to have an efficient public transportation system ... and, luckily for us all, there is. A quick glance at any busy street will show you the volume of public transit vehicles dashing about the city: taxis, buses, and dabbabs. Many Westerners have probably seen, but never taken a ride in a dabbab (one of those white mini-vans); possibly because most Westerners also have private transportation. However, in some circumstances, dabbabs are superior to private vehicles: they are never hijacked; they are quite inexpensive to ride; and they save riders the difficulties of fighting traffic and looking for "safe" places to park.

There are some things to know about dabbabing before you rush off to try it. Dabbabs can be found on Zubeiri Street, Hadda Road, Ring Road, Wadi Dhar Street (from the new campus of Sanaa University to Tahreer Square, where it is called Ali Abdul-Moghni Street), Hayel Sayeed Street, through the old city, and Taiz Road. In addition, there are two stations where dabbabs can always be found: one in Tahreer Square across from the post office, and another on Zubeiri Street next to Bab Al-Yemen. In either of these places, you will hear a variety of place names being bellowed. Once you know the names of the places that you can go in a dabbab, it is quite easy to get around the city.

If you hear:  
**TAHREER!** - the dabbab will take you to Tahreer Square.  
**BAB!** or **AL-BAB!** - the driver will be going to Bab Al-Yemen.  
**DIE-REE!** - you will be driven to the Inner Ring Road and around the ring. With a Die-ree dabbab, you will occasionally hear another word thrown in to tell you which way the dabbab will go on Ring Road.  
**DIE-REE SAFIYAH!** - the dabbab is going to pass by Hadda Road and the Saudi Arabian Embassy.  
**DIE-REE JAMM'AH!** - you will pass by the old and new campuses of Sanaa University.  
**MEDINAH!** - this dabbab will take you through the old city; it also goes right past the American Embassy.  
**FINDUK!** or **GARYAT HADDA!** - these dabbabs go out to the Hadda Hotel and to Hadda Village.  
**HAYEL!** - the driver will take you to Hayel Saeed Street (renamed Riyadh Street) via Zubeiri Street.  
**ASSIR!** - this dabbab will take you out to

Assir Village on Zubeiri Street heading towards Hodeidah.  
**HASSABAH!** - the dabbab will go around Ring Road and then go out past the Yemania Building to where many government offices are located.  
**BEER OBAYD!** - the driver will take you from Bab Al-Yemen to the souk at Beer Obayd.

Many gestures are used by those in the know about dabbabs to avoid confusion. The most easily mastered of these is the sign for Ring Road; you point your index finger towards the ground and spin it around in a circle. (Note...if you spin your finger upwards in the air, you may call a helicopter instead of a dabbab and you will most certainly cause some eyebrows to be raised.) Aside from that, you need only point in the direction of your destination to hail the proper dabbab to get you there.

However, there can be some confusion with some of these signals. For example, if you are standing on Ring Road near either university campus facing out of the city, and you point your right arm down the street, a dabbab will take you to Hassabah. If you stand in the same position and point inwards toward the city, a dabbab will take you to Tahreer Square. If you stand on the opposite side of the street and point towards the city, the dabbab that stops for you will take you to Bab Al-Yemen.

To save any confusion, just flag down a dabbab and as it passes, yell out where you want to go; if it's on his way, he'll take you there. Dabbab drivers can be most accommodating at times and the passengers are usually helpful to foreign travelers and expatriates.

Some final things to note about dabbabing: women can demand the front seat and avoid the crush in the back of the van; pay only after you get out of the dabbab (the price should be between 3 and 5 Yemeni Riyals); and, most importantly, when you want the driver to stop, yell out **ALA JAMB!** and he will pull over to the curb as soon as he can. Above all, if you want to see a different side of the Yemeni traffic jam, catch up on the latest news, and perhaps meet some unique individuals, give the dabbabs a try; they're inexpensive and convenient.

A final note. These messages are relevant only to dabbabing in Sanaa. Other cities, such as Taiz, may have different signs and different words to yell. So, be careful on how you use the information in this article if you are not a Sanaa resident.

P.S.: In dabbabs, you will hear the latest rumors, especially about politics and politicians. You can also overhear gossip.



**LESSON #36**  
**Tag Questions, Part One**

This week let's change our focus from prepositions to something completely different: tag questions. Tag questions are those short questions which are added to the end of a sentence, often asking for agreement or affirmation. They are similar to the *n'est-ce pas* construction in French, but are much more complicated. This week's lesson will tell you how to form tag questions and give some insight into how and when to use them.

**FORM**

**First part of the sentence**  
affirmative  
negative

**Tag question**  
negative  
affirmative

examples:

Selwa is here, ...  
Selwa isn't here, ...

isn't she?  
is she?

They have left, ...  
They haven't left, ...

haven't they?  
have they?

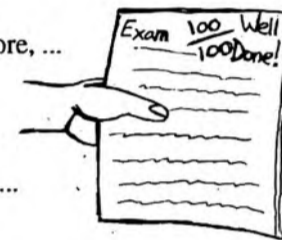
You like tea, ...  
You don't like tea, ...

don't you?  
do you?

**NOTE:** The verb in the tag question is a form of the helping verb appropriate for the first part of the sentence, including *be, have, do, will* (and modals like *would, could, etc.*), and must agree with the first part of the sentence in tense. In American English, if the main verb is *have* (not *have* as a helping verb), the tag question is formed with *do*. **Ali has a new car, doesn't he?**

**Practice A** Add tag questions to the following:

- You didn't go to the souk, ...
- They are coming to visit, ...
- Omar hasn't worked here before, ...
- Dunia is a teacher, ...
- I did well on the exam, ...
- They haven't any children, ...
- We can't travel now, ...
- He is running for Parliament, ...
- Ali crashed his car, ...
- Mother won't want to go, ...



**Special case** Negative tag questions for the subject *I* which use the verb *be* are made with the contraction *aren't* (rather than the nonexistent *amn't*).

I'm not going with you, **am I?**

I am going with you, **aren't I?**

**Practice B** Add tag questions to the following:

- I'm not late, ...
- I am on your list, ...
- I'm not supposed to know about this, ...
- I am working on this project, ...
- I am obnoxious, ...

**Pronouns in tag questions**

Note the changes in pronouns in the following examples:

That is your car, isn't it?

That's not your car, is it?

Those are your pens, aren't they?

Those aren't your pens, are they?

There is an exhibition at the embassy, isn't there?

There weren't many problems, were there?

**Practice C** Add tag questions to the following:

- There isn't an exam tomorrow, ...
- These are your photographs, ...
- This isn't your handbag, ...
- There's a petrol station on Hadda Street, ...
- This hasn't been typed yet, ...
- There were many people at the square, ...
- There was an accident at the airport yesterday, ...
- That's your scarf, ...
- Those are Amin's papers, ...
- This didn't upset you, ...



**USAGE** Using tag questions can be a very sophisticated use of language. There are certain expectations involved. For example, if the first part of the sentence is affirmative and the tag question negative, the speaker expects an affirmative response. If the first part of the sentence is negative and the tag affirmative, the speaker expects a negative response.

sentence: You're going, aren't you?

expected response: Yes, I am.

sentence: You're not going, are you?

expected response: No, I'm not.

Tag questions can be spoken two different ways. A rising intonation means that the speaker is really looking for information and are guessing while asking for affirmation. A falling intonation means the speaker is expressing an idea and believes and wants the listener to agree.

You're not marrying him, are you?

Tell me it's not true!

You're not marrying him, are you?

We both know this is a bad idea.

Interesting, isn't it?

**WEEKLY IDIOM**

give a hard time

To give someone a hard time means to complain, to give trouble by what one says or does, or to scold. Sometimes it can be with a sense of teasing as well.

Abdullah's boss gave him a hard time for coming to work late.

My father is always giving me a hard time, but I know it's because he loves me.

**ANSWERS** Practice A 1. did you? 2. aren't they? 3. has he? 4. isn't she? 5. didn't I? 6. have they? (British English), do they? (American English) 7. can we? 8. isn't he? 9. didn't he? 10. will she? Practice B 1. am I? 2. aren't I? 3. is it? 4. aren't I? 5. aren't I? Practice C 1. is there? 2. aren't they? 3. is it? 4. isn't there? 5. has it? 6. weren't there? 7. wasn't there? 8. isn't it? 9. aren't they? 10. did it?



**Interviews:**  
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Why Do People Obey their Rulers?

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## The First Archaeological Campaign at Hajar am-Dhaibiyah, Shabwah

By: David Warburton,  
Director, AIYS,  
Sana'a.

At the American Institute for Yemen Studies (AIYS) in Sana'a, on the evening of March 9, 1993, David Warburton, and Jean-Francois Bréton, Director of the French Archaeological Mission in Yemen made some remarks about the campaign which they had recently carried out in Wadi Dura in Shabwa Governorate. It is still premature to make any definitive statements concerning the scientific results of the excavations and the coins discovered in the area. These have yet to be identified and the pottery corpus is still being studied. It is, however, possible to give an orientation into how archaeologists choose to dig at a particular site and at a particular place on a site. As published in the French

Pages of the Yemen Times (vol. III:3, 20 January 1993, p. 11), in 1984 local residents of the Wadi Dura brought a number of objects to the Ataq Museum, which came from fields which had been bulldozed in preparation for cultivation. The French Archaeological Mission in the PDRY made a small sounding in 1985 at a promising site on the edge of the area where the bulldozer had removed several meters of silt. In this sounding, several superimposed tombs - sunk into the silt itself - were discovered, and the objects likewise brought to the Ataq Museum. Not far from the cemetery in the silt was a mound, which probably not natural in origin, representing rather the remains of successive towns built one atop the other through the centuries. From the very start, it was clear that the tombs should be

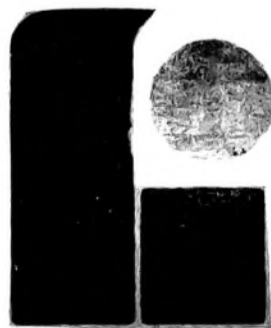
associated with this mound, Hajar am Dhaibiyah, one of the highest in Yemen, at some 15 meters above the plain. An inscription from the mound itself proved to be Sabaean, dating to the seventh century BC, although the objects from the necropolis appeared to date from the first centuries of the Christian era. It was clear that this mound would be an interesting place to excavate, as the owners of the tombs were not notably poor people. This point was driven home when examining the decorated silver hilt of a long iron sword with obvious Parthian/Sasanian influence in the office of the Director of Antiquities for Shabwa, Mr. Khayran Zubaydi. The excavation might bring the settlement associated with the cemetery to light. With the support of the American Institute (which sent

Augusta McMahon an archaeologist from the University of Chicago) and the French Archaeological Mission as well as that of the Yemeni General Organization for Antiquities, Manuscripts and Museums, and in particular the Chairman, Dr. Mohammad Bafaqih, the excavation began in the last days of November 1992 and continued for three weeks. A trench consisting of four 10 x 10 meter squares was opened up from the top of the tell down the southeast slope, as a step trench on the edge of the tell, where the slope was "gentler" than elsewhere, at slightly less than 45 degrees (12 meters vertical difference over 25 meters horizontal). This particular place was chosen because the slope should have enabled the team to make a series of "steps", each consisting of several

square meters, down the slope. The object would have been to acquire a glimpse into the successive superimposed towns with each step. It rapidly transpired however that the well coursed granite blocks of a single large building with foundations ca. 6 x 6 meters had prevented the erosion of the tell and thus led to the gentle slope, the outer facing having been merely reduced to a series of terraces. Below this - but clearly constructed at about the same time on the basis of the stratigraphic evidence - was a belt of rounded granite blocks slanting steeply upwards, maintaining the slope of the tell. Below, but apparently standing on the lowest courses of this band of granite, were a couple of more modestly built houses. The uppermost square, straddling the flat surface of the tell and the beginning of the slope,

brought several superimposed houses to light but mostly the stones of fallen walls in meter thick deposits of wind-blown silt. Stratigraphically, it is clear that almost all of the structures are contemporary with one another, and the initial impression of the pottery indicates that the structures should be dated to the first centuries of our era, which fits in reasonably well with the material from the cemetery. Thus, one of the purposes of the excavation would appear to have been attained, but the search for a stratigraphic sequence must await future campaigns, as no clear structures dating to the epoch preceding the period of the cemetery were reached. As usual in archaeology, the excavators did not find quite what they sought, but as usual, the results are also quite encouraging.

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