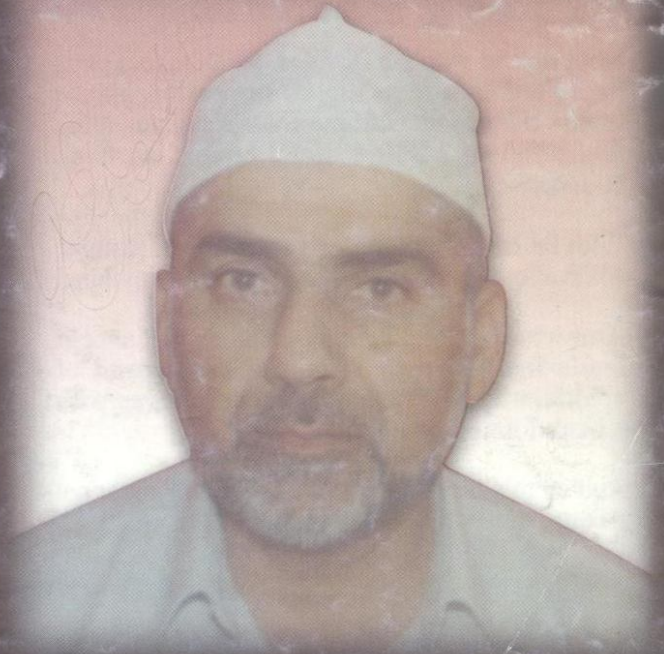




Inna Lillahi wa Inna Haihi Raajiun



MULLA ASGHAR
M.M JAFFER
1936 - 2000



BWANA ALI H.
SHERIFF
1939 - 2000



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FEDERATION SAMACHAR

A publication of the Federation
of Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri
Jamaats of Africa
Volume 31, No. 6
Muharram 1421 A.H.
April, 2000



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COVER PICTURE

The Late Alhaj Mulla Asghar
M.M. Jaffer and
Bwana Ali H. Sheriff



From the Editor's Desk

Community mourns.....

In the past two months the Khoja Shia Ithna asheri community of about 120,000 souls world-wide has lost two dear members, the President of the World Federation, Alhaj Mulla Asghar M.M. Jaffer and Bwana Ali H. Sheriff who both served the community with such zeal and devotion that it will not be easy to fill in the vacuum created by their deaths.

Both Mulla Asghar and Bwana Ali extended their altruistic and religious services to hundreds, probably thousands, of individuals in the community by not restricting themselves to simply preaching religion but by actually involving themselves to ensure that one project after another were implemented. They were men who took deep interest in the happenings of the community with the intention of propagating our faith and facilitating an upliftment in various amenities like education, medical benefits, housing etc. for community members at large.

Islam teaches us that no soul is indispensable and that there will always be someone to take over the responsibilities of those who depart from this ephemeral world but when two zealous and long serving members pass away, it becomes very much more difficult to accept their loss and seek their replacement. Suddenly the wisdom and guidance that we once took for granted goes missing. This makes tasks more difficult for the various committees they worked in and to the individuals who benefited from their services by way of religious guidance or welfare projects.

Both Mulla Asghar and Bwana Ali had many friends, many of who treasure special moments they had with them. To some they were preachers, to others they were social workers, friends, brothers, fathers, sons, uncles or simply associates who they could socialise with and confide in.

Interviewing Mulla Asghar for a past issue of the *Federation Samachar* was an experience and his response to the questions raised was forthright for even the sensitive ones. I also cherish a 10-15 minute conversation I had with him when he was last in Dar es Salaam, a visit during which he was magnanimous in his modesty.

As for Bwana Ali, he was always a silent supporter of the *Federation Samachar*. His encouragement and guidance was always a source of inspiration and when I returned back from South Africa after his death, I found two envelopes from him among my unopened mail and indeed it was sad that I could not acknowledge or reply to these. During the last Supreme Council meeting in Zanzibar in April, 1999 I can vividly recollect an enlightening breakfast we had together during which he provided me further guidance on community affairs.

Allah (SWT) reminds us in the holy Qur'an that every person shall taste death but for the believers this is a mercy. For the bereaved who have lost their dear ones, Allah (SWT) tells us that 'Glad Tidings' await those who persevere in patience remembering that "to Allah we belong and unto Him we will return." At this moment of affliction for the loss of our dear ones, we can only pray to Allah (SWT) in His mercy and grace to rest the souls of the deceased in the proximity of our Chahardah Masumeen (AS).

While both will be sadly missed, the most we can do is to pursue the goals and ideals for which they lived and spent their entire lives. From them let us learn to be individuals who care for and serve the community and our society at large. Please recite Sure-Fateha.

Munir Daya

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Your letters

Views, opinions or articles should be addressed to:
The Editor
Federation Samachar
P.O. Box 6710, Dar es Salaam.

Dear brother,

Remembering Mulla.....

If there is any one I am missing today, it is Mulla. Some years ago, after we had lunch together, I asked him, "Mulla, give me something today I can remember you by tomorrow". He looked at me, and said, "give me a paper and pencil". I gave him a small notebook, and in his handwriting he scribbled something for me. He said, "Ukera, whenever you are surrounded with problems you can't solve, recite this salawaat 100 times, or 580 times".

After few months, I met a brother at a Friday prayer. He was sitting on the footsteps with his hand on his head, he seemed tired and worried. This brother told me of his problems, and asked me for a solution. I pulled a piece of paper from my wallet and wrote down this salawaat for him, and told him exactly what Mulla told me. In a matter of few days, and as Allah is my Shahid, and as we all will go where he has gone, I came to understand that this brother's problem was solved. The next time I met him, he said, "this salawaat came in time for me".

On this note, I humbly request my community brothers and sisters, with your Yasin, Kumail and Waretha, also to recite this Salawaat 10 times, as a tohfaa and maghferat for him.

Alla Humma Salli Alaa Fatimata, wa Abeeha, wa Balaha, wa Baneeha, wa Sirril Mustaudaii Feeha Adada Maa Ahata Bihi Ilmuk.

May Allah who is ever Kind, the Best Forgiver, forgive him and grant him a top place in the vicinity of Muhammad

wa Ale Muhammad (a.s), he so much served.

**Ukera K. Peera
Los Angeles,
California.**

Dear brother,

Ode for Mulla..

*No words will ever be able to praise him,
No tears shed will be enough to ease the pain,
No heart will remain without pain and sorrow,
No man will be able to replace you, Mulla Saheb.*

**Muhammad Ladak
Box 36, Moshi, Tanzania
mlk@eoltz.com**

Dear brother,

Mwanza GCG list was incorrect

We thank you for publishing the list of GCG office-bearers who were elected to revive the Group's operation in Mwanza District. Please note however that the name of the Hon. Secretary was missed out. The Hon. Secretary is Mohamed Mohsin Pirbhai.

**GCG
Mwanza**

We regret the error but trust this letter will notify our readers accordingly.

Editor.

Dear brother,

Our heartiest condolences...

On behalf of myself, and our whole family of Late Mr. and Mrs. Haiderali Gulamali Khimji in Nairobi, Mombasa and London we hereby extend our heartiest condolences and deep sympathy to the community at large on the passing away of Mulla Saheb.

Our souls are a property of Allah and when He times for it to return back to the Almighty so has it been and so will it be.

All we as a community can do is to heed to and follow late Mulla Asghar's teachings. His countless services in the Khoja and non Khoja world are commendable and difficult to enumerate.

May Allah (SWT) rest his soul in eternal peace.

**Zulfikar Khimji,
Nairobi.**

Dear brother,

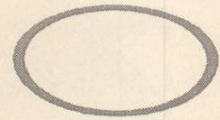
Damn politics!

I would like to air my views on the letter by J.H Walji titled 'Our leadership is beseeched with hypocrisy' which appeared in *Federation Samachar* in 1999, Volume 31, No.5. No doubt he has adequately described the shortcomings of our leaders, so, I do not wish to dwell on this part at great length. However, what I do want to point out is the change in our motto. We no longer consider honesty, integrity and religion as a motto in our community but instead we disintegrate this motto into one corrupt principle. And this is 'Politics.'

So, with regard to *Amanat* please forget this new-found motto - it should not even be in our dictionary.

**A.G Panjwani
4 FIRECREST RD
CHELMSFORD, ESSEX CM2 9FN
UK.**

LETTERS



Dear brother,

My community just seems to wither away!

One day in the holy month of Ramadhan I browsed through the *Federation Samachar*, a leading magazine and mouthpiece of our African community. The issue was of January 1999, Volume 31, No.2. In this I came across a letter written by 'Good Grace, Moshi' that tarnished the portrayal of East African members who had displayed good voluntary service, organisation and behaviour in their community. But now, these members, on moving to England, have not shown even a glimpse of this good voluntary service. The following extract which shocked me shows this striking contrast:

'Stanmore - a holy assembly but unholy behaviour'

I was fortunate enough or should I say unfortunate enough to see a video of the London Stanmore Jamaat on 13 March 1998. From this viewing, I concluded that some of our Western brothers have not only learnt about the good aspects of Western society but have also learned the bad aspects of Western society - namely Western hooliganism. Some participants showed a total lack of courtesy and respect. In fact, they presented themselves as badly behaved school boys. Furthermore, what was really offensive was the use of foul language in our sacred Imambara. One of our Stanmore members even reminded the Stanmore body that some Madressa teachers in the meeting were misbehaving in front of their students - the same children who are looked upon by the community to be the "leaders of tomorrow."

On reading the above extract, my mind looked back to the days when I was hardly 18 years of age, serving my community and also other non-community organisations from 1942 onwards. Back then, I was elected Honorary Secretary of a non-community

organisation called 'Dar es Salaam Badminton Association.' I was one of the founding members of this organisation and the only Muslim serving as a secretary for over two years. I can tell you that in these two years and ever since I was a member of this organisation, there were no major disputes, aggressive attitudes or abusive language between people. There was a harmonious attitude within the organisation and a structured, co-ordinated approach to handle all types of situations. I retired from this organisation with the ambition of serving our own community and thus I joined the 'Hussaini Society.' I served as a volunteer when the opening meeting took place of the 'East African Federation' in Dar es Salaam in July 1946 at Anjuman Islamic Hall which was opposite to the Mnazi Moja ground. I attended this meeting with Pyarali Rustom, Late Mohammed Rahim, Mohammed Dhirani and many others whom I knew. Soon after, I served as a secretary in 'Ithnaashari Gymkhana' and its sports club.

In 1948, late A.J Sachedina, known as "Azad" whom I had never met, explained to me about the 'Ithnaashari Union' and requested me to serve as an Honorary Secretary. I took this role under his presidency and we were re-elected 3 times. Then in 1956, my nephew, late Mohammad Kassamali Popat Panjwani who was the secretary of Ithnaashari Sports Club, approached me with a request to take over the club. I then merged it with the Ithnaashari Union and we named it 'Ithnaashari Union and Sports Club.' I continued to serve the club until the election of 1959.

In 1965, Brother Fidahusseine Hameer and I were elected as secretaries of 'Dar es Salaam Ithnaashari Jamaat' until 1973. I was re-elected again with

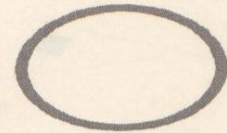
Brother M.D Kermali in 1975 until 1976. I then served as an Honorary Secretary for the 'Marriage Reconciliation Board and Medical Committee.' After nearly 3 years, I resigned from this post because I had to migrate to Dubai.

During my experience in serving our community there was no tension or abusive language between people. People were generally happy to serve without hesitation and there were only minor instances of differences in opinion that later were amicably and harmoniously settled without any major fuss. I enjoyed serving the community and especially the 'Marriage Reconciliation Board' with people such as Late Rajabali Alibhai, Late Ahmed Lakha, Late Molvi Alimohammed Jaffer Dewji, Late Pyarali Mohammedali Merali, Late Hussein Dattoo and Ahmed Essa Hassan.

But what about our current Muslim community in England? We should be ashamed of our own behaviour as stated in the letter 'Good Grace Moshi.' We elect a president trusting him in general meetings and affairs but soon after, we undermine him and his good faith. Why should we take such a spiteful attitude of betrayal and disallow the president in carrying out his duties? How can the general body expect a person not to make mistakes? It is simply beyond human nature. Therefore, we should not condemn the president for errors of judgement and we should forgive him and co-operate to the highest level as possible with him so that the community can benefit. Our community needs good infrastructure of schools, sports and modern methods of learning. Let the office bearers have freedom to embark on this infrastructure so everyone is well taken care off and are able to set

(continued on page 7)

LETTERS



(...from page 6)

a fine example of a wholly Islamic life to their children to be proud of.

There is no doubt that we have good leaders in our community and a favourable environment in which to work in but we need to take advantage of this vital opportunity. Any misunderstanding and disputes that emerge from needless banter should be done off with and dusted immediately to create a strong infrastructure. We can progress and benefit from our community provided we trust each other and work hand in hand.

Please note that faith is the foundation of trust. So, why criticise other people when our religion teaches us to unite and spread Islam? We should also put the blame on ourselves and not solely on the president of our community. How will we ever let a president carry out his duties if we do not seek to turn our failures into successes? Give a president and his fellow executive committee time and freedom to achieve what is needed rather than criticising them and always looking to their faults. There are also many upcoming dangers - namely immoral activities and social misbehaviour such as drug addiction that face our young generation. These activities will divert them from Islam and turn their lives into nothing but ruins. So now who is to blame? The president or ourselves?

There is no doubt that this is the time for change. We need to create a new vision for our community where our young generation will want to learn all the good things possible under Islamic Sharia so that they will be happy with themselves and with the heavenly atmosphere that surrounds them. So, let us drive our young generation to this vision of good moral behaviour and an Islamic way of life. Finally, I would like to leave you with an important but forgotten quote in Gujarati: '*Jagya Tiyarathi Sawar*' (It is still not too late. Be prepared!)

Akber G. Panjwani
London.
Federation Samachar

Dear brother,

Mauritius -- name missed out!

Thank you for having published the article on our Jamaat. We also take this opportunity to congratulate you on your new website, which is now much more pleasing. On this site we will be glad to see an update in the section reserved for Jamaat homepages also.

Meanwhile we would like to draw your attention to an omission regarding the paragraph on our past Presidents. The name of our elder, Br. Ally Ackbar Kassamally Esmael is not mentioned. We would appreciate if in your next issue the name of our brother is mentioned for the benefit of the readers of your esteemed publication.

The Secretariat.
Mauritius Jamaat.

Our apologies for the omission. The introduction of updated Jamaat Web Pages on the Africa Federation site is in the pipeline but has been delayed due to technical problems our Internet team is experiencing. Editor.

Dear brother,

Progress is appreciated

Even though I am not a Shia Ithna'asheri Muslim, but a Shia Ismaili Muslim it was a pleasure to read the *Africa Federation Samachar*, December 2000 issue on the Internet (<http://www.africafederation.org>).

It is nice to see how various Khoja Groups (ie. Ismaili, Ithna'asheri, Sunnis etc.), have progressed in modern day. Mashallah! Keep up with the good work.

Amshy Mawji,
Vancouver, Canada

Dear brother,

Observations on the last *Samachar* issue

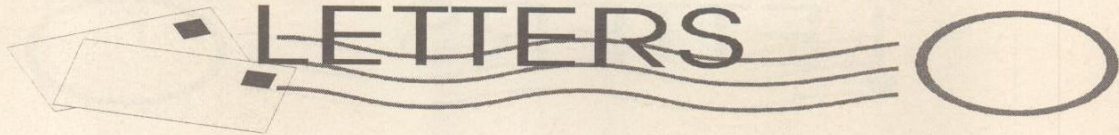
The articles appearing in *Federation Samachar* Vol:31, No.5 of Ramadhan, 1420 A.H/December 1999 cannot pass without support and comments. The letter, "Our leadership is besieged with hypocrisy" gives a true picture of our leadership because we have some leaders who deceive followers by portraying themselves as infallibles.

In the same issue, the article '*In perspective - the Nai Misid Hujjatatul Islam Jamaat of Zanzibar*' is well researched for which the writer deserves felicitation. However in the group photograph, the progeny of Nai Misid pioneers in 'Saun Baag', the person sitting in front on the extreme right is Mohamed Saleh Lakha my late father and not Mohamed Husain Saleh Lakha as quoted.

Coming to the very important article, The Role of the Marja on page 83 this says "His son Imam Hassan (A.S) was forced to give up his Imamah and thus once again incompetent people came in." Thus from the above are we made to believe Imam Ali (A.S) who was deprived of his right as a temporal ruler for 25 years also lost his Imamah for the spell? Can we be made to believe that Imamah can be given up if forced to do so?

Zakirhusein Mohamed Lakha
Dar es Salaam.

Rather than 'Imamah', the writer meant 'Khalifat' and he has confirmed the same to us. Editor.



Dear brother,

Condolence for Mulla from India

The sad demise of Janab Mulla Asgar has caused irreparable loss to the entire community. He was a source of knowledge and a guide. His lectures were heard with great interest and appreciated by all and the knowledge imparted was immense.

We in Bombay used to have his Islamic lectures regularly through video cable network and each and every lecture was a source of inspiration and guide for all the Momins and will remain with us for ever.

May Allah (swt) rest his soul in peace. Let us all pray surah-e- Fateha for our beloved guide.

Iqbal Hussein
Mumbai,
India.

Dear brother,

Bwana Ali's death is sad and.....

We have indeed been shocked to hear of the sad passing away of Bwana Ali. Well, we all have to leave one day but sad news like this really shakes us up. We pray to Allah to grant him a place within the proximity of the fourteen Masumins and to give courage and strength to the bereaved family to bear this sad loss. Amen!!!

Dr. Asgharali Moledina

.....shocking

I received the shocking news of the sad demise of our Marhum Bwana Ali. May Almighty Allah (SWT) grant the departed soul a place in the jawara e rehmat in the proximity of our chaharda e masumeen - ameen.

Hussein J A Janmohamed
United Kingdom

Federation Samachar

Dear Brother,

Rather *not eat* than eat

According to views received from our fellow brothers it appears that while living in a mixed religion society we tend to get dissuaded by the external forces in our lives. People living in a totally Muslim environment are unlikely to have any thoughts of eating kuffars food and will totally avoid it without question. The views presented by our brothers in the December, 1999 issue of *Federation Samachar* may be correct but I personally would like to share or rather state what the holy Quran says: "*Bismillah, Innamal Mushrikuna najisun*" -- Indeed those who associate anything or anybody with Allah (mushrik) are impure i.e. najis.

It makes me wonder that very often we don't hesitate to hurt the feelings of others but when it comes to eating the food of mushriks we feel we should not hurt their feelings while this is done at the cost of our *nafs* and our eman gets weaker! If one was told to do some other wrong would one agree to do this just because one does not want to hurt their feelings of others? It is a point to consider!

Kafirs or mushriks don't transfer any najasat on physical contact by touching if they are dry but this is not the case when things are not dry. In the case of a dog which is *najisul-Ayn*, by it just touching its nose to a part of our body, we become najis. For correlation purpose may I also mention that the spirits made by Allah (swt) are all tahir or paak/pure according to us. Regarding the ulemas who allow eating kuffars food, it is advisable that each person with this doubt follow only their marja-e-taqleed.

That the kuffars are najis is true but this done not mean that we should not interact with them. Infact we must invite them to our Imumbarghas to listen to our lectures/majalises. This rarely happens when we hold our majalises in the masjid. About the issue on the distribution of the Holy Quran, we feel that non- Arabic Quran copies can be given to non Muslims so that they may read and understand. Regarding the dinner (*dawatul-Zul Ashira*) everybody ate from his own plate, but we have never heard in any *riwayaat* that the prophet ate from a non-Muslim's house!

We agree that the kuffar are not responsible for the blame of finding the truth but we are obliged to find the truth too and follow this correctly. In the process we have to be careful of alims with half knowledge who misguide the Muslim Umah instead of referring them to the right authority.

Regarding Mr. Rizvi's letter, the answer to the first paragraph is mentioned in the former part of the letter. The latter part's answer is given in the concluding part of this letter. It is more important to be quality Muslims than being Muslims by name. The Islamic shariat is simple and it is only we who make it difficult! As I mentioned before, is it documented that the Prophet ever had a meal with the Kuffar, cooked by a non-Muslim and/or had a drink of alcohol at the prophet's house! Can such a possibility ever occur in our minds??

In that letter there is a suggestion that there is no need to warn our fellow brothers or sisters if they are eating any najasat but what if our own child is eating any najasat like stool? Will we not warn him? And if we are drawn to warn our child why then should we not warn our brothers and sisters?

Kubra Rashid and Anverali Somji
Dar es Salaam

LETTERS

Dear brother,

Bwana Ali was a model to depict

I learnt with regret and deep sorrow the passing away of Bwana Ali Sheriif, a good friend, a guide and mentor and supporter of all things that are good.

He was a model of humility, patience and perseverance. A visionary who took his role to make positive contribution to his family, community, the Muslim Ummah and his country very seriously. He will be sourly missed by all. We mourn the passing of a great man who taught us all by the way he lived his life. He lived with commitment and zeal to all things good and contribution to humanity at large.

We take solace in that we got to know and learn from him. We take solace in that he established many things within and outside the community that will live on and benefit not only this generation but the coming ones as well.

Our heartfelt condolences to the family and the community on the passing of a wonderful man and a generous contributor. We pray to Allah (swt) to grant *sabr* and strength to the family to bear this great loss. We pray to Him to place Bwana Ali Sheriff's soul in the proximity of his Chosen ones, whose cause and thought Marhum always emulated and propagated.

Sadik Alloo
Los Angeles.

Dear brother,

Remembering Bwana Ali

The sad news of sudden demise of Al Haj Bwana Ali took us by surprise and plunged us in grief and sorrow. It was a painful experience as I met him recently in Kenya and enjoyed his love and affection. But this is the will of Allah swt and we have no choice but to accept it knowing that he always designs it for the betterment of his obedient creatures.

Marhum Bwana Ali was a pious man with a habit of remembering Allah swt all times. He served the community in various fields, particularly in Education and Tabligh. Such a man is dear to Allah swt and He will inshallah, grant him a place among his chosen ones in Jannat. Let us recite Dua and prayers for his soul to rest in eternal peace.

Hussein Sheriff Khalfan
Chairman, Zainabia Child Sponsorship
Toronto.

Federation Samachar

Dear brother,

Subscription details wanted..

Please advise me on the subscription rate of the *Federation Samachar* and mode of payment including airmail postage. Would also appreciate if you can airmail the December 1999 publication to the following address:-

Hussein J A Janmohamed
Middlesex, United Kingdom.

Subscriptions can be made through the Subscription order on the Internet or by a direct cheque payment to the following address:

Account: KSI Supreme Council
Account Number: 10771001
Stanbic Bank Tanzania Limited
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North America --- US\$10 postage included
Europe --- Pounds Sterling 5 or equivalent (postage included)
India/Pakistan/Dubai --- US\$ rate.
Other countries not mentioned --- Equivalent rate of the US\$ is applicable. Editor.

Dear brother,

Campers remember Bwana Ali

On Wednesday the 23rd of February 2000, we (Nakurians) lost a pioneer of the esteemed camp, Bwana Ali Sheriff. He was a person who cared about us like a father, and tried his best to persuade us to take up education so that we could be successful. This great, kind, gentle, caring and pious man was dedicated to serving his community and bringing about the best in the youths has now left us for his heavenly abode. Let us all pray to Allah (SWT) to forgive those few sins that he might have had and give him an eternal and peaceful life in the proximity of the Holy Fourteen Infallibles. Amen.

Rephrasing my opening statement, I would say that this is not only a loss to all Nakurians and his family, but to all that this amazing person talked with and gave some of his wisdom to, and in general the whole muslim world. If I, a person who was not even that close to this person, could feel his death so much, it is unbearable to think of the stage through which his close and dear ones are going through right now. Which is why I am writing this mail to give my condolences to Maalim Mustafa, Hilal, Yasir and all his other family members, and of course all NAKURIANS. I can't imagine another camp without this amazing person.

Also, those whose careers have been made successful by this person, or are on the path of success, please thank Allah (SWT) for such a person and pray that more people of this kind are born in our community to lead us all into prosperity and success.

Lastly, let us all recite a sura-e-fateha for the Marhum.

Tanga Nakurians

Dear brother,

Our community is orphaned

The day Mulla Asghar died was perhaps the saddest day in my life. It was with utter disbelief, profound shock and disbelief that we learnt of the sad passing away of our dear "Mulla Saheb". It is very difficult to imagine our KHOJA SHIA Community without Mulla Saheb. There is no doubt that the small 125000 community of KHOJA SHIAS have become "ORPHANS" with the sad passing away of this great personality. We had learnt to consider MULLA SAHEB as an immortal being and had often considered his wisdom and guidance as an accepted thing. A personality like him perhaps comes once in a century or even a millennium!!!! He will be sadly missed by all those who knew him and even by those who never knew him. His work and name had almost become synonymous with THE KHOJA SHIA community worldwide.

His courage, wisdom, perseverance and dedication in the service of the community will be missed by all. How ironic it is that he breathed his last on the very chair and office from where he tirelessly worked from for the past so many years as a servant of Allah and for the upliftment of our community, the Muslim community and humanity at large. Perhaps that was his last mortal wish and desire!!! The vacuum left by his passing away will be very difficult to fill. The most we can do is to pursue the goals and ideals for which he lived and spent his entire life!!!!

We pray to Allah to grant him a chosen place within the proximity of our Fourteen Masumins, whom he so much loved and whose message he always continued to preach everywhere he went. Amen. We pray To Allah to grant sabre-Jameel to his family and to all of us. Amen. I end with Sure-Fateha for this great son of the KHOJA Community.

Dr. Asgharali Moledina

Federation Samachar

Dear brother,

Mulla's death is a loss to the community at large

Dodoma Jamaat and Dar-ul-Muslimeen Education Center has learnt the passing away of Alhaj Mulla Asgharali M. M. Jaffer, the President and leader of World Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri Muslim Communities with great shock and sorrow.

Prophet Muhammad (SAWW) said: "The death of an Aalim is a great calamity which can never be healed. The death of a community is less painful than the death of an Aalim".

Imam Ali (AS) said: "An Aalim is alive even if he is dead, and an ignorant is dead even though he is alive".

Imam Muhammad Baqir (AS) said: "An Aalim from whose knowledge a community benefits, is better than the worship of 70,000 Aabid (worshippers)".

Prophet Muhammad (SAWW) said: "The Ulema are the heirs of the Prophets. They are loved by the inhabitants of heaven. And all the creatures of the world pray for them if they die, until the day of judgement".

Prophet Muhammad (SAWW) said: "If a person dies in the state of seeking knowledge to enliven the spirit of Islam, he will be in Jannah in the same level with the prophets".

The demise of Marhum Alhaj Mulla Asghar has deprived the Shia Community in particular and the Muslim Community in general of a devoted leader, who had Tabligh and welfare of the Community at his heart as a sincere Aalim, Muballigh and worker. Now that he is no longer with us, a vacuum will be felt all around.

In this moment of grief, which has befallen our entire Community worldwide, I offer heartfelt condolences on behalf of myself and our Community in Dodoma, to the bereaved family, to the Shia Scholars and Ulemas, and all members of the Shia Community worldwide on this irreparable loss.

I also offer condolences on behalf of our students, teachers, and staff at DAR-UL-MUSLIMEEN EDUCATION CENTER, who will always remember the great support of Marhum Mulla Asghar towards the noble activities of this center.

We pray to Allah (SWT) in His mercy and grace to rest the Marhum's soul in the proximity of Chahardah Masumeen (AS). Amen.

Sura-e-Fateha.

**Shaikh Muslim Bhanji,
Chairman, Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri Jamaat, Dodoma, Principal,
Dar-ul-Muslimeen Education Center, Dodoma,
P.O. Box 2736
Dodoma
Tanzania**

LETTERS

Dear brother,

Tribute paid to Mulla Asghar 20 years ago still stands true today

Al Hajj Mulla Asghar M M Jaffer's first visit to USA on June 1, 1981 was to Los Angeles, where the then small KSI community gave a reception in his honor. I as President, founder and builder of the community and establisher of Huseini Imambara in Los Angeles, paid glowing tribute to Mulla Saheb with the following words which still remain true ".....Mulla Saheb, it is not the critic that counts not the man who points out how he strong man stumbles or where the doer or deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena whose face marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strive valiantly, who errs and comes again and again because there is no effort without error and comes short again and again because there is no error without error and shortcomings; but who does' actually strive to the deed; who knows the great devotion; who spends himself in a worthy cause. Who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement and who at the worst, if he fails where daring greatly, knows that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat" (Documented live on video cassette).

Gulamabbas Dhala.
Los Angeles

Dear brother,

Samachar is not distributed well in Mombasa

When recently in Mombasa I tried to find out how many had acquired and read your last issue of the *Federation Samachar* which carried the Arusha Jaffery Academy photo on the cover. To my disappointment many were not even aware that the *Samachar* copies were on sale and one could not blame them because there was only a small undated notice on the Mosque notice

Federation Samachar

Dear brother,

Sad Demise of Bwana Ali Sheriff

We have indeed incurred a great loss. But the Almighty knows best when we have to return to Him. Bwana Ali's valuable contribution to this community cannot be weighed. We have composed a poem in his honour which follows:

A Man of Great Honour

Blessings come in many ways -
To some it is wealth, to others children,
But to us it was a man whose face made us modest,
Whose qualities made him wanted all over.

He walked amidst a crowd
Unnoticed yet standing out
Simplicity could not humble itself enough
To describe a man who shook the peoples hearts.

His hobby was charity
His words were wisdom
His actions were examples
And his friendship was one of a kind.

His demureness would silence a rowdy audience
Or make a child smile, a youth laugh;
Often his soft but expressive eloquence
Would keep all ears pricked in awaiting his next decree.

His greetings and humour,
Gentle and precise, kept us merry.
Remembering his good works among the many
That would otherwise not have moved forward

And then the time came
When the community was silenced at the loss
Of a great man amongst us.
But the Almighty knows best.

Blessed indeed were we
To have a man of such calibre
Amongst us; we can only pray:
May the Almighty shower him with mercy
and place him among the steadfast.

Ibne Abbas
Nairobi.

board to inform the community that the *Samachar* copies were on sale.

Unless something is done regarding the distribution and sales in Mombasa, the work of the Editorial Board is futile which is sad because you work very hard to produce a magazine of this calibre.

I visited many homes while I was in

Mombasa and not one had a copy of the latest *Federation Samachar*. I talked to the Secretary of the Jamaat to find out how many copies they receive and how many they sell and he told me that somebody else is in charge. The *Samachar* is very professionally prepared but the rest is, or needs to be looked into.

Concerned reader
Arusha.

Dear brother,

A dynamic leader is gone

Once in a great while a dynamic and charismatic leader comes along who is exceptionally well grounded in the knowledge of both Islam and the secular world, he has clarity of vision and is very competent. With his total dedication and commitment to the cause of Islam, he is able to instill a renewed sense of pride and self respect to the community of believers.

For Iran and the Muslim world it was Imam Khomeini for the small Khoja community worldwide it was Mullah Asgherali Jaffer popularly known as "Mullah Saheb". His stature was a very high one, his reach was far and wide, his prestige and influence unmatched all for the benefit of the community.

Mullah Saheb was able to transform our community and take it to new heights and uncover new possibilities. The Khoja community rose to an international stature and standing that far exceeded its expectations considering its tiny size. Mullah Saheb has left a legacy that will live on for the future generations to benefit.

Whether we agreed with his policies and tactics all the time or disagreed with him once in a while, he touched everyone. "Mullah Saheb" affected positively the lives of people from Africa to India, from Chechnya to Bosnia and from Europe to America. His ability to deal with people at their level endeared him to the young and old and people of all social and economic stature. His vast knowledge base of Islam and the secular world, his insights and wisdom, his drive and organizational abilities, made him a rare personality. He was many combined into one.

Mullah Saheb's place in our hearts and history is secured. We shall sorely miss him. We shall miss the benefit of his foresight and insights. We

Federation Samachar

shall miss his drive and reach. Many will miss him as a leader, mentor, elderly statesman, friend and a devoted family man. Our organizations will miss him and we shall all have to more than redouble our efforts to keep the flame alive.

We pray to Allah (swt) to grant Mullah Saheb a place in close proximity to His chosen Ahlul Bayt, whom Mullah Saheb faithfully and courageously served. May He grant the family the strength and patience to bear this great and untimely loss. Our prayers go out to the community members. May Allah (swt) continue to bring our hearts together and strengthen our resolve to serve and invest in our community, the Ummah and humanity at large.

Sadik Alloo
Los Angeles.

Dear brother,

We pray for a wise leader to follow Mulla

As Mulla has gone so has his wise leadership, strong personality, his nobility, his sacrifice and his wisdom. The father of Khojas is gone for good. The least we can do is to pray for his Maghfirat and may Allah (SWT) grant him a place amongst the proximity of our Masumins. We also pray that we get a wise leader to continue where Mulla Saheb had to stop.

Kampala Jamaat

Dear brother,

When the drop departed.....

Mulla and I were pals when we were in our teens. His frequent visit to Zanzibar and my visits to Mombassa provided us an opportunity to be together. My friend circle and myself valued his company as we all used to gain a lot from his wide reading and unique perspective of looking at things.

Later, I had the opportunity of working with him in the Executive Council of the Africa Federation. He had the potential of rising high had he chosen to work outside our community circle. Instead he dedicated himself to serving the community. His demise is a great loss and cannot be easily replaced, "When the drop departed from its home and returned, it encountered a shell and became a pearl" (Rumi). He has left us but will surely be more manifest in the world of love.

Baqir Alloo
Toronto.

Dear brother,

A great loss.....

It is indeed once again a great loss for the Muslim World, especially the Khoja Shiite Ithna Asheri communities globally for having lost a dear one, a blessed soul who has returned to His Merciful and Gracious Lord.

May we share the grief and sorrow with the family of the deceased, Al-jah Marhoom Aliasghar M.M.Jaffer. He was a man who selflessly devoted his love, care and concern for humanity and Islam, most certainly such are the most dear and near ones in the eyes of Allah s.w.t. May we learn and take his great lessons for serving Islam and the madhab of Ahlulbayt a.s. Kindly requesting for a Sura Fateha and Sura Qadr for the deceased soul.

Naseem Walji
Dar es salaam.



LETTERS

Dear brother,

Gujrati Survival -- as it stands, the time for action is *Now or Never*

I read with great interest, the article on the importance of Gujrati language by Br. Sajjad Mulla Hassanali Khaki, the Vice-chairman of Mombasa Jamaat, in your April 1999 issue.

I take this opportunity to re-emphasise the necessity of understanding and accepting the importance of our mother tongue-Gujrati. Also, through your media, I would like to appeal to our Community leaders at all levels, everywhere to wake up to the occasion and save the language from fading away completely.

Let me correct Br. Sajjad a little bit. He has praised the Tanzanian jamaats for encouraging Gujrati at all levels. Alas! Not any more. I am sure at least for Dar es Salaam, the biggest jamaat in East Africa, it has stopped teaching Gujrati in madressa since the last two or three years.

Br. Sajjad has mentioned something about Agha Seestani's advice. It would be very beneficial if the whole text were elaborated.

Mr. Editor, I have been informed that this issue of Gujrati had been discussed during the last Supreme Council meeting in Zanzibar and it was suggested that since we have our own schools in major towns, it should be introduced there as a subject. I don't know how much has been done to implement this idea. I don't know if this is practicable or not.

What I would like to emphasize at this stage is at least to maintain the SPOKEN GUJRATI, at all levels in our community.

I am talking about Dar es Salaam jamaat where I live. The present situ-

ation is that, it is quite common to find many youths – the upcoming generation talking English – in mosque compounds, madressas, with parents.

Mr. Editor, leave aside reading and writing, even the spoken Gujrati is fading away. Ah! What a pity? We are unconsciously burying our own "mother tongue". Reliable sources have it that it is a directive from our school authorities to pressurise parents and children to speak **only** English all the times. Yes, we understand, and accept that English is very important in our present world, but should we sacrifice our mother tongue to make our children speak fluent and eloquent English. If this is what we want, then it should be from debating societies, eloquent competitions which children should be encouraged to join.

Mr. Editor, where are we heading for? Like Mr. Khakhi, I shudder to imagine the situation in ten years time when the upcoming generation will be completely ignorant of even the spoken Gujrati. (like what is now amongst many families in Kenya). Oh, how selfish and shortsighted we are. The present generation, our forefathers and we knew so many languages (Gujrati, Kutchi, Urdu, and of course English...). But in the name of fluency and eloquence, we want our children to speak **only** English. Look at the other Indian communities: how they have maintained the mother tongue.

Have we thought of the consequences? Already there are families where grand parents, ignorant of English, **CANNOT** communicate with their grand children who have been **forcibly made ignorant** of even his or her spoken mother tongue.

Secondly, a community is known by its culture and one of the main factors of culture is its language. Gujrati has been our communal language for years. For we Khojas who number only about 125,000 to 130,000 worldwide, Gujrati is a **uniting factor**. Just imagine, Khojas from East Africa, from Madagascar, Maputo, India, Pakistan, meeting together. How would they communicate? It is **this Gujrati** language that binds us together. For, if we speak English in East Africa, they speak, not English, but French in Madagascar, and it is Portuguese in Maputo.

So, there is a need for a big campaign to educate the public on the importance of our mother tongue and promote it at all levels. Let us maintain **at least the** spoken Gujrati. Let our leaders at all levels, propagate this idea in their speeches and gatherings. Let us tell the school authorities to stop forcing children and parents to speak **only** English.

As Br. Sajjad has very rightly pointed out: if we do not rise to the occasion and create awakening for the language, we shall have to regret for it later. But, that would be too late then, and we shall have to blame only ourselves for that. So, let us start **now** before it is too late.

OBSERVER
Dar es Salaam

The Dar es Salaam and Arusha Jamaats are planning to re-introduce Gujrati classes in the Madressah though the teaching of the language does not fall under tabligh. Alternatively it was thought that the Jamaats could introduce the teaching of the language in our schools but this then would deprive community children not studying in our schools from learning the language.

Editor.

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LETTERS

Dear Brother,

Sudden departure of Mulla has left work unfinished

The hand trembles to call Mulla Marhum and yet it is an unmistakable reality however painful it may be. Yet I find it difficult to come to terms with reality. The untimely death of Mulla has brought back the memory of my first encounter with Mulla. I was in Dar-es-Salaam in my school holidays. I went to the mosque and enquired from my friend who was to recite the majlis. I was told Mulla Asghar. The name did not ring a bell, as I had never heard the name before. I got more curious and expected a lot from Mulla.

On reaching the mosque I saw Mulla sitting in the lower part of the pulpit and reciting a Majlis from a book. I was disappointed but not for long. Back to my hometown I met a person who had a lot of audiocassettes of Mulla's majalis. This gave me an opportunity to listen seriously and attentively to his majalis. Since then I have never looked back. It is sad that Mulla's death has created a vacuum.

I hardly ever got a chance to talk to Mulla. He was always surrounded by well-wishers and people with various problems for Mulla to them was a guiding angel. This made Mulla, in Dar-es-Salaam, comment that he never got time to pray Jamaat (congregation) prayers. On one occasion in Dar-es-Salaam a person was kind enough to find Mulla's shoes which were mixed with other shoes and placed them in front of him to wear. Mulla hugged the person and smilingly commented, "Brother why did you have to take the trouble." This incident really moved me and that is why I can still remember it.

It is true that we all will have to taste death sooner or later. It is also true that we are not Masum (infallible) and are therefore prone to make mistakes. The death of Mulla has proved how vital and important it is for all of

us to live in harmony and do exemplary work for the benefit of our community. We all should be the first to apologise for our mistakes and also be first to forgive the mistakes of others.

When I wrote in the last issue of *Federation Samachar* (Vol: 31, No.5, December 1999 at p 8) that Mulla (and Mohamedbhai) should not be allowed to retire, I did not in the least expect the sudden departure of Mulla. The only consolation I get (and so I expect will his family members) is that Mulla, without an iota of doubt, died the death of a Shahid (martyr). I can say this with conviction since Mulla was a lover of Ahul Bait (a.s.) and according to our beloved Prophet (PBUH) a person who dies with the love of Ahul Bait (a.s.) in his heart dies the death of a martyr. The fact that Mulla loved Ahul Bait (a.s.) can be gauged from his Majalis (lectures from the pulpit) and the fact that he had recently translated a book in which Ahul Bait were praised. (The only regret I have is that due to his untimely departure my copy of his book shall remain unsigned, but nevertheless I shall cherish it for as long as I live. Whenever I open the book to read I will always be reminded of Mulla Saheb).

The greatness of Mulla can be gauged from his unflinching effort to lead the community to prosperity. To achieve this he was prepared to stand for the Presidency of World Federation against some opposition. Even so this would have been, probably, his last term in the office. The people who supported Mulla are to be congratulated for they played a big role in re-electing Mulla and enabling him to serve us.

I used to travel many miles from Bir-

mingham to London to hear Mulla's lectures. His Sunday after Morning Prayer lectures in Gujarati were really inspiring. I used to often wonder where Mulla got the topics which made the members of the congregation spellbound.

The sudden departure of Mulla has left some business unfinished. I am told that Mulla had intended to translate some books in English. We need to find the names of those books and get some capable people to translate them if we are to do any service to Mulla in return.

It was gratifying to note that people from every nook and corner of the world travelled to attend Mulla's funeral and to pay homage to a grand and irreplaceable personality. For all of us who knew Mulla and admired him, his memory will remain with us for as long as we live.

**Mohammed Baker Hemraj
Birmingham.**

Dear brother,

Members in India will miss Mulla

With the passing away of our beloved Alhaj Mulla Asgherali M.M Jaffer Saheb the World Shia Ithnaasheri community has lost one of its greatest leader Aalim and Zakire - Ahulbait A.S.

His Sacrifice for the needy and poor of India and his help and guidance for our Khoja Shia Ithnaashery communities of Gujarat and Kutch will never be forgotten. In fact his untimely passing away has shocked everyone here. We give our heartfelt condolences to all family members of marhum Mulla Saheb and to The World Federation of Khoja Shia Ithnaasheri Muslim communities and to all mumineen. May Allah s.w.t grant him a place in the proximity of the Masoomen A.S Aameen.

**Aunali Y. Salehmohamed
WF Representative in India**

LETTERS

Dear brother,

Ironically Federation Samachar **reminds us again on the need** **of archiving our records**

I am an avid reader of the *Federation Samachar* and enjoy all the articles thoroughly. From the variety of articles it seems that you are trying your best to cater for different readers and in different countries too. I particularly enjoy reading articles about activities in East Africa and also news from India, Pakistan, Middle East and even Toronto. The editing with its attractive layout is excellent. Please keep it up and may Allah swt bless you.

The article on Nai Misit in your recent issue caught my imagination and took me back through memory lane to my youth days when I frequented Nai Misit for salaah, majalis, du'as, a'mal and, of course, for delicious hot niyaz whose flavors and taste I never miss. Cook Mussa under strict supervision of Rajabali Nathoo did a marvelous job.

The photo of Nai Misit pioneers came out clearly and I could remember all of the people lined up there. It pained me that some persons in the photo remained unidentified. This should raise the alarm that the history of our community is slowly being lost due to our negligence. The Africa Federation had taken up the work of archiving our records some twelve years back. The question being asked is what happened to the scheme. Why is there a wall of silence on this subject?

In the photo, the first person on the center front of the photo is Mr. Rai, a close friend of my father but unfortunately I do not know his first name as we used to call him "Chacha" according to our tradition. My father Mullah Abdulrasul Dewji, who was a popular zakir in those days and the top zakir at Nai Misit, is the fourth person next to Mohamedali Fazal Sheriff. The second person in the front row is my uncle

Federation Samachar

Gulamali Dewji who is living in Dar es Salaam. The fifth person in the same row is Yusuf Mohamedali Sheriff and not Hussein Nasarali Fazal as Late Hussein was either not born or too young in 1925. Kindly convey my appreciation to Brother Abdrazak Sheriff for his well-written article.

Amirali Abdulrasul Dewji
161 Clark Avenue,
Thronhill, Ontario
L3T 4Y7
Canada.

Dear brother,

Mulla's efforts in India **surpassed all imaginations**

Mulla Asghar Saheb was a great leader of our community and his Presidency was a matter of pride and honour. He was extremely dedicated towards his duties and responsibilities and it was his initiatives which has brought India into focus. With a modest beginning in the eighties with Gujarat Federation, the amount of work done in two decades in India surpasses all imaginations. His passing away has left a void which cannot be filled.

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Dear brother,

Mulla, a noble soul

On behalf of Tauheedul Muslimeen trust and the Shia community, I offer sincere condolences to those bereaved through the death of Alhaj Mulla Asghar M.M. Jaffer, a noble soul.

Indeed it is an irreparable loss to the muslim community worldwide. His sudden departure has left a big vacuum of intellect, social well being, guidance and leadership among us.

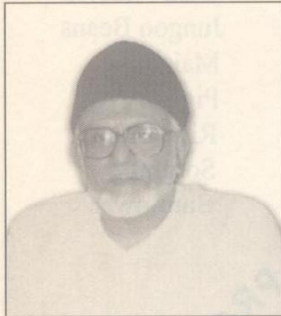
We pray to Allah (swt) to bestow His choicest blessing on the departed noble soul.

Dr.S.Kalbe Sadiq
Email:tauheed@lw1.vsnl.net.in
India.



Community shocked as World Federation President passes away

Inna Lillahi wa Inna Elaihi Rajoon



The community worldwide has been stunned and deeply shocked on the death of the President of the World Federation, Mulla Asgharali M M Jaffer (64) who suddenly passed away in his offices at the World Federation Secretariat in Stanmore at Dhohr time on Tuesday, 21 March 2000, 14 Dhul Hijja 1420.

The Stanmore Imambara where Marhum's mayyit laid in rest all night on 21 March, 2000 was open for Qur'an Khani from 10.30pm, after the Wiladat Majlis of our 10th Imam Hazrat Aliun Naqui A.S. Burial took place

at Carpenders Park Cemetery in London on Wednesday 22 March, 2000 15 Dhul Hijja 1420 with the programme being as follows:

- 12.30 pm Namaz Dhohr and Asr at Islamic Centre, Stanmore followed at 1 pm with Namaz-e-Mayyit
- 2.15pm Burial at Carpenders Park Cemetery
- 4 pm Ziyarat Majlis and Siyaka.

Silence and sorrow overshadowed the brightly lit spring day as 2500 mourners converged upon the Husaini Shia Islamic Centre, Stanmore, on Wednesday 22 March 2000, 15 Dhul Hijja 1420 to pay their last respects to Hujjatul Islam wal Muslimeen, Mulla Asgharali M.M. Jaffer. In an atmosphere filled with poignant grief, Hujjatul Islam Syed Bahrul Uloom, the senior most Alim in the UK, led Namaze Janazah at the request of Mulla Asghar's son Mohammad Abbas Jaffer.

In addition to Mumineen from all over the UK, many friends, relatives, ulama, zakireen and community leaders flew in from Allentown, Chicago, Dallas, Dar-es-Salaam, Karachi, Mashad, Minnesota, Mombasa, Nairobi, New Jersey, New York, Paris, Re Union, Stockholm, Toronto, Trollhattan and Vancouver.

Amongst the 50 Ulama in attendance were Sayed Rabbani - Representative of Ayatullah Seestani in Mashad, Sheikh Ali Alami, Agha Fartoosi and Agha Haider

Shirazi - Representative of Ayatullah Khamenei's centre in London and Hujjatul Islam Shaikh Zafar Abbas, the President of Majlise Ulamae Shia Europe.

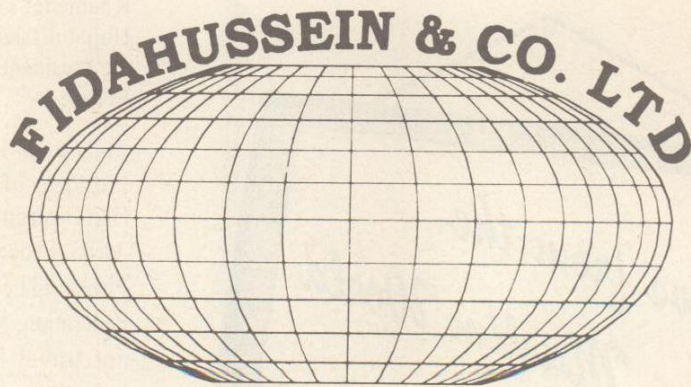
Among the mourners were the Vice President of the World Federation, Haji Hasnain Walji; Vice Chairman of Africa Federation, Haji Mohammed Pirbhai (The Chairman of the Africa Federation, Mohamed Dhirani could not travel because he could not be availed of a visa at the last minute by the British High Commission in Dar es Salaam); President of Nasimco, Haji Gulamabbas Sajan; President of the Council of European Jammats, Haji Jaffer Dharamsi; Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, Br. Iqbal Sakraine; Presidents of all Jamaats of UK and Haji Ramzanali Kermali Dhanji, the President of the KSIM Senior Citizens of UK.

Almost all the leaders and officials of the UK Muslim Communities were among the mourners. Included among the many Shia Organisations were representatives from the Imamia Mission - East London, Idara Jaffaria - South London, Husseini Mission - Hounslow, Alqaim Trust - Slough, Anjumane Jaffaria - Watford, Iddara Maarifat - Birmingham, Husseini and Haidery Islamic Centre- Bradford, Husseini Islamic Mission - Oldham, Anjumane Islamic Centre - Blackburn, Anjumane Husseini - Sheffield.

For Zohrain prayers there were carpets laid out in the lawn outside the centre because the weather was mild. After Zohrain prayers the Namaz Janaza was recited. While people prayed their last respect, there was recitation of Quran, marshiayas and majlis by Murtaza Bandali, Mustafa Jaffer and Safder Jaffer.

As there were many people, the "seeing of the face" took one and a half hours. The funeral procession thronged by mourners left the Husaini Shia Islamic Centre after Zohrain prayers at 2.30 pm for the Carpenders Park Cemetery. This is a new plot bought by the World Federation at the insistence of Mulla himself and bequeathed to London Jamat. The

(continued on page 19)



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Castor Seeds	Gum Arabica
Cassava Roots	Jungoo Beans
Cocoa Beans	Maize
Copra Cake	Pigeon Peas
Cotton Seeds	Rice Bran
Cotton Seed Cakes	Sorghum
Cow Peas	Sunflower



IMPORTS

Agricultural Implements	Jute Bags
Bicycles	P.P. Bags
Bicycle Spares	Sundries
Chalwyn Globes	Hessian Cloth
Secondhand Clothes	

PACKERS

Petroleum Jelly
 Rice
 Sodium Bi Carbonate

(...from page 17)

Cemetery is about a ten minutes drive away from the Centre. London Jamat provided four coaches which were all full for the funeral. In addition to the coaches there were also many private cars.

Amid the echoing sound of 'La ilaha illallah', young and old, in deep sorrow with tears rolling over their cheeks accompanied the coffin to begin the last leg of the journey. They followed, in respect and dignity, painfully realizing that Mulla Saheb was no longer amongst them.

At the Cemetery, Namaz Janaza was prayed again (presumably for those who came direct to cemetery), but many of the people repeated the Namaz. At the grave, Yaseen was recited en-masse and after Talqeen, Ayatul Kursi was recited. Burial started at about 4pm and people returned to the Mosque by 5.00 pm.

What greater tribute could be paid to his life's work than the fact that he breathed his last attending to the business of the World Federation in his office at the Husaini Shia Islamic Centre, Stanmore. In his last moments, before he suffered a heart attack, he was discussing with Maulana Kalbe Abbas, a trusted associate, the arrangements to recite Majalis in Mombasa, Marhum's home town, during Muharram 1421.

"We feel we have become orphans" was the common anguish on the lips of almost everyone, as the impact of this gigantic loss began to sink in. Masses of emails, faxes and phone calls all reverberated the same sentiment. This 'Son' of the Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri Community had emerged as the 'Father' of the Shia Community at large. His care and concern for Mumineen all over the world is legendary and unique. But the 'Mulla' as he was fondly known, was unique in more ways than one. Admired and respected while he was alive, the love for him gushed forth all the more in death among the young and old. During his 63 years' life span, he had touched thousands, making each feel special, and those thousands and more were deeply touched by his death. This

Mulla Asgharali M.M. Jaffer (1936-2000)



A tumultuous turnout was present to bid farewell to the Late President

Mulla Asgharali M.M. Jaffer was born in Mombasa, Kenya in 1936. He was educated at the Ithna Asheri Primary School and the Mombasa Technical High School. As a self-taught man, the Ulema and the public internationally recognised him for his depth of religious knowledge and personal piety.

Proficient in Islamic Jurisprudence,

was a unique funeral in the history of the Community. Never before such grief, emotion and out pouring of tributes have been seen in the Shia Community in the UK.

As the mourners returned from the cemetery, the rest of the world began marking this great loss with fatehakhani across the globe.

Siyaka majlis was recited by Maulana Kalbe Abbas in whose arms Mulla died when he was in his office. This was then followed by a series of tributes from Mohamed Pirbhai, the Vice Chairman of the Africa Federation, Ghulam Sajjan, Chairman of NASIMCO, Jaffer Dharamsi for CoEJ, Hasnain Walji, Vice Chairman of the World Federation and Amir Lakha, President of London Jamaat. A mention was also made of Agha's Seestani's representative.

Thereafter Namaz and Nyaz was served and Stanmore declared an official mourning period of seven days which will end on Tuesday, 28 March, 2000. The Africa Federation also declared an official mourning period of three days while Ziyarat for Marhum was held at various Jamaats in Africa.

Inna Lillahi wainna Ilayhi Rajioon.

usul-e-fiqh, logic, philosophy and Islamic history, he was instrumental in bringing to his students' a profound insight in Islamic teachings from a contemporary perspective. His books, video and audio cassettes have become household items in many Muslim homes, particularly in Europe and North America.

Mulla Asghar took interest in the theosophical society of Mombasa and also in local Jamaat affairs, rising to become President of the Bustani Jamaat and later as president of the unified Mombasa jamaat. He served as the Honorary Secretary and Vice President and later even served as President of the Africa Federation.

Soon after the formation of the World Federation in 1976, as its first President, he dedicated his life to the cause of Islam. A unique personality, he was blessed with many qualities, which characterised his leadership as one which was truly multifarious and multifaceted. A prolific writer and an outstanding orator, with a very approachable personality, he always had time for anyone, young and old, who approached him for any reason whatsoever.

Fluent in Arabic, English, Farsi, Urdu, Kiswahili and his mother tongue Gujrati, he was equally at ease communicating with scholars, intellectuals, poets and the learned from any corner of the Muslim world. But most of all, it was his message to the masses that touched many hearts.

He lived in London for two decades prior to his death and is survived by his wife, two daughters and two sons. May Allah (SWT) rest his soul in eternal peace. Amen

Mulla's final day.....

On the day he passed away, Mulla left for work as usual and was in the best of moods. He had three visitors to see him that morning. He met two then went to the washroom, had a cup of tea and then met Maulana Kalbe Abbas (the Stanmore resident Aalim) who had just come from Hajj.

After hugging and congratulating Maulana Kalbe Abbas on his Hajj trip he then told him that he had booked Maulana to travel to Mombasa where he was to go to recite majlises this year. As he was telling the Maulana this, he suddenly took a deep breath and said to Maulana that he could not breathe, (at that time Mulla was sitting in his chair, facing the door, so he could see anybody coming in).

Maulana panicked and shouted to Muhsin Dharamsi to come quickly and started to hit on Mulla's chest. As Muhsin Dharamsi came to the office to attend to Mulla, Muhsinbhai says that Mulla was looking at him but it looked as if he had no vision because he had no eye movement - and in that split second, Mulla turned back to the front, closed his eyes and kept his hands by his side and was gone forever. The simplicity of his death showed the sign of a true *momin*.

In the meantime an ambulance had been called for and they had wheeled Mulla's chair into the next office and put him on the ground. Sajida Rashid was then called to administer first aid and Mushtaq Kassam who happened to be there tried giving him mouth to mouth respiration while Sajida hit him on the chest in the hope of starting his heart again - it did not work and by then the paramedics had arrived and they tried their best too but to no avail. They took him to the hospital but he had been pronounced dead on arrival.

Mulla's wife was taken to the hospital presumably knowing from home that he had passed away. All this happened from 11.45 a.m. and in half an hour news of his death began spreading to all corners of the world.

Because there had already been two deaths that day at the hospital before Mulla, there was some delay in releasing his body. His body came to Stanmore mosque at 6 p.m where he was given *ghusl*.

About 2500-3000 people attended his funeral and in the ladies there were more ladies than we do in Ashura, simply because in Ashura there are a lot of Centres around London that people visit - but for this time all people around London came to Stanmore. It was a scene to be seen to be believed. They had his *janaza* out under the open sky because there simply was no room inside the center. Just seeing his face took a good 2 hours because of the number of people there.

He was buried in a *kabrastan* that he has been fighting for, for the last year. His is the only *kabr* there but the place is so peaceful you would want to go and spend time there just to reflect. The caretaker of the *kabrastan* was so amazed at the number of people attending the funeral that he asked our people if this was a normal procedure and whether this is the number of people that attend our funerals.

I pray that Allah s.w.t. gives all of us *sabr* to bear this loss because Mulla has left a void in our hearts that can never ever be filled. We can now only but pray for him.

I convey to you the condolences of my Sayyid and Master His Eminence Ayatullah al-Udhma as-Sayyid as-Seestani (may Allah protect him and prolong his life) on the death of Marhoom Haj Mulla Asgharali M M Jaffer - the President of the World Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaat.

We are deeply grieved and profoundly affected by the death of the Marhoom because we have lost a kind brother and a distinguished personality at a time when there is a tremendous need for people like him. He was trustworthy, steadfast, dedicated and full of devotion to his faith and his message - the likes of whom are a few and far between these days.

For over half century of his life, Marhoom Mulla served the school of thought of Ahlul-Bayt (a.s.) by way of his speeches, lectures and writings in various languages which he had mastered. Eventually his efforts were crowned by his Presidency to the World Federation of KSI. This position enhanced his activities and efforts to support the Ulema and his *Maraji'-e-Taqlid*. As we all witnessed, his work in London was not enough for him. He therefore expanded his activities traveling to different parts of the world like United States, Canada, India, Pakistan, Africa and other places where followers of Ahlul-Bayt live.

May Allah (s.w.t.) reward him the best of rewards and elevate his rank to be among the highest, for He hears the *Dua* (and) is near to us and Answers (our prayers).

Whilst we convey our condolences to the Central Executive Committee of the World Federation of KSI, the Deputy Head and honourable members together with all *Momineen*, we sincerely hope the Khoja Brothers (May Allah grant them success) will unify their word, unite themselves and cooperate hand in hand in order to follow the path and tread in the same foot

Condolence Book opened for Marhum Mulla Asghar

A condolence page has been set up on the World Federation and NASIMCO websites in tribute of Late Mulla Asghar M.M. Jaffer. In order not to duplicate efforts, the Africa Federation Web Site has a notification on its site which guides surfers wishing to register their condolence to either of the above sites.

Surfers can send in their tributes and comments as well as read what others have written about Marhum who was the President of the Community worldwide.

At the time we went to press there were over 175 condolence messages received from different parts of the world for the condolence book on the World Federation Web Site.

WF Executive Council Meeting postponed and Treasurer withdraws resignation.

The Eighth meeting of the Executive Council of the World Federation which was scheduled to be held on 1 April 2000 was postponed until further notice following the sudden death of Mulla Asghar.

On 25 March, 2000 the past treasurer of the World Federation, Al Haj Ahmedbhai Daya who had earlier tendered his resignation, withdrew his resignation following the sudden death of Mulla Asghar.

(...from page 20)

steps as that of the Marhoom Mulla Asgharali. To follow the path of his devotion and Ijtihad, trustworthiness and dedication to the Ulema and Supreme Majari'-e-Taqlid, for there lies in this path the success, strength and unity of this Jamaat and the preservation of its dignity in the world.

Seyyid Murtadha Kashmiri
Wakil of Grand Ayatullah As
Seestani
London

Federation Samachar

INNA LILLAHI WA INNA ILAIHI RAJIUN

MARHUM MULLA ASGHAR --- A TRIBUTE FROM THE AFRICA FEDERATION

"The Africa Federation learnt with great shock and sorrow the sudden demise of Mulla Asghar on Tuesday 21st March 2000.

Mulla Saheb suffered a massive heart attack in his office and in spite of being given the necessary first aid treatment, the medic staff could not salvage his rapidly deteriorating condition. He expired in the Hospital at 12.30 p.m. (GMT). The Marhum was buried on Wednesday 22nd March 2000 after Zohrain Prayers, at the Carpenters Park.

Marhum an ardent follower of Ahlul Bait (a.s.) and an able Zakir served this Community at large in various capacities. To start with he served the Mombasa Jamaat, then the Regional Federation of Africa and finally reaching the peak and serving the whole Khoja Shia Ithnasheri Community of the World being the President of the World Federation of Shia Ithnasheries.

His vocal capabilities, elegant persuasive qualities, pleasant nature and ever readiness to help any brother/sister in Islam were the rare qualities inherent in him. He was a man committed to serve the Community. His services in the field of tabligh had tremendously helped the Community at large.

Love and respect for the Late Mulla Saheb is evident by the number of phone calls, fax messages, email messages our Chairman is attending to during this period of grief.

His loss has deprived the Community in particular and the Muslim Community in general of a devoted leader who had tabligh and welfare of the Community at his heart. Now that he is no longer with us a vacuum will be felt all around and particularly at the World Federation meetings and conferences."

During the period of grief, the Africa Federation declared three days of mourning when all Momineen were requested to refrain from festivities, with all sports activities coming to a standstill and all cultural programs being postponed. The Constituent Jamaats were advised to have the Ziarat of the Marhum recited on Thursday 23rd March 2000.

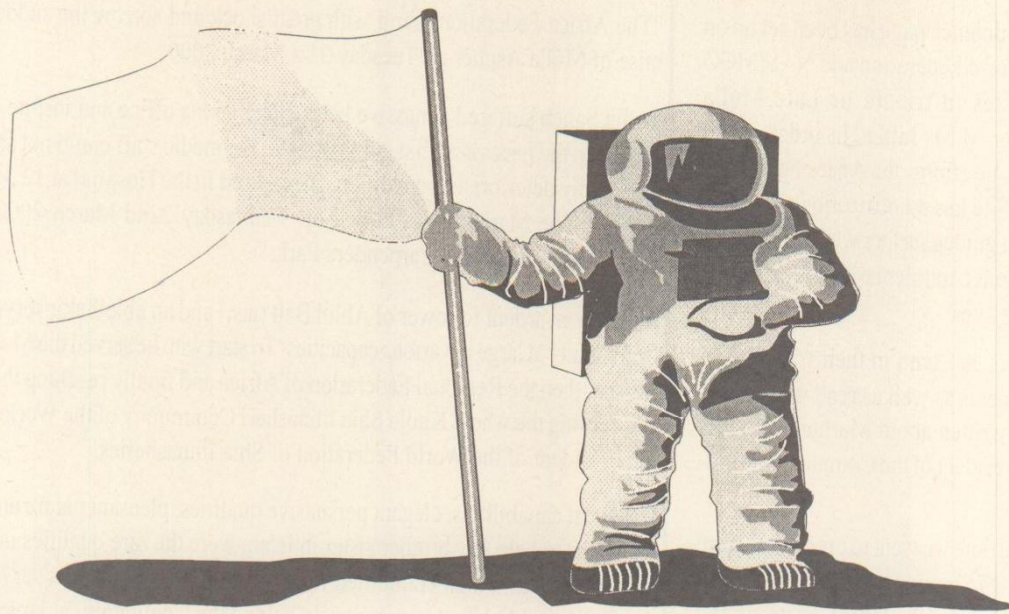
The Ziyarat for Marhum Mulla Asghar at the Dar es Salaam Imambara on Thursday 23 March, 2000 was well attended. After the Ziyarat majlis, the President of Dar es Salaam Jamaat, Asgherbhai Bharwani and the Chairman of the Africa Federation, Mohamedbhai paid glowing tributes to the deceased.

In his tribute to the late President of the World Federation, the Chairman of the Africa Federation, Mohamedbhai Dhirani said the achievements of Mulla Asghar were unmatched and he could very well be called the 'man of the century' for the community.

Unfortunately the Africa Federation Chairman Alhaj Mohamed Dhirani, could not attend the funeral due to visa problems, as the British High Commission was closed. Instead the Africa Federation was represented by Alhaj Mohamed Pirbhai the Vice Chairman who made it just in time at the Cemetery following a delayed flight because of fog problems at London's Heathrow Airport.

Various constituent jamaats of the Africa Federation held Ziyarat or condolence sessions in remembrance of Marhum Mulla Asghar. Let us recite a Sura -e fateha for the Marhum.

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A TRIBUTE TO MULLA ASGHAR

By: Mohamed G.M. Dhirani
Chairman – The Federation of K.S.I. Jamaats of Africa.

It was in July 1960 when I was returning by an East African Airways flight from Tanga after attending the funeral of a relative that I met Mulla for the first time. He was in the same flight having embarked from Mombasa and was traveling to Dar-es-Salaam to recite majlises at Mehfile Abbas (a.s.) during the period of Arbain of Sayyad-e-Shohada Hazrat Imam Hussein (a.s.). At that young age he had as yet not begun to recite at the Imambara.

We did not know each other then but we exchanged salaams and then spoke for a while. That acquaintance blossomed to a friendship for the last 40 years. Mulla Saheb had many qualities. He was an exemplary orator and his majlises were very popular. Jamaats used to clamour to obtain him to recite majlises during Muharram and all would be eager to attend when he recited.

During one of his talks he mentioned that he started reciting majlises by reading from the book. After deciding that he would speak extempore, he actually did so on one Thursday night in Mombasa. He told me that during that majlis he glared at the opposite wall all the time when he was speaking. Immediately after that majlis, without waiting, he walked home. His father appreciated his courage and encouraged him.

When he first recited majlis at Dar-es-Salaam he was only 23 years of age and he had a full grip on the audience during his majlises. His command on the Urdu language can be ascertained from what he once mentioned to me. He preached at an Imambara in

Lucknow and after the majlise elderly people from the congregation asked him as to which part of Uttar Pradesh of India he hailed from simply because they appreciated his command of Urdu.

Mulla was Linguistic and had good command on Gujarati, English, Arabic, Farsi and Kiswahili. As regards Kiswahili I can illustrate one important episode. After the death of the President of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, a day was designated on which leaders of all Communities in Nairobi converged at the State House to congratulate the new President Daniel Arap Moi on his appointment and to offer him allegiance. Most of the leaders spoke in English and on behalf of their communities. When it was Mulla's turn, he spoke in fluent Kiswahili which very much impressed the new President who asked from where he hailed. It is understood that subsequently Moi in his conversation over tea with the elders had referred to Mulla and had expressed his wish to meet him. In his submission at that time Mulla had said that he represented all the Muslims, as there was no question of divisions amongst the Muslims and referred to the Quranic Ayat which states that Allah (s.w.t.) has created people in different tribes and communities so that they should know each other but the best person to Allah (s.w.t.) is the one who is virtuous.

This concept of unity of Muslims was further illustrated by him when the Government of Kenya appointed a Commission to look into the different rules governing the Law of Succession with the intention of introducing uniform secular laws. Mulla Saheb became

the flag bearer and approached other Muslim Sects at the Jamia Mosque of Nairobi and he pleaded that in matters of Succession all Muslim laws are uniform and as such it was of utmost importance that all Muslim Sects should be united in their submission to the Commission to allow Muslims to have their own Laws of Succession.

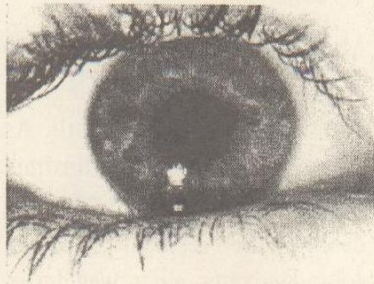
When the delegation met the Chairman of the Commission, one Humphry Slade, a member of the Commission who was a Lebanese Christian, raised a question which confused the other delegates. He asked that whereas a person during his life can distribute or give his properties and assets to any one whom he wished to, why should he be debarred to do so in his Will. Mulla was quick to reply that they are two different aspects, that is of bequeath and inheritance. During a person's life he can bequeath to anyone but on death the properties revert to Allah (s.w.t.) and its distribution has to be made according to His command. This carried the day and Islamic Succession Law was accepted for Muslims in Kenya.

Mulla was a good listener as well as humorous. Whenever he would be on a visit, friends would be eager to have him with them to socialize at night. It was famous with the housewives that they know that when Mulla was in town their husbands would be very late to return.

This person with multifarious faculties is no more. It was a grace of Allah (s.w.t.) that our Community was bestowed by Him with such a personality whose loss will be felt for a long period.

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Mulla Asgharali M.M. Jaffer (1936 – 2000) “An institution unto himself”

Inna lillahi wainna ilyahi rajeoon.

The most illustrious ‘SON’ of the community is no more. The ‘SUN’ whose rays permeated through to every household in the Community shines no more. Unique yet multifaceted personalities the like of Mulla Saheb, as he was fondly known around the globe, emerge but rarely. Over a century ago, when the newly converted nascent K.S.I. community in India needed a Muballigh, a guide, a teacher, Allah blessed the community with Haji Naji. At a time when the winds of change engulfed the Community, in the second half of the 20th century as it spread all over the world. Allah blessed the community with Mulla Asghar.

Today, the multifarious services of the World Federation and its standing in the Shii world are a testimony to his multidimensional and charismatic leadership, never before equaled in the K S I community.

His acumen as an able administrator, his meticulous memory, his prowess in public speaking, his moving majlises, his characteristic candour, his unifying diplomacy, his inspiring initiatives as well as his humility, approachability and humour endeared him to the young and old in the community.

Fluent in Arabic, Farsi, English, Kiswahili, Urdu, Kutchee and Gujerati, he made visitors from all corners of the world feel at ease in his presence. Acclaimed by Ulema, his deep insight into the subject of Fiqh and Usule Fiqh, theology, philosophy, theosophy as well as contemporary issues was legendary. As an educator par excellence, his ability to inform and educate his students on Islamic concepts from a contemporary perspective was truly enlightening.

What is remarkable is that all this erudition, from one who was self-taught, was not confined to the hawza or the classroom. As a brilliant communicator, he eloquently presented the teachings of Ahlul Bait (AS) to the masses at large. Wherever he went, people craved to hear him speak and be touched by his profound oratory. Countless minds have been set thinking, many lives have been changed by his nasihat and admonitions from the member. His impact on our society is nothing short of phenomenal and one that has shifted paradigms.

But then, he touched the people in other ways too. Bending over the little desk of a 5 year old boy in a classroom, in the interior of Andra Pradesh, patting his head lovingly, is a sight that moved and motivated his co-workers. For him to shed tears when he saw widows and orphans in abject poverty, in Karnatka having undertaken an arduous journey, despite his health condition, showed that here was a leader who cared. For him to travel up in the hilly areas of Skardu in Baltistan to oversee the construction of a school demonstrated that he cared enough to better the lot of his people. Whether there was an earthquake or a storm, a famine; a casualty or calamity of any sort in the Muslim world, he promptly engaged himself in asking, helping, consoling and doing the utmost possible. His voice was the one that rang out to make the community aware of the plight of their brethren. His was the voice that articulated the plight of the Ulema of Iraq when the regimes perpetrated atrocities. He could feel the pain, more than most, having endured similar oppression himself.

It was all this and much more that made Mullasaheb a legend in his own lifetime, a household name in the entire Shia community. His

qualities, his abilities and above all, his piety and sincerity was recognized by all the eminent Maraje. Marhum Ayatullah Khui had a special appellation for Mulla Saheb. He called him ‘MALAAZUL ANAAM’, one with ‘broad shoulders’.

Truly, he shouldered so much, for so many in so many fields. Words, however eloquent, cannot even begin to pay tribute to the man who was more than an institution.

Resigned as we are, to the will of Allah, that he has been so suddenly taken away from us, we must all strive to keep alive his mission, to continue on the path that he forged. While he remains without a match, head and shoulders above any amongst us, we must endeavour to follow in his footsteps, complete the projects he initiated, support the causes, and institutions and organizations that were so dear to him. That is the greatest tribute we can pay to him.

May Allah bless his soul with maghfirat and grant him a chosen place with the Masoomeen (AS) that he so dearly loved and served. In this hour of grief, our hearts go out to his entire family. We extend our deepest sympathies and condolences. We wish to record our profound gratitude to the entire family for their sacrifices and unflinching support as he continued to shoulder such heavy responsibilities in the service of Imame Zaman (AS). We also express our condolences to our Marja Ayatullah Seestani (May Allah keep him) on this sad loss to the entire Shia world.

Hasnain Walji
Vice President
World Federation

**NASIMCO'S
tribute to Mulla
at his funeral**

"We are gathered here to give condolences on the death of Mulla Asghar. NASIMCO is represented by Toronto, Vancouver, New York, Allentown and Minnesota.

Brothers and Sisters, Salaamun Alaykum. The first time I met Mulla Asghar was in the 1960s (1964) at the Africa Federation Conference in Tanga. The next time it was in 1972 during the Uganda crisis. At both occasions he was the Secretary General and I was amazed at his insight. In 1976 he had a vision and the World Federation (WF) was formed and Toronto Jamaat supported the formation. In 1980, NASIMCO was formed in the spirit of the WF constitution.

The Zainabia Child Sponsorship Scheme (ZCSS) was proposed from Toronto before NASIMCO was formed. This was developed by the WF and now it has mushroomed.

WF has developed many other projects for the eradication of poverty, for building Islamic Centres and for Education, Medical Assistance, etc. The WF has spent over Sterling pounds 56,000,000 over the course of its history. The principle credit for all of this goes to Mulla Asghar.

Now that we have paid tribute to Mulla Sahib, do we stop here? Is it enough to say that this is a great loss? Yes, it is a great loss, but is that it? I submit that this is not enough, nor doubt that the projects handled by WF, initiated by Mulla Asghar have to be carried on but there are issues of community unity and respect of leadership. This is where we ALL come in. If we do not address these issues we have not achieved our purpose of today's gathering, for surely, these were issues of concern to Mulla Sahib. Therefore, if we genuinely feel the loss of Mulla Asghar let us resolve to unite and respect our leaders.

If we do it than only will we have paid tribute to Mulla Asghar, otherwise, once again, we have carried out a ritual without life in it."

Ghulam Abbas Sajan
NASIMCO President

**Mulla Asghar --
A Sincere Friend of
the Needy**

There are certain requirements that a leader must have and among these qualifications is that humble touch and down to earth approach to solve the needs and problems of a community. Mulla Asgharali M M Jaffer had these qualifications. He has been a distinguished Community worker for the past 50 years.

Born in Mombasa, Kenya, Mulla Asghar attended night school for his basic education. Essentially, a self taught man by wide reading with a good interest in Arabic, Urdu, Persian, Gujarati and English literature. He spoke fluently Arabic, Urdu, Persian, Gujarati, Kiswahili and English languages.

At age 20, he embarked upon Community voluntary services in Kenya. Later appointed as Secretary General of Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri Community of Africa and became its President. During the political crisis in Zanzibar in 1964 and later in 1972, when the entire Community was up rooted from Uganda, he provided direction and guidance to the Community in Africa.

In 1975, he was instrumental in bringing the scattered Community from through out the world under one forum, which is now known as The World Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri Muslim Communities. It has been in existence for the past 24 years. The office of Presidency that he occupied had brought honor to the Organization by the manner in which he filled his role far above any feeling of partisanship or political advantage.

A sincere friend of the needy and poor among us and a devoted Community worker, his reputation for ability and fairness extend far beyond the border of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Community. His record of humanitarian service generally as well as to Muslim community internationally are a matter of record. The impact of his contribution world wide, in relief of poverty, in providing education to poor children as well as creating healthcare and welfare programme has made a difference in the lives of many. Today, a widow, an orphan, a refugee, a sick and a hungry is looked after by many social and welfare programmes that he set up. For the Shia Muslim Community in the west particularly, he was instrumental in bringing about the ethos of Islamic values and create an Islamic identity within the Community.

On a personal level, despite his active Community life and numerous demands made upon his time, he was a devoted husband and affectionate father to his children. Those who knew him is not likely to forget the candour of his speech, the courage of his faith and the warmth of his personality.

Acutely conscious of his responsibilities and obligations to Islam, it came as no surprise that he found death in the midst of the discharge of his duties. He is no more with us. His passing leaves a void in the heart of many who knew him. A leader of our time whose contribution impacted beyond the confines of his own Community showed that humanity benefits when it exist to serve for the sake of Allah (s.w.t.). In both his public and private life, he had demonstrated a deep and abiding feeling for the less fortunate section of the society. The desire to do so ran deep in the grain of his personality and beliefs. This was an indelible hallmark of his leadership.

Dr. Sibtain Panjwani
Secretary General
22 March 2000

Newly expanded Madressa Building is opened in Los Angeles

The newly expanded Madressa building in Los Angeles was officially opened on 4 December, 1999. The expansion project was sponsored by the Shia Ithna Asheri Jamaat of Los Angeles with support from mo'mineen from all over the United States and Canada, including the World Federation, NASIMCO and the Islamic Humanitarian Service (IHS).

During the opening, the IHS Chairman Dr. Mohsin Ali said that the expansion had created five new classrooms compared to the previous situation where all five classes were housed in one hall.

The projected cost of the expansion was budgeted at US\$150,000 but due to city requirements and standards, the cost escalated to about \$250,000. The Chief Guest at the occasion which also commemorated the birth anniversary of the Twelfth Imam (a.s.) was the Vice President of the World Federation, Hasnain Walji. Also present were the NASIMCO Chairman, Ghulam Sajjan and local scholars.

FROM THE NAHJUL BALAGHA SERMON 20

Death and taking lessons....

If you could see that has been seen by those of you who have died, you would be puzzled and troubled. Then you would have listened and obeyed; but what they have seen is yet curtailed off from you. Shortly, the curtain would be thrown off. You have been shown, provided you see and you have been made to listen provided you listen, and you have been guided if you accept guidance. I spoke unto you with truth. You have been called aloud by (instructive) examples and warned through items full of warnings. After the heavenly messengers (angels), only man can convey message from Allah. (So what I am conveying is from Allah).

Egyptian new Divorce law draws response from women

An Egyptian woman in her 30s exercised her right to divorce in a landmark court hearing held in Egypt in January this year. Wafa Gabr, 38, was the first to file for divorce under a law introduced in January, 2000. Wafa and her husband appeared in court in the town of Tanta in the Nile Delta. The judge wanted to reconcile them, but Wafa refused. She said she hated living with her husband. Previously, a woman could only get a divorce if she proved she had been beaten or that her husband was a drug addict, sterile or refused to support the family.

Under the new law, Wafa will have to forego alimony rights and return the dowry paid at the time of marriage - a major drawback for many women. Her application to end her 10-year marriage was held up for several years. Under the new law it could be granted in three months. The woman, from a village 75 miles north of Cairo, alleges that her husband neglected her during a long illness and offered no emotional support when one of their children was killed.

She said her husband, who is older than she is, married another woman, which is allowed in Islamic law under certain circumstances, and went to live with her in a town several hours from his first marital home. She also claims to have been the victim of domestic violence at the hands of her husband who has continually refused to grant her a divorce.

Under the new law, a wife can seek a divorce if she returns gifts, including her bride price. Wafa Gabr said hers was about Sterling pounds 40. The court ordered three months of reconciliation efforts, as required under the law, and adjourned the hearing. Wafa Gabr is the first of hundreds of women using the new law, which sets a precedent in the Islamic world.

The Personal Status Law came into effect in January this year after months of debate in the media over women trapped in unhappy marriages. In 1998 alone, 250,000 women went to court in the faint hope that their husbands would agree to a divorce. The situation was further exacerbated by half a dozen cases in which women killed their husbands because they were unable to divorce them.

The new law is based on a legal right under Islamic Sharia law which had long been abandoned across the Muslim world. Until now, women in Egypt were banned from seeking divorce except in extreme cases of mental and physical abuse and it was generally a privilege exercised by men.

In the first week after the implementation of the law more than 100 women filed for divorce in Cairo courts. Their grounds ranged from alleged abuse and neglect to differences of personality. Women from across the class boundaries are filing for divorce. Cases include a bride of 10 months and a grandmother who has been married for 41 years.

The change in the law has also met some scepticism. Dr Mona Hassan, a lecturer in Islamic history at Cairo University, said the law must be used with caution. She said: "There are two sides to this debate, positive and negative, because the Koran calls for troubled husbands and wives to find a solution to their problems through understanding, discussion and help from each others' families."

"It is important that these remain in place and the law is used as a last resort and not taken lightly. It offers new opportunities for women in extremely unhappy marriages and is welcomed for this reason, because it clearly gives them new freedom. But it should not be abused."

In the case of Wafa, she and her husband were asked to appoint a mediator who would try to reconcile them. If that fails, the judge will after three months declare them divorced.

Blair studies Koran in multifaith campaign

British Prime Minister, Tony Blair is studying the Koran and other religious texts as part of a personal ecumenical drive to include Britain's multifaith community in policymaking. The Prime Minister is said to have read the Koran three times, most recently on his winter holiday to Portugal, and has impressed members of Britain's Muslim community by the depth of his knowledge and understanding of their faith.

Mr Blair is understood to want his tenure to be imbued with a strong moral and spiritual dimension. He is also keen to recapture support that has been slipping from Labour and towards the Tories among some minority communities.

He has courted leaders of minority faiths to a greater extent than his predecessors and has held private discussions with leaders of the Muslim and other communities about their beliefs and culture.

The Prime Minister is understood to have been deeply influenced by Hans Kung, the radical Swiss Roman Catholic theologian, who has worked for decades to bring together religious, business and political leaders under a non-religious value-system known as the "global ethic".

Mr Blair is the first Prime Minister routinely to send messages of support and friendship to minority faith leaders during their traditional observances, festivals or holy days.

Iqbal Sacranie, secretary-general of the Muslim Council of Britain, said he had been impressed by the lengths to which the Prime Minister had gone to try to understand the beliefs and culture of Britain's Muslim community.

Mr Sacranie said that, under the present Government, the first Muslim life peers had been appointed, the Health Department had agreed to provide "chaplains" for minority faiths in hospitals, and the first Muslim adviser had been appointed to look at the conditions of Muslim jail

inmates.

Zaki Badawi, of the Muslim College, was more sceptical about Mr Blair's understanding of Islam. He acknowledged, however, that new Labour policies did appear to have been influenced by teachings of the Koran. "The Third Way is a very Muslim concept - the idea that you need to find a middle path between rampant capitalism and communism. That is something that he has borrowed from us," Dr Badawi said.

World Federation continues to assist Iraqi people

Almost 10 years after the Gulf war, the condition of ordinary people of Iraq keeps on deteriorating. Moving reports coming out of Iraq which is confirmed by United Nations states that the vast majority of Iraqi people continue to survive on a semi starvation diet, resulting in malnutrition among young children. This is compounded by epidemics of malaria, cholera, typhoid and other infectious diseases.

The worst scenario is in South Iraq and its marshes. During the war, almost one million people left on foot for the border of Iran. They came from places like Najaf, Kerbala, Kufa and Basra. They wanted to escape chemical bombing from Saddam's forces. Many were victims of it. They are found in border towns of Iraq and Iran. They live under the barest of subsistence within the twelve camps pitched there. They fled from persecution and war, leaving everything that they possessed except their memory. They endured all kinds of destruction that war inevitably brings to families, including chemical bombing. In these camps, children are found to be suffering from cancer. Their eyes reveal a desperate plea of helplessness. It is taking its toll at an alarming rate.

When representatives of the World

Federation visited these camps, they found that the war in Iraq had not spared any one. They found many professionals among the refugees, including highly qualified medical personnel. They did not have medical equipment or medicines with which to provide medical care to many who required it. Since 1992, with the help of generous support from the community world wide, the World Federation has sent one million pounds worth of medicines to Iraqi refugees. The World Federation still continues to do so, particularly cancer drugs which are now increasingly required for cancer patients among refugees.

As well as daily necessities like food, clothing and other necessary expenses, the World Federation sends £.5000 per month. This fund is distributed to various refugee camps through Ulema in Qum, Iran. Special remittances are made during Rajab, Shaaban and Zilhajj to encourage marriages taking place among refugee families. An equal amount is being sent to assist Iraqi refugees living in places of holy shrines as well as to the south of Iraq.

Soon after the Intefaza of Shabaan in 1991, the World Federation was able to raise £ 60,000 for distribution among the afflicted Iraqi families through various agencies in United Kingdom. Assistance to Iraq continues till to day.

-STOP PRESS- KAMPALA ELECTIONS

The following have been elected into the Executive Committee of Kampala Jamaat for the term 2000-2002:

Mustafa Kanji	President
Mohamed Rehmatullah	Vice President
Rifat Ali Shaikh	Hon. Secretary
Shabbir Jamal	Asst. Secretary
Mohamed Manji	Treasurer
Asim Morvi	Asst. Treasurer
Safdar Rehmani	Mukhi
Riaz Kanji	Astt. Mukhi
Members:	
Pyarali Khimji	
Syed A.H. Abidi	
Yusuf Kaba	
Abbas Lilani	
Mohsin Walji	
Zohair Suleman	

(from adjacent column)

the 7 weeks last year. Once again the program went very well with many volunteers to prepare food, bedding, cleaning, serving and security. Members of the community poured their hearts out with contributions of food, clothing and necessities to provide protection during winter for the underprivileged of our city. Local media covered this contribution to the society at large and the sheltered ones were very appreciative of the facility and care given to them.

The Shia Youth Award this year went to Samil Chagpar and Runner Up to Fatima Kanji. Presenting the Award, that carries trophies and cash prizes donated by the Damji family, Nazmul Damji thanked members of the panel of judges and the youths who had responded. He stated that he wished that all of them could receive the award as they met the criteria of higher achievement in their studies, voluntary work and service to our community institutions. He appealed to the community to appreciate our youths, as they are really outstanding and hard working.

A new centre on Kennedy road

Our brothers and sisters residing in the west part of Toronto are now renting a new centre on Kennedy road in Brampton, the opening of which was held on 9 December, 1999 which also coincided with the eve of the holy month of Ramadhan 1420 A.H.

Chairman Murtaza Panju informed the congregation in attendance that came from the Greater Toronto Area, Kitchener and Hamilton that their permanent centre would inshallah soon be in the making.

During the same ceremony, Aliraza Rajani, President of the Islamic Shia Ithna Asheri Jamaat of Toronto assured members of his committee's support and co-operation while Hujjatul Islam Maulana Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi delivered a brief lecture highlighting the importance of religious functions. Finally Maulana was also asked by the Chairman to cut the official ribbon.



DATELINE TORONTO

from Baqir Alloo in Toronto

Toronto Jamaat held a Special General Body Meeting on 4 March, 2000 and unanimously passed two resolutions concerning the 9000 Bathurst Project. The resolutions passed empowered the Executive to amend the Master Plan of 1996 and to take all steps necessary to finalize the Program, Budget, Schedule and Outline Specifications and to develop a Scheme Design consistent with these documents for the purpose of a Multi Purpose Hall, and to carry out an assessment of the existing main buildings.

The meeting was attended by about 200 members and was chaired by Speaker Akil Jaffer Dhirani assisted by Yaseen Mehdi. Opening the proceedings, Jamaat President Aliraza Rajani explained the importance of the meeting and urged members to give priority to the building of a hall in order to accommodate the fast growing membership of the Jamaat and to provide an Assembly Hall for Al-Sadiq School. Vice-President Razak Damani introduced to the meeting members of the Project Development Committee, which consisted of professional members of our community. Riyaz Kara and Kurban Manji explained in detail all the salient points of the Project and appealed to all members to get involved by way of suggestions and input.

The Moharram Program at Bayview Mosque includes various preachers. Maulana Sadiq Hassan of Karachi will preach in Urdu and Brother Mahmood Dattoo of London, England will preach in English while Begum Sabiha Haiderali from Karachi will cater for the ladies majalis in Urdu. Sheikh Shafiq Hooda will preach at Brampton Center while Hamilton will have Maulana Amjad Shah of Birmingham as their preacher. Brother Ashik Kermali will give his services to the London-Ontario congregation.

The JIBA Ontario Award Night 2000 was held on 26 February, 2000 at The Host Banquet Hall and was attended by 250 people including Toronto Jamaat President Aliraza Rajani, Minister of Immigration Hon. Eleanor Kaplan, Progressive Conservative Chief Government Whip and Deputy Speaker of the House Hon Frank Kleese and Councilor of Town of Vaughn Mario Rocco. The (Year 2000 Awards of the Year) in their respective category were awarded to Dr. Hussein Khimji and Dr. Haider Fazal (Professional Men of the Year), Sister Mahjabeen Yusufali (Professional Woman of the Year), Aijaz Bazmi (Senior of the Year), Ounally Rehmulla, Nazmul Damji (Businessmen of the Year), Parin Karim (Businesswoman of the Year), Munsif Sheraly, Sameer Karim and Shazia Damji as Youths of the Year and to Hussein Ali Paryani for Humanitarian services of the Year.

The Muslim Help Center Lifeline Program is picking up slowly in providing counseling and help to brothers and sisters in distress. Twenty-two trained volunteers take turn in manning the lines so that they can be reached at any time. This is a vital program in this vast city where life is fast and the culture, at times, confusing. The program has been sponsored by Toronto Jamaat and is open to all Muslims in Ontario. Another training session for the same program with seven volunteers has commenced. The program is under the leadership of Sister Sabira Pardhan.

The very successful Out of Cold Program that provides shelter to the homeless of Toronto every winter at our 9000 Bathurst premises is now tailing off. This year the Toronto Jamaat took on the program for 12 weeks instead of

(continued on adjacent column)

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Dodoma	Mbeya	Songea
Iringa	Mtwara	Singida
Kigoma	Mwanza	Tabora
Tanga	Zanzibar	

DATELINE IRAN

Washington eases some sanctions against Iran and looks into settling legal claims.

In recognition of what it terms "a shift towards democracy in Iran" the United States has lifted its import ban on several Iranian products, including carpets, caviar and pistachio nuts. Although Tehran welcomed the move, Iran's U.N. ambassador called Washington's actions "insufficient."

In exchange for the easing of U.S. sanctions, however, Iran said it will import U.S. grain and medical supplies. Relations between the United States and Iran have been strained since the Islamic revolution of 1979 that led to the taking of U.S. hostages.

In announcing the new U.S. policy in Washington on 16 March, 2000, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright did not include oil on a list of products Iran will be allowed to export to the United States.

"Today, I am announcing a step that will enable Americans to purchase and import carpets and food products such as dried fruits, nuts and caviar from Iran," Albright said in a Washington speech.

Albright also said the Clinton administration will look for ways to increase contacts between American and Iranian scholars, artists, professionals, athletes and nongovernment groups. "We believe this will serve to deepen bonds of mutual understanding and trust," she said.

In another move intended to reduce hostilities, Albright said the United States is willing to work with Iran to settle legal claims the two nations have against each other.

The policy changes she announced come nearly a year after Washington lifted its ban on U.S. exports of agricultural and medical products to Iran. Since then, private Iranians have made grain purchases but the government

has not.

Washington's actions are designed to show Iranians that "the United States bears them no ill will," Albright said.

Iran's official reaction to the U.S. announcement was both upbeat and chilly, providing evidence of lingering animosity between the two countries.

"We welcome (being able) to export Iranian foodstuffs and carpets and see it as positive. In response to this, America will be able to export grain and medicine to ... Iran," foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told IRNA, Iran's official news agency. Iran's U.N. Ambassador Hadi Nejad Hosseini also called the U.S. steps positive. "I wish to stress, however, that these steps, as important and refreshing as they may be, are insufficient to make a quick and drastic change in the state of affairs between the two countries."

The prospect of improved U.S.-Iran relations is "still heavily contingent on American willingness and ability to change its policies toward Iran," Hosseini said.

As one example, he complained that "Iranians visiting the United States continue to be treated as common criminals at American airports" and are being unnecessarily fingerprinted.

"This discriminating and degrading treatment is personally humiliating," Hosseini said, speaking from the same podium where Albright made her address a few hours earlier.

The movement toward democratic reform in Iran is "plainly gathering steam," Albright said. "We want to work together with Iran to bring down what President Khatemi refers to as the 'wall of mistrust,'" she said.

Nevertheless, Albright made clear that the administration has "no illusions" that the United States and Iran will be able to overcome their hostility overnight. "We can't build a true relationship on carpets and grain alone," she said.

Without apologizing, Albright also acknowledged past American meddling in Iran, including:

"Significant" U.S. involvement in the 1953 overthrow of leftist Iranian premier Mohammed Mossadegh

Support for Shah Reza Pahlavi's "brutal repression" of political dissent

Washington's "shortsighted" support of Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s.

While the United States will lift an import ban on several Iranian luxury items, making carpets, caviar, and pistachio nuts available to Americans for the first time in more than 20 years, the biggest prize for Iran is persuading the United States to lift the ban on U.S. investment in Iran's oil and gas industry, which dominates the economy.

"I think American (oil and gas) companies are itching to do (business with Iran) because they see the European firms getting a head start on them in the energy sector," said Shaul Bakhash, professor of history at George Mason University near Washington and an expert on Iranian politics.

Friday's speeches by Albright and Hosseini were sponsored by the American Iranian Council. The private group based in Princeton, New Jersey, seeks better relations between Washington and Tehran.

Robert Pelletreau, chairman of the council and a former U.S. ambassador in the Middle East, said the lifting of sanctions on Iran's non-oil exports was just one step along the road to reconciliation and that dialogue may have to wait a while.

The positive developments may be a welcome sign but the unwinding and unraveling many obstructions on both sides are unlikely to lead to any dramatic breakthroughs.

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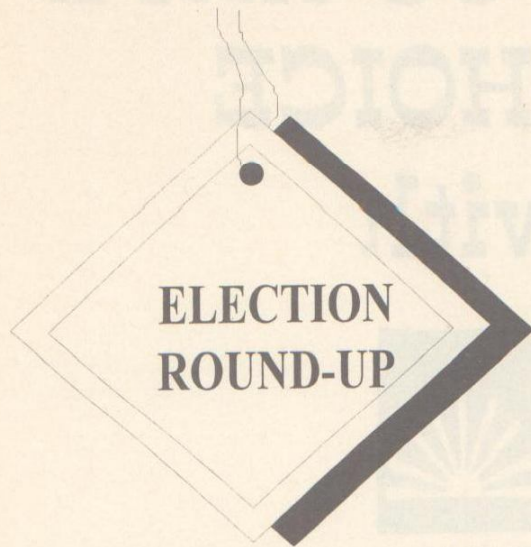
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Election Round-Up



DAR ES SALAAM

At the Bi-Ennial General Meeting of the Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat held from Friday 25th to Tuesday 29th February 2000, the following were elected into office for the next term of two years:

President Asgher Bharwani
 Vice President Zulfikar Dewji
 Hon. Gen. Sect. Yasin Nurmohamed
 Hon. Asst. Gen Sect. Pyarali Shivji
 Hon. Treasurer Sajjad Jaffer

Committee Members

Mehboob Somji
 Munir Daya
 Mustafa Virani
 Raza Virjee
 Salim Kassam
 Aliraza Rajani
 Murtaza Dhalla
 Hassanali Jaffer (Nominated)
 Mohamed Lalji (Nominated)

Trustees

Shiraz Rashid
 Mohamed Panju Jessa
 Mohamedtaki Dhanani
 Abbas Gulamali

KARACHI

Following is the list of Office bearers of Khoja (Pirhai) Shia Isna Asheri Jamaat in office from 12th March, 2000.

President Dost Mohammad Bhojani
 Vice President Yasin Ali F. Gheewala
 Hon. Gen. Sectr. Altaf Hussain Bhojani
 Hon. Jt. Sectr. Ghulam Abid Lakhani
 Hon. Treasurer Liaqat Ali Tejani

MEMBERS:

Afsar Ali Hassan Ali Tajri
 Ali Raza T. Lakhani
 Nisar Hussain Virani

Federation Samachar

ARUSHA

At the Annual General Meeting held on 25th February, 2000 the following Office Bearers were elected into office for the term from 2000 to 2002:

President: Mehdi R. Rashid
 Vice President: Tahseel M. Sheriff
 Hon. Secretary: Sadiq A. Chagani
 Hon. Treasurer: Shabbir M. Virjee
 Committee Members:
 Muslim M. Remtulla
 Hassan M. Fazel
 Rizwan G. Peera
 Sajjad M. Manji
 Suhail G. Punja

ALLENTOWN:

During the Annual General Meeting of the KSI Jamaat of Pennsylvania held on 19 February, 2000 the following were elected into office:

President Mohammed Khaku
 Vice President Hasnain M. Jaffer
 Secretary Mohamedraza Rajmohamed
 Assistant Sect. Mohamed Salim Bhimji
 Treasurer Hassanain Abbas Jaffer

Committee Members:

Yusuf Mohamedali
 Syed Akberali M. H. Rizvi

Trustees:

Akbarali Rajmohamed Fidahusseini
 A. Manji Mohamed Husayn
 Rajmohamed

Yousuf Karamally
 Dr. Sibtain A. R. Dossa
 Zulfiqar Ali D. Nasser
 Muhammad Ali R. Merchant
 Mehboob Hussain D. Merchant
 Mohammad Amin Khandwala
 Mohammad Ali Jafri

LOS ANGELES

During the elections held on 12 March, 2000 the following were elected to serve the Los Angeles Jamaat:

President Khalil Dewji
 Vice President Arif Peera
 Secretary Saida Somji
 Treasurer Mushtaqli Kermalli
 Councilor Dr. Murtadha Khakoo
 Councilor Fatim Bata

Sub-Committees:

Chairlady Saida Somji
 Assistant Nasreen Ali
 Assistant Nurunnissa Manek
 Assistant Azra Currimbhoy
 Assistant Tahera Jaffer

Program Coordinators:

Imran Virani
 Salim Jaffer
 Khalil Dewji
 Saida Somji

Youth Volunteers:

Sukaina Hasanali
 Sajeda Kermally
 Sabrina Ali
 Fatima Alloo
 Emil Ali
 Ali Jawad Kermalli

Burial (Ghusl/Kafan/Dafan)

Men:

Amin Dhala
 Ukera Peera
 Shiraz Dharas
 Safder Chandoo
 Khalil Dewji
 Dr. Mohsin Ali

Women:

Nargis Jaffer
 Salma Dharas
 Nurunnissa Manek
 Siddika Dhala

Medical Team:

Sherbano Khakoo
 Hasina Singh
 Dr. Mohsin Ali

Madrasah:

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 Principal Dr. Murtadha Khakoo
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Death Jottings

**inna lillaahi wa inna
ilaihi raajiuun**

The following deaths have been reported since the last issue of the *Federation Samachar* which carried death announcements to 22 December, 2000.

Marhum Akber Gulamhussein Asaria, Dar-es-Salaam on 4th April 2000, 28th Zilhajj 1420 A.H.

Marhuma Rubabai Roshan Issa Hasham, Mombasa on 2nd April 2000 in Dar es Salaam.

Marhum Haju Abdulhussein Ismail Walli, Dar-es-Salaam on 1st April 2000, 25th Zilhajj 1420 A.H.

Marhum Abbas Mohamedhussein Visram, Dar-es-Salaam on 1st April 2000, 25th Zilhajj 1420 A.H.

Marhum Mohamedali Mehrali Daya died on Thursday 30th March 2000, 23rd Zilhajj 1420 A.H.

Marhum Amirali R, Dharsee of Dar-es-Salaam on Thursday 23rd March 2000, 16th Zilhajj 1420 A.H.

Marhum Mulla Asgherali M. M. Jaffer of London on Tuesday 21st March 2000, 14th Zilhajj 1420 A.H.

Marhum Yacoob Ali Sheykh of London on Friday 17th March 2000, 10th Zilhajj 1420 A.H.

Marhum Sayyid Muhsin Musawi, Sunday 12th March 2000, 5th Zilhajj 1420 A.H.

Marhum Sayyid Muhsin Musawi died on Sunday 12th March 2000, 5th Zilhajj 1420 A.H.

Marhuma Zarina Huseinali Merchant died on Sunday 12th March 2000, 5th Zilhajj 1420 A.H.

Marhuma Sugrabai Mohamedali Kermali Nasser, Mombasa died on Tuesday 14th March 2000, 7 Zilhajj 1420 A.H.

Marhuma Rukiyabai Amirali Moti, Bukoba died on Saturday 11th March 2000, 4 Zilhajj 1420 A.H.

Marhuma Shireen Fatima, Karachi died on Thursday 9th March 2000, 2 Zilhajj 1420 A.H.

Marhum Akber Amarsi Alibhai died in London and was buried the same day in Leicester on Monday 06 March 2000, 29 Zilkaad 1420 A.H.

Marhum Hassanali Kassam Haji Ali Muraj died on Saturday, 4 March 2000, 27 Zilkaad 1420 A.H.

Marhum Akber Parpia, Mwanza, Saturday 4th March 2000, 27 Zilkaad 1420 A.H.

Marhum Ali H. Sheriff, Arusha, Wednesday 23rd February 2000, 17 Zilkaad 1420 A.H.

Marhum Syed Nasir Husein Zaidi of Leicester on 22nd February, 2000, 16 Zilkaad 1420 A.H.

Marhum Dr. Mohamedsadiq H. Rahim of London on Saturday 19th February 2000, 13 Zilkaad 1420 A.H.

Marhuma Shirinbai Mohamed Jamal of Edmonton Friday 18th February 2000, 12th Zilkaad 1420 A.H.

Marhuma Khatijabai Mahmood Sheriff Dewji, Arusha on Friday 18th February, 2000 12th Zilkaad, 1420 A.H.

Marhum Murtaza Najafali Tejani, Dar-es-Salaam Saturday 12th February, 2000 6th Zilkaad, 1420 A.H.

Marhum Akberali Hirani, Trollhatan, Sweden on Tuesday 1st February 2000, 25th Shawwal 1420 A.H.

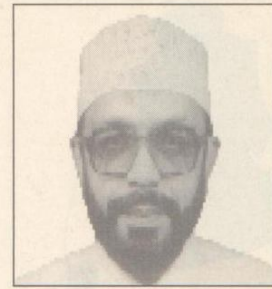
Marhum Mulla Nasir Jamal, Mombasa Thursday 27th January 2000, 20th Shawwal 1420 A.H.

Marhum Hussein Visram, Bukoba, Thursday 27th January 2000, 20th Shawwal 1420 A.H.

Marhum Ali Mohsin Ali, Dar-es-Salaam, Monday 17th January 2000, 10th Shawwal 1420 A.H.

Marhum Hasnain Habib Hassanali

MULLA NASSIR M.M. JAMAL



Following a massive heart attack Zakir-e-Hussein Alhaj Mulla Nasir Mohamedali Jamal (67) of Mombasa passed away on 27th January, 2000. Marhum was a devoted Mulla who preached the Azadari majlises well and was at standby for preaching during any occasion be it a Wafat or Khushali.

Marhum, who was born in Mombasa on 9th March, 1933 was known for his short sermons which were full of advice and for his *nasiyat*. He served the Mombasa Jamaat for over four decades mostly as a member in charge of organising duas, marshias and majlis programmes. He was also involved in training upcoming Zakirs.

Marhum was the brother of Late Mulla Gulamhussein Bishon of Mombasa. He leaves behind his wife, a son and daughter. May Allah (SWT) rest his soul among His chosen ones as Marhum devoted his entire life to His cause. We pray for his Maghfirat and offer Sura-e-Fateha for the departed soul.

Hasham, Dar-es-Salaam, Monday 10th January 2000, 3rd Shawwal 1420 A.H.

Marhum Ahmed JM Jaffer, Dar-es-Salaam, Thursday 6th January 2000, 28th Ramadhan 1420 A.H.

Marhuma Sugrabai Hassanali Asaria, London, Sunday 2nd January, 2000, 24th Ramadhan 1420A.H.

Marhuma Rubabbai Mohamed hussein Alibhai, Dar-es-Salaam, Wednesday 29th December 1999, 20th Ramadhan 1420A.H.

Marhum Raza Ahmed Lakha, Mombasa, 26th December, 1999, 17th Ramadhan 1420 A.H.

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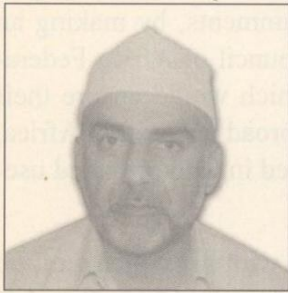
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Haji Ali H. Sheriff (Bwana Ali) passes away in Arusha

Inna Lillahi wa Inna Elaihi Rajioon



The community around the world was stunned on learning about the death of Haji Ali Hussein Sheriff Dewji, well known as "Bwana Ali" on 23 February, 2000 at the age of 61. He suddenly died in bed early in the morning when about to wake up for his morning prayers.

Born in Zanzibar on 12th January, 1939 Bwana Ali was happily married with eight children. He pursued his Primary and Middle School Education at the Zanzibar Government School from 1951 to 1958. Thereafter he moved with his family to Arusha where he pursued Secretarial and Co-operative studies at the KNCU Co-operative College in Moshi from 1958 to 1960. In July, 1960 he traveled to India and successfully obtained a Bachelor of Commerce degree at the Aligarh Muslim University. He was in India for a period of almost four years, up to April, 1964.

On return, Bwana Ali continued to study other courses some of which led

him to travel out of Tanzania. In 1966 he pursued a three week Tomato Puree Industry course in Italy following which he pursued a two week course in 1968 on the Basics of Management Accounting organised by the NIP in Tanzania. In 1976, he traveled once again to India to pursue another three week course, this time on the Hand made Paper Product Industry. In 1978, he traveled to Sweden for a three week course on the Wooden Ruler Industry and in 1980 he was again in India for a screen printing course that also lasted three weeks.

Marhum was a member of two professional institutions. One, a Fellow of the International Association of Bookkeepers based in the Bahamas, West Indies and secondly he was a member of the School and the Outward Bound Badge, Oloitokitok.

The various courses he attended and his nature of always wanting to learn about something new enabled Marhum to be well conversant with many business fields. Such experience was bound to lead to something significant and this came in 1982 when the Government of Tanzania, through the National Scientific Research Council, recognised the joint efforts of Marhum Bwana Ali and late Bashir Lalji in developing the technology of using waste oil as fuel. Both were presented with a National certificate, a shield and a cash prize of Shs. 50,000/- for their

innovation. Following the innovation of the "Waste Oil Technology", a group of professors and lecturers from the Dar es Salaam University visited Bwana Ali's Ceramic factory at Arusha and assessed the technology as innovative and original. The waste oil technology not only spread in Tanzania, particularly in areas where firewood is scarce, but was adapted in far off places like Djibouti, Somalia, Zimbabwe and Malawi.

In 1983, Marhum assisted in establishing eleven rural pottery projects in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar. He was again awarded a Certificate of Appreciation by the Ministry of Industries for being among the ten selected promoters of Small Scale Industries in Tanzania.

Prior to winning the awards, Marhum was the Manager of the Tanzania Bean processing Factory (now TGSP) from 1964 to 1971. In 1970 he established a Glaze Pottery Workshop, the present SDS Ceramic factory at Unga Ltd. in Arusha.

From 1972 to 1975 he was the Manager of Handicraft Industries involving pottery, wooden items, coconut shells and the like while in 1976 he established a hand made paper workshop in Arusha producing paper products, disposable paper products and the like. In the same year he was also appointed as managing Director of the SDS Group of companies.

In 1978 he established a factory to manufacture wooden educational items which is today called Meru Wood products and located at SIDO Industrial Estate in Arusha.

While he could communicate in Pharsi and Urdu, Marhum Bwana Ali was fluent and proficient in oral and written English, Kiswahili and Gujrati. The Late Bwana Ali had the tact of instilling confidence and encouraging individuals to initiate constructive projects through his moral support. His affectionate and soft-spoken nature made him to be an amiable person who was liked and respected by all.

Bwana Ali believed to live a constructive life and his active involvements

(continued on page 38)

in the early years did not keep him away from sporting activities. He held a number of certificates from the Muslim University of Aligarh as a member of the University riding Club between 1962 and 1964. At local level he held a certificate for climbing Mt. Meru and Kilimanjaro in 1975. He was also a keen swimmer and an active cricket player.

Bwana Ali was also actively involved in various general community services. In 1967 he was a member of the Volunteers in Technical Assistance (VITA), USA while in 1973 he was a member of the School Advisory Board of Arusha School. In 1975, he was appointed as a member of the Education Board of the KSI Ithnaasheri Supreme Council for Africa and his involvement towards uplifting communal awareness on education and religion continued until his death. Between 1974 and 1976 he was the Chairman of the Arusha Chamber of Commerce, Agriculture and Industry while between 1981-1992 he was a member on the Board of Directors of the Tanzania Engineering and Manufacturing Design Organisation (TEMDO) which was a Parastatal Organisation under the Ministry of Industries and Trade. Marhum was also a director of the Jamhuri and Dolly Sisal Estates Limited, a company initiated by his late brother Marhum Ebrahimbhai Sheriff for the benefit of our community members. Marhum was also a member of the Golden Crescent Group which, on a number of occasions gave him a forum to deliver intelligent lectures on religious and moral issues pertaining to our community.

During the later years of his life, Marhum was actively involved in religious affairs of the community. He taught religion in schools and in institutions of higher learning, he preached at various Mosques in Africa and was also involved with the Bilal Muslim Mission. In 1996, the Africa Federation bestowed on him the Huseini Medal for his gallant services to the community. This was when members of the Federation and invited guests had converged in Nairobi for the annual Council meeting.

(continued on page 39)

Tribute from the World Federation for Marhum Haji Ali H. Sheriff (Bwana Ali)

To Him we belong, and unto Him is our return

The mysterious ways of destiny has once again snatched away from us a member whose dedication to the cause of KSI community in Africa and at large, together with his noble demeanor, will long be cherished. This morning, we heard of the sad passing away of Haji Ali H. Sheriff Dewji, lovingly known as "Bwana Ali."

Marhum was known for his keen interest in several fields of Community services, particularly Education and Tabligh. He was among the first who cared for the less fortunate students who failed in their traditional education attainments, by making an elaborate submission to the Supreme Council of Africa Federation on the alternative short courses which would ensure their future. He undertook several journeys abroad and within Africa, in an effort to implement what he believed in, and provided useful guidance.

In the field of Tabligh, in collaboration with his colleagues, he convened annual seminars in which an interaction took place between the laity who formed the congregation and the clergy who preached during the Majlises. At such seminars, each side ventilated its view openly. As a constructive solution, he urged the Supreme Council to issue a circular to the preachers, requesting them to preach on the subjects proposed. The subjects were such, which dealt with the matters of faith and fundamentals.

A man of gentle nature, always in control of his passions, Bwana Ali will be remembered for the words he spared, and for dynamism he displayed. In the lobby of Community leaders, he was among those who cast the longest shadow. It was his frail health, which did not allow him to assume the higher reins.

Marhum was the youngest surviving brother of Haji Ebrahim H. Sheriff, the former Chairman of Africa Federation (1959-1964). May Allah bless his soul with maghferat and grant him a chosen place with Masoomen (A.S.) who he so dearly served.

Asgharali M.M. Jaffer
President
23 February 2000

Mulla Asgharali M.M. Jaffer who penned this obituary passed away on 21 March, 2000.

(...from page 38)

Marhum was also the architect of the Shia centre in Arusha which he established and actively assisted under the umbrella of the Bilal Muslim Mission. His tabligh work even extended outside the boundaries of the Bilal Muslim Mission which therefore endeared him to even non-community members. Many Muslim communities of Arusha who had respect for him and faith in him assigned him the task of upgrading old and dilapidated mosques and in all 18 mosques and madressas were upgraded with Marhum's supervision. The locations or names of these are: Unga Ltd., Bondeni, Sanawari Chini, Sanawari Juu, Kisongo, Majengo Juu, Majengo Chini, Izzedin, Masjid Jihad, Sekai, Unga Ltd. Daraja 11, Kisambare, Ngarenaro Madressa, Saloin Madressa, Kwa Iddi Mosque, Kilashini, Mbuguni and Mombangombe. Marhum was also an advisor to the Matrimonial Committee of the Arusha Jamaat.

When one looks back at the life of Bwana Ali there comes a realisation that the joy in life comes not from wealth but from constructive accomplishments. The life of Marhum portrays successful involvement in sports, business, industry, education, social services, religion and despite all this Marhum remained ever modest at all times--- reminds one of the famous adage which states that it is only the branches on a tree which has fruits that bend down. The branches which are barren stand erect in pride!

Bwana Ali will be ever remembered by his family, his community in Arusha, Africa and the world at large and by the so many people who allowed him to constructively influence their lives in one way or another.

Love and respect for Bwana Ali was evident at his funeral which was attended by thousands of Arusha residents and also by many residents and representatives of Jamaats in and out of Tanzania. A number of representatives from the Bilal Muslim Mission also attended the funeral while the Africa Federation was represented by Chairman Mohamedbhai Dhirani.

May Allah (swt) rest the soul of Marhum in eternal peace. Amen.

Federation Samachar

Tribute from the Africa Federation for Marhum Bwana Ali H. Sheriff

INNA LILLAHI WA INNA ILAIHI RAJIUN

The Africa Federation has learnt the passing away of Bwana Ali on Wednesday 23rd February 2000 with great shock and sorrow.

Bwana Ali was the great grand son of Haji Dewjibhai Jamal who was one of the pioneers for the spread of Mazhabe Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) in East Africa and on whose request Ayatullah Sheikh Zainul Abedin Mazandarani sent Syed Abdulhussein Marashi to Zanzibar. Born in Zanzibar, he was a graduate in Bachelor of Commerce from the Aligarh Muslim University in India. Bwana Ali was the youngest surviving brother of late Haji Ebrahim H. Sheriff, the Chairman of Africa Federation from 1959-1964. He is survived by his wife and eight children.

His modesty, soft spoken and gentle personality, pleasant nature and ever readiness to help any brother/sister in Islam were the rare qualities inherent in him. He was a man committed to serve the Community and Islam, with utmost dedication and zeal. His services in the field of education and tabligh had tremendously helped the Community at large. His preaching, particularly in the months of Muharram will be missed by many Jamaats. His special services to Hujjaj with whom he traveled every year will always be remembered.

Marhum was always available to provide wise counsel to youths, elders and institutions alike. This has gone a long way to the betterment of personnel and Community at large. He was a member of the Higher Education Board of the Supreme Council of K.S.I. Jamaats of Africa for decades and worked incessantly to encourage our youths to take-up further studies to secure future prospects.

Marhum was the architect of the Shia Centre of Arusha. He established, nourished and actively assisted in the day-to-day running of the Centre – which is today the pride of Bilal Muslim Mission. His work extended outside the boundaries of Bilal Muslim Mission. Many Muslim communities of Arusha who had a lot of respect and faith in him had assigned him the task of upgrading old and dilapidated mosques and 18 mosques were upgraded with Bwana Ali's supervision.

Bwana Ali's contributions extended from education to industry, from preaching to propagation and from consultation to counseling. His wisdom, charm, love, care and guidance will always be remembered by not only all of us at the Africa Federation but also by communities based outside Africa.

His loss has deprived the Community in particular and the Muslim Community in general of a devoted leader, who had Tabligh and welfare of the Community at his heart as a sincere worker. Now that he is no longer with us a vacuum will be felt all around and particularly at the Africa Federation meetings and conferences.

Love and respect for the Late Bwana Ali was evident at his funeral which was attended by not only thousands of Arusha residents but also by many residents and representatives of Moshi, Mombasa, Nakuru, Mwanza and Dar-es-Salaam Jamaats and Bilal Muslim Mission. Africa Federation was represented by the Chairman Alhaj Mohamed Dhirani.

In this moment of grief, which has befallen not only the Sheriff family but our entire Community worldwide, we pray to Allah (s.w.t.) in His mercy and grace to rest the Marhum's soul in the proximity of Chahardah Masumeen (a.s.) and that He may grant us all solace to bear this great and irreparable loss. Amen.

Finally let us offer Sura-e-Fateha.

Central Health Board (CHB) Screening Programs indicate serious problems with obesity and lack of physical exercise

Compiled by Dr. Z. G. Abbas, Specialist Physician

Population screenings were carried out recently in two Jamaats in Tanzania, Dar es Salaam and Tanga. In Dar es Salaam 243 people participated while in Tanga 117 people were recruited. At both places, participants registered by completing a confidential form. Next, each individual saw a physician who obtained a comprehensive history, conducted a full medical examination, and completed the second part of the questionnaire. Fasting blood was drawn for blood glucose and other biochemical tests. Finally, each person was given full medical report that included the results of their blood tests, and advice to see their doctors if results were abnormal. Screening in Dar es Salaam was conducted during weekends over a couple of weeks during 1999. The Tanga screening was conducted on 30th January 2000.

Results of Dar es Salaam Jamaat (* = Matters of concern)

Dar population checked: 243
Age: Range from 20-76 years
Sex: 55% Male 45% Female

***Weight:** Underweight 3%
Normal weight 30%
Overweight 41%
Obese 26%

Total overweight 67%

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the Dar es Salaam screening population were found to be overweight; only 30% were normal weight. On gender basis, over three-quarters of the females (i.e., 78%) were found to be overweight. Overall, over half of the male population (58%) was overweight. This is an important issue, as it is well known that being overweight is strongly associated with heart attacks, diabetes, and hypertension.

***Education**
Primary 25%
Secondary 65%
University/Diploma 10%

Higher education (i.e., university Federation Samachar

degree or diploma) was achieved in only 10% of our population. Particularly, the rate of higher level education (i.e., university and diploma holders) among the women in our community was very low (4%). In contrast, 14% of male in our community had higher level education. This should be a matter of concern as it has serious implications for future generations in our community.

***Tobacco:** 29% smokers

Tobacco smoking was common in our population. This, too, was disturbing. Despite much education and awareness by the Central Health Board (CHB) of issues regarding smoking, many people, especially men, continue to smoke cigarettes.

***Physical Activity:**
No physical activity 82%

A large percentage of our population did not have any regular form of exercise. The level of inactivity was same in both male and female. This high level of inactivity is of grave concern.

***Blood Pressure:**
Known hypertensive 19%

Thirteen new cases of high blood pressure were detected in persons who were not unaware that they were hypertensive.

***History of diabetes:**
Known diabetes 9.5%
Of the 18.5% patients with known diabetes, 12 (50%) had controlled blood sugar levels. **Two new patients were diagnosed with diabetes.**

***Family History:**
Family history of diabetes mellitus was found in: 44%
Family history of cardiac disease was found in: 40%
Family history of hypertension was found in: 36%
Family history of stroke was found in: 16%

***Cholesterol Levels:**
Moderately high 30%

Severely high 5%
Total High: 35%

TG: Abnormal triglyceride 35%

Results of Tanga Jamaat (* = Matter of concerned)

Entire Tanga population: 117

Age: Range: 18-88 years

Sex: 43% Male 57% Female

***Weight:** Under weight 6%
Normal weight 36%
Over weight 34%
Obese 24%

Total over weight 58%

Over half (i.e., 58%) of the screened population in the Tanga Jamaat were overweight. Two thirds (67%) of the Tanga female population were overweight. Almost half (46%) of the screened men in Tanga were overweight.

***Education**

Primary 58%
Secondary 38%
University/Diploma 4%

Only 4% of the screened Tanga population had high level education and 8% of the Tanga male population had high level education. In contrast, none of the women who were screened in Tanga had high level education (i.e., a university degree or diploma). This is a matter of concern.

***Tobacco:** 24% smokers

***Physical Activity:**
No Physical Activity 74%

Physical inactivity more or less was same in the population.

***Blood Pressure:**
Known hypertension 16%

Eight (8%) of the people with no history of hypertension were found to have high blood pressure on screening.

***Cholesterol**
Total high 35%

(continued on page 41)

(.....from page 40)

***TG**

Abnormal triglyceride 27%

Blood sugar on Screening

Known Diabetes 15%

Twenty (20%) of the patients with no history of diabetes either had impaired fasting blood glucose or had glucose levels that were diagnostic of diabetes mellitus.

Family History:

Family history of diabetes: 47%

Family history of heart disease: 40%

Family history of cerebrovascular disease: 14%

Family history of hypertension: 12%

Summary and Conclusion

1. Two-thirds (68%) of all screened persons were overweight in the Dar es Salaam Jamaat; this was also observed in the screened Tanga population. The high rates of hypertension, high cholesterol, and diabetes present a significant risk for heart disease in susceptible individuals in the community. Members of the community should take these results seriously.
2. Over one-quarter (29%) of the population screened are smokers. Further education should be directed towards male smokers in the community.
3. Overall, only 10% of the screened population have a university education. However, women fare badly—only 4% have higher level education compared with 14% of men. None of the women screened in Tanga had a high level education.
4. A large percentage of the population (82% of males and 80% of females) has no regular physical activity.
5. In my opinion, health awareness should be a priority for adults in the community. This could be achieved by organizing more lectures, seminars and workshops on all main issues highlighted in this report. The issues of priority are obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, and high levels of physical inactivity—all important risk factors for heart disease.

Screening details of Dar es Salaam and Tanga Jamaats

No:	Subject	DSM Range 20-76 years	Tanga Range 18-88 years
1)	Age		
2)	Sex: Male	55%	43%
	Female	45%	57%
3)	Overweight	67%	58%
4)	University Education	10%	4%
5)	Smoking	29%	24%
6)	No physical activity	81%	74%
7)	Hypertension	19%	16%
8)	Diabetes	10%	15%
9)	High Cholesterol	35%	35%
10)	High triglycerides	35%	27%
11)	Family history:		
	Of diabetes	44%	47%
	Of heart disease	40%	40%
	Of hypertension	36%	12%
	Of stroke	16%	14%

Imran and Zohra are best students for the year 1998

The 'Best Students for the Year 1998' award winners as announced by the Secretariat of the Africa Federation Education Board, are Imran Shabbir Janmohamed of Nairobi and Zohra Murad Fazal of Dar es Salaam.

Imran obtained 7A's in his O' Level examinations while Zohra obtained 6A's and 1B. While congratulating the two students, the Education Board Secretariat also commended Hussein F. Dato of Dar es Salaam for his excellent results.

Best Students are selected by the Education Board of the Federation of KSI Jamaats of Africa on an annual basis after submissions from all the Jamaats in Africa. This year the Education Board expressed concern that some outstanding results obtained by our students in other Jamaats were not sent in for consideration for the 'Best Student' award.

Tanga Charity Walk a success

A fund raising Charity Walk was organised in Tanga by the Jthna-asheri Volunteer Corps (IVC) and the Ja'afery Madrasah on Sunday, 28th November, 1999. The project was organised in order to collect funds for Ramadhan 1420, in order to present tokens of appreciation for services rendered by the Volunteers and for organising the 6th Annual Sports Tournament which was subsequently held in the Holy Month.

The organizers collected a net amount of TShs. 1,400,000/= from the 4km Charity Walk. In all there were 94 participants for the walk. After the walk, a presentation ceremony was held in the Imambara. Four trophies were presented. One was to the sponsor of the project m/s Coastal Oil Industries (Tanga Branch). The highest collector for the project was Br. Mustapha G. Kara who collected a generous amount of 403,000/- and he too was presented a trophy. The other two trophies were presented to the oldest walker, Jafferbhai Dhalal and the youngest walker Hasnain A. Haji.

Certificates of Appreciation were also presented to all those who assisted the organizers toward this project. Finally a lucky draw was held for 10 prizes with entries relating to the serial numbers of the participants sponsorship cards. In the end the volunteers served a delicious breakfast.

Tabligh Corner has new Cds

The Dar es salaam Tabligh Corner has received new CD'S now available at reasonable Hadiya. The CD's are:

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QURANIC STORIES
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- CD ON ETRAT OF IMAM ALI
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SADIQ A.S. - ISBN 964
6355 23 4
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For more details one can contact Tabligh office by email tabligh@raha.com or alternatively the CDs can be procured at the Mosque compound.

Federation Samachar

AF Website off the air for three days

The Africa Federation's Internet Website server went off the air from Tuesday, 21 March, 2000 to the afternoon of Friday, 24 March, 2000. During this period we could not add any data to our site and this included the important announcement of the passing away of Mulla Asghar.

The site was duly updated on Saturday 25 March, 2000. In the meantime the Africa Federation issued a circular announcing the tragic death and calling for a three day period of mourning. We have received a few complaints in regard to the delayed posting on our website of Mulla's death and wish to reiterate that this was by no means intentional.

Mulla's death has been received with grief and shock all around the world and for the community in Africa he was probably endeared even more because he was a man who had his foundations here.

In Mozambique and South Africa....

Our brothers and sisters in Maputo, Mozambique have rented a prime property for their religious and social activities. It is a two storeyed independent bungalow with a facility to construct a Musafarkhana in the future.

A resident Alim has already been posted to this Centre to provide religious, social, educational and other services to the community.

In the city of Nampula in Mozambique, a new Mosque is being built for our large Community settled there. The building will comprise of a Mosque, Imambara, Madressa and an alims residence.

Further South, there are now Shia Centres in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town in South Africa.

It is hoped that more of our Khoja brothers will look into the opportunities to settle in Southern Africa hitherto virtually unexplored by our Communities.

Tanga hosts Ramadhan Sports tournament

During Ramadhan 1420 the Tanga Ja'afery Madrasah Sports Complex organised its 6th Annual Sports Tournament. The games contested were badminton, table tennis, scrabble and darts. The tournament started in the first week of Ramadhan with a participation of 37 participants.

Badminton had two groups, i.e. Group A and Group B. Group A consisted of youths in the range of 12-17+ whereas Group B consisted of participants above the age of 18. Games were played in Doubles and in Group A the winners were Mujahid M. Chandoo and Suheil M. Dhirani. The runners-up position was taken by Kumail M. Manji and Hussein M. Dhirani.

In Group B the winners were Shakir S. Dhirani and Salim S. Dhirani while the runners-up were Mohamedrafik J. Khimji and Faisal Abdhillahi.

The table tennis event was very interesting with some talented players contesting for glories. The tournament was on singles basis on a best of three basis. The winner was Imtiaz M. Hassanali, the runner-up was Salim S. Dhirani and Shaheen S. Dhirani took the third place.

The Scrabble tournament did not have a very good response but the games played were interesting. The winner was Mohamed R. Manji and the runner-up was Kumail M. Manji.

Darts is a fairly new game installed in the Tanga complex just about a year ago. The tournament was held on Singles and best of 3 basis. The Winner was Hassan M. Dhirani, the runner-up was Shabbir H. Meghji and Shabbir M. Sachoo took the third place.

The tournament ended five days before Eid, and the presentation was held on Eid night.

Mauritius Organisation marks first Eid Function

The Jaffery Madrassa which is run under the aegis of the Ahle Bait (A.S.) Propagation Organisation of Mauritius celebrated Eid-UI-Fitr on Friday 21st January 2000 at 3.00 p.m at the seat of the Madrassa in Port Louis.

It was the first function organized by the Madrassa since its opening in October 1999. The Eid Milan gathering was organized for the Madrassa students and was attended by mothers, brothers and sisters of the students. The programme was presided by Mrs Tahera Kassamally Esmael, one of the teachers of the Madrassa. The programme started with recitation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an by Master Shawkat Abdoola Cassim and translated in French by Miss Sharmeen Peerboccus. Madrassa students of the lower and upper classes then recited Qaseedas and Munaajaats. Miss Basheera Abdoola Cassim thereafter gave a (takreer) speech in Creole which was appreciated by one and all. The students also presented a sketch in the local dialect wherein the respect for parents and the way the right path has to be followed were highlighted.

Finally all the Madrassa students were presented with Eid Gifts. Those under-aged students who fasted during the Holy month of Ramazan were offered special gifts for their efforts and as a sign of encouragement for others. Master Ali Abdoola Cassim and Miss Fatemah Abdoola Cassim (brother and sister) got special gifts having kept the most number of fasts in their respective categories. Gifts were presented by Madrassa teachers viz Miss Razia Bayjoo, Mrs Hamida Rajani and Mrs Sabera Gulam Husen. Mrs Khaironissa B Rajani, Mrs Noorbanoo Kassamally Esmael and Mrs Nooroon Haji Ismail. Some elders of the community also presented gifts to the deserving students.

The programme was jointly prepared by Mrs Hamida S Rajani and Mrs Tahera Kassamally Esmael. Refreshments were served at the end of the programme.

Federation Samachar

Parents need to be broad-minded, says Matchmaker Khimji

Supreme Council Matchmaker, Zulfikar Khimji has told the *Samachar* that he has received a fairly positive response following the announcement of his appointment in the last issue of the *Federation Samachar*. He said, " Frankly speaking this matter is of a very deep concern because 90% of the calls are from fathers of unwed daughters. It is sad we have a good number of unwed highly educated girls. It is a pity we have not established a system to solve this deep and top priority concern for which we need to come up with workable solutions within the bounds of our Shariah. It is also important to encourage constant contacts between opposite sexes by way of debates, lectures and outings without breaking religious laws. Parents too need to be broad minded and should co-operate with the respective Matrimonial committees of their jamaats."

Khimji said that he had written letters to each and every jamaat worldwide, for details of all boys and girls eligible to seek life partners including bachelors, spinsters, widow, divorcees etc. To this effect he said a notice of his appeal had also been placed on the Nairobi Jamaat notice board and he expressed hope that all jamaats have done the same.

Khimji reiterated that details sent to him will be strictly confidential. He also expressed hope to organise a mass marriage ceremony within a year in coordination with the Golden Crescent Group, Nairobi District. He expressed optimism that if parents, Jamaats and individuals respond and support this, a fair number of marriages would be consummated.

Mombasa to host 58th Council Session

The 58th Session of the Supreme Council will insha'allah be held in Mombasa, Kenya during the Easter Holidays from Friday 21st to Sunday 23rd April 2000. The Meeting will start **promptly on Friday 21st April 2000 at 1430 hours**. All delegates, councilors, participants invitees and guests are requested to arrive and check-in by the morning of Friday 21st April 2000. The formal opening of the Session will take place at 2100 hours on the same day.

Bhojani appointed as Court Assessor

Mohamedali Gulammohamed Bhojani (70) of Dar es salaam was appointed in January, 2000 by the Commercial Court in Tanzania to be an assessor for marine and shipping civil cases. Following his appointment, Bhojani had to attend a Commercial Court Assessors' seminar which took place at the University of Dar es salaam Faculty of Law Conference Room. In this seminar the role of Commercial Cort Assessors was outlined.



Bhojani has been in the Shipping field since 1951 when he joined a private British Shipping Company in Dar es salaam. When shipping companies were nationalised by the Government in 1968 he was working as a Shipping Manager with Dalgety. With the Government owned NASACO he was promoted to Dar es salaam Branch manager in 1980 and to Director of Operations in 1982. In 1983 he retired and worked for various private companies in different capacities until 1997.

His appointment came a result of his vast experience in maritime and shipping laws. He has attended many international seminars and workshops and was also an Executive Committee member of various institutions in the country. At community level, he was the secretary of Union in 1958-60 and a trustee of dar es salaam jamaat for the 1997-1999 term. During his heydays he was an active cricket, volleyball and football player.



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CASE FOR SURVIVAL

The Challenge facing the Community in North America

A discussion paper presented on 23rd January, 1999 to NASIMCO and other community workers and educators.

By Hassan Ali M. Jaffer, Mombasa

This is the fourth part of the article being serialised by the *Federation Samachar*. Editor.

It is generally recognized that Islamically there can be no objection to intermarriage in so far as it is based on compatibility, provided there is a genuine desire on the part of the partners to ensure that their progeny grow up as practicing Muslims. Shades of opinion also tend to believe that as a result of such intermarriage, the infusion of new blood could be beneficial for the Community as it would help to stem the tide of too much in-breeding.

At the same time, with all the external influence creeping into the society as a result of such intermarriages, sociologists would understandably express some concern that as a result of the admixture of varied cultural backgrounds, and the variable standards of religious and moral upbringing and outlook of the individual partners, the consequent dichotomy of approach between the two parents is ultimately bound to have some effect on the upbringing of their progeny. Where will this will lead to is a matter of conjecture. While no statistics are available to evaluate the extent of intermarriage practiced, say, in the last decade, social workers are agreed that this trend is gaining momentum and in years to come, is likely to accelerate.

Pockets of the community members are scattered in small hamlets all over North America. The social fabric of the supportive society as was known in East Africa is virtually non-existent in many parts of North America. As a result, contacts between families are diminishing. Taking into account the prevalent local environment, it is therefore but natural that there will be more and more of intermarriage. It would not perhaps be too speculative to expect that 50 years down the line; the Khoja Community in North America will lose much of its ethnicity

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and may well end up with an entirely new breed of succeeding generations!

The writing appears to be on the wall. We only have to accept the reality and come to terms with it. While loss of ethnicity is tolerable, can we tolerate loss of our religious identity, for which, in the first instance we chose to break away from our kith and kin and came into being as a separate community?

In the Holy Quran, Allah talks of the five tests which believers have to undergo: "Be sure we shall test you with something of FEAR and HUNGER, some loss in GOODS or LIVES or FRUITS (Of your toil) but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere....." Ch.2, Verse 155

Commentators of the Holy Quran are agreed that the "fruits (of your toil)" referred to here mean one's progeny.

And what divine commandment do we have to meet the challenge in this respect?

"O ye who believe, save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is Men and Stones, over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who flinch not (from executing) the commands they receive from Allah, but do precisely what they are commanded." - Ch.66. Verse 6.

The divine challenge is indeed too clear for any one to ignore.

Part 3: State of the community in North America

What is the state of the community in North America today and how effective are our organisations in leading the thought process? How relevant and effective has our central organization NASIMCO been in addressing to the issues confronting the Community?

I have been visiting USA and Canada since 1983. I have my grandchildren born and bred in North America. Consequently I have taken interest in the

affairs of the community in this part of the world and I am very much concerned about its future. I strongly feel that unless we come to grips with the realities and take urgent and even some radical remedial measures to face up to the challenges ahead, there is every possibility that 50 years from now, this community of ours as we know of today, may virtually cease to exist!

We have the example of the Lebanese Shia Community in West Africa and the state of the Indian Community, both Muslims and Hindus, in the West Indies. Perusal of the video cassette circulated by the Bilal Muslim Mission of America spotlighting the plight of the Shia migrants from India to the West Indies will be revealing.

Following excerpts from a booklet "In Fraternity" "A Message to Muslims in America" issued by the Islamic Center of South California may also help to focus our attention towards the prevalent trends.

"Our children and grandchildren are our guaranteed biological link with the future. But are they going to be our Islamic progeny?"

"Islam did not come to America only in our generation. It came before, more than once, and disappeared. It came with the slave trade as Muslims were kidnapped from West Africa and shipped to America to work on the plantations. Some of them tried hard to cling to Islam, but the hostile conditions and abhorrent treatment were too much for their endurance and most of them lost their Islam almost within one generation."

"In the period between and around the two world wars, there was a sizable immigration to America from the Middle East. The immigrants included many Muslims. The goal of the migrants was to secure a fortune in this

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(.....from page 45)

land of plenty. Many of them were quick to get rid of their Muslim identity. They changed their names and those of their children. They embraced the existing materialistically geared social customs and norms. They did not care whether their new identity was in tune with Islam or not. They were lost and their new surroundings completely disgusted them. They multiplied in numbers, but their descendants remained completely outside the realm of Islam. America now witnesses the third wave of Muslims. It is a wave that runs into millions and includes highly educated committed Muslims. Their presence is already felt and growing."

"Will Islam stay or will it disappear as happened before by the end of this generation? The answer entirely depends on whether our children will or will not grow up as Muslims."

The situation in America is quite different from that in the mother countries of many naturalized Muslim Americans. We cannot live Islam through yielding to our environment. Nor can we depend on social conditions to groom our youngsters as Muslims as is the case in mother countries. In those countries it is of little importance whether a person is observant of Islam or not. The issue is whether Muslims are aware that they are Muslims and know the Islamic standard. In America, to stick to Islam runs against many social norms, lifestyles and peer pressure. To retain Islam our children have to be specially prepared. They should be taught to swim against the current. They need to know what to accept and what to reject from a full spectrum of social and moral values. This cannot be attended by chance. It requires a well-planned, intelligently executed and very broad process of upbringing. They should also start an early age, and no age is too early. We have often seen parents taking it for granted that their children would grow up as Muslims like themselves or they would perhaps always remain children. The first eye opener is when the daughter wants to date or even get pregnant, or the son is caught in drugs, drink or sexual disease. In their panic

the parents suddenly wake up and frantically send for help to deal with the crisis situation or to hurriedly form an Islamic youth group? Although logic says it is too late, we do not accept that any stage is too late."

Returning from my last visit to North America in summer of 1995, I submitted the following memorandum to the World Federation Executive Council meeting held in Daressalaam, in which I tried to analyze the state of the Community in North America and the role of Nasimco as its central organization.

"The Community in Africa is fast losing contact with the rest of the community in North America and Europe. We appear to be repeating our past folly when we were virtually disconnected with our compatriots in the Indo-Pak subcontinent. Surprisingly, the community in North America is equally estranged from the community members living in Europe.

"In this context, convening of the W.F. Executive Council meeting in Daressalaam was a welcome move.

"I would like to express my concern about the state of the community in North America.

"Unless the community in North America is able to crystallize its vision and decide on priorities, efforts at perpetuating our East African memories in managing the affairs of the community is fraught with danger.

"Nasimco, for all its efforts, is conspicuous by its virtual non-existence in so far as its role in influencing the thinking of the community and in the development of the vision and priorities for the community in North America is concerned.

"The communities scattered in U.S.A., especially feel increasingly estranged and left out as Nasimco operates from Toronto with typical remote control syndrome."

"This feeling of estrangement and lack of sense of direction and motivation to think positively runs deep. I feel that the W.F. may have to reduce the focus of its attention from the rest of the world and concentrate its thinking, energies and resources in looking into the plight of the community in North

America and probably in Europe also. "If we do not take some bold initiatives, I can foresee the risk for our community in North America losing its identity as practicing Muslims within the next two to three generations.

"The role and impact of Ulema and Zakereen descending as jet set Muballigh has proved disappointing and we need to take a positive stand against this wanton abuse and exploitation of our simplistic sentimentality.

"There is need for a U.S.A. based central organization to address to the immediate needs of the community in U.S.A., which Nasimco secretariat, based in Toronto is unable to address. Such a body could be affiliated to Nasimco in one form or the other. Ideally, Canada and U.S.A. should be treated as one unit, but reality dictates that no noteworthy progress has so far been made.

"Time is running out fast. Children are growing up fast. If the second and third generation of our children born and bred in north America become disenchanted with our faith for lack of proper understanding, and in consequence, distance themselves from the mainstream of the community, while the leaders of the Jamaats, some of them operating like little tin gods, try to re-live their African memories without understanding and responding to the current realities and the needs of the growing generation, we shall face a disaster and our progeny may hold us responsible on the day of judgment for our indifference today.

"Time has come, when a loud message has to go out to the worldwide community, especially to the leaders of the individual Jamaats, regional Federations and the World Federation that we have to shed parochialism, conceptional territorial bureaucracy, and instead, we need to think globally, as a fraternity of brotherhood. The tendency of regional Federations operating in terms of protecting their territory from encroachment and the reluctance of the World Federation to provide positive lead in the thought process for fear of antagonizing the structured power barons is unfortunate.

(to be continued in the next issue)

To be brides and grooms cautioned on Thalassaemia

Dr. Z. G. Abbas

Specialist Physician for The Central Health Board (CHB)

Q. What is Thalassaemia?

A. Thalassaemia is an inherited blood disorder. In this disease the production of red blood cells is disturbed. The proteins used in the production of the red cells are abnormal and as a result the red cells are also abnormal. This leads to a rapid break down of important blood components in the body. Hence, Thalassaemia is primarily a disturbance of red cell production combined with a break down of blood components.

This protein is called haemoglobin in the red blood cells. Haemoglobin in the red cells provides the oxygen transport mechanism of the blood. It carries oxygen from the lungs to all the tissues of the body and conveys carbon dioxide from the tissues to the lungs. If red cells are defective or haemoglobin is defective it will carry less oxygen to the body.

Q. How is Thalassaemia passed?

A. Nowadays there is an increase awareness of the importance of genetic factors in causing the disease and affecting men. We all know that every individual is made up of genes from parents. This is present in every cell of the body. There are always two kinds of genes passed one from the mother and the other from the father. In the same way, genes are also present in the haemoglobin in red blood cells. In normal people there are normal genes from parents and so there is no abnormality.

Those who have one normal gene from one parent and other altered gene or abnormal gene from the other parent are healthy because their one gene is working well. They are said to be healthy carriers of Beta-Thalassaemia Trait. Since a gene is inherited from each parent, at least one parent must be a carrier. When both parents are normal they cannot pass Thalassaemia. When one parent is a carrier of beta-Thalassaemia and the other parent is normal then 50% of

children will be Thalassaemia carriers. When both parents are beta-Thalassaemia carriers 25% of children are normal, 50% will be Thalassaemia carriers and 25% will have Thalassaemia Major. These days it is possible to test the fetus during pregnancy to see if it has Thalassaemia Major.

Q. What are the symptoms of Thalassaemia minor?

A. As I mentioned above, when one parent is a carrier of Thalassaemia and the other parent is normal, then 50% of children will be Thalassaemia carriers. It is a condition in which there is usually mild anaemia and little or no clinical disability at all.

Q. What is Thalassaemia Major?

A. In this condition where both parents are carriers having Thalassaemia minor, 50% of children get the serious condition called Thalassaemia Major. With Thalassaemia Major a child is quite ill and anemic. The haemoglobin drops and they become anaemic and pale. The spleen gets enlarged which is an early and prominent feature. The liver also gets enlarged and slowly the stomach gets bigger. A child's development and growth is retarded. Heart enlargements occur and lead to heart failure. Anaemia is crippling and the probability of survival for more than a few years without blood transfusion is low. Patients need regular blood transfusion, often a unit (pint) of blood every month. The bones of the forehead and cheek begin to bulge. Death occurs if no treatment is given. **Treatment of Thalassaemia Major:** *Need regular blood transfusion. Surgical removal of the spleen is required and one needs daily injection of medicines. The ultimate cure for Thalassaemia is bone marrow transplant. The whole procedure is extremely painful, dangerous and expensive.*

Q. Why do we need to be concerned about Thalassaemia?

A. Thalassaemia poses an increasing problem for the Indian subcontinent, South East Asia and many Asian countries. The burden of this disease is increasing worldwide. Recent studies done in Sri Lanka showed an increasing number of patients with clinical features of Thalassaemia Major whereas first case was identified in 1951. A similar trend has been seen in our community in the UK.

Q. Is Thalassaemia like AIDS?

A. No. Thalassaemia is an inherited disease; one gets it from the parents through genes. It should not carry any stigma or embarrassment. On the other hand HIV is a viral infection, which is transmitted through blood transfusion, sharing needles, unprotected sexual intercourse, etc.

Q. How do you Prevent Genetic Disease?

A. Since there is at present time no effective treatment for most genetic disorders, so we are left with mainly prevention of such conditions through counseling. This involves providing advice on the chances of recurrence of a genetic disorder in the children of either healthy parents who already have an affected child, or when one of the parents or a near relative is affected with a disease which is known to be inherited.

In our community worldwide it has been recommended that all intending brides and grooms should under go THALASSEMIA blood test before getting married.

We are observing an increasing number of Thalassaemia cases in our community in Africa and elsewhere. The CHB therefore strongly recommends to all constituents Jamaats through its Medical Boards and Medical Sub-Committees to make concerted effort to educate our community members, especially to be brides and grooms to undergo THALASSEMIA blood tests before getting married.

A Tale of Two 'Dities'

by ANON

A Tale of Two Dities is not like 'A Tale of Two Cities' which was written by an English novelist, Charles Dickens (1812-70). Dickens' two cities were London and Paris in a fiction work which was woven against a historical background.

The two Dities are however Anon's acronyms for the notorious Timidity and Rigidity. These two jointly bring about a development of a blind faith in a closed mind. The tale can be about us as victims.

Now, a blind faith in a closed mind is a gross injustice to a religion as open and simple as Islam because a self-cultivated conviction in the faith through own reasoning is the only acceptable approach to the faith. It allows no coercion, and yet neither '*nifaaq*' nor doubts as well for a follower or convert to be worthy of Islam.

It is in this respect that Islam stands out unique as compared to other religions. There are over 400 verses in the Holy Qur'an which exhort the use of mind -- to think, ponder, reflect and reason for attaining a conviction in Truth. A human mind when open is amenable to the Truth.

The emphasis on the importance of using the mind in the matter of beliefs is quite prominent in Verse 8:22 which in the English translation reads: "***Surely, the vilest of animals in Allah's sight are the deaf, the dumb who do not understand.***"

That which gives a dignity to Man and a status (*ashraful makh lu qaat*) over animals is mind. Hazrat Ameerul Mumineen A.S. said, "*Mind is more beautiful than Man himself.*" Those who choose not to use their mind despite its nagging presence can indeed be deemed to be worse than animals.

A part of one of his sermons reads: "*All praise is Allah's Who....made Islam the source of understanding for the intelligent and the source of intellection for the contemplative....*" (Nahjul balaagha, Sermon 106).

It is in the light of what has been stated
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herein above that we as parents and some of us as teachers need to pause and ask ourselves whether we do permit our children from their tender age when capable of learning---generation after generation---their right to ponder and question, to reflect and reason and to contemplate and then assimilate all that is taught to them regarding beliefs.

Do we make sure that their mind remains wide open and responsive to bold reasoning when they are adults as when they were young ready for learning, so that the process of building up conviction brick by brick is continuous?

Sadly, however, the scenario appears to be somewhat different. The children rightly are taught the beliefs but then wrongly are made to accept what is being taught, because, for them, to question is to doubt and that is a sin. The fear of committing a sin in this way is enough to slam the mind shut.

The fear can be haunting to children, innocent as they are, when teachings include also Allah (swt) being wrathful and ready to punish and chastise as a central attention while His mercy and benevolence are given a side line emphasis.

In such a trend in the family and a tradition in Madressas there are indications of seasonal planting of seeds of *Timidity* beginning in the early age and reaping in the later age the cycles of crops of *Rigidity*. It represents an inadvertant graduation of a blind faith in a closed mind.

The result can be alarming-- a community in its single minded devotion to the teachings and then preachings accept as true and authentic every thing which is written or read out in the matter of beliefs, rituals and spiritual issues, even if any is in conflict with the core teachings in the Holy Qur'an or *Ahaadith* supported by the former because to do otherwise would be a sin!

Hazrat Amirul Mu'mineen A.S. has cautioned the Muslims and said

(excerpts): "*make moral and righteous use of your mental capacities. He is wise who carefully meditates over what he hears.....and then accepts only Truth....*" (Nahjul Balaagha, Sermon 156).

It would be unfair to ascribe the cause of the trend and the tradition to the parents at home and the teachers in Madressas, because on one hand these weaknesses are unintentional though they continue to take the toll through succession of generations, and on the other they themselves are the products of the weaknesses unknowingly.

As we all know, the sole and absolute '*ubudiyat*' (servitude) to Allah (swt) is the core message of Islam and the purpose of this life. But then the surrender in '*ubudiyat*' lies in first, understanding and recognising the *Ma'bood* (the Master) in the true concept of His attributes and then, knowing absolutely well that no one has ever had shares or delegation or proxies in relation to His attributes.

The attainment of these understandings is a life time struggle. It is only through the exercise of an open mind that a Muslim brings himself closer and closer to '*yaaqeen*'. The saying is therefore that the sleep of an '*arif*' is better than the wakeful night of prayers of an '*abid*' if he lacks '*irfan*'. Sadly, however, less emphasis than due is given on such teachings on '*Usool*' beliefs. It is these which prompt the children to think.

Therefore, Allah (swt) is perceived wrongly as "one" God, a countable entity and a "common God" for all religions. The philosophy of the Islamic '*ubudiyat*' to Allah (swt) in Islam is made to appear of minimal consequence when compared to "worship" of the same common God in other religions.

So, the traditional silence in the series of preachings from the pulpit on the important subject of *Tauheed*, *Sifaat*, Man's servitude to Allah (swt) only as the purpose of this life etc. with no questions asked over the silence is perhaps a telling indication of the product of the teachings and graduation. A Tale of Two Dities has a lesson for us.

Convincing an atheist professor on the existence of God

At some educational institutions, some professors professing to be wise take their worldly wisdom too seriously. This is to an extent that some believe they know everything and are all powerful. With these feelings and artificial superiority complex, some professors become atheists believing more in science than the Almighty Creator of the Universe.

A typical exchange of conversation between an atheist professor and a less knowledgeable Muslim child follows. Thereafter follows another conversation between the same professor and the more knowledgeable Muslim child.

“LET ME EXPLAIN THE problem science has with God.” The atheist professor of philosophy pauses before his class and then asks one of his new students to stand.
 “You’re a Muslim, aren’t you, son?”
 “Yes, sir.”
 “So you believe in God?”
 “Absolutely.”
 “Is God good?”
 “Sure! God’s good.”
 “Is God all-powerful? Can God do anything?”
 “Yes.”

The professor grins knowingly and considers for a moment. “Here’s one for you. Let’s say there’s a sick person over here and you can cure him. You can do it. Would you help him? Would you try?”
 “Yes sir, I would.”
 “So you’re good...!”
 “I wouldn’t say that.”
 “Why not say that? You would help a sick and maimed person if you could in fact most of us would if we could... God doesn’t.” [No answer]

“He doesn’t, does he? My brother was a Muslim who died of cancer even though he prayed to God to heal him. How is this God good? Hmmm? Can you answer that one?” [No answer]

The elderly man is sympathetic. “No, you can’t, can you?” He takes a sip of water from a glass on his desk to give the student time to relax. In philosophy, you have to go easy with the new ones. Let’s start again, young fella.”

“Is God good?”
 “Er... Yes.”
 “Is Satan good?”
 “No.”
 “Where does Satan come from?”
 The student falters. “From... God...”

“That’s right. God made Satan, didn’t he?”
 The elderly man runs his bony fingers through his thinning hair and turns turns back to the Muslim. “Tell me, son. Is there evil in this world?”

“Yes, sir.”
 “Evil’s every where, isn’t it? Did God make everything?”
 “Yes.”
 “Who created evil?” [No answer]
 “Is there sickness in this world? Immorality? Hatred? Ugliness? All the terrible things - do they exist in this world?”
 The student squirms on his feet. “Yes.”
 “Who created them?” [No answer]

In a still small voice the professor asked: “God created all evil, didn’t He, son?” [No answer]
 The student tries to hold the steady, experienced gaze but fails.

Suddenly the lecturer breaks away to pace the front of the classroom like an aging panther. The class is mesmerised. “Tell me,” he continues, “How is it that this God is good if He created all evil throughout all time?” The professor swishes his arms around to encompass the wickedness of the world. “All the hatred, the brutality, all the pain, all the torture, all the death and ugliness and all the suffering created by this good God is all over the world, isn’t it, young man?” [No answer]

“Don’t you see it all over the place?”

Huh? Pause. “Don’t you?” The professor leans into the student’s face again and whispers, “Is God good?” [No answer]

“Do you believe in God, son?” The student’s voice betrays him and cracks. “Yes, professor. I do.”

The old man shakes his head sadly. “Science says you have five senses you use to identify and observe the world around you. You have never seen God, Have you?”

“No, sir. I’ve never seen Him.”
 “Then tell us if you’ve ever heard your God?” “No, sir. I have not.”
 “Have you ever felt your God, tasted your God or smelt your God...in fact, do you have any sensory perception of your God whatsoever?” [No answer]

“Answer me, please.”
 “No, sir, I’m afraid I haven’t.”
 “You’re AFRAID... you haven’t?”
 “No, sir.”
 “Yet you still believe in Him?”
 “...yes...”

“That takes FAITH!” The professor smiles sagely at the underling. According to the rules of empirical, testable, demonstrable protocol, science says your God doesn’t exist. What do you say to that, son? Where is your God now?” [The student doesn’t answer]

“Sit down, please.” The Muslim sits...Defeated. Another Muslim raises his hand. “Professor, may I address the class?”

The professor turns and smiles. “Ah, another Muslim in the vanguard! Come, come, young man. Speak some proper wisdom to the gathering.” The Muslim looks around the room. “Some interesting points you are making, sir. Now I’ve got a question for you.

“Is there such thing as heat?”
 Yes, the professor replies. “There’s

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heat.”

“Is there such a thing as cold?”

“Yes, son, there’s cold too.”

“No, sir, there isn’t.”

The professor’s grin freezes. The room suddenly goes very cold.

The second Muslim continues. “You can have lots of heat, even more heat, super-heat, mega-heat, white heat, a little heat or no heat but we don’t have anything called ‘cold’. We can hit 458 degrees below zero, which is no heat, but we can’t go any further after that. There is no such thing as cold, otherwise we would be able to go colder than 458 degrees below zero. You see, sir, cold is only a word we use to describe the absence of heat. We cannot measure cold. “Heat we can measure in thermal units because heat is energy. Cold is not the opposite of heat, sir, just the absence of it.”

Silence. A pin drops somewhere in the classroom.

“Is there such a thing as darkness, professor?”

“That’s a dumb question, son. What is night if it isn’t darkness? What are you getting at...?”

“So you say there is no such a thing as darkness?”

“Yes...”

“You’re wrong again, sir. Darkness is not something, it is the absence of something. You can have low light, normal light, bright light, flashing light but if you have no light constantly you have nothing and it’s called darkness, isn’t it? That’s the meaning we use to define the word. In reality, Darkness isn’t. If it were, you would be able to make darkness darker and give me a jar of it. Can you...give me a jar of darker darkness, professor?”

Despite himself, the professor smiles at the young effrontery before him. “Would you mind telling us what your point is, young man?”

“Yes, professor. My point is, your philosophical premise is flawed to start with and so your conclusion must be in error....”

“The professor goes toxic. “Flawed...? How dare you...!”

“Sir, may I explain what I mean?”

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The class is all ears. “Explain... oh, explain...” The professor makes an admirable effort to regain control. Suddenly he is affability itself. He waves his hand to silence the class, for the student to continue.

“You are working on the premise of duality,” the Muslim explains. That for example there is life and then there’s death; a good God and a bad God. You are viewing the concept of God as something finite, something we can measure. Sir, science cannot even explain a thought. It uses electricity and magnetism but has never seen, much less fully understood them. To view death as the opposite of life is to be ignorant of the fact that death cannot exist as a substantive thing. Death is not the opposite of life, merely the absence of it.”

The young man holds up a newspaper he takes from the desk of a neighbour who has been reading it. “Here is one of the most disgusting tabloids this country hosts, professor. Is there such a thing as immorality?” “Of course there is, now look...”

“Wrong again, sir. You see, immorality is merely the absence of morality. Is there such thing as injustice? “No.” Injustice is the absence of justice. Is there such a thing as evil?” The Muslim pauses. “Isn’t evil the absence of good?”

The professor’s is temporarily speechless. The Muslim continues. “If there is evil in the world, professor, and we all agree there is, then God, if he exists, must be accomplishing a work through the agency of evil. What is that work, God is accomplishing? Islam tells us it is to see if each one of us will choose good over evil.”

The professor bridles. “As a philosophical scientist, I don’t vie this matter as having anything to do with any choice; as a realist, I absolutely do not recognize the concept of God or any other theological factor as being part of the world equation because God is not observable.”

“I would have thought that the absence of God’s moral code in this world is probably one of the most observable phenomena going,”

The Muslim replies. “Newspapers make billions of dollars reporting it

every week! Tell me, professor. Do you teach your students that they evolved from a monkey?”

“If you are referring to the natural evolutionary process, young man, yes, of course I do.”

“Have you ever observed evolution with your own eyes, sir?”

The professor makes a sucking sound with his teeth and gives his student a silent, stony stare.

“Professor. Since no one has ever observed the process of evolution at work and cannot even prove that this process is an ongoing endeavour, are you not teaching your opinion, sir? Are you now not a scientist, but a priest?” “I will overlook your impudence in the light of our philosophical discussion. Now, have you quite finished?” the professor hisses.

“So you don’t accept God’s moral code to do what is righteous?” “I believe in what is - that’s science!”

“Ahh! SCIENCE!” the student’s face splits into a grin. “Sir, you rightly state that science is the study of observed phenomena. Science too is a premise which is flawed...”

“SCIENCE IS FLAWED..?” the professor splutters. The class is in uproar. The Muslim remains standing until the commotion has subsided.

“To continue the point you were making earlier to the other student, may I give you an example of what I mean?” The professor wisely keeps silent.

The Muslim looks around the room. “Is there anyone in the class who has ever seen air, Oxygen, molecules, atoms, the professor’s brain?”

The class breaks out in laughter. The Muslim points towards his crumbling tutor. Is there anyone here who has ever heard the professor’s brain... felt the professor’s brain, touched or smelt the professor’s brain?”

No one appears to have done so. The Muslim shakes his head sadly. It appears not one here has had any sensory perception of the professor’s brain whatsoever. Well, according to the rules of empirical, stable, demonstrable protocol, science, I DECLARE that the professor has no brain.”



Wayside Wisdom

by Munir Daya, Dar es Salaam

Are our reading habits on the decline?

Are reading habits on the decline in the era of the Internet and Cable TV? Will the student community fall prey to the 'idiot box', or the 'intelligent box' that beams in incessant smut along with information and knowledge? Prominent book publishers and distributors swear that though there is an indirect impact on the new generation by television and the Internet, nothing can replace reading habits in the real sense. A cursory look around the main cities in the world shows that book exhibitions in one form or another take place, very often drawing huge crowds which goes to show that reading habits have not died.

The BBC radio and television programmes along with many other prominent media channels have regular time allocated every day to reviewing books and even on the Internet, book reviews and cyber bookshops abound. Malls and shopping complexes around the world have book stores and a visit to any indicates that readers are all out to look for something more to read.

Reading helps to promote literacy and human values. At community level almost all our libraries offer readers a wide range of religious books but it is sad that only a few of our members do take advantage of these books which are offered free or at very nominal cost. In addition to the book libraries, some of our Jamaats also have video cassette libraries to propagate the message of truth and yet the response is moderate.

At one recent book exhibition held in February, 2000 a senior official from 'Better Yourself Books (BYB)' said,

"In the fast-changing knowledge world, the importance of books will never decline. The Internet and Cable television can never replace reading habits beyond a point." Not surprisingly, BYB did not exhibit any books on crime, astrology and cheap novels. "We have very select books on display. The festival covers various topics of children fiction, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, human relations, science, family values, and such topics as we have found obligatory to promote," said the official.

While the BYB official was talking about book reading in general, in the case of religious books, one may argue that special efforts need to be made to draw readers because the subject matter is more serious than entertaining. What many do not however realise is that serious religious book reading at any age does guide us towards a happy life that is dictated with morals, peace and happiness. Reading also makes us intellectually more alert rather than being bigoted about issues, habits and traditions.

And while there is much more satisfaction in constructive reading, there is no harm in reading non-fiction books that are either adventurous, filled with suspense or simply exciting. Actually reading does not have to be limited to religious books. It should be spread to cover books on different subjects with the criteria being to read books that inform, educate and entertain with the intention to promote one's literacy and understanding of human values.

The reading habit needs to be encouraged from a very young age because

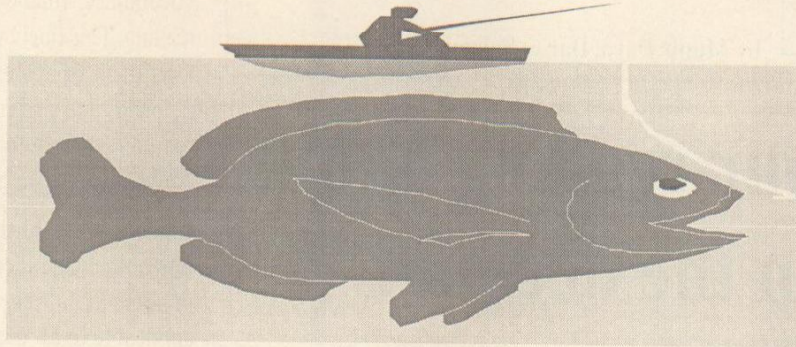
reading is not an abrupt hobby, it generally develops from school age when children begin reading one book after another. At this stage it is okay to allow children to read popular but clean novels because this develops their vocabulary, fluency and interest in reading. This fluency subsequently allows them to express thoughts more rationally and also enables them to peruse and understand more serious books easily when guided to do so.

While Book publishers and distributors do indicate increased readership in some countries, this trend is not applicable to all countries. In Tanzania there is a slump in book publishing and while this can be attributed to various reasons including poor financial returns, one reason is the reduced interest in reading because of alternative options like sports, video games, television, the Internet and the like. A survey report of the International School in Dar es Salaam released to parents in early April, 2000 points out that, "Very few students listed reading (for interest) as an activity they give time to."

The reduced interest in reading also extends to newspapers in Tanzania, many of which now have a highly reduced circulation, especially the English media. Newspapers which once had a circulation of over 50,000 copies now barely sell 7000 to 8000 copies. While part of this drop can be explained by there being more newspapers to read, the fact that the country's population has almost doubled over the years and that the number of schools have increased to over 650 tells us that logically there should be more readers now than before.

The very first ayat of the Holy Qur'an commands: "Read in the name of Your Lord, who created you" (30:97). It is to our own detriment if we disregard this very first command of our holy book. To encourage reading, a serious *glove in hand* relationship between parents, children and our religious and academic institutions can help in seeking out better ways to encourage interest. There is great treasure behind our skulls and this is true for about all of us. Let us enhance the power of this great treasure by reading rather than leaving it ignorant and bigoted.

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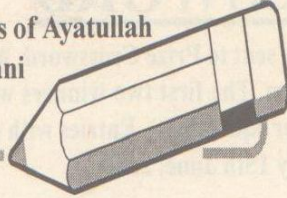
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Current legal issues

English Version of *Al-Mustahdathat Minal Masaa'il*

Ash-Shari'a according to the Edicts of Ayatullah
al Uzama Syed Ali al-Husaini Sistani



The following are a selection of legal rulings based on the opinion of the eminent jurist Ayatullah al-'Uzma al-Sayyid 'Ali al-Husayni al-Seestani. Three of his works, *Al-Fatawa al-Muyassarah* (FM), *al-Mustahdathat min al-Masa'il al-Shar'iyah* (MMS) and *Minhaj al-Salihin*, vol. 1 (MS) were used by the translator Hamid Mavani of Montreal. The source is clearly marked in regular brackets after the response to each question to facilitate easy reference to the original Arabic text.

Translating a work of this sort is a challenging enterprise and one is torn between remaining faithful to the original text and being idiomatic. The translator has opted for the former at the expense of smooth and flowing sentences, and as a result, the reader will find that some of the sentences are stilted and unidiomatic. Regular brackets have been inserted to clarify the meaning of a sentence or to insert the Arabic term for the English equivalent. The square brackets are part of the original Arabic text.

Q: (Is it permissible) to play chess and backgammon without placing a bet?

A: It is not permissible to play them. (FM, p. 436)

Q: What is the ruling on playing chess by using the customary pieces? Is the ruling any different in the case where the game is played by computer which employs symbols and shapes instead of the customary pieces?

A: Playing it (chess) is absolutely forbidden even without placing a bet. And there is no difference in this, whether it is (played) with customary pieces or by computer. (MMS, p. 27, Q51)

Q: Some people play with gambling

instruments other than chess and backgammon for enjoyment and without placing a bet?

A: It is prohibited to play with all that is considered a gambling instrument even without placing a bet. (FM, p. 436)

Q: What about some electronic games that appear on TV with an apparatus called "Atari" and are played with buttons for enjoyment, without placing a bet?

A: If the pictures that appear on the screen are pictures of the instruments of gambling, then it is not permissible to play with them using the "Atari" apparatus, otherwise, it is permissible. (FM, p. 436)

Q: Are wrestling and boxing matches allowed without placing a bet?

A: They are permissible if they do not lead to substantial bodily harm. (FM, p. 434)

Slandering Allah (s.w.t.), Prophet (S) or Imams (a.s.)

Q: During verbal disputes, some people unfortunately employ words in a non-serious manner that imply disbelief in Allah (s.w.t.) or articulate that which is inappropriate for the infallible ones (a.s.). Is it obligatory to impose a penalty (*hadd*) on them for that?

A: As long as they are not serious and do not mean what they are saying, there is no *shar'i* penalty on them but they are deserving of *ta'zir*. (FM, p. 419)

Q: If they are serious and intend to slander Allah (s.w.t.), the Prophet (S), the Imams (a.s.), religion or school of law (*madhhab*) and persist in this?

A: The ruling upon them is death. (FM, p. 419)

Gossip

Q: Is it permissible to gossip about a deviant (*mukhalif*) Muslim?

A: It is preferable to refrain from gossiping about him. (MMS, p. 21, Q32)

Stealing, Cheating and Deceiving

Q: Is it permissible for a Muslim to steal from the unbelievers in their country [Europe] or to deceive them in taking their properties by employing means that are known to them (the unbelievers)?

A: It is not permissible to steal from their private and public properties, and likewise to damage or destroy them (properties), if this tarnishes the reputation of Islam and Muslims in general. Similarly, it is not permissible even if it is not as such, but considered a deception and breach of an implied trust given to them (the unbelievers) on entry or on reception of a residency permit for their (the unbelievers) country, since the prohibition of deception and breach of trust is with regard to anyone. (MMS, p. 24, Q39)

Q: Is it permissible for a Muslim to provide incorrect information to government agencies in Europe to obtain through legal channels privileges and financial or non-financial facilities?

A: That is not permissible for it constitutes lying and for whatever has been mentioned, there is no justification for that. (MMS, pp. 24-25, Q42)

Q: Is it permissible to cheat on school exams if some of the teachers help the students in doing so?A: A. This is not permissible. (FM, p. 434)

Greeting Non-Muslims

Q: What is the ruling on saying "salam" or replying to it with respect to the People of the Book, or others amongst the unbelievers? Is it permissible to congratulate them on some of their special occasions like Christmas and the like?

A: There is no objection to commencing with "salam" to them, but it is discouraged (*makruh*) except when necessary, even if it is customary. Their "salam" should be replied by saying "alayk." There is no objection to congratulating them on special occasions. (MMS, pp. 31-32, Q63)

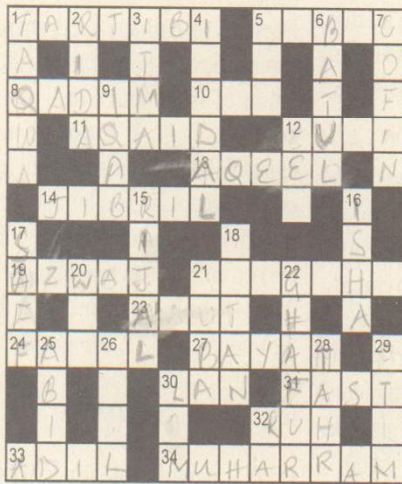


Kids Spot

PRIZE CROSSWORD

Entries to the Prize Crossword should be sent to Prize Crossword, Africa Federation, P.O. Box 6710, Dar es Salaam. The first two winners will be awarded a prize of TShs. 20,000/- each (or equivalent). Entries with name and address details should be received by 15th June, 2000.

There was a very good response for the previous puzzle and the two winners are Miss Zahra M. Nathu (age:10) of P.O. Box 986, Mwanza and Sumayya Pirbhai of P.O. Box 1461, Dar es Salaam. Congratulations.



Clues Across:

1. Ghusl performed by washing the body part by part. (7)
5. Syriac and Jewish month corresponding to January/February. (5)
8. The Eternal - Sublimne name of Allah (s.w.t.) (5)
10. A form of divorce in which a man vows not to have connections with his wife for more than four months (Arabic) (3)
11. Religious tenets, beliefs (Arabic) (5)
12. Finishing time of Namaze Fajr (Arabic) (4)
13. Elder brother of Hazrat Ali (a.s.) (5)
14. Archangel (6)
19. Spouses (Arabic) (5)
21. Stoning to death according to Islamic Shariyah (7)
23. Death (Arabic) (4)
24. Divine Blessings (Arabic) (5)
27. Oath of an allegiance (Arabic) (5)
30. Curse. (Arabic) (3)
31. Obligatory duty like Namaz (4)
32. Soul. (Arabic) (3)
33. The Just - Sublime name of Allah (s.w.t.) (4)

34. The first month of the Islamic calendar. (8)

Clues Down:

1. Guarding against evil to please Allah (s.w.t.) (5)
2. Chadar used as covering for hijab (Arabic) (4)
3. Consensus of Jurists on a religious matter (Arabic) (4)
4. Equality or moderation in religious performances (Arabic) (6)
5. An Islamic unit of weight weighing about 3 kg. (Arabic) (3)
6. Title of Hazrat Fatimah Zahra (a.s.) (5)
7. A box having a dead body (5)
9. Divine punishment (Arabic) (4)
12. Arrow (Arabic) (3)
15. Distinguished men. (Arabic) (3)
16. Late night namaaz (4)
17. A row for offering prayers. (Arabic) (4)
18. A historical city in Syria. (5)
20. Preaching. (Arabic) (3)
21. Biblical name of a city in the period of Prophet Sulaiman (a.s.) (4)
22. All Forgiving - Sublime name of Allah (s.w.t.) (6)
25. Title of our fourth Imam (a.s.) (4)
26. Pre-eternity. (Arabic) (4)
28. A period of cleanliness between two consecutive menses (4)
29. The Greatest - Sublime name of Allah (s.w.t.) (4)
30. Initials used as a mark of respect. (2)

A short story for the kids

Looks aren't everything

By Miss Kubra Rashid

Once a King in India told one of his Wazirs who was a wise man that Allah (swt) had given him so much knowledge of poetry and so much wisdom yet he was extremely ugly! The Wazir listened to this statement and smiled but did not reply to him.

Later when they reached the palace, the Wazir asked the servant to bring two pots, one made of pure gold and the other made of clay. These two pots were brought before the King. The Wazir asked the King, "Oh King, in which of these two pots would the water be cooler?" The King answered, "oh Wazir is this a question to ask, definitely the water in the clay vessel would remain cooler".

The Wazir said "Oh King, the golden vessel is more pleasing to the eye but the earthen (clay) vessel does a better job of keeping the water cool. In comparison our faces may be as ugly as the clay vessel but what matters is what kind of personality we are.

Moral --- Don't be deceived that an ugly person is a bad person! Or a beautiful or handsome person is always good!

Pen Pals

Readers are welcome to send us their name, address, e-mail number (if any), age, hobbies with the intention of seeking pen-pals from around the world. This will encourage communication by way of letter writing (or e-mail communication) between community members. Those seeking pen pals can write to Pen pals Section, Federation Samachar, P.o. Box 6710, Dar es Salaam.



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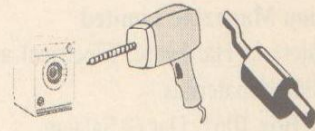
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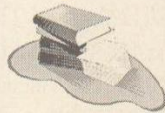
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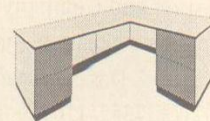
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Divine laws should prevail over man-made laws

by M.G. Pardhan, Dar es salaam Advocate

Justice is to do right and to conduct in a fair and good manner with others. It is opposite to oppression, deceit and wrongdoing. All human beings are endowed with a sense of justice. However the environment one lives in and the type of upbringing one has does sometimes affect one's sense of justice.

We may divide Justice into three aspects or categories:

- a) Divine Justice or *Adl* is a belief and assigned only to God, the almighty Allah (SWT);
- b) Legal Justice or Law of the land is based on man-made laws;
- c) *Shariah* or Islamic Justice is based on the laws derived from the holy Qur'an and *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet and his progeny or as enunciated by the learned in law.

There are over 31 Ayats on Justice in the holy Qur'an. Most refer to the sins people commit or that past generations have committed. Those who commit sins prohibited by Allah in the Qur'an will be dealt with on the Day of Judgment with *Adl* or Divine Justice. In the same manner those who killed or tortured the Messengers or Prophets sent by Allah (SWT) will also be punished, and no injustice will be done to them.

However, when we glance at the *Shariah* we get a different type of justice from what we normally are used to in our day-to-day affairs. *Shariah* or Islamic Justice tells us to be fair and just with all even if it is against your

own self or parents or close relatives. This is well narrated in Ayat no. 135 of Sura Nisa, a Sura which provides good guidance on issues relating to Islamic Justice. Similarly in Sure Maida, Ayat no. 8 tells us that justice is nearer than piety from Allah's point of view. And then we have a very famous Ayat in Surat An-Aam, viz nos. 152/153 about what real justice means to Allah. In this Ayat, Allah first tells us what is forbidden. It tells us not to associate anything with Allah, not to kill your children or approach the property of orphans with bad intentions etc. and then goes on to tell us that one has to give full measure and weight in business transactions, to behave with kindness to parents etc. with a general statement or message that Allah (SWT) does not impose on any soul a duty beyond his or her capacity. This is real justice.

Now let us examine ourselves and delve deeply into our actions and speech. Do we really come up to this measure? Do we practice clean and fair deeds? Can we not try to live upto what Allah (SWT) desires that we do?

Finally we may look into the wisdom of Hazrat Ali (A.S.) when he talks about 'Faith' in Nahjul Balagha, Sermon no. 30. He says Faith has four pillars namely patience, conviction, justice and Jihad (struggle). If we look at each of them, he states that each one has four aspects. The four aspects of justice are: understanding of a problem or matter in hand, deep knowledge of the matter in hand, power to be able to make a decision in the matter being dealt with and lastly a firmness or forbearance in such a situation.

Imam Ali (AS) goes on to explain that in order to do real justice one must

apply one's mind to that particular situation and therefore a study of the said matter is essential in order to grasp the complexity of a case or situation. And to do this one must have deep knowledge and then be able to take a decision in the matter. Once a decision is taken, one must be firm on it and at times one has to show forbearance to give a chance to the one who has committed wrong or sin.

Lastly you will note that normally people try not to follow the law of the land. This is because it is not permanent. The laws keep changing. What is a law today may be amended or even cancelled by a new government or a change in administration whereas there is no change in the law of Allah. Others argue that *Shariah* should be amended to suit the times. Allah does not like this, and that is why we do not see changes in the law of nature. This is for our good if we only could apply our mind and think a little more.

Allah is our Patron and he would never ask us to do something which is beyond our capacity. It is only our laziness or weak desires which makes us a bit lethargic in the performance of our duties. Only when we carry out duties with understanding can we ask for true and just compensation. Reading and understanding of the holy Quran is thus a must for anyone who desires to be just and fair in his dealings.

Generally it is the fear of punishment or retribution that make most abide by the law. This should not be the case. We should follow rules and laws because it is fair and just to do so, and also because we should do unto others as we would like others to do unto us. If we are fair and just in our dealings we need not fear the end. Thus everything depends upon Intention or *Niyat*. If our intentions are good, naturally good will be the end. At times we may even suffer due to good intentions but that is only a temporary set back.

Ultimately however, irrespective of how fair man-made laws may appear to be, these cannot replace the divine laws as set out by the Almighty.

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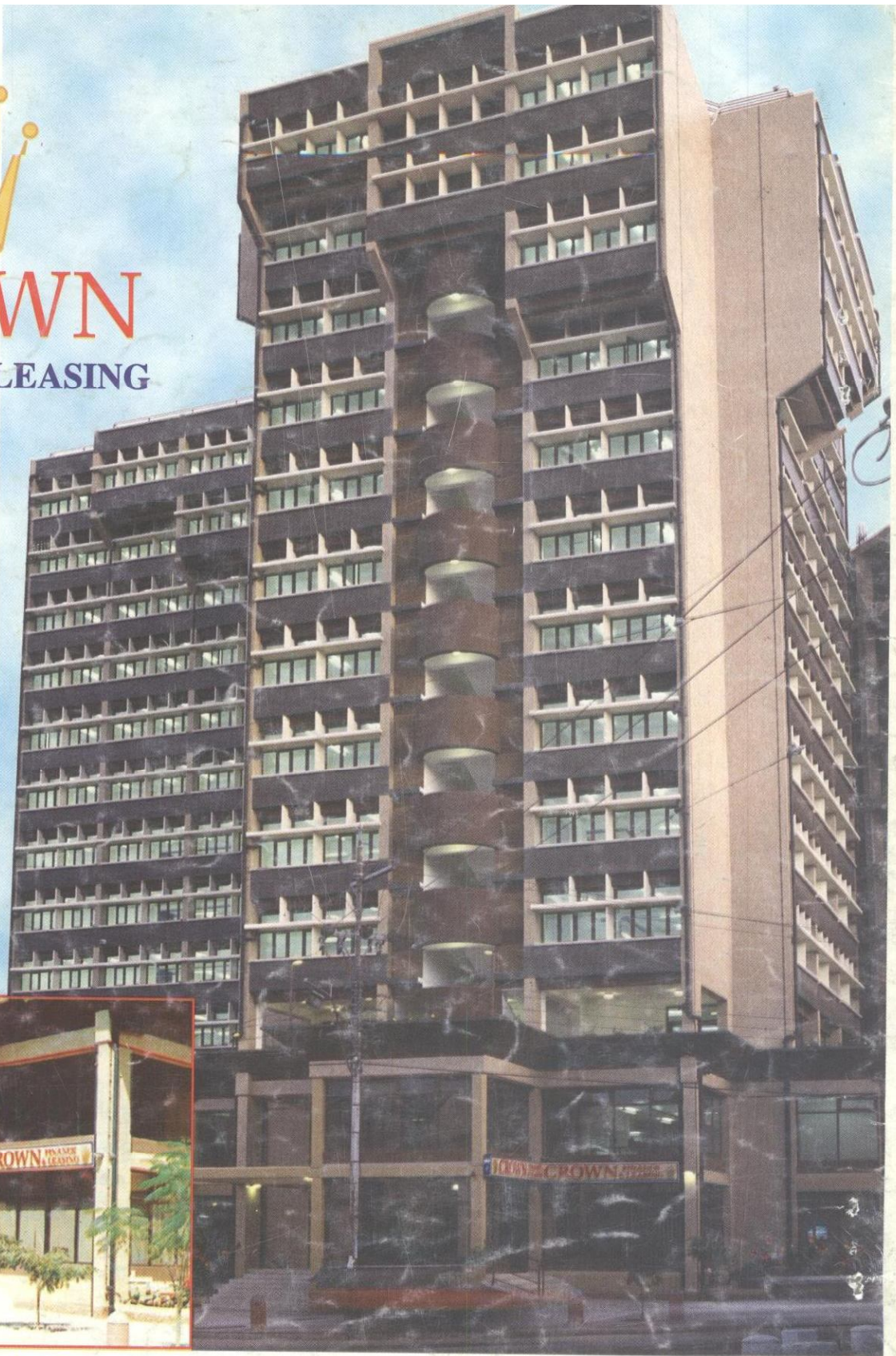
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