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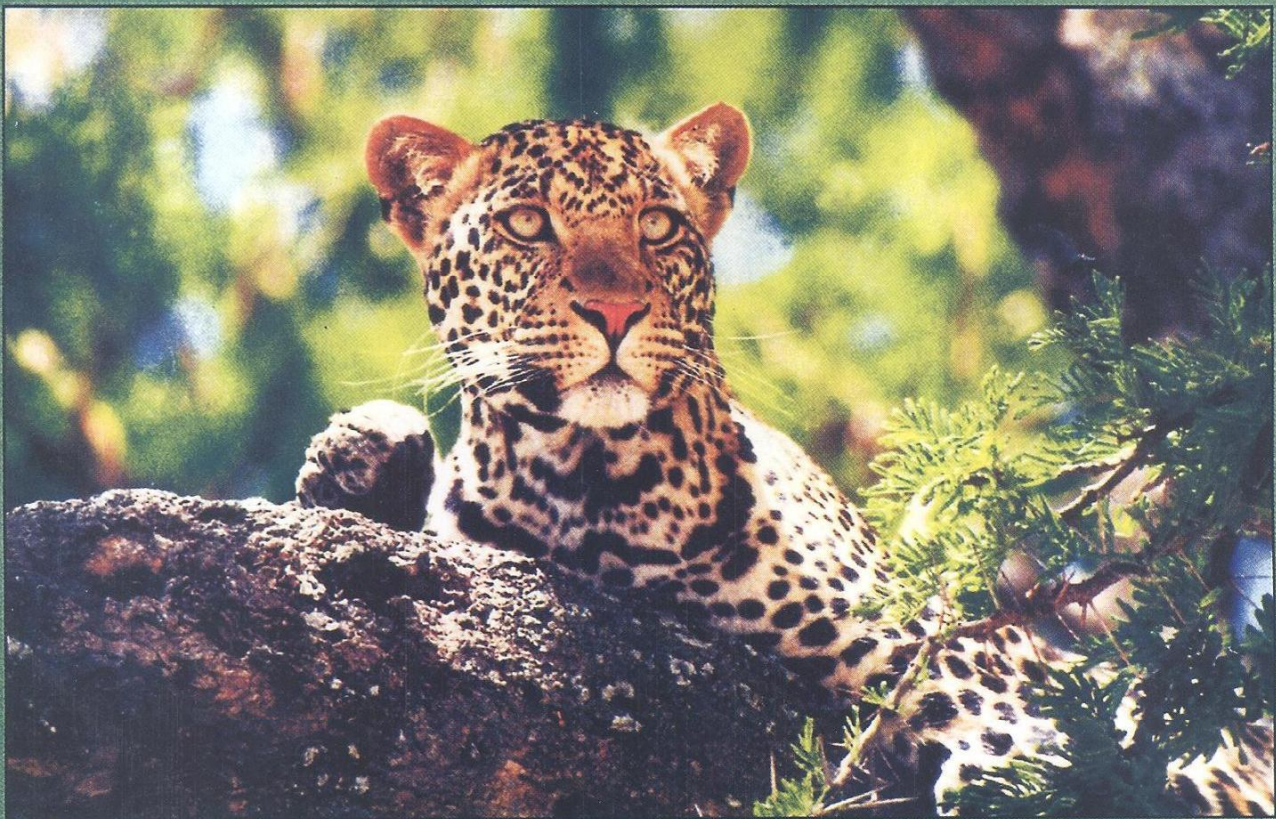
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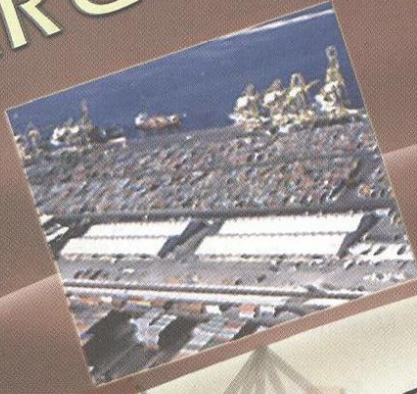
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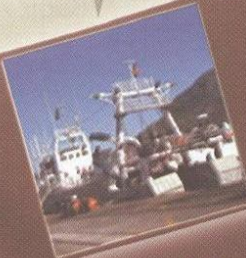
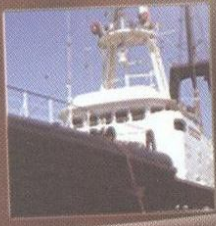
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Zulfikarbhai Khimji, the
re-elected Chairman of
the Africa Federation.

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The views expressed in the *Federation Samachar* are not
necessarily those of the Africa Federation
or the Editorial Board.

Commendable response by the community towards the plight of survivors of the earthquake in Iran

Following the tragic earthquake in Iran in December last year, there were worldwide sympathies for the plight of those who survived and relief funds were raised from Muslims and non-Muslims alike depicting true altruism among those who sought and arranged donations and those who actually donated.

Our community responded through the World and Africa Federations along with some individual jamaats by seeking donations to send to Iran and the World Federation even sent a team to Bam to look towards further possible assistance. A delegation from the World Federation donated Sterling 25,000 to the Iranian Embassy in London while the Africa Federation donated Sterling 10,000 to the Iranian Embassy in Nairobi.

A few have questioned the need to remit funds from our small community to a country that has enough petro-dollars to pay for the welfare of its own people. They argue that Iran has immense oil wealth and billions in its national treasury and central bank to buy medicines, tents and other supplies for victims of the disaster.

They ask why the KSI's should not first rehabilitate those KSIs who are impoverished in East Africa and elsewhere? They reiterate that when the KSIs experienced a disaster in East Africa where there is hardly any social security, history proves that the Iranian Government was not very helpful during the community's previous plights especially in Somalia, Uganda and Zanzibar.

When calamities like the one in Bam occur, the level of suffering

is so high that many survivors actually wish they too would have died. During such times one cannot be political about what is right or wrong because the Holy Quran emphatically guides us to spend on others in a crisis.

Spending is mentioned in the Quran approximately fifty times, and the believers are warned that accumulating money or spending it only on individual luxuries will ruin and destroy the individual [2:195, 9:34-35; 11:116-117; 17:16].

The Holy Quran points out that spending on social needs should reach all the needy, whatever their beliefs may be, as the individual's responsibility is towards the society as a whole, and it cannot be limited to a certain part of it which has certain beliefs, ethnicity, gender etc. [2:272].

Iran may be a rich country but the Government did make a public appeal seeking assistance. The argument that our community also needs funds for our own brethren is valid but this does not mean we refrain from constructive and philanthropic expenditure.

While our community needs remain to be fulfilled, it should be understood that our federations have multiple responsibilities in their quest for seeking community progress. Some responsibilities may appear to contradict each other but ultimately every responsibility needs to be given due emphasis.

We spend much on sports festivals, and rightly so, to foster communal brotherhood and encourage youths towards sports. We also spend much on external tabligh activities but when doing so we have remained focused on our other objectives

of economic upliftment and making education affordable to all.

The plight of the community cannot be addressed by refraining from essential or religious incurrences but by having focused objectives to address our deficiencies. And when charities are done in the name of God by a community should one not expect His blessings in our endeavours? The Holy Quran says, "*Those who spend out of their possessions [for the sake of God] by night and by day, secretly and openly, shall have their reward with their Lord; no fear need they have, and neither shall they grieve.*" [2:262-274].

In worthwhile donations there should be no politics or economics. Would it not be unfair on those who survived the earthquake to be deprived assistance just because their Government has not been previously helpful to the plight of the Khojas? If charities, Muslims and non-Muslims around the world responded to the Bam calamity should our community have decided to refrain? Certainly not!

In our charities what should be carefully considered is that money donated is spent effectively. In the case of Bam, the response of our community to the crisis may kindle the Iranians to re-think about non-Iranian Ithnaasheries during their times of crisis. If it doesn't, our generosity would still be worthwhile because it is not geared towards a give and take attitude.

Munir Daya



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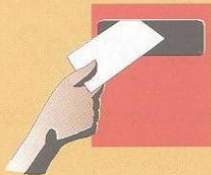
Dear brother,

Mehfils have a role

In your last issue I read an article criticising the existence of many mehfiles in Dar es Salaam. Indeed it is with regret for somebody to compare our mehfiles to pujakhana. It is an insult as these mehfiles have been given names of our Imams and other noble personalities. They perform good reform for our people through lectures and majlis.

If even one person gets reformed, the aim of such mehfiles is achieved. The writer mentioned that money used for these mehfiles can be used for other purposes but such gatherings in mehfiles allow those attending to help each other and solve their problems. Mehfiles play a big role in our society and should not be undermined or criticised.

**Concerned member
Dar es Salaam.**



Views, opinions or articles should be addressed to:

**The Editor
Federation Samachar
P.O. Box 6710,
Dar es Salaam.**

All letters sent to the *Federation Samachar* will be considered for publication unless the author specifically refuses its publication.

Letters will be subject to editing for brevity and content. Only destructive letters and those lacking objectivity or reason will not be considered for publication.

Readers are requested to keep their letters short and to the point.

Dear brother,

Editorial was bold and objective

Congratulations to you, Mr. Editor on your bold and objective analysis of the annual Federation and council meetings. Indeed you hit the nail on the head when you raised several issues on which I would also like to write a few words.

Yes, time management is one area we need to pay much heed to. Lots of man-hours are spent by community members annually without optimising the use of collective tempo. If only we can be more conscious of time spent in each of these annual sessions without much apparent result, and improve on our time performance, we could generate more interest and enthusiasm in attending such meetings. It is not just the amount of time spent, but rather how effectively we have spent time.

If delegates and invitees were distributed with various reports on the opening night, they have very little time, if any, to study the reports and make serious and constructive comments or suggestions. To expect well-thought and intelligent discussions on various issues, one needs to give people sufficient time to give thought to those issues, about which many know very little until they receive the reports. Could this probably be why some people, because of a compulsive desire to stand up and speak, say things which are of very little or no consequence?

Equally important, the chairman needs to limit time allocated for

each person to speak, not to drag their points, not to repeat a point already raised earlier by someone else. Without being scared to be offensive, the chairman must be in control—decide who should speak how long and what.

Mark the number of congratulations that pour in after a chairman's speech, one person after another asking to be heard to say the very same thing already just said by a previous speaker. The head of each jamaat might consider it his duty to stand up and convey congratulations on behalf of its jamaat, but this is only at the cost of boring the rest of the participants. We have to cut out this tradition. You have ably mentioned other issues on meetings management which need to be taken seriously by the executive committee—the *quatro* that make the decisions and lead the Federation. I believe they should carefully study your editorial and restructure annual meetings to become more meaningful, effective and interesting.

Your editorial, in the spirit of critical analysis, has been very fair in its comments and I could not support you any more. Let the *Samachar* continue to be a magazine, in which issues are analysed critically and objectively, rather than a newsletter to tell the readers the happenings and the goings-on.

**Mohamed N. Takim
Dar es Salaam.**

Dear brother,

Mosque in Lamu in dilapidated condition

During the first week of June last year a group of our youths with elders of Mombasa Jamaat visited Lamu island that is situated in the coast region of Kenya.

The trip was organised by the Golden Crescent Group (GCG) of Mombasa region and of keen interest to many of us was the KSI mosque that was built there in the 19th century. This includes a mosque, imambada and kabrastan, all of which still exist but are in very bad shape.

I appeal to all our Khoja brothers worldwide to visit this place and if possible to establish for the *isale sawab* of their marhooms establishments like a charitable dispensary or a school, the income from which can support the maintenance of the mosque, imambada and musafarkhana.

**M.H. Juma
MOMBASA**

Dear brother,

On Tabligh Board appointments...

I refer to your Editorial in the last issue. The presentation of the Tabligh Board report at the Mombasa Council Session took too long (over six hours) for deliberations.

I suggest that the Africa Federation should appoint people who are in tabligh field and who are highly educated in the religious field for this job. Otherwise we will be answerable to Imam Hujjah (af) of neglecting our community youth.

**Observer
Mombasa**

Dear brother,

Seeking clarification on the legality of adverts

Your volume 33 No5. of October 2003 refers.

In the page of legal rulings of Aga Sistani, page 82, the question of working in places selling alcoholic beverages, it is very clear that the masail prohibits such things.

Therefore, do you think it is allowed to have an advert for a Hotel Resort or a water park where alcoholic drinks are on sale? Is it also allowed to have an advert of a unisex saloon where for sure ladies attend to men or vice versa?

S.T

Dar es Salaam.

While we are not the religious experts, a logical interpretation would mean that our media should and cannot carry adverts of organisations or companies operating along non-shariah lines.

Editor.

Dear brother,

Blind traditions - can the Marja intervene?

When we recently met our elders in Moshi we discussed on the subject of how we sometimes blindly follow traditions adopted by our forefathers many years ago.

Our forefathers have done a wonderful job in ensuring continuity and growth of our religion as we see it today but because of numerous conversions they adopted traditions believing that these were part of our faith. It is however high time we question ourselves and seek reasons on the significance of such traditions in marriages, mosques and sometimes our own homes.

For example we keep a bowl of clay for the couple to step on in our marriages and we ask our brides to step on the blood of a slaughtered chicken. Similarly we have a number of such rituals that many are publicly worried to raise because they would be classified as rebels when as a matter of fact the reason is to bring a change for the better.

Some Muslim sects have questioned and even criticised such traditions and yet we continue to ignore this. Can our community leaders or religious authorities come up with a statement to this effect and can we not ask our Marja to issue a fatwa on this issue?

**Fatema M. Hameer
Dar es Salaam
Sayyedah M. Rashid
Nairobi**

Dear brother,

Was the Maulana right?

I have been reliably advised that one of our resident maulana criticised the community for not raising their voice against the article on 'too many mehfiles' carried in your previous issue.

To my information the *Federation Samachar* is reputed to be an unbiased and reputable community magazine read around the world and I am optimistic that your magazine would carry positive and adverse letters on the article.

One wonders how a Maulana can raise such an accusation in public without checking facts. Logically he should have contacted the Editor or the writer to raise his opinion and should have asked you to publish what he thinks is right. Rather he chose to go to the pulpit thereby causing doubts and divisions.

I believe the *Samachar* is playing a healthy role in raising community thinking by raising issues as food for thought. The *Samachar*, as a media for the Africa Federation, has abstained from controversy and even the 'Mehfil' article was written to invite opinions with a clear mention to readers to write in their opinions.

I also salute the Africa Federation office bearers, particularly the Chairman, for allowing the Editorial Board discretion to be constructively critical and your Editorial in the previous issue is a valid case in point.

Brother in Islam
Dar es Salaam.

Dear brother,

Too many mehfiles?

I refer to the article "Too many Mehfiles" which appeared in the *Federation Samachar* of Shaban 1424 (October 2003), Issue number 5, Volume 33 by Mrs. Sakina Zainul Dattoo.

I believe any objective reporter would surely print both sides of readers' views and then leave it unto the readers to arrive at their own conclusion. Unfortunately this was not done here, and so it puts into question your reporter being un-biased. However, in the final sentence I must admit, Ms Dattoo does invite readers to send in their comments.

Now reacting to the article I have the following observations to make:

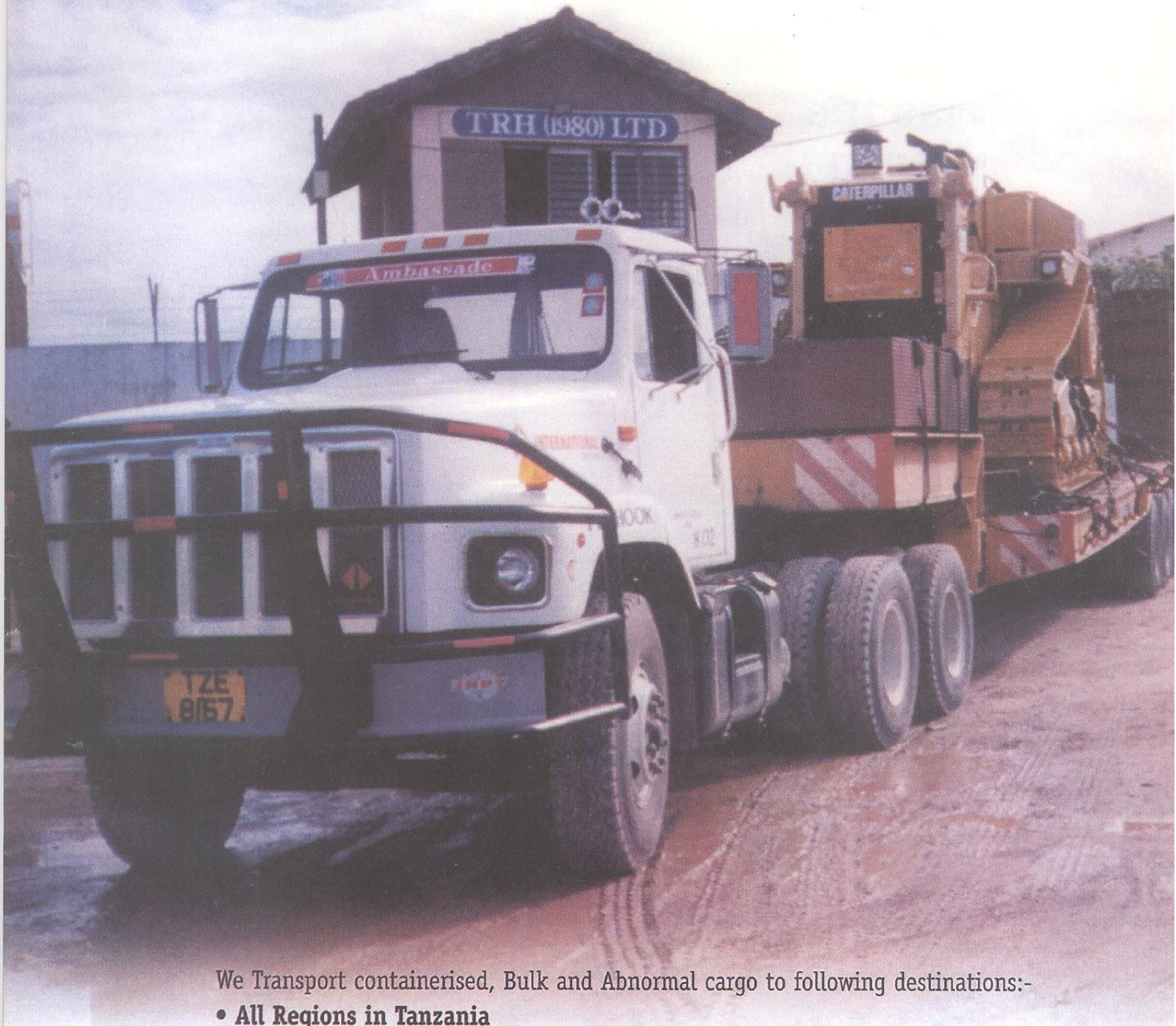
1. Individuals have set up many of the "Mehfiles" in Dar es Salaam. In a country where there is a freedom of worship surely people are entitled to spend their own money in whichever way it pleases them. After all it is their money. I believe your reporter should have taken the views of these individuals in order to create a little balanced picture.
2. Also I believe many people (young, old, infirm etc) prefer to visit such "mehfiles" to get solace of mind and perhaps even increase their knowledge from "majalis". It is their own form of prayers. Perhaps to them no other place offers better peace of mind in this complex world we live in. May be they have not reached the level of intellect the objectors of "Mehfiles" have in mind!
3. The article's opinion is that money spent in Mehfiles be put up to other uses e.g. education, tailoring and computer classes for less fortunate children of the community. It also states that the financial position of some of our community members is not good enough and therefore some of our girls get married at an early age. Well our community is full of philanthropists, who have time and again gladly contributed to worthy causes. We have built schools for providing nursery to secondary education. Genuine cases have been helped with their school fees and there are innumerable instances where people have willingly contributed to such funds. Let us make our community aware of the burning issues that need our attention instead of shelving the "Mehfiles" for financial reasons.
4. In our community a bit of wastage is observed in many places, kindly do not single out "Mehfiles".
5. Finally, to one who equates "alams and zaris" to that of worshipping idols' well the former has a completely different symbolic value to the latter. Can we Shias allow to print such illiterate views or perhaps are we ignorant of our own religion?

So I beg to differ with the views as expressed in the article.

Hussein J. Dhanji
P.O.Box 834, Dar es Salaam

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Dear brother,

TOO MANY MEHFILS????

OR TOO MUCH ILM????

We would like to comment (answer?) on the article in Issue No. 5: Vol. 33 of "Too many Mehfil". First of all, we would like to ask the one who says that her "identity be concealed" as to why not give your name, dear lady? If we are bold enough to challenge Allah (s.w.t) and the Pure Maasoomen (a.s) then we should even have the courage to give our names! We should be prepared to face the "attack" and not be like the ones who ran away leaving the Holy Prophet all alone in *Jange Ohad*.

Your first concern was majalis for youths and children; this tendency of putting unnecessary limelight on youths and children is wrong as we should not be mean and think only of our children and youths (who are hardly present at these mehfil during the weekdays because of schools and jobs) but also of the elderly especially those who are living all alone or those living in *bewa khaana*; these ladies wait for the evenings to come so that they can go to the mehfil as through the majalis held there, the otherwise lonely hearts experience "suroor" or contentment.

At the same time, we would also like to point out that if the elders of the community have such naïve concepts about Islam and majalis, then it is no surprise if the youths go astray! The need is to educate the elders of the community so that they can influence the youths within their families and the community at large and thus, these mehfil have a role to play "everyday".

Thirdly all zakiraas recite in all mehfil plus Imambaada and Mehfile Abbas (a.s) too. There is no such thing as "zakiras of different mehfil" The only point is that not all zakiraas can attend all the mehfil. Personally, we too attend only those mehfil that are either close to our houses or on days that are convenient to us.

Fourthly, how can one compare mehfil with pooja houses? Being a Muslim, and more importantly, being a Shia, such a thought is a shame! It seems the concept of *Tawheed* is not very well understood by the one who raised such thoughts. When Bibi Zainab (a.s) returned from Shaam, after the tragedy of Karbala, it is recorded in history that as she entered her house, the first thing she did was to kiss the musallas of her two sons and she cried. What would you call that? "To *bhare salaam*" at home is something private between the person concerned, the Masoomen (a.s) and Allah (s.w.t). An alam or a zarih at home actually reminds of the tragedy of the great martyrs of Islam, and at the same time, an alam is like a symbol or a flag. Just as we have the flag of Tanzania in our government as a symbol of our country, that any person who gets appointed as a "Jumbe" is required to keep in their house or office, *Alam*, *Zarih* and *shabih* are our assets, and our symbols. Today you condemn kissing of these *zarihs*, tomorrow, you may say that doing *sajda* on the *sajda-gaah* is like pooja (may God Forbid)!

You call spending money on

majalis as waste, then let me assure you that if even the mujtahids and the Ulema don't comment on majalis, then who are we to raise any unnecessary objections? Allow me to quote a question put forward in a gujarati magazine of India, famously known as, "Ithna-asheri", Issue of November 2003. The question was as follows:

Question: I have been working in Saudi Arabia for some years, and every month, I send some contribution to India for the *azaadari* in Maahe Muharram, the majalis in Maahe Ramadhan and some amount for the poor. I want to know if I should send the whole amount only for the poor ladies of the community?

The answer given was by Hujjatul Islam Mawlana Sayyed Muhammad Al Musawi Saheb Qibla, who replied:

You should assist and help the poor ladies of the community as much as you are capable of, but it is not befitting for you to stop sending your contributions for the *azaadari* in Muharram and the majalis in Maahe Ramadhan, as none can describe the status of majalis and the sawaab obtained in this act is unlimited!

As you say that the jamaat asks questions, then if the jamaat asks questions which are "unreal", then what is the connection with these majalis? How many children has the lady who raised this issue personally appointed for education? This is something

(continued on page 12)

(...from page 11)

that one does to help another on one's own will, you can't force someone to stop doing majlis and spend on someone's education or rather the mehfil owners to "close down" mehfiles and start supporting children who need education! Today you say this, tomorrow, you may ask for the closure of the Imambada and Mehfile Abbas (a.s), too!! You may say, "why all this majalis in muharram? Why not close down and educate children?"

You see it is very easy to just pinpoint on majalis, why don't you speak up when people spend millions on wedding receptions which include mixed gatherings and twenty food varieties which goes into the dustbin after the ceremonies are over? At that time, no-one thinks of a poor child who needs education or who may be dying hungry, only when it comes to nyaz and majlis our concern for the poor and the uneducated rises!

It seems that the lady raising the comments is not very well informed regarding these mehfiles; some of these mehfiles – used for majlise Hussein being *sawaabe jaariya* on one hand, even do conduct extra religious activities in the afternoons like the classes going on in Mehfile AzaaKhaanae Zainab (a.s).

I wonder at your words when you compare a "Mahila Samaj" with our mehfiles? To be more precise, the mehfiles bearing the names of Maasoomeen (a.s)? And since when is the Hindu method introduced in our Islamic culture; to marry off young girls because of financial strain? We would like to remind you that this is not practiced here as we are talking of Dar es Salaam and not India or Pakistan!

Seventh, if the nyaz or the "Fateha" that is distributed is not appreciated by the general mass, then this is their problem, the givers don't have bad intentions and looking back on history, if nyaz was not recommended in Islam, then the first invitation to Islam by the Holy Prophet would not have been over a three-day feast – "Da'wate Dhul Ashirah" as the poet, Naayab Hallori quotes,

"MAY BHI KEHDETA KE BID'AT
HE SABHI NAZRO NIYAAZ

DEENE HAQ PHEYL GAYA
HOTA JO DAAWAT KE
BAGHAYR"

Depending on the donor on his wish on how "big" the Fateha he/she wants to give, this is none of our concern as we are no-one to judge the "khuloos" of any person.

When you say, "Too Many Mehfiles", we would say, "Too much ilm being distributed freely"! Finally, a suggestion to you to kindly read books concerning majaanises, and you will know the value of majlise Hussein – our true asset, as our Aimmah, starting from Imam Zaynul Abedin (a.s) used to hold majalis frequently!

We welcome any feedback on this letter.

Mrs. Zainab M. Walji
Miss Zaheera M. Alishan
Dar es Salaam.

Dear brother,

Seeking written consent prior to nikah

I refer to the article in the popular *Federation Samachar*, vol. 33/4 titled 'Indian culture is less Islamic than the west' and wish to support the writer Sakina Dato for covering this sensitive issue.

While not all western cultures are good, like mix gatherings or music and drinking sprees, we need to question ourselves on some rituals in the name of our religion.

May we also point out the fact that while Islam gives a girl the final right to decide who she wishes to marry, there are allegedly cases where the bride to be is deprived of such legal rights.

What would happen is a girl would be surrounded by relatives and some community women and has to be positive under duress. In the next room, the maulvi and others would not be able to recognise the emotion in the voice of the bride to be and would recite the *nikah* as if all is well.

We suggest that there should be an independent written consent from the girl and the boy prior to recitation of a nikah.

Zaynab M. Khataw,
Dar es Salaam
Sukaina M.J. Rashid, Nairobi

Dear brother,

Mehfiles should be boosted, not relinquished

I have read your October 2003 issue of the *Federation Samachar* and would like to comment on the subject of Mehfiles covered by sister S.H.Dato where a community member questioned the increasing number of Mehfiles in Dar es Salaam.

It is unfortunate that instead of proposing on how to improve such mehfiles to higher standards so as to be able to mobilise our youths the writer opted to question their usefulness.

Zakiya Juma
Mombasa

Dear brother,

“Too Many Mehfiles??”

This is in response to the article “Too many mehfiles” published in the Shaaban issue, October 2003. First of all, I sympathise with the editor for having been the target of the critics for this article.

The article talked against too many mehfiles and although I am not a regular attendant to these mehfiles, I would like to express my views on the issue concerned.

The lady wanting to conceal her identity (fears that she is wrong in her thinking? A coward?) says, “Mehfiles are loosing their real meaning as they overflow in the city”. The real meaning of such mehfiles is to attract people towards good deeds as Imam Sajjad (as) says, “Gatherings of good people invite towards good deeds”.

If they are overflowing in the city, that should be a reason for more good being done. It is we, the general shias who have lost the purpose in our lives that is making the mehfiles loose their meaning, not their overflowing in the city.

She has also said, “They are not useful, for people go for fatiha”. We should keep in mind that even The Holy Qur’an calls people to do good with incentives and promises for a good hereafter.

Do we also remember that the Holy Prophet (saw) started his divine mission by the famous Feast, *Dawat Dhul Asheera*? Did he not have a better place to spend on than feeding those

ignorant people who paid no heed to his message?

Of course, on the other hand, the Masumeen (as) have been ideal examples for us and they always used to say, “O Allah, we neither worship you in fear of hell nor in hope for heaven, but we do so because we find you deserving and worthy of worship.” We as followers of Ahlulbayt, should follow their footsteps and not go to mehfiles for incentives but for the message given there.

Sometimes about twenty years back, there was a census organized by the Jamaat and I was one of the volunteers. People were being questioned on their diets and on asking one old man as to how many times a week he ate fried foods, I was shocked with his reply. He answered, “Twice”. “How much?” he said one fried item that I get in fatiha on Thursday and Sunday at kabrastan. Do we who talk so much in opposition to fatiha and nyaz, and term them as asraf of money, realize that there may be so many people who are eating in the name of Masumeen (a.s.) things that otherwise they will not get?

When we talk about a lot of money being used that could go to better causes, I would ask the lady concerned as to who is she to brand what is better than what? A Mujtaheeda? Do we realise that if it was not for these mehfiles, these ladies (most of them who have nothing to do and are bored) would be either gossiping over the telephone (again asraf and ghunah) or

cropped up in front of the TV. or simply go to sleep and waste both time and health? In addition to this, since when has anything been better than promoting the love of Ahlul bayt (a.s.)?

Talking about how hard it is for parents to pay school fees, I have heard of the incident about Syed Akhtar Rizvi when he once visited the suburbs in Tanzania as a representative of the Supreme Council. In those days resident Alims were not common. The people took that opportunity to ask him to provide an alim to them claiming that when questioned on the day of Qayamat for not teaching religious education to their children they will blame the council. Mawlana(RA) replied then we too will ask you if you had consulted us before giving birth to them. Maulana, with his wise reply, made it very obvious that education of children is the duty of parents. Childrens’ school fees is solely the responsibility of parents.

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Dear brother,

Calling for a census

It has been some time that the Africa Federation has undertaken a continent-wide census of the community. Please let us know how many we are in each jamaat and whether or not the community is increasing. We are waiting.

Zuheir Abbas
Moshi

(...from page 13)

However there is a lot of thawab and also a duty to help our brothers of lesser means. How about stopping to wear the 200,000/= dresses that we wear on every khushali which will pay a child's one term fees?

What about the \$300,000 bangalows that we build? How about the thousands of dollars shopping sprees that we make to Dubai and India? Are we not accountable for all that?

One thing I fail to understand is why are we after nyaz and do not think of sacrificing our other leisurely expenses?

It is good to note that the lady concerned has mentioned that we get ilm from Mehfil, this is the ilm that the Holy Prophet emphasised so much that he said that even if an hour of your life is left, acquire ilm. It is the ilm of the recognition of your Lord and this can only be acquired through the Masumeen (a.s.)

I conclude - the problem is not too many mehfil. It is the mentality of us Shias.

Zishaane Fatima Karim.
Dar es Salaam.

Contribute your
comments, thoughts
and opinions to the
Mailbag pages of the
Federation Samachar.

These can be
emailed to:

samachar@raha.com

Dear brother,

Mehfil article was commendable

I commend your Sakina Dewji Dato for writing the article on a sensitive subject of Mehfil and then inviting further comments from your readership. I am very impressed by the content of this rather short article.

Truly speaking the people have made the mehfil a puja house as well as a past time place. I prefer going to the mehfil, but mehfil run by our jamaat, where there is no competition, even there is no competition for Fateha. I prefer to go there, pay respect to our Aiyahs and learn from the scholar during the majlis. However, what many people do is come late to these majlises, so they miss the message of the majlis but to just take part and get some Fateha.

Let me share with you an example from the men's side about Mehfil. On Thursday evenings, our mosque in Dar-es-Salaam has Dua-e-Kumail, majlis and ziyarat immediately after Isha prayers. The good thing is that these are held inside the main mosque and there is continuity. If you take the current time of Magrib Azan, i.e. 6:30 pm, the function ends at about 8 pm.

Unfortunately, there is a bus waiting outside our mosque at 7pm to ferry people to Kariakoo to a Mehfil where there is a repetition of the same, except there is an incentive at the end, and that is full Niyaz. Why are they breaking the crowd from the mosque to go to these mehfil? Do you think the house of Allah (s.w.t.) takes precedence over the house of Imam? (We khoja's do it.)

There is one Mehfil that I know of where the children are forced to cry out loud during the gham time in Muharram Majlis. If the children don't cry, they are pinched to do so. They are also forced to do hard matam to bring about loud noise (josh). Is this the lesson of our Imams? These children are innocent and they do as told by the guardians of this mehfil only to get the monetary reward at the end and a *Nusu Kilo Fateha*.

We are really making a mockery out of these Mehfil. Many people keep *Mantaa* and *Nazr* so they fulfill it with doing majlis at a particular mehfil and then feed a fix number of people with a variety of luxury food. *Nazr* and *Mantaa* are good, but let us look at what kind of *Nazr* and *Mantaa* our Ahlul Bayt (a.s) kept. The best example is *Sura Dahr*. The *mantaa* by the household of the prophet was to keep a fast for three days. This shows the best of all the *nazr* is to keep a fast for the sake of Allah (s.w.t.).

I am in the committee of Mehfil Asgari. Unfortunately, we have not been able to hold regular majlis because the attendance is so poor from the children (boys) of our community, except during the months of Muharram and Safar. This mehfil is supposed to be a training ground for our children to learn/read marshiya, speeches, ziyarat and etiquettes of Majlis.

I believe the solution to stop these mehfil being Puja houses, is to cut its finances. If the guardians come to you to ask for funds, explain them to use the funds in a better place.

Shabbir Manekia
Dar es Salaam.

Dear brother,

An open letter to the Chairman

Dear Zulfikarbai,

Mode of Economic Upliftment of the community

Let me hasten to congratulate you on having satisfactorily passed 730 days in office in April, 2003 and encourage you to struggle through the remaining days in office up to April 2004.

As a middle aged personality with a high spirited energetic mood, you have steered the community through a lot of changes and progress in your administration. Your patience suits the community at large and encourages them to share in your wholehearted support for religion, educational and economic matters. Yet, despite the same age, you have not only climbed Mount Kenya to its peak, but also encouraged many young, boys and girls of the community to follow your footsteps, with all the tempo and spirit that it takes.

Why then should we not have full confidence in you to lead the community to an economic peak? With a man of all this God given qualities and endless zeal, the community cannot go backwards and suffer in the present economic dilemma. This especially so with a man with the community's welfare at heart, and a successful businessman himself.

Constitutionally you are at liberty to enjoy a second term in office, which you can declare

'The Community Economic Upliftment Term.' With your zeal, you can achieve a lot towards this goal, despite the backdrop of prevailing dilemmas you are currently faced with. The changing economic climate globally has seen third world countries suffer, with our community not being spared. Families that were well established for four to five generations face lots of difficulties today in contrast to their forefathers. This has given impetus to a lot of migration since the 70s, resulting in many new jamaats springing up in Australia, Europe and North America. The African jamaats are dying, so to say. Lack of education and declining business opportunities being the prime causes.

You rightfully said at the last council session held in Mombasa "Today our most important priority is that we need financial and intellectual resources to meet our three policies, namely *"EDUCATION, ECONOMIC UPLIFTMENT AND STRENGTHENING OUR INSTITUTIONS"*. To this end, your greatest achievement was to have reconciled with the Territorial Council of Indian Ocean Island Jamaats – (*STRENGTHENING OUR INSTITUTIONS*).

You have marvelously done well in organising for 90 scholarships for Higher Education during the first two years of your term, a noble task at that. Not stopping there, you have embarked on another 55 during this final year of your term. Despite the fact that you only had 75% ability of funding these scholarships, you took the risky challenge and approved all the applications. This is indeed a great achievement and reflects your spirited love for the community (EDUCATION).

We are a business community, flourishing with talented membership that lacks the right opportunities and courage to expand their present businesses, or venture into small-scale industries. The economic situation worsens by the day in our region, yet you are hopeful to raise another 55 scholarships for education, Were you to tackle the economic upliftment professionally, as you have demonstrated for education, you shall achieve a lot .

Let me cite an example of one person of another community who some years ago left his banking top job (to refrain from *Riba* (interest)) and was helped with a loan of Kshs. one Million – today he gives loans to help others to a tune much more than what he was accorded through

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his jamaat initially.

The Asian Community at large has individually and jointly indulged in small and big scale industries alike prosperously. These ventures are a result of individual finances not being enough and grouping and joining hands of several well-intended individuals. Only recently established, many of these are quite successful. Many of the indigenous people either lack the resources or capability leaving the African continent wide open for prospective enterprises. We no longer have any chances of success in small 'dukawalla' or import businesses, unless established on a large scale and wide penetration of the market.

I know of certain individuals doing retailing on local purchase, one of whom endeavored to own his own flat, eating away their capital owing to the downturn of the economy. They do not meet their ends comfortably. Such brothers could be given the right boost within a joint-venture or an interest-free loan to import their own stocks in bulk or to buy locally in quantity thereby giving them good margins to raise their standard of living.

There are lots of openings in the agriculture sector, since most African economies depend on agriculture. Very few of our brothers are into farming – I know some of them here in Kenya who have been successful. One may argue as to lack of knowhow. Let us ask these successful farm owners how they are managing them with occasional visits to their lucrative farms, and borrow at leaf from them. However, the overall management and marketing of produce is where the money is.

Livestock is an equally neglected but lucrative sector that we often ignore. Its potential is local and international. Lots of land is also available for ownership or long-term lease hire.

The AGOA – African Growth & Opportunity Act was enacted into law in October 2000 in the USA, which gives quota and duty-free access to the world's biggest and most lucrative market. The AGOA has been very successful in its three years with over 1000 items enjoying duty-free importation into the USA. Going into such businesses needs big capital and only joint ventures can succeed. Other communities are quite busy in the textiles industry within the EPZ with each industry employing 1000 to 2000 labor forces. Their finished product gets air freighted to the USA. This has to be a saturated line of business, but there are hundreds of other items to explore. It needs a thorough investigation. More information may be sought from the Chief Editor of "African Business Magazine" published in the U.K. who happens to be our own brother with a wide experience.

Then there is the United States Corporate Council for ARICA (C.C.A) which is a partnership of multinationals and African enterprises to invest into small to medium sized companies. NEPAD also enjoys US support.

The time has come when the Africa Federation and World Federation should engage paid professionals in the business sector, on remuneration terms and not envisage honorary services of community members. The Federation should deploy such personnel to every jamaat on a consultative study and report back on ways to enhance our businesses through

better ways of doing business and linking up brothers of varying potentials into successful joint ventures. This will not bear any fruits if you entrust such responsibilities to individual jamaats or honorary committees. I am sorry to say but such honorary efforts have only ended up in talks and with no results in the past.

The membership at large will not knock on every door looking for fanatical help nor will potential financiers do the same on their doors – only the Federation paid liaison desk and officers can achieve this task. Such officer(s) need to be empowered with travel allowances and market researches, backed by host jamaats during their visits. With growing needs, officer(s) can be based in each country of our membership including Europe and North America. A reporting format and level should be established for such officer(s) at annual council sessions.

If we do not look into this, our community shall face economic ruin and subsequently lack recognition in the world. We should be thinking in lines of linking up with NGO's and the UN itself. Only an economically sound and strong community can achieve such anticipations.

The membership at large sometimes rightfully complain about our support towards the Indopak, Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq communities. We have an obligation to look after our Khoja as well as Shia brothers. Let us not forget that all Khojas in Europe are from Africa, and also that WF's income has been derived from these origins. We are therefore obligated to strengthen our community within Africa whether it is to derive from donation or increased Khums

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amounts. This will result in a stronger African and European Khoja community that can then donate much more towards our Shia brethren at large.

We need to reform our administering of economic and welfare undertakings for the community. With the increase in number of our boys and girls going for further studies abroad there is an increasing trend to settle there in the hope of better prospects. These are largely based on the perspective of being employed rather than to invest. There will come a day, we as a community, shall have difficulty in sustaining our centers.

These young graduates need to be guided into businesses by investing into them. A common cry amongst the leadership has been that our community may die away religiously in 25/30 years time. We need to be financially sound enough to sustain our centers without being a burden. Our future generation needs to be wealthy enough to be able to carry out our religious rites and frankly speaking, if we are given a chance to rebuild present devastated Iraq, we have resources to rebuild it alone.

My congratulations to the World Federation President, Br. Ahmed Hassam and his team. May the Almighty grant them health, wisdom and energy to serve the community.

To you Zulfikarbai, my salutations for the several milestones during your tenure in office. May the Almighty grant your *tawfiq* to take up another term in office and make this economic milestone a reality.

Rajabali Bandali
P.O. Box 86874
Mombasa.

Dear brother,

Mehfil article effectively re-awakened community thinking

I read the article in the *Federation Samachar* about the excess of mehfiles. It was a bold step taken by the writer to address the issue, and we commend you for carrying this. This shows your commitment to bringing to light issues that are important for the progress and development of our Muslim community.

Whenever we discuss or criticise such gatherings, you will probably agree the main difficulty is the lack of the goal in them. Otherwise, if they are held with a message, the more such gatherings are held, the better.

Unfortunately, many people are not accustomed to constructive criticisms, and in order to have a positive effect on our community it is sometimes necessary to raise some discussions with extreme caution. In this regard, it is essential to remind people that Islam represents a complete way of life and is not just a set of empty rituals and traditions. In fact, presenting and discussing the more open and dynamic aspect of Islam allows us to raise the intellectual level of our communities and revive the pristine teachings of the ma'sumin (as).

So it's important that in any discussion or evaluation of our practices and traditions, we compare these to the standard and examples given to us by the ma'sumin. In fact, whatever deviations we see in our communities are the direct result of forgetting the comprehensive nature of the original Islamic messages.

For example, today some members of our community take pride of the fact that we have been declared a "peaceful community" by the United Nations. This declaration is a meaningless thing, as if the UN has any more authority in this regard.

Due to the influence of the *Federation Samachar* on the community and in view of the *Federation Samachar's* almost "secular" view of Islam, it is important for the community's intellectuals and activists to speak out and bring to light Islam's comprehensive message.

We pray to Allah (s.w.t.) to grant you continued success in your efforts to positively influence the development of our community.

Sayyid Muhammad Ali Taqawi
Islamic Seminary
Qum.

Dear brother,

Mehfils help keep us united through *Azaadari*

I refer to the article written on the subject of 'Too many Mehfils' in the *Federation Samachar* of Sha'ban 1424. As per that article, the views expressed for the subject were from an anonymous lady via *Samachar's* Sakina Zainul Dattoo.

I wonder, whosoever she is, how dared she compare our Holy Mehfils to puja houses? We are pure monotheists in our full sense of worshipping non except one God. What made her think that to revere and show due respect to the replica of *Alam*, *Zareeh* and *Shabeeh* is idol worship?

Did she ever ask those who keep these holy replicas in their homes to know their beliefs? She should perfectly know that it is this *Azaadari*, *Maatam* and *Majaalis* which keep us united, and provides us with courage to remain on the right path in spite of the numerous tactics of the enemies of Islam to our heritage and culture.

It is not concealed from everybody's eyes to see those who don't believe in *Azaadari* that to what a great extent they have been driven away by satanic forces, so much so that even their physical appearance does not match to a true Muslim.

The woman who opposed the idea of Mehfils is hereby reminded that even the great Angel Fitroos was rewarded enormously and its wings restored because of merely

showing his respects to the wooden cradle of Imam Husain A.S. She is also reminded to be acquainted with the past history that Bani Israil used to carry a revered *Taaboot* with them to the battle field as a means of blessings.

There is also an ayat of the Holy Qur'an telling the people in previous eras to establish prayers in their houses so as to be free from the clutches of oppressive regimes.

Consequently, what is the core of essence in attending Majalis?. The answer is through the Holy Ahlul Bayt, getting proper knowledge of Islam, knowing the true ethics and morals of Islam, and getting to know what our Creator Allah S.W.T. wants us to be. How can one imagine that our Mehfils are like puja houses?. My undoubting challenge is that nobody can pinpoint even a single drop of polytheism in this.

Her second concern was about the money spent for these holy Mehfils. She casts her looks at these expenses as being extravagances. I would like to advise her to look around wisely to the numerous un-Islamic functions going around day in day out, with its enormous wastage of uncountable money. Did she also approach the concerned to catch their attention to the worthy causes?

M. Haji Ahmed Khaki,
Box 8310,

Dar es Salaam.

Email: maksvs@hotmail.com

Dear brother,

THE OTHER WOMAN

I refer to the article on the 'Other woman' by Munir Daya in your last issue of the *Federation Samachar* and would like to make a few comments.

In my opinion there are many men in our community who misuse the concept of short-term marriages to woo the other woman. Very often the other woman agrees to respond to because of lack of enough religion, money or for pure attraction to the man.

I know we Shias allow 'short-term marriages - *mutah*' and if I am not mistaken it is even regarded as rewardable if indulged in the right context. However we get different interpretations of the shariah from different sources and one main question facing women is that are our husbands allowed to indulge in *mutah* relationship without the wife's context?

My knowledge tells me that a husband has to seek consent from the first wife prior to marrying the second or more wives and it is perplexing here too as to why the first wife would or should agree unless the issue is of disability or fertility.

As the *Federation Samachar* does cover practical subjects reflecting on issues of the community I suggest you also do a write-up on the exact rules and regulations of *mutah* in order to save our wives from being unduly deceived by their husbands.

Concerned woman
Dar es Salaam



Third Edition of Child Psychology book on sale

The Tabligh Centre of the Dar es Salaam Jamaat has published a third revised edition of the book 'Child Psychology'. The second edition of this book by Mohamed A. Khalfan was published by Nasimco in Toronto, Canada. The Secretariat of the World Federation purchased and distributed 200 copies of the Toronto edition at the conference held in Dubai in October, 2003.

The third edition is revised incorporating an additional number of illustrations, incidents, examples and scenarios to register a greater impact on parents reading the book.

The third edition is also being translated into Indonesian language by a publishing organisation for sale in Indonesia.

To differentiate the third edition from the earlier ones, the title of the book has been changed to 'Simple Child Psychology'.

Copies are available at TShs. 70/- , Kenya Shs. 60/-, US Cents 70 less discount for a lot of thirty copies or more plus postage from:

The Dar Tabligh Centre
P.O. Box 233,
Dar es Salaam
Tel: 255 22 2115119
Fax: 255 22 2113107
email: tabligh@raha.com.

Cyclone hits Madagascar

The cyclone "Gafilo" hit Madagascar wreaking havoc in many towns in March this year. Cyclone Gafilo ripped through northern Madagascar at wind speeds of up to 200 km/h destroying buildings, uprooting trees and flooding towns.

The government appealed for international aid to help deal with what authorities feared was one of the worst cyclones the island has experienced. Madagascar is usually exposed to cyclones between December and March. In February, 2003 twenty nine people were killed and tens of thousands were made homeless by Cyclone Elita.

The Chairman of the Africa Federation, Alhaj Zulfikar Khimji spoke to Alhaj Navaz Molou, Chairman of the Regional Council to find out the situation of our members there and was informed that the cyclone reached the town of Morondava causing material damage to some members of our community. Telecommunication links between Morondava and other parts of Madagascar were then cut.

The chairman reiterated the Africa Federation's assistance and support to the Regional Council and launched a relief fund for assistance to our affected brothers there.

Following the devastation by the cyclone, the President of the World Federation, Dr Ahmed Hassam, in consultation with the Chairman of the Africa Federation, declared the area an emergency zone and, on behalf of the entire KSI community, pledged a sum of USD 100,000

for immediate relief for the affected mumineen and a sum of USD 25,000 for local charities assisting the people of Madagascar in general.

Whenever called upon, our community in Madagascar has always been most generous and immediately forthcoming in assisting in emergency relief work elsewhere in the world, like the earthquakes in Gujarat and Bam.

The World Federation in conjunction with its regional and jamaat members also launched an appeal to raise USD 500,000 to assist affected mumineen. It is hoped our community worldwide will rise to the occasion and donate generously to rehabilitating our community members in affected areas.

Members in Africa are requested to send their donations directly to the Secretariat of the Africa Federation or through their respective jamaat or by depositing funds in the Supreme Council's bank account, details of which are as follows:

Mombasa

Habib Bank AG Zurich - Unity House
A/C 147227 (Local)

Nairobi


Habib Bank AG Zurich - Koinanage Street A/C 170828 (Local)

Dar es Salaam

Habib African Bank Ltd - India Street

A/C 0000108 0001 (Local)
A/C 0007269-0011 (Forex)

NBC - Samora Avenue
A/C 012103010054



Motor Comprehensive Insurance
Motor Third Party Insurance
Contractors All Risks
Personal Accident
Cash in Transit
Burglary
Liability
Marine
Bonds
Fire

RELIANCE INSURANCE

*Your Tomorrow
taken care of*

*We offer reliable services
that can only be matched by
the rising and setting of the Sun*

Good news to Madrasah students

The Imam Ja'far As Sadiq (AS) Academic Excellence Scheme has brought good news to our Madrasah students in Africa. Essentially, a reward incentive scheme which seeks to maximize the output potential of our youths, the scheme also pursues to revitalize the interest of our boys and girls in religious education.

Presenting a paper on 28th December, 2003 at the First Heads of Madrasahs (HoM) Annual Convention in Nairobi, the Hon Secretary of the Tabligh Board of Africa Federation, Mohamedarif Suleman, said that the biggest challenge that Madrasahs face today is the lack of interest amongst youths. He said that while most students competed aggressively in secular schools, there was little effort in our Madrasahs by the same students.

He said that based on scientific studies, programmes could succeed if incentives were offered to promote that ambition rather than just sit back and watch things fall out. He said that the Board felt very positively about the monetary reward scheme, but appealed for the total commitment of the Madrasah administrations in ensuring that the continuous assessment schemes are well taken care of.

Throwing further challenge to participants, he established that the cause of our problems are multifarious. He said that our institutions had adopted to the blame game rather than meeting the challenge head on. In this sense, it was universally

mentioned that students had exhaustive participation in schools such that involvement in the Madrasah is not possible. Similarly, the paper covered the following further aspects to stir the minds of stakeholders:

1. We have accepted beliefs regarding Madrasahs and the students that are entirely wrong because of our past history;
2. We lack the understanding of the present educational system.
3. We do not recognize that all students have great potential
4. We have not identified what drives people – is it money? Or relaxation? Or safety? Or seniority? Or security? Or bargaining power? Or leadership? Or is it really about all of these and recognition?
5. Our society rewards excellence in secular schools by way of press releases, grapevine prominence and even accolade and admiration, but religious education is even today seen as a lesser feat even at Madrasah levels.
6. Society has also allowed our value system to shun down Madrasahs as institutions that have failed and are of little value in making up an individual's life.

The project, coded 0503, assumes that desire is prompted by recognition, and that if immediate steps are taken today, the Madrasahs could reverse the situation of waning interest.

The Imam Ja'far As Sadiq (AS) Academic Excellence Scheme is scheduled to take off in the mid

of 2004, and will be launched gradually in all Madrasahs in Africa. It involves the careful award and consolidation of scores based on the American Grade Point Average (GPA) system, resulting into title awards for winning students in each Jamaat. Monetary rewards will range between US\$20 and US\$100 (equivalent to TShs. 24,000/- - 120,000/-; or KShs. 1,600/- to 8,000/-). The following mechanism will be put into place:

1. Each Madrasah class to contest in the scheme;
2. Evaluation forms to be given to each subject teacher by department heads;
3. Scoring basis (%):

Class Attendance **30**

Allocate 30% to the total evaluation for the child's attendance.

Tests **5**

Teachers should give tests during the term and award 5% to the total

Exam **20**

This is crucial, as it will exhibit exam-readiness of the student

Term Paper **20**

Each subject teacher must ask students to write a term paper of a limit depending on their abilities on a pertinent topic with adequate research

Class Project **20**

Projects are an important part of learning. These may be written projects or even model creation projects

Class Presentation **5**

A teacher may decide to have a short presentation by each student on subjects that he/she may feel are important.

Murtaza Jaffer appointed Judge for Industrial Court.

Murtaza Hassan Jaffer has been appointed as Judge for the Industrial Court in Kenya.

A practicing lawyer in the High Courts of Kenya and Zanzibar, Nairobi based Murtaza Jaffer was earlier this year appointed Chairman of the Kenya Export Processing Zone Authority. Prior to that he has also served on the Board Of the Kenya Anti Corruption Authority. He is also a delegate at the constitution of Kenya Review Conference (Bomas of Kenya Conference) appointed by the Constitution Commission to represent 'Special Interests.'

Specialising in labour laws and known as a human rights activist in Kenya, Murtaza Jaffer has served as CEO of the Kituo Cha Sharia - Legal Aid Centre in Kenya and as CEO of the National Council of NGOs, Kenya and the NGO Coalition for Eastern Africa.

He served on the Boards of several NGOs in Eastern and Southern Africa as well as UN Expert Group Committees, having worked/consulted in 17 African countries, the latest being Southern Sudan and Somalia.

Murtaza Jaffer had also been active in community affairs having represented Nairobi Jamaat as a councillor of the Federation of K.S.I. Jamaats of Africa. He has been a fine contributor in Council meetings and has contributed towards the drafting of many past resolutions enacted during Council sessions.

We congratulate Murtazabhai on his appointment and may Allah (s.w.t.) bless him with even more achievements in the future.

Muslim Association of Mombasa honours Haji Bashir Deera



At a dinner to celebrate Idd-ul-Fitr, Haji Bashir Peera, the former Africa Federation Secretary General was honoured to a grand reception to mark his 20 years as a member of the managing committee and trustee of the association. Mr. Adib Chaudry presented Mr. Peera with a commemorative plaque for his distinguished and dedicated selfless services to the Muslim community of Mombasa.

Mr. Peera has played a leading part in his capacity as the Hon. Secretary of the Islamic Festival Committee in the organisation of the annual Idd baraza and Maulid-un-nabi celebration for over twenty years.

The Muslim Association is the oldest Muslim organisation in Mombasa which owns and manages the famous Sakina mosque. In his reply to the service award, Mr. Peera thanked the Almighty Allah (s.w.t.) for having given him the courage and strength to serve the Muslim ummah. We congratulate Bashirbhai on his achievement.

THE TABLIGH BOARD OF THE AFRICA FEDERATION



Pictured above are members of the Tabligh Board of the Africa Federation. Front row L- R: Shabbir Janmohamed, Gullamhussein Mukhtar, Mohame Arif Suleman, Aliraza Nanji, Amirali Dattoo, Hussein Jaffer and Suh Janmohamed.

Center Row L-R: Amir Ahmed, Barkatali Rajani, Syed Jaffri, Abdulraza Khalfan, Mehboob Somji and Kumail Lalji.

Back Row L- R: Mrs .Shaheen Inayat, Mrs Syed Jaffri and Mrs Kulsu Dossa.

Jaffer Rajwani - a Stamp Collector who lives by the hobby of kings and the king of hobbies

An ardent community stamp collector in Dar es Salaam, Jafferbhai Rajwani, began with the hobby of stamp collecting at a very young age. In those days, he asked for stamps from shopkeepers and neighbours – slowly creating a small collection. He says, “the size had little to do with the pleasure I used to derive from each stamp.”

Talking to the Editor of *Federation Samachar*, Munir Daya he said, “I joined the Barclays Bank in 1948 and this gave me an opportunity to develop my collection further by contacting pen pals in many countries around the world. The hobby became so fascinating and rewarding that I used to encourage others to take it up.

As time passed, stamp collecting proved to me so worthwhile not only for the personal pleasure that I gained from it, but also for increasing my general knowledge. It afforded me a splendid opportunity to learn more about history, geography and customs not only of my county, but of most nations of the world.

By 1970, my stamp collection was piled up with more than 180 countries of the world. Since I could not cope up arranging and organizing stamps from more countries, I decided to concentrate only on East African stamps in general and Tanzania stamps in particular until today.

My banking career gave me an opportunity to study banking in Kenya and United Kingdom and back to Dar es Salaam in the Head Office of Barclays Bank and finally with a senior position at the Head Office of the National Bank of Commerce before retiring.

My first stamp collection was



Then Minister of Education and Culture, Professor Hon. Juma Kapuya admiring Jafferbhai's collection.



The Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism, Hon. Zakia Meghji took special interest in Jafferbhai's collection.

displayed at the National Museum organized by the Lions Club with the participation of the Stamp Bureau of the Tanzania Post Corporation. A large number of school children attended the exhibition but there were few adults from the public.

This prompted the Tanzania Post Corporation to organize another exhibition at National Level inviting their counterparts, Kenya and Uganda, to participate in the 'East African Stamp Exhibition' held at the Sheraton Hotel in Dar es salaam.

This time, my presentation and display were of stamps issued by the East African countries, namely Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika until the break up of the East African Community in 1997.”

Jafferbhai continued, “In that exhibition I also displayed exclusive Tanzania stamps. Professor Hon. Juma Kapuya then the Minister of Education and Culture graced the Exhibition and was highly impressed on seeing such a unique and artistic presentation of old and new stamps issued during the last 70 years, for the first time in the history of Tanzania.”

The Minister personally congratulated Jafferbhai and praised his devotion towards art and his efforts in making the exhibition most successful. A Certificate of Appreciation was awarded to Jafferbhai for his active participation.

(continued on page 24)

(...from page 23)

The next exhibition was also held at the Sheraton Hotel with all three East African countries participating. This was officiated by the Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism, Hon Zakia Meghji.

Jafferbhai said, "This time, my display and demonstration of stamps covered the subject of a short history of stamps issued under the rein of the British starting from 1895 with the portrait of Queen Victoria followed by King George V and VI and ending with Queen Elizabeth II until 1960, just before independence.

The stamps which were displayed presented a short history of stamps issued depicting the British East Africa Protectorate, British East Africa and the Uganda Protectorate, Kenya and Uganda only and the mandated Territory of Tanganyika with the head of Giraffe in 1922 being the first stamp of Tanganyika and finally with the British Royal family from 1935 to 1960 and then of course, East Africa stamps that were never seen before."

This was a rare opportunity for the public and the postal authorities to see the demonstration and explanations given for each stamp.

The Hon. Minister Zakia Meghji took personal interest in his display and was greatly excited with the extra-ordinary experience of viewing over 100 years of history of stamps in the region of East Africa which was never seen before.

The Hon. Minister and the Postmaster General awarded Jafferbhai a special Certificate of appreciation for taking keen interest in the promotion of Tanzania Stamps.

They viewed Jafferbhai's participation in the exhibition as

instilling awareness and inspiration within Tanzanians on stamp collection which would have a great impact among the young and old who are generally interested but do not have full knowledge of the importance of the hobby of stamp collecting.

Jafferbhai said, "One would ask, what is the advantage of stamp collecting? It is my personal experience that when retirement comes, and one suddenly finds one has a lot of time, stamp collecting comes as a tonic. Physicians too have recommended this as a fine hobby for the elderly.

A retired philatelist is kept occupied with stamps and his children also enjoy viewing his stamps for they never go out of style or lose their value. Stamps never fail to interest the young and old.

A well known philatelist, Albert Robertson says, "Stamp collecting has been called, THE HOBBY OF KINGS AND THE KING OF HOBBIES" but it is more than just a hobby or investment.

It is a medium of education for both young and old, rich and poor, which can be a wonderful family hobby that wise parents share and enjoy with their children, cementing happy family relationships so desirable in this busy bustling world.

It is proved that the hobby of stamp collecting is relatively inexpensive compared with videos, computers and the like. Our adults should encourage their children to develop this hobby instead of allowing them to follow unIslamic pursuits."

Jafferbhai concluded, "Stamp collecting assists children tremendously in their school lessons. One overseas survey showed that children who collect stamps obtain far higher examination passes than do non-collectors."

Letter from Bukoba...

from Aliabbas M. Ramji

Murabbi Alhaji Zulfikar Khimji visited Bukoba Jamaat last year and while the *Federation Samachar* covered the visit in the last issue, here are some details of the IZAAS project that was not earlier covered.

During the Chairman's visit, the IZAAS medical project organized a program to explain its activities to the Chairman and his delegation.

A group of business people of Bukoba started the IZAAS Project in 1997. This is the first time our jamaat members had an opportunity to see the work being done in the name of our beloved *Bimare Kerbala* (a.s). A total number of 143 people participated in this program.

Murabbi Zulfikar Khimji was shown 15 sewing machines received by PARTAGE (France) used for teaching the disabled the art of tailoring so that they can earn their own *halaal* rizk.

He was also shown chromium walking sticks, crutches and wheel chairs received as donations from various other organizations. He was also shown artificial limbs and a baking electric oven donated by Miss Asmina Hassanali Jiwa from Canada to establish a facility to make artificial limbs in Bukoba at the cost of US\$5000.

The visiting Chairman met

(continued on page 25)

Letter from Bukoba...

(...from page 24)

disabled who had undergone corrective surgery by Dr Thomas Setar (MD), a voluntary orthopedic surgeon, through the Rotary Club of Ohio (USA). He also saw various other disabled children who needed support.

Alhaj Amiraly Dato presented to Murabbi Zulfikar 200 pairs of sunglasses, 4 cartons of school books on behalf of WIPAHS for the needy disabled through the IZAAS Medical project. He also presented machinery worth US\$1800 which consisted of an ear-testing and a blood-testing machine donated by Thomas Seter MD of USA.

Then the children of Kashai orphans recited beautiful *Kasidas* and a Qur'an recitation.

The chairman of IZAAS Medical Project, Br. Raza Fazal thanked Murabbi Zulfikar for his visit to the program in Bukoba and he specifically thanked him for his commendable leadership of the Africa Federation.

He pointed out that Africa at present is facing a catastrophic problem of HIV (AIDS). He said the children that recited *Kasidas* are of parents who have passed away in AIDS and 30% of these children's are HIV positive.

He called on the Chairman to look into the AIDS problem facing Africa and to guide our community to work in harmony with other communities.

In his address, Murabbi Zulfikar said that he was very touched by what he had seen. He said that any assistance given to them will

Recording of data of our prominent personalities

The Africa Federation Web Team intends to launch a section on the Africa Federation Website to record the contribution of prominent personalities who have served the community in different fields over the years.

All jamaats are requested to appoint a member who can provide the Web Team with names and details of all such personalities within respective Jamaats. Under this new proposed section of the website, the Web Team would also like to carry details of prominent deceased members of our community.

When sufficient data is obtained, it is intended to carry a regular page in the *Federation Samachar* on past contributors of our community. The *Samachar* Web team and the Editorial Board of the *Federation Samachar* will exercise discretion on the merit of including names/details submitted. When in doubt the Board will liaise with the Africa Federation for advice.

The Secretariat requests your co-operation in providing these details which will become part of the history of our community for our posterity.

The AF Web Team also seeks the support and co-operation of all jamaats in informing us of deaths, jamaat activities, sporting and other activities/achievements etc. preferably with photographs.

Profiles and other details should be sent to:

Munir Daya – samachar@raha.com

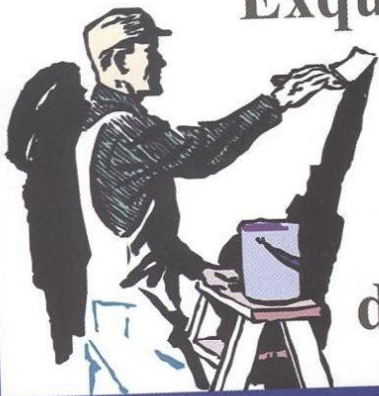
Fatima Patel – federation@raha.com

or can be mailed to:

The AF Secretariat
P.O. Box 6710
Dar es Salaam.

be repaid by Allah (s.w.t.) manytimes over. The next day he visited the orphans and was deeply disturbed to see 18 children living in a shabby dark unpainted house. He was more disturbed to see 50 orphans studying Quran under trees protected by tarpaulin from the hot sun.

From his own funds, in the memory of his late father, he donated US\$4000 for improving the housing facility. He also donated a portable mobile school 20 feet x 7 feet erected on steel pipes covered with a tarpaulin, complete with doors and windows.



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Ali Thawer **wins** **web award**

By Sakina Zainul Dattoo



Ali Thawer, the 17 year old sport loving teenager looks like the rest of his age mates in high school uniform. Like the rest of them, he was busy preparing for his Ordinary Level examinations at the Aga Khan Mzizima Secondary School. But unlike most of his classmates, Ali Thawer knows where he's going.

A recipient of the Golden Web Award 2002-2003 from the International Association of Web Masters and Designers, Thawer has lots of web designing experience under his belt at this tender age. He has worked with Tanzanian ISP's like Raha.com to design web pages for national and international companies. Emslies Travel and Vintage Holidays are just some of his clients, he says proudly.

In school and in his community, he handles major websites. Thawer breathes the computer software and spends every available minute playing with colours and designs.

It all started in the early eighties when Thawer's father brought home a computer when it was still a rarity to own one. "I said they (children)

might damage it and I'll repair it but they will learn skills," Gulam Raza Thawer, a computer personnel himself turned hotelier told the *Samachar*.

And the senior Thawer's bid to make his children computer literate seems to have paid off. His older son is also a computer graphic designer and has had a big influence on the younger Thawer who sees him as an inspiration. The award has cemented Ali's will to pursue computer graphics as his future career.

"I know graphics is getting saturated but there are many aspects to it... 3D for example is a new field requiring lots of physics and is challenging," Ali said.

"There are many graphic designers but few exceptional ones to do quality work," senior Thawer added.

And quality is Ali's intent. The Florida based Microsoft affiliated organisation first awarded him with a Junior Web Award and later cleared him to contest for the Golden Web Award that he won.

"I had to create a graphic web page and use different computer languages such as PHP, Java scripting and html... I was just browsing through the web and came to know about the competition," he said.

But this is not the end for the talented kid. The organisation

has now nominated him for the Diamond Web Award, which he says he'll work towards.

Ali also plans to take up more clients and more challenging projects before starting A' Levels. And his headmaster is fully behind him. "I have always known Ali as someone who designs our certificates. I am not surprised at all (that he won the award)... he has tremendous amount of skill, interest and hard work... Ali has shown a way on how to put computer to good use, it's typical of that family," Aga Khan Mzizima's headmaster Theo D'Souza said.

Fourth in the family of two sons and four daughters - all highly talented and bright, Ali nods with a big smile on his face as the father confesses that the secret for success lies in their mother's love.

"Security and support from the father and love by the mother... it is a team work but the major credit goes to their mother, that is an undeniable faith," senior Thawer said.

The winning Website can be found at www.Golden Web Awards.com.

The message to community youths is that there is a lot to do out there in this world. In addition to skills it also requires an initiative and drive to make achievements. In today's competitive world there is little time for youths to waste on trivial pursuits like television or paltry Internet surfing or endless chatting through the Internet. Positive results can only come through constructive time management.

Editor.

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Nairobi hosts Karibu Sports Festival

The 10th Sports Festival of the Africa Federation was held in Nairobi during the Christmas holidays from the 23rd of December to 31st December 2003.

The Sports Festival (Karibu Festival) was co-hosted by three Jamaats, Nairobi, Daresalaam and Madagascar in Nairobi. The Sameer Group under the leadership of one of Kenya's leading Industrialist, Naushad Merali was the main sponsor.

The Sports committee that coordinated the Festival comprised of:

Mohammed Kermali – Seconded by Nairobi Jamaat

Mukhtar Assaria – Nairobi Jaffery Sports Club Sports (NJSC) Committee

Moonawer Dhanani – Seconded by Nairobi Jamaat

Nazir Kalyan – Seconded by Nairobi Jamaat

Murtaza Kanani – Seconded by Africa Federation (AFED)

Amirali Nanji – NJSC Committee

Sajjad Manji – NJSC Committee

Kassim Rajani – Co-opted member

The Africa Federation also appointed a Steering Committee that comprised of:

Amirali Somji – Chairman, AFED Sports Council

Moonawer Dhanani – AFED Sports Council

Munir Bharwani – Seconded by Daresalaam Jamaat

Murtaza Kanani – Seconded by AFED

Over 420 participants converged

for the Karibu Sports Festival, participating in cricket, soccer, volleyball, golf, squash, tennis, table tennis and pool.

The participating teams were Madagascar, Dar es Salaam, Nairobi, Arusha, Songea, Bujumbura, Mombasa, Mumbai, Dubai, Toronto, USA, Moshi, and Stanmore. Bujumbura and Stanmore were debutants. The Toronto volleyball team was the main absentee this time.

The opening ceremony took place on Tuesday 23rd December, 2003 at the Jaffery Sports Club and many dignitaries were present. Dignitaries included invited guests from outside the community. The Chief Guest was Alhaj Zulfikar Khimjee and the master of ceremonies was none other than the very eloquent speaker, Manzoor Kanani.

In his address, Zulfikarbhai said, "The actual vision behind this Festival is the assimilation of talent interspersed with basic values and discipline. Sporting activities bridge the global communal divide and reduce the gulf by bringing together rich diverse cultures and ethos; thereby enriching the moral fiber of the community at large. Events such as these are a solid testimony of a vibrant community and are clear proof that the inter-communal harmonization process is protracted and holistic.

Remember we are here not to win trophies or shields but to win brotherhood, exchange business ideas and create unity amongst ourselves.

He expressed disappointment about the ladies festival not being held but said that rather than this

being a deterrent this was a challenge to host it in future."

For the first time in the history of the Sports Festival, cricket was played in coloured clothing and a white ball. The Karibu Festival also introduced the idea of providing all participants with playing clothings for all the field sports.

Ten teams participated in cricket, twelve teams in soccer, nine teams in volleyball and the rest of the sports had many individual participants.

The participants keenly contested for glories and cricket was won by defending champions Mumbai while Madagascar successfully defended the soccer title. Daresalaam regained the volleyball honours, which was won by absent Toronto at the previous Festival in Dubai.

Nairobi won the golf and table tennis events while Daresalaam also took the tennis trophy. Seeded players from Dubai were awesome and swept squash honours.

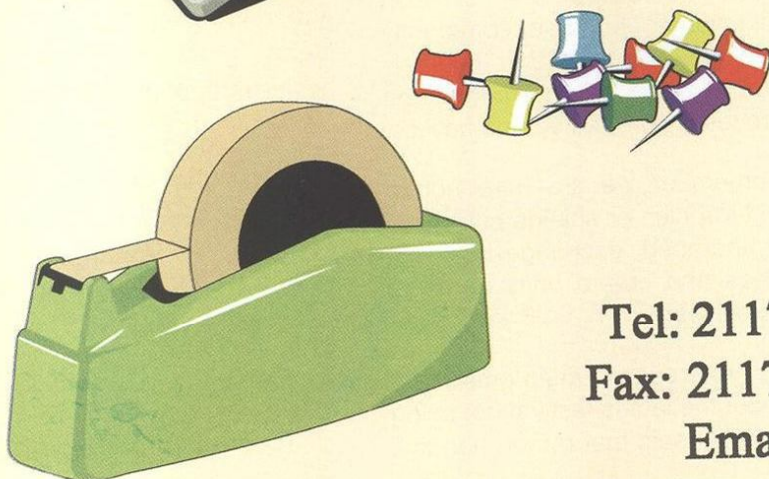
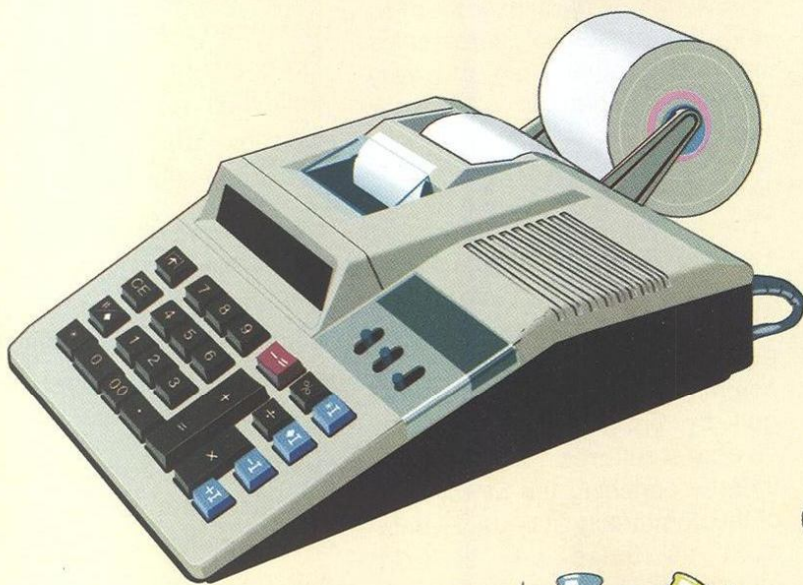
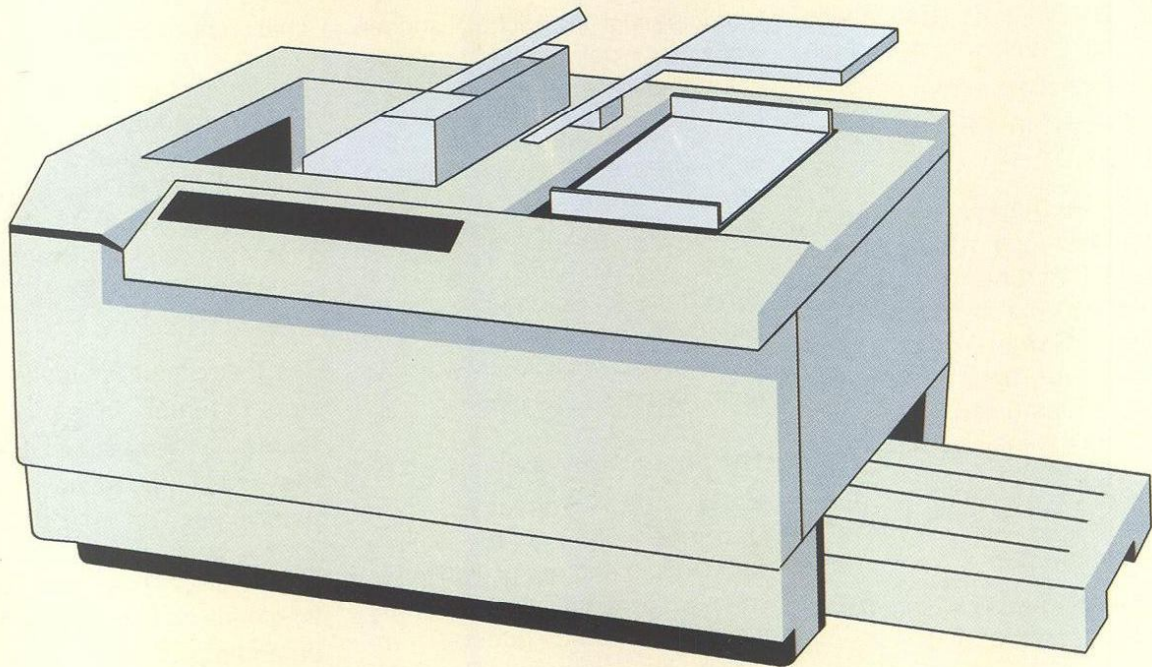
Apart from the various sporting activities, the participants and spectators had lots of interaction and networking in exchange of ideas plus educational and business opportunities.

The closing ceremony which took place at the Jaffery Academy court yard was well attended and the Guest of Honour was Alhaj Ahmed Hassam, the President of the World Federation.

He had the following to say in

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his message, "As we come together as individuals from various parts of the globe, it is essential that we recognise that uniformity of our opinions is not a prerequisite to unity. I do hope that the participants will take time to share their views and aspirations on how to respond to our rapidly changing needs. How exciting it would be when participants leaving Nairobi leave with a sense of learning from each others culture and experiences. And how satisfying it would be for the Africa Federation leadership that they had an opportunity to be the catalyst in this process."

At the closing, the Africa Federation Chairman, Zulfikarbhai Khimji called on youths to consider leadership roles in the community and asked the veterans to guide the youths and give them a legacy to lead. He also thanked all those who had played a part in organising the event for a job very well done.

The winners of the 10th AFED Sports Festival were as follows:

Cricket Winner (Team Trophy)

Mumbai

Cricket Winner (Individual Trophy)

Mumbai

Cricket Runner Up (Team Trophy)

Nairobi 1

Cricket Runner Up (Individual Trophy)

Nairobi 1

Cricket Best Upcoming Player

MohammedAbbas Virjee - Mombasa

Cricket Best Batter

Shiraz Syed - Nairobi 1

Cricket Best Bowler

Rizwan Batliwalla - Mumbai

Soccer Winner (Team Trophy)

Madagascar

Soccer Winner (Individual Trophy)

Madagascar

Soccer Runner Up (Team Trophy)

Mombasa

Soccer Runner Up (Individual Trophy)

Mombasa

Soccer Best Upcoming Player

Mujahid Khatau - Nairobi

Soccer Highest Goal Scorer

Husein Walji - 11 Goals - Dubai

Soccer Fair Play Award Team

Arusha

Volleyball Winner (Team Trophy)

Dar es Salaam Green

Volleyball Winner (Individual Trophy)

Dar es Salaam Green

Volleyball Runner Up (Team Trophy)

Songea

Volleyball Runner Up (Individual Trophy)

Songea

Volleyball Best Upcoming Player

Mujtaba Z Khimji (Nairobi)

Volleyball Best Player

Akil Gulamhussein (Dar -es-Salaam 'Green')

Squash Winner (Team Event)

Dubai

Squash Runner Up (Team Event)

Nairobi

Squash Winner (Individual Event)

Ali Dawood (Dubai)

Squash Runner Up (Individual Event)

- Riaz Jamal (Dubai)

Squash Upcoming player

Mohamed Haider Merchant

Tennis Winners Team

Dar-es-Salaam

Tennis Runner Up Team

Nairobi

Tennis Junior Doubles Winners

Abbas Juma and Mustafa Merali - Stanmore

Tennis Junior Tennis Winner

MohamedQasim Merali - Toronto

Tennis Junior Tennis Runner Up

Aliabbas Karim - Kampala

Table Tennis Winner Singles

Mohamedali Khimji - Nairobi

Table Tennis Runner Up Singles

Anis Kassam - Nairobi

Table Tennis Winners Doubles

Anis Kassam and Mohamedali Khimji - Nairobi

Table Tennis Runner Up Doubles

Hussein Juma & Fayaz Kermali - Stanmore

Table Tennis Plate Winner

Rizwan Dhalla - Songea

Table Tennis Plate Runner Up

Mustafa Merali - Stanmore (14

years of age!)

Pool Winner

Mohammedabbas Merali - Nairobi

Pool Runner Up

Abbas Kalyan - Mumbai

Golf Overall Winner

Imran Fazel - Nairobi

Golf Overall Runner Up

Mohamedraza Merali - Jimmy - Nairobi

Golf Overall Third

Azim Merali (Stanmore)

Golf Daily Winners:

Golf Day 1 - Winner Zaheerabbas Fazel - Nairobi - (39 Points)

Golf Day 1 - Runner Up Shakeel Jaffer - Daresalaam (34 Points)

Golf Day 1 - Nearest To Pin Zuhayr Munir Daya - Daresalaam

Golf Day 1 - Longest Drive Zaheerabbas Fazel - Nairobi

Golf Day 2 - Winner Mohamed Bashir Merali - Nairobi - (34 Points)

Golf Day 2 - Runner Up Mohib Chagpar - Stanmore - (32 Points)

Golf Lost on Countback - Hussein

Virji - Stanmore - (32 Points)

Golf Lost on Countback - Ebrahim

Jaffer - Nairobi - (32 Points)

Golf Day 2 - Nearest To Pin Shafiq

Kanji - Moshi

Golf Day 2 - Longest Drive Azeem Merali - Stanmore

Golf Day 3 - Winner Zuhayr Munir Daya - Daresalaam - (36 Points)

Golf Day 3 - Runner Up Shafiq

Kanji - Moshi - (35 Points)

Golf Day 3 - Nearest To Pin Hussein Virji - Stanmore

Golf Day 3 - Longest Drive Zuhayr

Munir Daya - Daresalaam

Golf Day 4 - Winner Gulamabbas K G - Mombasa - (33 Points)

Golf Day 4 - Runner Up Ebrahim Jaffer - Nairobi - (33 Points)

Golf Day 4 - Nearest To Pin Azeem Merali - Stanmore

Golf Day 4 - Longest Drive Hassan Fazel - Nairobi

The Sports Festival was a great success and there was unanimous praise for the hosts for the excellent arrangements made to cater for so many guests.

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Zanzibar

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Shinyanga
Songea
Singida
Tabora

Chairman and delegates globe trot for communal development



The Chairman signing a visitors book during one of his visits

The Chairman of the Africa Federation, Alhaj Zulfikar Khimji with different delegations visited many jamaats in different countries for community development.

We outline hereunder a brief report from each jamaat of his visits.

Accompanied by Hon Secretary Alhaj Barkat Rajani and Alhaj Gulamabbas Khimji the Chairman travelled from Nairobi on Saturday 6th September 2003 to Arusha.

ARUSHA

Here the Chairman addressed the jamaat on the same night after the Maulud of the Wiladat of our 9th Imam (a.s.), in his speech he highlighted various activities carried out successfully during his tenure including:

- * Settlement of the Somali refugees.
- * Purchase of property in Kampala in partnership with the host jamaat.

* Over 140 students on Federation's loans pursuing Degree Courses in various places throughout the world.

The Chairman and Hon. Secretary then had an extended meeting with the Managing Committee of Arusha Jamaat where issues of mutual interest were discussed and resolved. During the meeting the Chairman thanked Arusha Jamaat for hosting the Tabligh Board meeting in June 2003 and on the preparation underway for the AFED Karibu Sports Festival and requested for their financial and moral support.

MOSHI

The delegation visited Moshi on Sunday 7th September 2003. A meeting was convened with the Managing Committee of Moshi Jamaat where issues of mutual interest were discussed and the Chairman briefed the committee on the preparations underway for the AFED Karibu Sports Festival and requested for their financial and moral support.

After Zohrain Namaaz, the Chairman addressed Moshi Jamaat members again highlighting the various activities carried out during his tenure. Whilst appreciating their continued support during his term of office he requested the congregation to continue supporting the Africa Federation.

DAR-ES-SALAAM

The delegation travelled to Dar-es-Salaam on Sunday evening and on Monday 8th September 2003 held meetings with the Boards based in Dar-es-Salaam.

In the meeting with the Setwel Board, the office bearers were briefed on the exercise of issuance of permits for the Somali families which is virtually completed both in Arusha and Dar-es-Salaam. Our Somali brothers are now allowed to indulge in gainful employment as well as in business.

At the meeting with the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania, Zulfikarbhai discussed about the formation of the Central Bilal Board as decided at the Tabligh Board meeting held in Arusha in June 2003.

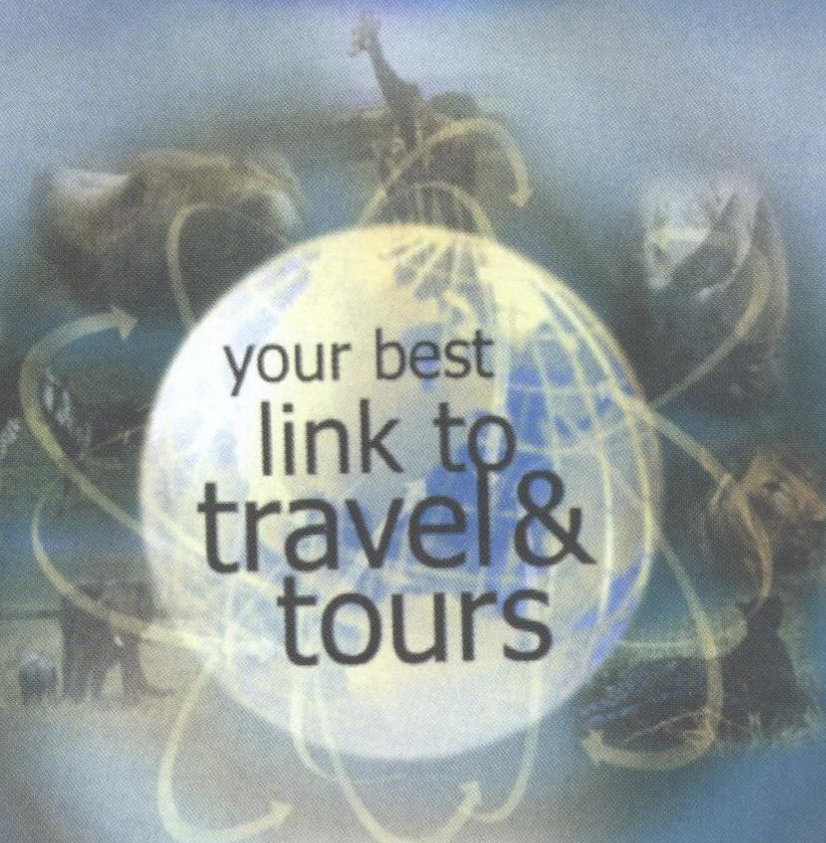
During the meeting with the Tanzania Trustees, the Chairman briefed them about the purchase of the property in Kampala in partnership with the jamaat. Discussion on the AF properties in Dar-es-Salaam was held at length; the office bearers were informed about the possible

(continued on page 35)



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construction of business outlets at the empty space at the UN Road property, replacement of Boarding House by Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat, purchase by AF of Chuma Road property owned by Mombasa Jamaat. The trustees were asked to look into the increase of rental income from the properties in Dar-es-Salaam as the returns from these properties are very minimal.

At a luncheon meeting with the Central Health Board, the office bearers were informed that Alhaj Mushtaq Damji had taken over as the Secretary as Alhaj Inayat Alidina the former secretary had migrated. He was requested to study the Terms of Reference prepared by the AF and submit his suggestions and comments to the Secretariat.

The Chairman and Hon. Secretary had a meeting with Alhaj Mohamed Nathoo, a councillor of Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat. The Chairman thanked Mohamedbhai for his continuous support and views. Mohamedbhai and the office bearers discussed issues regarding the Sports Council Bye Laws.

The Chairman met with the Editor of the *Federation Samachar*, Munir Daya who briefed him on the progress of the forthcoming issue of the *Samachar* scheduled for release in October and informed him that two more issues of the *Samachar* would be out by April 2004.

The Chairman also had a meeting with members of the Marriage Support Group of Dar es Salaam Jamaat and in their discussions the Chairman requested that the group members attending the Women's Convention organized by the WF in Dubai from Dar es Salaam Jamaat should represent AF.

Discussions also took place on

hosting an International Marriage Forum during the Sports Festival in Nairobi Dec 2003 and this Group from Dar es Salaam was requested to spearhead all the preparations and presentations. It was decided that subject to Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat's approval this Group may then become the AF Marriage Forum for all Jamaats in Africa.

At the dinner meeting hosted by Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat, the office bearers discussed various issues of mutual interest which included the purchase of a property in Kampala in partnership with the jamaat, the date of holding the forthcoming AF Triennial Conference and the World Federation Triennial and Constitutional Conference.

The Chairman requested for the blessing of Dar es Salaam Jamaat for the Marriage Support Group of Dar es Salaam Jamaat to represent the AF at the WF Ladies Convention. Zulfikarbhai also mentioned that as Setwel families have been issued with permits for their stay in Tanzania they be offered membership by the jamaats they are residing in and assistance be given to them in gaining employment and business opportunities.

The office bearers were informed that Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat is now offering the AF the Pop Inn Motel/Guest House as a Boarding House facility and that renovations works were underway.

On Tuesday 9th September, the Wiladat night of our 1st Imam (a.s.), the Chairman addressed members of Dar es Salaam Jamaat. He took this opportunity to thank the jamaat for their assistance and co-operation.

He then highlighted the accomplishments that he and his team have achieved which include:

* the entry of the Regional Council as a full member of the

AF;

- * increase in *huqooq* collection;
- * 90 Education scholarship loans have been granted during this period;
- * permanent residential status to our Somalia brothers;
- * Financial assistance for Medical Insurance Schemes and for critical illnesses has been extended to certain jamaats;
- * Formalization of property documents in Tanzania and increased rental income in Dar-es-salaam has been finalized. The same has been initiated in Kampala, Uganda;
- * Education investment in Kampala, AF has invested 25% share in a business property in Kampala and will share the income on a 50-50 basis with the Jamaat;
- * A comprehensive "Will" (Wasiyat) document with guidance and provisions has been published. This document incorporates the mention of our jamaats and institutions, should one decide to endow out of his/her one-third portion;
- * Formation of the Central Bilal Board (CBB). All Bilal activities in Africa Mainland and in the Indian Ocean Islands will now fall under the CBB which will be a policy making Board;
- * Launch of MAMAS in Tanzania. AF has committed US \$ 10,000 for primary and secondary education, which will benefit all those community children who cannot afford this education;
- * To create unity and enhance public relations, he has visited over 90% of our member Jamaats in Africa and the world over.

The Chairman then outlined his forecast for the remaining part of his term. This included:

- * Lead a delegation to the China Trade Fair;

(continued on page 37)

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(...from page 35)

* Participate in the World Federation Triennial Conference where the AF resolution calling for WF to dedicate their next term to Africa in assisting with Economical Upliftment, Housing Scheme and Education would be discussed;

* Hosting the Sports Festival in Nairobi in December 2003;

* Hosting an International Marriage Forum to coincide with the Sports Festival for interaction of our youth;

* Purchase of properties in Tanzania and UK which can be utilized by our students;

* Review of the AF Constitution by the Strategic Planning Committee;

* More interaction with our Community in the Indian Ocean Islands.

A meeting was held over dinner on Sunday 14th September 2003 with MAMAS Tanzania where discussions took place on the recommendations prepared by the AF on the concept and approach to the MAMAS Scheme with correct protocol and procedure being maintained.

It was agreed during the meeting that MAMAS Tanzania would collate full information on the applications already approved for subsidy by MAMAS from the Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat and forward the same to AF Secretariat which would accordingly proceed to issue remittance to Dar es Salaam Jamaat.

The Secretariat paid special acknowledgement to Anverbhai and Shabbirbhai Manekia and their families for making the stay of the Chairman comfortable in Dar es Salaam.

NAMPULA - MOZAMBIQUE

An AF delegation comprising of the following members flew to Pemba in Mozambique on 11th September and then drove to

Nampula:

* Alhaj Zulfikar Khimji – CM – AF

* Alhaj Barkat Rajani – HS – AF

* Alhaj Gulamabbas Khimji – Nairobi

* Alhaj Nazir Kalyan – Nairobi

* Alhaj Abbasali Nanji – Nairobi
Tabligh Board Member

* Dr. Asgher Moledina – Maputo

* Alhaj Jaffer Abdulhussein – USA

* Alhaj MohamedRaza Hassanali – Trustee – Tanga Jamaat

* Maalim Ahmed Issa Hasham – D'Salaam

* Alhaj Moh'dhussein Rajani (Haji Saheb) – D'Salaam

* Mrs. Khairun A. Alibhai – D' Salaam

The delegation paid visits to community businessmen and well wishers in Nampula on Friday 12th September and later the office bearers of AF had a meeting with the Managing Committee of Nampula Jamaat and Dr. Asgher Moledina. The Chairman took the opportunity to thank the Chairman of Nampula Jamaat, Alhaj Yusufbhai Nurmohamed for attending the 61st Supreme Council Session in Mombasa in April and was pleased that funds had been raised for the construction of the Mosque in Nampula. The Chairman expounded that he would wish to see Nampula Jamaat operating as all jamaats in Africa do with a constitution.

Yusufbhai advised that the present premises of the Mehfil was given to the Jamaat by him as *Waqf*. He agreed to transfer this property to Nampula Jamaat.

Nampula Jamaat arranged an Open forum for its members on Saturday 13th September where diverse issues related to the community and running of the

jamaat were raised by members. The AF Chairman and Hon. Secretary gave their comments and views and assured to look into the possibility of sending a Maulana for Ramadhan and later a Resident Alim.

Haji Saheb of WIPAHS – Dar-es-Salaam offered to sponsor 3 boys and 3 girls for a Crash Course in Dar-es-Salaam.

During the Open Forum the Chairman initiated an impromptu fund collection for Nampula Jamaat Mosque and US \$ 45,000 was pledged.

The delegation returned to Dar-es-Salaam on Sunday 14th September 2003.

KIGOMA

The Chairman Alhaj Z. Khimji accompanied by Alhaj Pyarali Shivji, President of Dare es Salaam Jamaat, Alhaj Hassan Remtulla and Alhaj Murtaza Jivraj visited Kigoma Jamaat on Monday 15th September 2003. The delegation visited the Mosque at Ujiji, had a meeting with the managing committee of Kigoma Jamaat and the Chairman addressed the members of the jamaat on the same night.

DUBAI

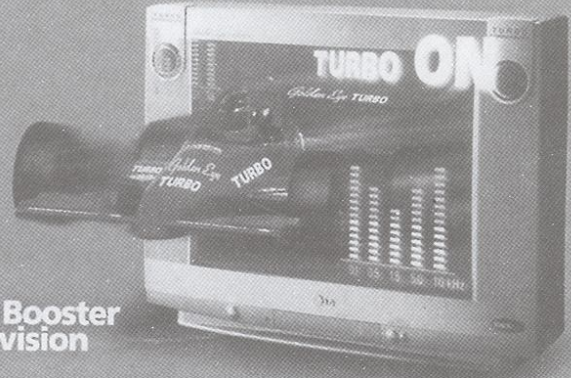
The Chairman of the Africa Federation Alhaj Zulfikar Khimji led a high powered delegation to Dubai to attend the 9th World Federation Triennial Conference. The delegation consisted of members and leaders from various jamaats of Africa like Madagascar, Dar-es-Salaam, Mombasa, Nairobi, Arusha etc. This was one of the strongest participation ever from the Africa Federation at the World Federation conference.

During the conference a resolution to eradicate poverty in

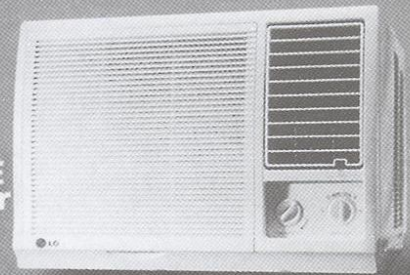
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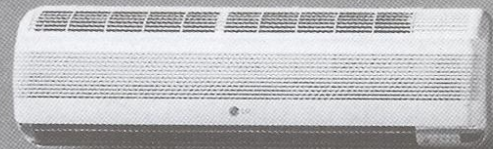
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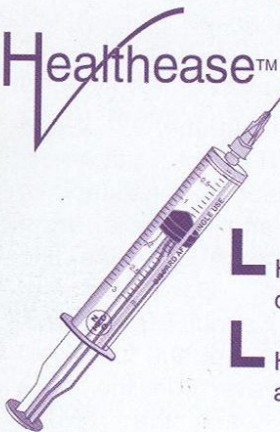
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Africa with a focus on three aspects namely education, housing and economic upliftment was presented. The resolution was unanimously passed by the conference with support from one and all regional Federations and the World Federation respectively.

Apart from the resolution, reports, progress and activities of various jamaats of Africa were presented and the conference was made aware of the work being done in Africa.

Arusha Jamaat presented a detailed plan for the hospital project in Arusha. The strategic plan of the Africa Federation was presented by young and dynamic Br. Mohamed Dewji supported Br. Kazim Fazal and Br. Hussein Dharsee.

The Chairman of the Africa Federation Youth network, Br. Murtaza Bhalloo represented the youths. Ladies from various jamaats were also present and played an active role in the ladies section. The presentation by the Dar-es-Salaam marriage support group especially by the ladies was made very confidently.

During the election of Executive Councillors, Africa netted two key positions duly elected by the conference, namely Alhaj Anwar Bhai Dharamsi from Dar-es-Salaam and Alhaj Elyas Bhai Roshanali Valli from Tananarive Jamaat, Madagascar. Others elected were Alhaj Gulam Bhai Dinani of USA, Alhaj Anverali Bhai Rajpar and Alhaj Masum Bhai Somji of Karachi and Dubai respectively. Moreover Alhaj Amir Bhai Somji of Arusha was nominated as Electoral Commissioner.

CHINA

After the World Federation Triennial Conference, as part of the resolution for economic upliftment of the community, the Chairman led a delegation of over 25 individuals coming from Kenya, Tanzania, Madagascar

and as far as Kinshasa, to the China Trade Fair held in Guangzhou (Canton) in October 2003.

The exhibits at the trade fair included raw materials, machinery and tools, electronics and electrical appliances, textiles and garments, foodstuff, native produce, animal by-products and medicines and health products, furniture and articles of daily use, gifts and decorations, office supplies and outdoor activity equipment, stone carvings and horticultural products.

This was the second trip to China, the first being organized in October 2002. The many successful business transactions accomplished during the Fair, important contacts and emergence of innovative ideas gained lots of praise and a hope for future such delegations to Exhibitions and Trade Fairs conducted round the Globe.

MOMBASA

On 20th December 2003, the Aga Khan community held the inauguration ceremony of the Aga Khan Academy in Mombasa. This important function was graced by His Highness the Aga Khan, the President of the Republic of Kenya His Excellency Mwai Kibaki who officially opened the Aga Khan Academy, the Minister of Education from Kenya, Hon. Professor George Saitoti; from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Minister of Higher Education Emile N'Goy Kassongo, Educational Advisor to the President, Sangwa Ibiy and ministers from various countries around the world attended this function.

The Chairman, Alhaj Zulfikar Bhai Khimji was officially invited by the Aga Khan community to attend the inauguration on behalf of the whole Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri Community together with the Chairman of Nairobi Jamaat, Alhaj Akber bhai Karawalli.

The Aga Khan Academy in

Mombasa is the first of its kind and will adopt the International Baccalaureate programme throughout from primary to higher secondary level. The campus will offer high quality facilities in terms of equipment, laboratories, libraries, professional development centres and residential accommodation as well. The Aga Khan Academy project cost around 12 Million US Dollars.

In view of the progress made by the Aga Khan community in the field of education, the Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri community is capable of creating a similar or even better educational infrastructure.

COUNCILLORS FORUM

Further to the resolution on poverty eradication in Africa focusing on Education, Housing and Economic upliftment passed at the World Federation Triennial conference, the Africa Federation during the 10th AFED Karibu Sports Festival in Nairobi invited all councillors to attend an open forum on 27th December 2003 to fully discuss the resolution. The forum was also graced by the presence of the World Federation Treasurer, Alhaj Azad Bhai Kanani.

The Forum started off with recitation of a few verses from the Holy Quran by Alhaj Gulamhussein Mukhtar followed by a welcome address by the Africa Federation Chairman, Alhaj Zulfikar Khimji and a few words by the Treasurer of the World Federation, Alhaj Azad Kanani.

The provision of housing for our community members was given significant priority. Jamaat representatives were requested to look into the housing requirements for their jamaat and report back to the Africa Federation Secretariat by the end of January 2004 as a full report was to be presented to the World

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Federation during the World Federation Executive Councillors meeting in March 2004.

Moving focus next to Education for the youths, the working of the MAMAS scheme was addressed as well as Higher Education funds provided by the Africa Federation where a maximum of USD 7,500 per year was counted as not being sufficient to meet expenses abroad. The idea of building our own institution for Higher Education was broached. Dar-es-Salaam having previously done a feasibility study on it was requested to once again look into it.

On the Economic upliftment sector it was proposed to construct small business units at strategic places and to sublet these to our community members at reasonable costs. The idea of trading and establishing business contacts within the community was also highly encouraged. On the same note, visits to trade exhibitions and fairs was discussed.

Another area of concern, medical facilities and insurance for our community members, was also addressed. Jamaats were asked to look into medical insurance coverage for their members.

As the forum drew to a close, the Chairman of Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat, Alhaj Pyarali bhai Shivji addressed the issue of nomination of the Chairman for the Year 2004 to 2007. Alhaj Pyarali Bhai proposed that Alhaj Zulfikar Bhai Khimji take up the Chairmanship for the next term in office and this proposal was seconded by Bukoba Jamaat and Nairobi Jamaat as well as all those present.

All in all, it was a fruitful forum with several innovative and useful ideas floated.

KARACHI

In order to enhance the economic conditions in Africa the Chairman of the Africa Federation, on 2nd January 2004, after the closing of the 10th AFED Karibu Sports Festival, travelled to Karachi to attend the 12th JIBA international Conference, where he witnessed the re-election of Alhaj Abbas Mooraj as the Chairman of JIBA International, Mr. Mohammed Ali R. Merchant and Mr. Ghulam Abbas Badami as Hon. Secretary General and Hon. Treasurer respectively for a second term in office. During the JIBA International Conference the Chairman acquired many innovative ideas ideal for our jamaats in Africa.

In Karachi, the Chairman had the opportunity to meet with officials of the Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri Pirhai Jamaat, the President Alhaj Dostmohamed Bhojani and his committee members and officials from Mehfile Murtaza as well. The Chairman also visited various projects of Pirhai Jamaat and Mehfile Murtaza such as Zainabiya Housing, Pirhai School and College, Mehfile Murtaza Primary, Secondary and Teachers Training Centre.

While in Karachi, the Chairman met Alhaj Mustafa Bhai Gokal. Mustafa Bhai has offered Islamic Studies to Africa Jamaats for *muballighs*. On invitation by the Chairman, which Mustafa Bhai Gokal has kindly accepted, he will avail more details on the same during the next Africa Federation Conference in April 2004.

ARUSHA

The Chairman's latest visit was to Arusha Jamaat accompanied by the Hon. Secretary Barkat Rajani to discuss the World Federation resolution on poverty eradication and capital projects with the managing committee. A meeting was also arranged in Arusha with

World Federation donates £20,000 towards Jaffery Kindergarten in Nairobi

The World Federation (WF) President, Ahmedbhai Hassam presided over the opening ceremony of the Jaffery Kindergarten in Nairobi in January this year. The Chairman of the Africa Federation, Zulfikar Khimji and the Chairman of Nairobi Jamaat, Akber Karawalli, were present with other community leaders and members of Nairobi Jamaat.

The WF President complimented the Nairobi Jaffery Education Board and the Nairobi Jamaat for the design of both the nursery and the larger complex.

The World Federation donated £20,000 to meet the shortfall on this project. Dr. Hassam acknowledged that the community worldwide puts an emphasis on education and said it is important to ensure that we provide both religious and secular guidance to our children.

He also highlighted the importance of providing for professional development of our teachers as well, be they teaching at our madaris or schools. To this effect he advised the Nairobi Jaffery Education Board to use the facilities of the Al Murtaza Professional Development Centre in Karachi, Pakistan who provide courses to ensure sustained quality improvement in teaching and learning at our schools.

the Chairman and Secretary of Setwel Board, Alhaj Anwar Bhai Dharamsi, Alhaj Azim Bhai Dewji, Br. Afzal Rajani respectively and the Tanzania trustee, Alhaj Shaukat Bhai Jaffer to view a property to purchase for Setwel settlement in Arusha.

Zulfikarbhai Khimji retains Chairmanship

For the first time in the history of the Africa Federation, there were two contestants for the Chairmanship position for the period 2004-2007.

The current Chairman, Zulfikarbhai Khimji was nominated by Dar es Salaam Jamaat while Dr. Asghar Moledina was nominated by Mombasa Jamaat.

The spirit of the contest was mature. With both candidates being seasoned workers of the Federation and active social workers, a close contest was anticipated.

Both contestants had a refined approach in the campaigns outlining what their visions were and each issued a booklet with their manifesto. Voting was open to only members of jamaats who had paid their annual dues.

Elections were conducted in 25 jamaats including the Regional Council of Madagascar. A total number of 2452 people voted throughout Africa of which 1443 voted for Dr. Moledina and 1009 voted for Zulfikarbhai Khimji.

The final results were declared on the basis of an electoral vote system wherein each jamaat has a voting right allocation. Irrespective of how many members vote in each jamaat, it is the voting right quota of each jamaat that counts to determine the winner.

Zulfikarbhai won the election after he obtained more votes in 14 jamaats to obtain 103 votes while Dr. Moledina obtained more votes in nine jamaats including the Regional Council (Madagascar) to obtain 75 votes. Votes were tied in Kinshasa and Mwanza.

The jamaats with the three highest voting right allocations are the Regional Council (65 votes), Dar es Salaam Jamaat (55 votes) and Mombasa Jamaat (16 votes).

After the election, the incumbent Chairman thanked all those who entrusted him and also stretched out a friendly hand to individuals and jamaats where he lost out on votes. He thanked all jamaats for conducting elections smoothly and thanked councillors, well-wishers and all those who assisted him during the election period.

He thanked the community in Africa for vesting confidence in him and assured all of his maximum efforts to seek community development.

Dr. Moledina congratulated Zulfikarbhai on his success and began his letter with Ayah No. 83 of Sure Al-Qasas as a *hadiya* to the Chairman for the ensuing term. *"That abode in the hereafter, We assign it for those who intend not to seek neither haughtiness nor any mischief on earth; and the future belongs to the God conscious."*

He said he looked forward to continue working for the common good of our community. He said he was confident that the Chairman would accord the same sort of cooperation to even the people and jamaats who supported him.

He said he would be in Nairobi for the forthcoming Triennial meeting and looked forward to discussing issues, objectives, problems, projections and dreams of the jamaats that he had the privilege and pleasure to meet during his campaign trail.

He said, "I am happy to take note of the number of popular votes cast in my favour. To all those who voted for me, I wish to thank them for the trust placed in me and the support given. By the very nature of the interpretation of our constitution,



Zulfikarbhai Khimji

the final results are declared on the basis of the electoral vote system."

Zulfikar Haiderali Khimji was born in Mombasa, Kenya in 1950. After completing his secondary education he ventured into the locksmith and security business. He rose steadily in business and today he is the Managing Director of a leading firm in Kenya, MPPS.

His community service dates back to 1980 when he was involved in youth activities. Excursions, expeditions and sports competitions were his favourite way of bringing together the youths of the time.

He was at one time heavily engaged in the Golden Crescent Group (GCG), a group that provided him an opportunity to refine his leadership skills. He then became the Chairman of Nairobi Jamaat and has been the Chairman of the Africa Federation since 2001. He is an active member of the Jaffery International Business Association (JIBA) and has on several occasions been invited as the chief speaker.

He has also given services outside the community in general by actively participating in International Service Clubs and organizations. Last year he was awarded the Highest Muhammadi Medal in Madagascar in recognition of his selfless services to the community.

We congratulate Zulfikarbhai on his re-election and congratulate Dr. Moledina for proving to be a worthwhile candidate.

UK professionals visit East Africa

In October 2003, ten UK professionals spent two weeks touring East Africa to provide first hand university and career advice to local communities. Under the auspices of the Careers, Education and Training Advisory Board (CETAB) of the World Federation, the professionals visited four cities and gave advice on choosing a university and a profession, gaining work experience and living in Europe.

The trip was planned in order to offer personal advice and experience to local East African communities as well as to provide insight to the visiting professionals on education, work and life in East Africa. Over two weeks, the group visited four cities - Nairobi, Arusha, Dar-es-Salaam and Mombasa. The group consisted of Shabbar Dhalla (Law); Murtaza Kanani (Dentistry); Gulamabbas Mohamed (Computer Science), Sameer Harji (Computer Science with Business & Management); Nadir Rajpal (Computing & Operational Research); Fatema Dato (Podiatry); Sidika Hudda (Human Psychology); Sukaina Jaffer (Podiatry); Sukaina Manekia (Radiography) and Fatim Kurji (Law).

Two surveys were conducted to gauge the public's reaction to the sessions that were organised in Nairobi. The majority of 14-17 year olds gave the maximum rating for the session, while in Mombasa, respondents absorbed all the information given to them and then requested for more. The sessions were thought to be extremely useful and it was felt that more professionals should be encouraged to visit. "We missed this opportunity in our time," said one 'over-35' participant.

The young professionals who participated felt a sense of personal achievement and learning. "Overall an incredible trip with good company..." said the group of professionals. "...the interaction amongst the group members was

exceptional. We learnt how fortunate we are compared to others in the world."

They added, "This was an opportunity to help others and give something back to the community. It was an experience to visit Africa and a chance to see our community at large."

One said, "I also had the opportunity to re-establish links with my extended family and meet relations that I did not know about. I would definitely recommend that this continue in the future with different groups."

Nairobi

The first session was attended mainly by students and was held at the Nairobi Jaffery Sports Club. Career talks on law, podiatry, psychology, radiography and IT-related careers were presented. This was followed by an interactive Q. & A. session. A second session was held the following day at the mosque, and was attended by community leaders, members of the Africa Federation Executive and Nairobi Jamaat and visiting dignitaries from Madagascar.

Four 'life preparation' talks were given, dealing with career choice, preparing for university, a woman's perspective on life while in university, and what working in Europe is like. As part of their tour, the visiting professionals attended the Al Ghadeer Clinic in the slums of Nairobi, and had a tour of the city and the local tourist attractions. A key highlight was a meeting with Mr. Justice Abdulrasul Lakha, a past Chairman of the Africa Federation, at the Law Courts in Nairobi.

Arusha

While visiting the Jaffery Academy in Arusha, a game was designed in order to break the ice and encourage students to open up and participate in the session. So successful was this that a number of questions were asked to the group which led to a packed session later

at the madressa. One-to-one meetings were also organised at various points so that students could direct their queries to the most appropriate professionals, while Q. & A. sessions were held at every major session to supplement the various talks that were delivered. The professionals also visited the Hemani Nursery school, the hospital and the dispensary run by the jamaat.

Dar-es-Salaam

Activities held included a seminar organised by the Higher Education Committee to offer careers' talks by the professionals and a trip to the Al-Muntazir Secondary School where talks on career choice and factors for success in life after university were presented. This was followed by an extensive Q&A session on various careers and routes to enter university. The group visited many of Dar-es-Salaam's institutions, including the hospital, madressa and the new Tableegh Centre that is currently being built.

Mombasa

The activities in Mombasa focused around career talks at the Jaffery School and the Jaffery Academy, followed by an open forum offering one-to-one sessions. There was a presentation on IT at the Jaffery Institute for Professional Studies and an informal forum held for the visiting lady professionals to talk to the ladies and answer their questions. Finally, there was an informal meeting with leaders of the community at the residence of the chairman of the Education Board of Africa Federation, AIHaj Iqbal Sunderji. The professionals were also able to visit one of the Bilal centres run by the Bilal Muslim Mission of Kenya to witness the school in progress.

Samachar seeks growth in global distribution



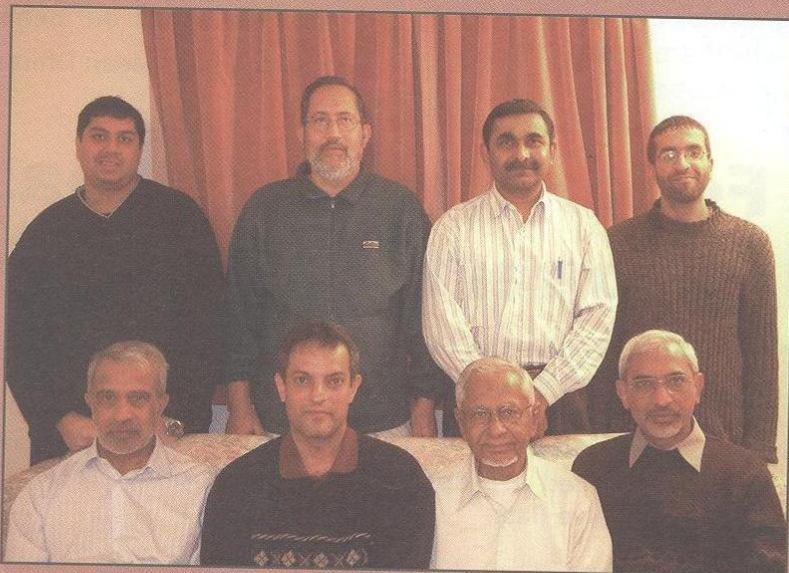
The *Samachar* Editor with members of the World Federation during his visit to Stanmore last December.

In an effort to boost the global distribution of the *Federation Samachar*, Editor Munir Daya had a meeting with members of the World Federation at Stanmore Jamaat in London and then proceeded to Toronto where a new North American team was formed with due support from NASIMCO.

In London, discussions were focused on previously outlined objectives of making the *Federation Samachar* the community's global media. The World Federation currently issues its press releases through the World Federation website.

During the discussions, the Editor said that one objective of the *Samachar* Editorial Board is to have an effective worldwide readership. He said the distribution in Europe falls far short of demand because postal or parcel rates to Europe are expensive. He suggested that a European Edition of the *Samachar* be launched similar to the North American Edition being printed in Toronto.

He said that this could be done under the World Federation if the previous objective of making the *Samachar* the official worldwide community media was to be fulfilled or alternatively could be done through the involvement of the Council of European Jamaats.



The North American *Samachar* team formed in Toronto in December last year. Front row, from left to right, Ghulam Sajan, Munir Daya, Baqir Alloo, Bashir Valji. Back row, from left to right, Amirali Virjee, Sabi Ahsan, Shabbir Mohamed, Munir Chagpar.

Samachar and a member of the previous North American Editorial team. Prior to the formation of the new team, Editor Munir Daya met Mohsinbhai Kamalia, the treasurer of NASIMCO to seek network distribution support. Mohsin bhai assured the Editor of Nasimco's support. It was also agreed that more Nasimco news would be carried in the North American Edition.

Meanwhile in Dubai, the *Samachar* has appointed Abdulhusein Tejani and Ebrahim Tejani to be the distributors of the magazine there.

The World Federation President, Dr. Ahmed Hassam acknowledged the role of the *Federation Samachar* and asked for some time during which he could allow his media personnel to come up with a workable proposition.

Presently the Editorial Board has appointed Bashirbhai Tejani to sell copies of the *Federation Samachar* in Stanmore and to other jamaats in Europe.

In Toronto, a new North American Edition team was formed following a meeting on Sunday 14th December, 2003 at the residence of Baqirbhai Alloo, a regular columnist for the

Nairobi to host Council Session and Conference

The 22nd Triennial Conference of the Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaats of Africa will inshallah commence from Friday 23rd April 2004 (4th Rabi-ul-Awwal 1425) in Nairobi, Kenya and will continue up to completion of the agenda. The 62nd Session of the Supreme Council will inshallah precede the 22nd Triennial Conference.

The Chairman's keynote address will be delivered on the opening night during which he is expected to highlight the achievements of the entire term and the plans for the forthcoming term.

Visiting dignitaries will also speak on the opening night. These will include the President of the Regional Council of Indian Ocean Islands, representatives of the World Federation and any other designated representatives or dignitaries from overseas.

The opening night will also have the election of the Vice-Chairman and Hon. Treasurer and the appointment by the Chairman of the Hon. Secretary, Hon. Asst. Secretary and Hon. Asst. Treasurer for the ensuing term 2004 to 2007. There will also be an election of six trustees, two from Kenya, two from Tanzania and two from Uganda.

The following resolution has been received from the Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaat of Dar-es-Salaam which will be placed for discussion and consideration at the triennial conference.

Resolution:

It is hereby proposed to amend

the percentage of the respective jamaat's contribution from the present 50% of the total loan granted to 20% of the total loan granted.

Aim and Objective of the resolution:

With the reduction in the inflow of funds in the form of donations and charities to jamaats due to decline in economic conditions, it is not possible for the jamaats with high student population, to cater for students loans if 50% is to be contributed.

It is therefore felt that reduction in the percentage of the contribution from the present 50% to 20% would ease the jamaat's burden considerably and enable the jamaats to cater for more students loans.

It would also leave adequate funds for other needs such as housing, medical, welfare and tabligh which are an integral part of jamaat responsibilities.

Hyderys organise lecture for youths

The Tanga Hyderys committee organized a lecture session for youths of our community aged 10 years and above on Sunday, 29th February 2004 at the Imambara. The committee requested the guest Alim from Pakistan, Maulana Mohammed Shariff Gulam Hyder to conduct this lecture session.

All participants were given a notebook, pen and a question paper (to raise questions) that was prepared in advance by the Hyderys Sports Committee. The session drew 31 youths and elders.

Br. Yusuf M. Y. J. Dhirani gave a short speech to welcome all to the session following which the Maulana proceeded to answer nine out of thirteen prepared questions due to lack of time to answer all questions. The Maulana answered questions to the satisfaction of those present. The session concluded with a vote of thanks delivered on behalf of the committee by Hassan Dhirani.

Federation purchases property in Arusha

The Africa Federation Chairman, Zulfikar Khimji accompanied by the Hon. Secretary, Africa Federation Tanzania Trustees and the Setwel Board Chairman traveled to Arusha on Saturday 10th January 2004 where together with the Africa Federation Councillor, Alhaj Gulamhussein Mukhtar they visited a property on sale in a prime area. The property comprises of twelve flats.

After deliberate discussions and negotiations, purchase of this property by the Africa Federation was finalized at T.shs 121 M. All necessary documents and transfers have been made in the name of the Registered Trustees of The Federation of K.S.I. Jamaats of Africa.

A quantity surveyor is expected to visit the property and provide details and the estimate of the minor renovations that is to be done which is expected to be completed within six months. The annual income of this property is expected to be USD 30,000.

Letter from Mwanza.



Regional Sheikh, Salum Hassan Faraji addressing the Idd el Haj Baraza.

Mwanza resident Alim, Mowlana Sayyed Arifali Naqvi opened the Bakwata organised Idd Baraza with recitation of verses from the Holy Qur'an and duas.



All Muslim sects in Mwanza decided to pray Idd-el-Haj namaz together at the Nyamagana Stadium. Our Jamaat was represented by the Chairman, Alhaj Sibtain Meghjee, Alhaj Hussein Manji Pirbhai, Sheikh Mohammed Moledina and Alhaj Zulfikar Karim.

In the afternoon on Idd, BAKWATA organised an Idd Baraza. Our resident Alim, Sayed Arifali Naqvi opened the Baraza with recitation of verses from the holy Qur'an and duas. Sheikh Bakir of Bilal Muslim Mission, Mwanza addressed the congregation inviting them to visit the Bilal Library and called on women to participate in sewing classes. He also urged unity amongst Muslims.

Meanwhile in Muharram the Bilal Centre organised daily majlises in the evening followed by Nyaz.

Tanga Awards



The Ja'afery Medresah Administrator, Br. Hasnain Ahmed was awarded the Abul-Fazl award by Maulana Saheb Sayyed Nasir Mehdi for his dedicated services to the Ja'afery Madrasah on Eid night in Tanga. The award was kindly donated by the family of late Mr. and Mrs. Mohamedali Kara of Tanga.



The Hyderys Sports Chairman, Shabbir M. Sachoo (in red) was awarded the Abul-Fazl recognition award from the Hon. Chairman of Tanga Jamaat, Br. Mahmood Y. J. Dhirani on Eid night in Tanga for his dedicated services to youths and the Hyderys Sports team. The award was kindly donated by the family of late Mr. and Mrs. Mohamedali Kara of Tanga.

Suhaila Alloo wins second international competition



Mwanza's Suhaila Alloo won the second prize of the annual 32nd International Letter-writing competition for youths organised by the Tanzania Posts Corporation. She was the first winner in Tanzania and second in the world and was awarded a silver medal, diploma and two albums of postage stamps by the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in October, 2003.

The UNESCO jury had the following comments on Suhaila's write-up, "*Considering the young age of the author, this composition is remarkable for the way it addresses vital issues confronting modern Africa today.*"

Her write-up was on 'The Future'. This follows:

'The Future'

Everyone dreams about the future. A perfect place to live, a road that is filled with happy people dancing, cherished with sweet sounds of laughter. However this is all a dream, and how do we make this dream a reality? I am writing this letter to tell you how we can build a better future.

Everyone in this world matters. I am a 12-year-old girl, studying in small town called Mwanza. I believe that I have a say and I can contribute my opinion and share my thoughts with you. My future is important and so is everybody else's. As a child I reckon that every child on this planet has rights to study, be

loved, to have medical care, to play and to eat and drink. Individually I have all the above mentioned rights, but I still care.

Everyday I wake up to see my people lying in the road. Young children are working to keep their families safe, saving them from starvation. They have to give up school, and fun to help their families. A kids life is to have fun, play and laugh everyday but I don't always see that happen.

A recent news article shows that child soldiers are forced to fight, under 18, in Nigeria and Congo. This year in Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe 14 million people, half of them children, are at risk of starvation. In Zimbabwe there is a huge food crisis. People are running out of staple food such as maize. The food needs to be distributed equally and two million people are at risk. There is a lot of conflict between the black and white farmers about the land. It was promised that white-owned farmland would be given to blacks, however after 20 years, 70% of farmland is still owned by whites. Those people need that land. You can't just let whites keep that land. Distribute it equally.

Starvation and famines are not the only reason people are dying. One of the most problematic diseases is HIV/AIDS. This is killing thousands of innocent lives. From the ages 15-49, 1 in 4 people in Africa are living with HIV. There are several reasons for this. One of the reasons is linked to starvation. In most families the man is very important. He brings in money for the family. After his death the family is left with absolutely nothing. People are so desperate

that they sell of land, or/and exchange sex for food or cash. Many children are forced into prostitution. It tears my heart to tell you this but it is not like these people have a choice. They do this to survive. Why should they have to do this?

Many of these problems can be solved or reduced. Medical care needs to be improved. May be not HIV/AIDS but diseases like polio, measles and cholera can all be treated and cured. There is nothing wrong in asking for help. Ask for help from other countries. 27% of kids in Tanzania are under weight. 21% of men and 43% of women cannot read and write, whilst 20% of the world has no water supply.

People have their whole lives ahead of them. It will take time and money, but the earlier we start the better. We need to wake up now and let the morning begin. This country is my home and there is no better place.

In the past few paragraphs I have been talking about Africa. Globally we are facing a lot of issues. War! Why war? America was bombed, and it was so dramatic. September 11th changed so many lives. Because of two countries and their hatred towards each other causes death of loved ones. No one benefited from this incident and the hatred still kills people. We are all made from God and one day we have to go back to Him leaving all our money and hatred.

Human rights

It doesn't matter what colour or what sex you are. Some people believe that white people are more superior to black people. It

(continued on page 47)

prize in tion

(...from page 46)

is racism and totally unacceptable. In the end each one of us has a heart and harsh words hurt.

Environmental issues also play a very big role in this world. The amount of pollution causes several diseases. There are a number of things that can be done to reduce pollution. Firstly, drivers should have to obey speed limits. Littering should be stopped. Posters should be put and trash cans should be increased. Deforestation, desertification and global warming all cause a number of problems.

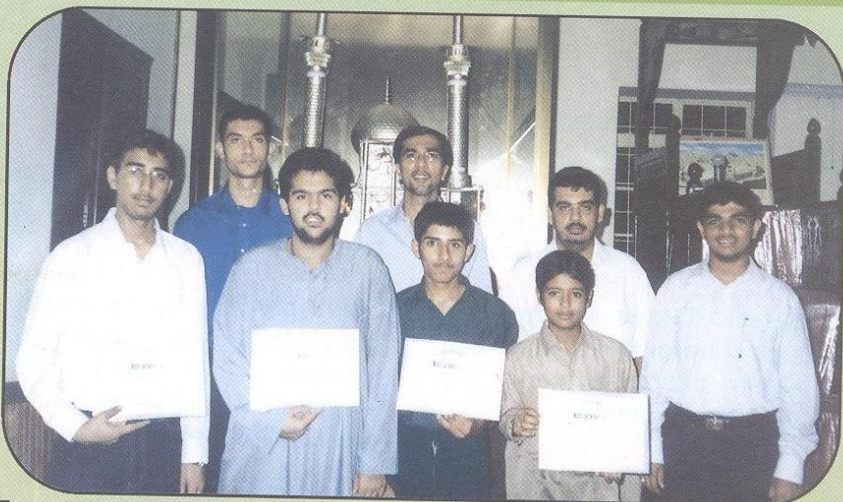
I know it is not easy and it will take time but if unity and harmony are produced we can do it. It will never work unless every person helps and makes this world a better place. Life is too precious to see it fly by. I want everyone to feel what I feel. In Africa I see people's lives fly by and I know it is the same around the world.

However racism and prejudiced people should be banned. We all have to learn how to live in harmony. The oneness has to be built. After all it is everybody's future. We can create love. We can develop and form new ideas. We can fabricate new life and construct happiness. Let's put aside all grudges and forget war. Lets join hands and all hope for a better future.

I have connected my words to your heart. Every word on the pages has a value. I hope you feel what I feel after reading this letter. My whole heart and soul is given to you. I love my world and I love my people. My hand is out there with many other hands. We are all waiting for yours. Come and we will put together a new world."

Suhaila is only 12 years old and studies at Isamilo School in Mwanza. We congratulate her for this magnificent achievement that also speaks well of the school she attends.

Tanga Hyderys organise Treasure Hunt ...



Treasure Hunt winners: Front - left to right - Mohamed Ramzan Sachedina (winner), Hussein Walji (runner up), Mujahid Walji (3rd winner) and Hasnein Bandali (youngest participant). Rear - left to right - Hasan M. Dhirani (Sportsmaster), Shabbir M. Sachoo (Sports Chairman), Mustafa G. Kara (Sports Secretary), Feizan S. Sachoo (Sports Treasurer).

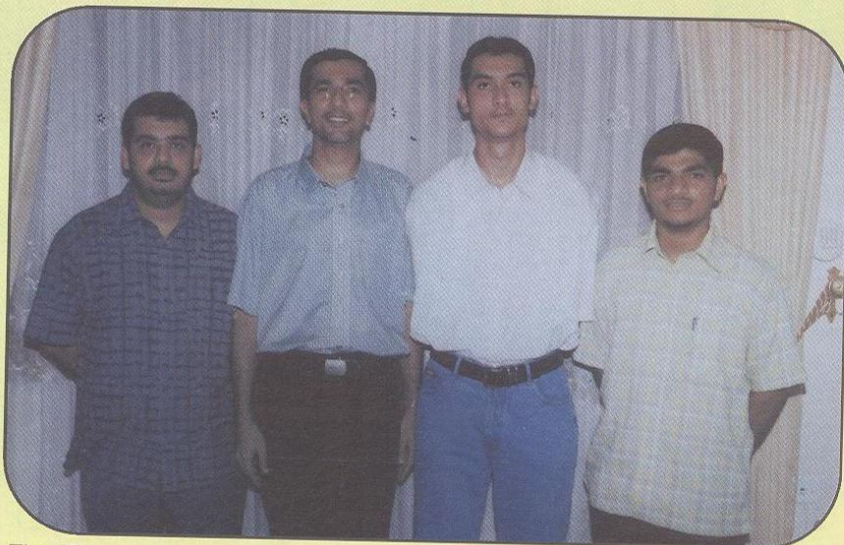
Hyderys Tanga organised its first ever Treasure Hunt competition on 9th November, 2003 that was sponsored by the family of late Zainabhai Moh'draza Sachoo. Fourteen youths participated. Participants were given twelve questions to answer in 1 hour and 15 minutes by roaming about in the Tanga Municipality on their bicycles. The winners are pictured above.

The presentation took place on Eid night when all winners including the youngest participant, Hasnain Bandali were awarded. A serial number lucky draw for the participants was also done and Hussein Bandali was the lucky winner. Consolation prizes were awarded to all participants.

.....organise Juniors volleyball event

In November last year, Hyderys Tanga organised the first ever junior volleyball competition that drew eighteen participants divided into three teams - Hydery Heroes, Hydery Stars and Hydery Warriors. Hydery Stars defeated Hydery Warriors 3-0 in the final. The event was sponsored by Hussein M. Yusufali & Co.

The Hyderys Sports Committee



The Tanga Hyderys Sports Committee (Jan 2004 - Dec 2005) - From left to right: Mustafa G. Kara, Vice Chairman, Shabbir M. Sachoo, Sports Chairman, Hassan M. Dhirani, Secretary, Feizan S. Sachoo, Treasurer.

Dar hosts exciting cycle race

On 21st September, 2003 a total of 144 participants from the age of 10 years to 55 years took part in a fund-raising cycle race for the scouts.

They were divided in to three age groups between ten and thirteen, fourteen and seventeen and eighteen and above.

The race which covered about 14 km started outside the Dar es Salaam Mosque after Fajr prayers and ended at the residence of the Dar Jamaat's Past President, Asgharbai Bharwani.

The first cyclist left the mosque at exactly 7 am and the first cyclist to cross the finishing line arrived at about 7.34 am followed by others. Almost all participants finished the race though some faced some difficulties before finishing.

After the race there was a small presentation held in the presence

of Jamaat office-bearers and some prominent members of our community plus parents (both mothers and fathers) of the participants.

After speeches by the patron of the cycle race, Alhaj Akber Hameer and our Jamaat President, Alhaj Pyarali Shivji the presentation was done to winners who were:

Group A Above 18 yrs

1. Wajidali Fazal
2. Hassan Sadikali
3. Murtaza Ganji

Group B 14 TO 17:

1. Mujahid Esmail
2. Zuheir Saleh
3. Shaneabbas Nayani

Group C 10 To 13

1. Abbas Bachoo
2. Sahil Somji
3. Javed Virjee

Special presentations were made to Mushtaq Fazal for being the oldest participant and to Ain Shariff.

STOP PRESS

Chairman visits Madagascar

In April, 2003 after returning from the Toronto World Federation Executive Council Meeting, the Chairman of the Africa Federation, Zulfikarbhai Khimji paid a seven day visit to Madagascar to establish and offer assistance to victims affected by the recent cyclone that hit the Island.

The Chairman visited various jamaats including Morondava, Majunga and Tulear which were more affected by the cyclone.

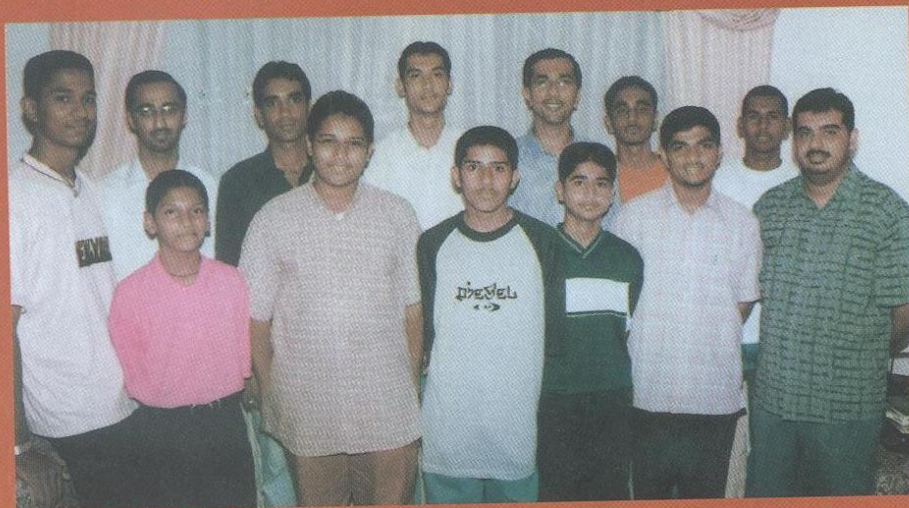
The joint venture fund raising appeal is still open and those who wish to donate are requested to forward the funds through the World Federation, NASIMCO or the Africa Federation.

It is our religious obligation to remember our brothers and sisters in Madagascar in their time of need.

Youths take up the Kilimanjaro challenge

On 9th December, 2003 a total of 28 youths including 18 scouts and cubs departed from Dar es Salaam to Arusha for an expedition to climb the Kilimanjaro mountain. They spent two nights in Arusha and four nights on the mountain. Zaheer Nurmohammed reached Gilmanns point while the rest were between Kibo and Gilmanns point.

The Hyderys Sports Committee with sub committees.



From left to right, front row: Hanan Hamidu, volleyball vice captain, Akber S. Khakoo, football juniors captain, Alihussein S. Khakoo, fees collector, Mujahid M. Walji, fees collector, Muntazir A. Bhimjee, football juniors vice captain, Feizan S. Sachoo, sports treasurer and Mustafa G. Kara, sports vice chairman.

From left to right, rear row: Mohamed A. Dhirani, volleyball juniors captain, Sadik F. Manji, football seniors vice captain, Hassan M. Dhirani, sports secretary, Shabbir M. Sachoo, sports chairman, Abbas Peera, football seniors captain and Feisal Abdillahi, football co-ordinator seniors/juniors.

10th Karibu Sports Festival - WF Youth Network Desk sponsors Akhlaaq awards



The President of the World Federation, Dr. Ahmed Hassam presents Ali Shaukathussein Jaffer the 'Akhlaaq' award.

A KIND OF LANGUAGE By Abida Azim, Tanga

If anger is the language of the mind;
 Then patience is the language of the heart;
 If ugliness is the language of misery;
 Then beauty is the language of humanity;
 If sun-rise is the language of the dawn;
 Then sun-set is the language of twilight;
 If the world is the language of living;
 Then dying is the language of eternity;
 If education is the language of development;
 Then illiteracy is the language of poverty;
 If sadness is the language of death;
 Then happiness is the language of life;
 If dreaming is the language of thought;
 Then performing is the language of reality;
 If love is the language of the heart;
 Then poetry is the language of beauty.

Very rarely do we get the opportunity to congregate in events like the 10th annual Africa Federation KARIBU sports festival in Nairobi and it becomes so much more important to make the most of it. Events and gatherings of this nature provide us with joy, anxiety, pressure, hope, and expectations. During the festival, which lasted 168 hours, teams as well as individuals endured a test of performance, patience, and principles. This test took place both on and off field and everyone had to ensure that they did their utmost to pass it in both arenas.

The gathering attracted people from various backgrounds and languages. Differences in these areas many times create differences in understanding, attitudes, and behaviour. However, we share our faith, which teaches us brotherhood. As we study, analyse and try to understand the strategy and game of upcoming opponents, we have to understand our fellow brothers' feelings, behaviours, and emotions. There is a lot of tension on the ground, pitch, and court, and it is up to us to manage that so we do not break the principles of good conduct. Competition will always be there, and it has to be there, as long as it is healthy and helping each of us to excel.

The objectives of the World Federation Youth Network Desk (YND) include ensuring preservation and enhancement of the religious and spiritual foundation level of the youth of our community, including Akhlaaqiyat in all arenas. The WF-YND sponsored awards in the category of "An Exemplary Mark of Akhlaaq amongst the youths".

The overall trophy was presented to Ali Shaukathussein Jaffer of Dar es Salaam. The President of the World Federation Dr Ahmed Hassam said "Ali is a 23 year old young man, born and brought up in Tanga, now living in Dar-es-salaam. Currently, he is part of the ghusl committee in Dar-es-salaam. He has represented the cricket team there and is also normally active in football, tennis and swimming. I am delighted that the community leadership has nurtured individuals like Ali as they are potential leaders of tomorrow."

Other 'Exemplary Mark of Akhlaaq' awards presented to:

| | |
|------------|-----------------------|
| Nairobi | Shahbaz Mira |
| Madagascar | Rajabali Sheikh |
| Arusha | Juma Mussa |
| Dubai | Mohamed Mazhar Somji |
| Bujumbura | Mohamed Abbas Mohamed |
| Mombasa | Mohamedabbas Virjee |
| Stanmore | Mohamed Iqbal Kassam |
| Toronto | Akil Najafi |
| U S A | Nabeel Meghji |
| Songea | Roshan Husain Dhalla |
| Mumbai | Akil Merchant |

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Toronto hosts Executive Council Meeting

The first Executive Council meeting of the World Federation for the new term of 2003 - 2006 was held on Saturday 20th March 2004, at the newly constructed Masumin Centre at Brampton, Ontario, Canada, following the forums by the Boards and Desks of the World Federation the previous evening. This was a well-attended meeting with representations from North America, Africa, Europe and Dubai. The community leaders not only engaged themselves in deliberating upon the challenges and opportunities, but also availed themselves of the opportunity to bond and network with the team from the Secretariat, including the Office Bearers and Board Chairpersons.

State of the Community Address

The President of the World Federation, Dr. Ahmed Hassam opened the Executive Council meeting with welcoming remarks and thanked the Brampton and Toronto Jamaats for their hospitality. In a succinct address, he outlined the recent activities of the World Federation, which included the Bam and Madagascar relief efforts.

In a momentous announcement, he informed a delighted house that following extensive groundwork, the Presidents of the World Federation and NASIMCO and the Chairman of the Africa Federation had agreed in principle to work under a single Ijaza for the collection and disbursement of Khums. The

modalities for this will inshallah be finalised in due course. This is a historic event, which will centralise the contributions of our community and maximize our potential to serve. This augurs well for the community as it will enhance harmony and cooperation between the World Federation and the member regional bodies. Dubbed as the 'Brampton Accord', it was all the more symbolic that it came on the fourth death anniversary of Marhum Mulla Asgher, who had always strived towards such a goal.

The President also acknowledged the efforts of Dr. Hasnain Walji, the former President of the World Federation for having laid the groundwork on centralisation and strategic planning which had borne fruit resulting in a number of initiatives during the first five months of office during the current term.

Strategic Planning: Update

Brother Abbas Kanji presented the action plans that have been prepared by the boards and desks of the World Federation. The plans, which have been developed to implement the strategic plan, will help the World Federation prioritise and focus its efforts, allocate resources, and create a culture of accountability and cooperation. There was discussion after the presentation, and this was conducted using the 'Smart Methodology' for objective setting. The discussion also

highlighted the need for cooperation between boards with common objectives.

Bam Earthquake Report

Brother Mohsin Kanji, the Executive Councillor of the World Federation presented a report about the conditions in Bam following the earthquake, and the relief efforts currently underway. The Bam initiative made two important statements in the mode and manner of the function of the WF and its endeavours of sharing of responsibilities. Firstly, the manner in which the project was handed over to the nearest jamaat, Dubai to assess and implement the project. This quick action enabled the World Federation to be the first Shia organisation to visit the devastated areas to assess the situation on the ground. Secondly, the form of emergency assistance by way of temporary Husayniyas for the month of Muharram, which was most timely and unique, not even thought of by the Iranian authorities.

Brother Mohsin also pointed out the admirable level of cooperation between NASIMCO, World Federation and the Africa Federation in this project.

Utilising Huqooq Funds

Sheikh Mustafa Jaffer elaborated on the various kinds of *huqooq* funds, and described the various processes necessary for utilisation of those funds. From

(continued on page 52)

(..from page 51)

his research, it transpired that the largest proportion of funds collected by the World Federation was khums money.

What has to be understood is that most of these funds are to be utilised in projects and places where the Imam (AS) would be pleased. In discharging our responsibilities and identifying the projects the key is prioritisation. We as a community cannot fulfil the needs of the whole world and therefore have to determine the policies which will guide us in identifying the most important ones from the less important ones. However, while determining priorities, it is also necessary to bear in mind that *huqooq* funds cannot be used exclusively for the benefit of the Khoja community.

Assessment of Capital Projects

Presenting a paper, Councillor Masum Somji stated that following the last World Federation Conference in Dubai 2003, it was agreed that information on all our capital projects be gathered and the data presented at the 1st Executive Council meeting.

Assessments have revealed that currently the total cost of the outstanding and envisaged projects in the community totals over US \$ 70,000,000. The Council directed the office bearers not to approve any new capital projects until the Executive Council has approved the recommendations from the Capital Projects Working Group.

Shared Learning Sessions

These sessions are a new agenda designed to share best practices within our community. The example of IEB was used. Brother Mujtaba Dattoo, demonstrated how Madrasah teachers who were brought together at several retreats,

shared their teaching experiences. The retreats were also seen as an opportunity to bring together the various generations of Madrasah teachers and to meet with scholars and authors to share best practices. Brother Nisar Sheraly, the religious coordinator for the World Federation outlined on how he plans to collect data from our Educational Institutions and address the needs of our community in these areas.

Approval of Minutes, Financial Report and AOB

The minutes of 7th Executive Council Meeting held in Madagascar in February 2003 were approved.

The financial report provided an in-depth detail of all World Federation expenditures for the year ending December 31, 2003.

The 'Any Other Business' section began with an update from Brother Zahir Janmohamed, who spoke about External Liaison. The Chairman of the Africa Federation, Brother Zulfiqar Khimji thanked the audience for the generous donation that was given for the Africa Economic Upliftment. In closing the session, the former President of the World Federation, Dr. Hasnain Walji gave a moving memorial to Mulla Asgharali M M Jaffer to mark the fourth death anniversary of this great personality.

Women's Desk discuss Marital issues

A Women's Convention was organised by the Women's Desk to run parallel with the meeting of the Executive Council at the Masumeen Centre, Brampton. Marital issues with respect to the three key objectives of the Women's Desk in the strategic plan were discussed within a small group of women representing various jamaats.

On a proposal of developing a system/database to provide a

means for spouse selection, several concerns were raised. It is critical to ensure the database is geared to the target audience. There has to be an element of screening involved to eliminate abusers. A generic template should be created at the World Federation level that could be used by local jamaats so that as part of local membership, *bona fide* members would automatically be registered to the site based on marital status and age. It was agreed that similar issues would occur in traditional matchmaking as compared to a formalized website but due to the demand from youths to provide a more progressive platform, a website/database method was considered for launching.

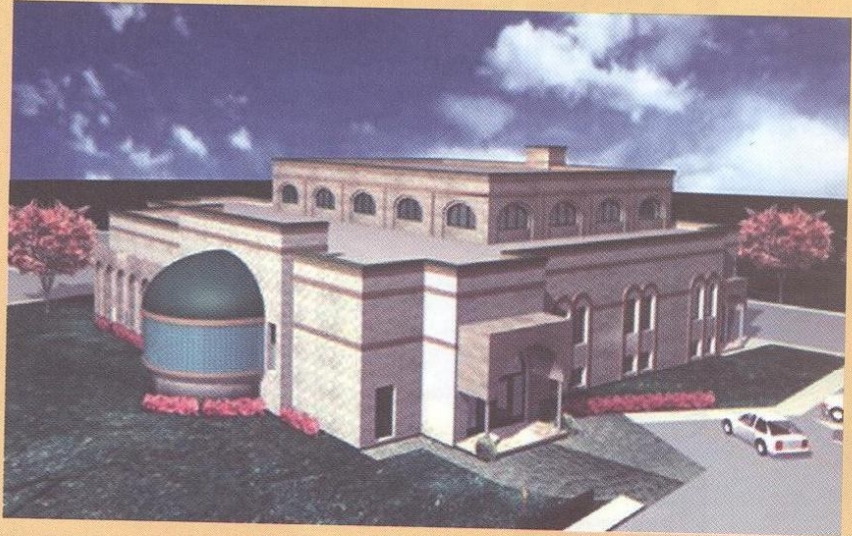
On the education front, the madressa system needs to be leveraged to ensure appropriate and effective awareness is provided to the youth of today. Providing spouse selection teaching at the madressa level can help increase awareness on spouse selection. Such courses should be highly recommended prior to Nikah being recited.

Counselling

With regard to counselling, confidentiality is the key factor in its credibility and future success. It is important to have a male and female point of contacts for counselling apart from the local Jamaat's President and Resident Alim. Involving in-house professionals is extremely beneficial for resolving issues surrounding divorces. A recommendation of making available a list of in-house professional expertise was brought forth. The session was extremely productive in that valuable information exchange occurred with superb recommendations to take our communities into the next level.

Inshallah, with the implementation of these recommendations, our communities will see more successful marriages in the years to come.

Masumeen Center is now a reality and stands magnificently in the landscape of the town of Brampton. The \$3.8 million project was completed on time for the Holy Month of Ramadan to provide facilities for mo'mineen residing West of Toronto, which includes the Brampton and Mississauga Area. This tailor-cut Center has a prayer hall, two congregation halls, a gymnasium with an extension to the main halls, Madressa Classes, rooms for nursing mothers, a library, a play ground for small kids and a parking lot for over 105 cars.



The new Brampton Centre

The opening ceremony on October 19th, 2003, 22nd Shabaan came as a relief and thanks to Allah swt, after holding programs in rented premises for two decades, the community now has its own Center. A large gathering including government officials attended the occasion and the Guest of Honor was the Hon. Mayor of Brampton who joined our Resident A'lim, Maulana Syed Muhammad Rizvi and the new President of the Islamic Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaat, Nazir Gulamhusein of Toronto in cutting the ribbon.

Elders of the Brampton Jamaat and Executives of ISIJ of Toronto and the invited dignitaries joined in the second cutting of the ribbon. The well-coordinated and organized program demonstrated the bond and collaboration between members of our Brampton Jamaat.

In his address the Brampton Jamaat President, Alhaj Murtaza Panju, who was the driving force



by Baqir Alloo, Toronto

from the inception till completion of the project, attributed the successful completion to all members of our worldwide community who financially, morally and physically participated in the project. He also thanked the Government for their support and guidance.

The Ja'ffari Community Center at 9000 Bathurst Street has undergone some design changes to make the building more effectively functional. The design change followed a review and identification of potential improvements with the help of external consultants together with the office of Professor Kazim Dharsi of Allentown.

The recommendations were presented and approved by the General Body with a singular objective of ending up with a structure and a building layout that works better for the community. The JCC project is back on track and approximately 40% complete with a total budget of Canadian dollars 17 million. Momineen are urged to contribute generously and as an option, the ISIJ of Toronto has introduced Ja'ffari Investment Certificates for purchase by the membership at large.

Ja'ffari Investment Certificates have been launched to finance the Jaffari Community Center and other capital projects of the ISIJ

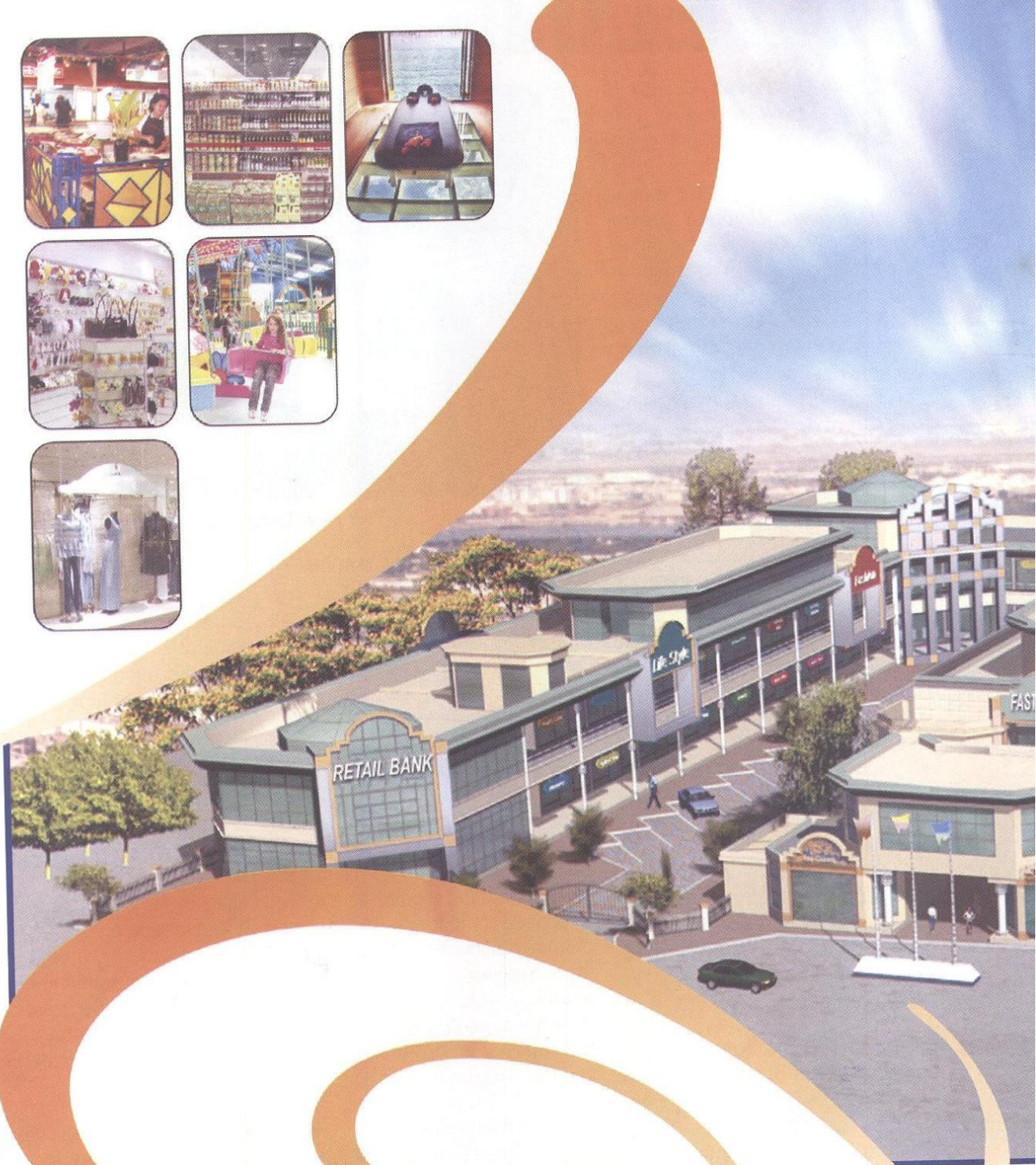
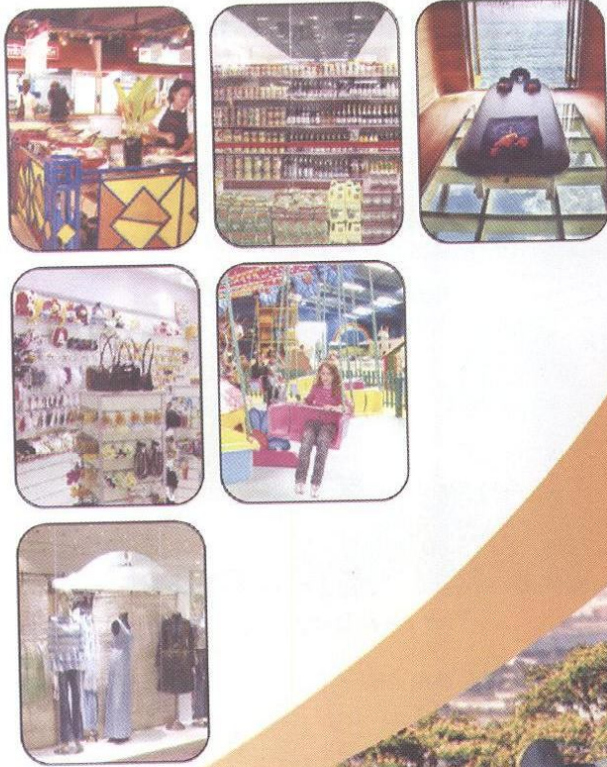
of Toronto. The certificates, which are similar to mortgage backed securities, are issued in multiples of C\$500 with a targeted effective yield of 4% per annum non-compounding.

The Ja'ffari Investment Certificate is an Islamically acceptable investment based on the principles of *Muzaraba* or revenue/asset sharing. The offering matures on March 1, 2009. Details of the offering and subscription forms are now available on the net by logging into www.Jaffari.org or by contacting jaffari.investment@rogers.com or by contacting the ISIJ of Toronto Executive Committee at jamaatexecutives@Jaffari.org.

The Fund Raising Committee under the leadership of Jaffer Kermali is working hard to solicit funds. Extreme congestion experienced during the holy months and the ongoing discouraging parking problem underscores the need for a larger Center that can cater for our fast growing community. Mumineen are urged to join hands and support the project through donations or through buying Ja'ffari Investment Certificates, which is a loan to the community for a fixed period and earns profit. The scheme is the brainchild of Hamza Bahadurali, Mohammed Dattoo and Munsif Sheraly.

(continued on page 57)

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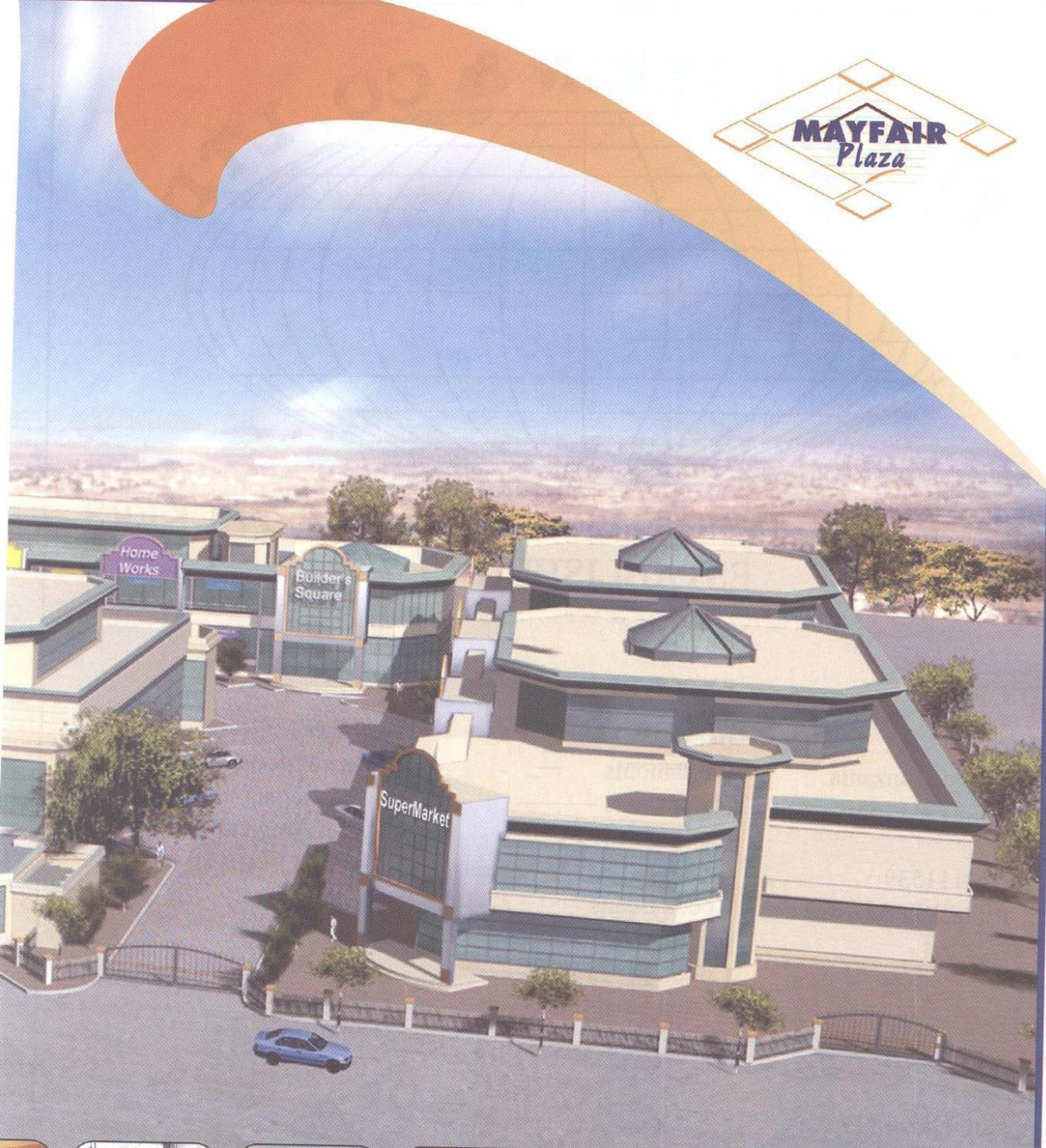
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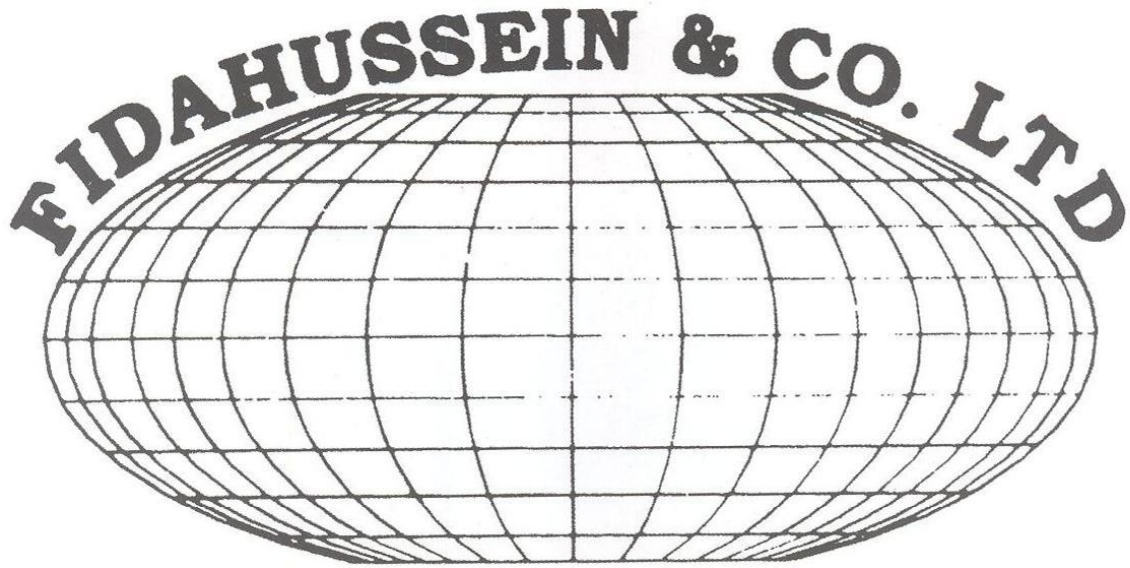
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(...from page 53)

Toronto Community Members plunge in political and media arena. A large number of our community members have joined political parties with the aim of making our presence felt. Ghulamabbas Sajjan worked hard for over two months in successfully recruiting members for the ruling Liberal Party. His endeavor paid off and resulted in nine people from our community being elected as delegates to the Federal Liberal Party Convention held from the 12th to 15th November, 2003.

Delegates elected from the Thornhill Riding were Ghulamabbas Sajjan, Sabi Ahsan, Zainab Khimji, Fatima Sajjan and Ali Kuba. Others elected were Mohsin Kamalia, Sultan Rhemtulla and Mohamedtaki Remtulla from Richmond Hill Riding whereas Asghar Manek, who floated the move was elected from the Stoney Creek Riding. The delegates were able to participate in the Convention where the retiring Prime Minister Hon. Jean Chretien, the contender for Liberal Party leadership Hon. Sheila Copps and the elected head of the Party and Prime Minister Designate Paul Martin and other delegates deliberated on the vision, policy and strategy of the party.

Hon. Paul Martin took over as Prime Minister of Canada on December 12, 2003. It was inspirational to see that many members of our community turned out to vote for the candidates ushering a proactive stance and outlook. Toronto Jamaat Resident A'lim Maulana Syed Muhammad Rizvi in his message said "We do not want "politicians" or "journalists" who happen to be Muslims, we want

"Muslim politicians" and "Muslim journalists" who can safeguard the interest of the community, raise the voice against injustice in society, and present the Islamic solution to social problems to the nation".

The J.S. Woodsworth Award Committee for work in anti-racial education and Ethno-cultural Equity Program short-listed Nisar SHERALI among the top twenty people who deserve to be recognized. It is an Ontario-wide competition and Nisar made the coveted short list. Mr. Howard Hampton, the leader of NDP Party, congratulated him at the awards ceremony. Nisar, over the past 30 years has been very active in the field of multiculturalism and is the past Chair of the Multicultural and Race Relations Committee of Scarborough during whose tenure the Heritage Languages Program was introduced in the schools.

Nisar was also on the Mayor's Task Force to promote equality for minorities. He was appointed by the Premier of Ontario on the Multicultural and Race Relations Committee and contributed positively to the recognition of religious holidays that for Muslims covered two Eids, the Prophet's Birthday and Ashura Day.

He has held several workshops on 'Understanding Muslims' for the Toronto Police and schools and has been an integral member to produce multicultural and interfaith curriculum for the York Region School Board.

He has also received recognition during Canada Day and Awards of Excellence in Education from the York Region as well as the World Federation.

Launch of online students' directory

The Student Support Network (SSN), as part of the Careers, Education and Training Advisory Board (CETAB) is launching its Online Students Directory! This online directory will allow students to register their details on a database that is accessible to the community youth throughout the world.

The Directory, labelled as the "key that will open up the floodgates of opportunities for students, globally!" enables students to search for their counterparts and friends wherever situated in the world, as long as they are registered with SSN, and exchange information, ideas and educational material. As an added feature to the Directory, SSN have enabled the database to record the numbers of community students undertaking further and higher education and also allow interaction amongst students of similar backgrounds and courses.

SSN project leader, Mahmood Dhala, has said that the "directory will eventually become the 'one-stop-shop' for the KSI student community" as it is envisaged that "the directory will be the first stepping stone to providing a more user specific service to our students".

CETAB launched the Students Support Network in 2002 and ensured that SSN would "...provide a wide range of services for students within our communities" and "... to provide interaction between University students on a world-wide level across all jamaats". The online directory is evidence of this active role in providing a service to students on a global scale.

If you are interested in registering, visit the Students Directory at www.world-federation.org.

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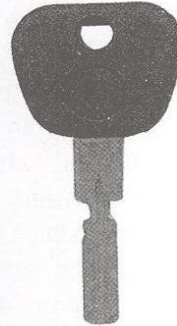
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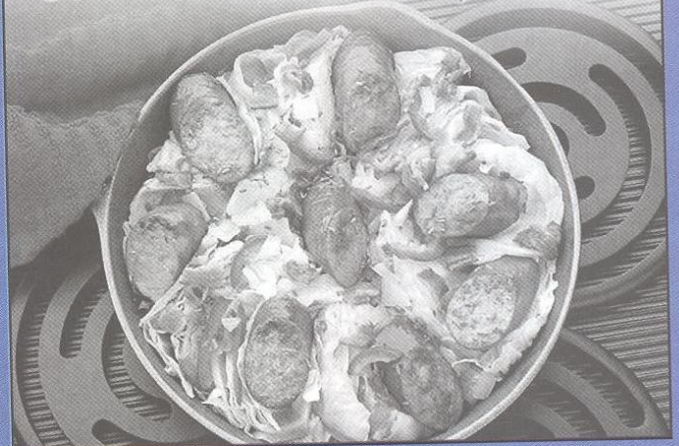
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Iraqi minister invites Khoja businesses to build trade links with Iraq

A World Federation delegation involving Dr Ahmed Hassam, Ahmed Daya and Mustafa Jaffer met with the current Minister of Religious Affairs of Iraq appointed by the Iraqi Governing Council, Syed Hussein Barka Shami Al Mousawi, on Thursday 30th October, 2003.

The Minister extended an invitation to Khoja businesses to invest in Iraq. The factories and businesses that were run by the former government are being privatised and Gulf region businesses are taking advantage of this. His invitation is to take part in the reconstruction of Iraq. Areas of interest where Iraq is seeking investors include paper and paper products manufacture, fertilisers, medicines and medical supplies. The Minister wants to ensure that the Shia community and particularly the Khojas are able to take part in acquiring some of these businesses.

On the subject of musafarkhanas in various places in Iraq, Syed promised that he would appoint a solicitor to carry out research on all properties that were donated as Trust to the Khojas for the service of zawwar (visitors). He is now waiting for a list of places with addresses to begin this work.

The Minister has historically had good relations with the World Federation, and passed on his thanks to the Khoja community for their stand and assistance in times of crises in Iraq. He was a witness to all relief efforts carried out by our community in the Gulf War of 1991-1992. He mentioned that the current situation in Iraq is improving.

Federations donate aid for earthquake disaster in Bam

As part of immediate support for the people of Bam, Iran, who suffered a severe earthquake in December last year, financial aid was sent by the World Federation and its affiliates. The World Federation donated £25,000 pounds to the Iranian Embassy in London while the Africa Federation donated \$10,000 to the Iranian Embassy in Nairobi. Both Embassies were thankful and were particularly appreciative for the quick response to the crisis.

A delegation from the World Federation and London Jamaat, Stanmore met with the Iranian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, H. E. Agha Murtaza Sarmadi to present him with their donation. The President of the World Federation pledged the organisation's support to get involved with the reconstruction programme. Dr Ahmed Hassam, President, Brother Azad Kanani, Honorary Treasurer and Brother Pyarali Merali, London Jamaat, Stanmore represented the World Federation.

The Africa Federation met with the Iranian Embassy in Nairobi on December 27th to present their donation. They were represented by Brother Zulfikar Khimji, Chairman, Brother Ramzan Nanji, Vice-Chairman, Brother Mustafa Pirmohamed, Treasurer, Brother Manzoor Kanani, Executive Councillor of the World Federation and Brother Azad Kanani, Honorary Treasurer of the World Federation.

International success of Qur'an website

The World Federation's sister website www.quran.org.uk had its most successful month last Ramadhan with over 11,000 hits. This is more than four times the daily average throughout the year. The busiest day saw almost 1700 hits. The site comes up in the top two for Qur'an resources on a Google Internet Search. The rise in visitors is no coincidence as Ramadhan is the month of the Glorious Qur'an.

The www.quran.org.uk website was set up to categorise and link together a central resource of quality Qur'anic material in a simple, user-friendly manner. Unique material relating to the Qur'an is continuously added to the site.

Since its creation, the site has acquired a formidable reputation of its own. The site was recently displayed on CSPAN, a public TV news channel in the US, recommending it as a good site to visit for information on Islam. Over 500 diverse academic institutions including the University of London - School of Oriental and African Studies and Georgetown University, Washington, DC, link directly to the website. The site has been visited by individuals from locations as far as Kyrgyzstan and Trinidad and Tobago. The reputation of the site within academia will be further enhanced with the establishment of a specialist Qur'an library at Dar-ul-Tableegh.

The website provides links to eleven different English translations of the Qur'an, including widely used versions by Marmaduke Pickthall, M.H. Shakir, and Yusuf Ali. There are also links to translations in 23 other languages. Content includes numerous articles and full-length books by the likes of Shaheed Mutahhari and Shaheed Al-Sadr and other eminent Muslim scholars covering topics from Qur'anic orthography to the Qur'anic liberation of women. The multimedia section links to several MP3 and RealAudio based recitations of the Holy Qur'an and is accompanied by resources aimed at improving recitation skills.



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Women's Desk calls for ladies participation

The World Federation Women' Desk is looking for ladies to represent their jamaats as part of their Desk Team. The duties will involve:

- * Raising awareness in particular jamaats of the work to be done by the desk;
- * Closely working with the desk to deliver specific services to women of our community, specifically those drawn up in the five year working plan;
- * Forming and leading a local team of volunteers with specific skills and requirements to help the desk meet the objectives it has set out;
- * Work closely with the local women's body and inform the desk of any feedback and/or requirements they might have;
- * Attend relevant training, conferences and seminars.

Jamaats in Africa were requested to forward a name of a lady interested to be part of this team to the Africa Federation Secretariat by 15th April 2004 for submission to the Women's Desk Co-ordinator, World Federation.

IEB launches Qum student sponsorship programme

The World Federation's Islamic Education Board (IEB) has launched full sponsorship of the five best students of Madrassah Imam Ali AS annually for a period of three years.

This forms part of the manifesto pledge of investing in a sustainable programme of tabligh activities. IEB will be given first priority when the sponsored students graduate to serve the communities. English will be taught as a compulsory subject for sponsored students.

The President of the World Federation, Dr Ahmed Hassam said: "I am delighted that we are developing closer working relationships with Madrassah Imam Ali AS. This is the beginning of a sustainable investment in tabligh that should help us deliver the objectives of the strategic plan and the manifesto. I applaud the efforts of the IEB team in taking an active role in making this happen."

Canada prepares to enforce Islamic law — Judges will give legal sanction to disputes between Muslims

Canadian judges soon will be enforcing Islamic law, or Sharia, in disputes between Muslims. Muslims are required to submit to Sharia in Muslim societies but are excused in nations where they live as a minority under a non-Muslim government.

Canada, however, is preparing for its 1 million-strong Muslim minority to be under the authority of a Sharia system enforced by the Canadian court system, according to the Canadian Law Times.

Muslim delegates at a conference in Etobicoke, Ont., in October elected a 30-member council to establish the Islamic Institute of Civil Justice.

The institute is classified in Islamic law as a Darul-Qada, or judicial tribunal. Its bylaws were scheduled to be drafted and approved by Dec. 31, 2003.

Cases will be decided by a Muslim arbitrator, but the local secular Canadian court will be the enforcer.

One of the obstacles to establishing the system, the Law Times said, has been the Muslim communities' lack of unity and organizational strength. Muslims in Canada come from many different countries and different schools of Islam. Also, there are few Islamic legal scholars, known as *ulama*, in North America, which are essential to adjudicating complex issues.

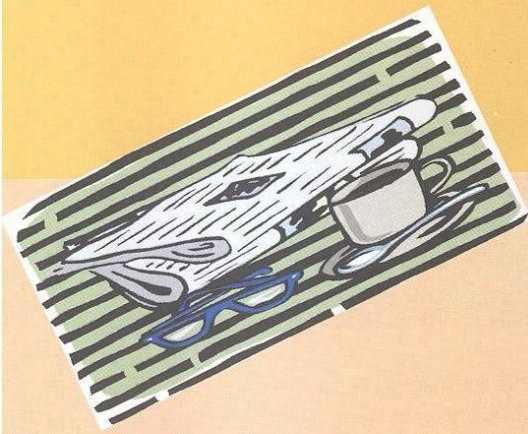
"It seems the community was looking forward to something like this," says organizer B. Husain Bhayat, according to the Law Times. "If all groups are represented, with hard work and the unity we saw here, we will have no difficulty going forward."

The two main streams of Islam, Sunni and Shi'ite, were represented at the conference, along with Imams and leaders of organizations.

Hiridjee Family loan for women studies

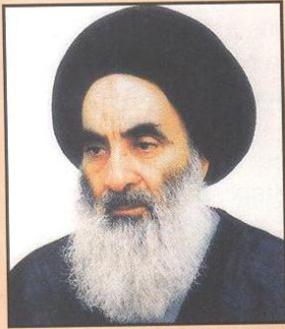
The Hiridjee Family Loan for studies is available to female students wishing to pursue higher education. There are loans for two students for up to 3 years, up to a maximum of GBP 10,000 per student per year for three consecutive years.

There is no restriction on where one stays or on the type of course to be pursued. For more details contact cetab@world-federation.org.



Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani: The real face of power in Iraq

By Paul Vallely



He is seldom seen in public. He does not do TV interviews. He communicates only through written edicts or through lower-ranking members of the network of scholars who study the Koran and Islamic law in the provincial town of Najaf. And yet the 75-year-old Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Husseini al-Sistani is undoubtedly now the most powerful man in Iraq. Revealingly it has taken almost a year for George Bush to wake up to that fact.

This venerable Shia cleric in January called 100,000 demonstrators on to the streets of five key cities to protest against America's refusal to allow immediate direct elections in Iraq - and more significantly, was able to send them all back home, with the ease of a man turning off a tap, when he had secured the concession from the Americans he had been seeking.

Ashura, when 180 pilgrims were killed by bombs targeted at the Shia community, could have seen the start of a civil war between Shia and Sunni Muslims, but the Ayatollah swiftly clamped down on talk of retaliation.

But he was happy to scupper the signing by Iraq's provisional Governing Council of an interim constitution to pave the way to the transfer of sovereignty back to Iraqis and the holding of full elections. At the behest of the Ayatollah five Shia members of the council refused to append their names.

What is becoming clear is that Ayatollah Sistani represents the most significant political challenge encountered so far by the US-led coalition. Twice already he has forced Washington to rewrite its political road map. At his behest the US has reversed its plan to write a constitution before elections: the elected assembly will now write the constitution. He has also successfully demanded that the United Nations be brought in to assess the feasibility of the elections. None of this is what the US viceroy Paul Bremer had expected.

The elderly cleric has a long white beard and black turban - indicating that his family claims descent from the prophet Mohammed. One of only five living grand ayatollahs in the world, Sistani was said to be of the "quietist" school of Islamic tradition. He had, after all, lived in uneasy stalemate with the Saddam regime, spending long periods under house arrest and largely staying out of politics. And in the early months of the US occupation he had seemed malleable enough. His initial response to the invasion was to advise "believers not to hinder the forces of liberation, and help

bring this war against the tyrant to a successful end for the Iraqi people". What the Americans failed to note was that he added that Iraqis working with the occupiers should ask, at the end of every conversation with them, "when they were leaving".

Had they been more diligent they would have worked out Sistani's influence much earlier. They should have noticed that Sistani receives millions of dollars in donations and controls a network of schools, mosques, clinics and other social welfare institutions. They should have observed that when, in the early days of the occupation, Sistani spoke out against looting, it died down rapidly in Shia areas. And when he issued a fatwa against the black market in petrol, queues at petrol stations immediately shrank by 75 per cent.

They should have seen the significance of the fact that -

(continued on page 63)

The Media Watch page carries articles that we consider would be of interest to our esteemed readers. We do not necessarily agree with all the contents of such articles.

Articles on these pages are meant to encourage comments. Your opinions are welcome.

Articles are sometimes edited for brevity or for factual and grammatical corrections.

(...from page 62)

though he gave private audiences to members of the US-appointed Iraqi Governing Council and the UN Special Representative, Sergio Vieira de Mello, who later died in a Baghdad bomb - he consistently refused to meet American officials. He was positioning himself for the long term.

Events have placed him well. One by one the other main clerical leaders have been killed. Ayatollah Muhammad al-Hakim, Saddam's principal Shia enemy, died in a car bomb in Najaf recently after returning from 24 years' exile in Iran. Abdul Majid Khoei, the son of Ayatollah Sistani's predecessor as the highest Shia religious authority in Iraq, was also assassinated in Najaf last spring when he returned after 12 years' exile in London. The leader of the other great clerical family, 30-year-old Muqtada al-Sadr, son of the great Ayatollah al-Sadr famed for preaching in a shroud, who was killed by Saddam in 1999, does not have the credentials to be a serious rival.

Ayatollah Sistani's prime influence comes from his status as Shi'ism's leading marjah al-taqlid, the title (literally object of emulation) given to a cleric whom Iraq's 15 million Shia Muslims regard as a guide in every aspect of their lives.

Born in Mashad, Iran, 75 years ago, the young Ali began studying the Koran as a youthful prodigy at the age of five. He has lived immersed in Islamic study ever since, first as a student in Qom and then for the past four decades in Najaf which has been the centre of Shia learning for 1,000 years. He has studied philosophy, rhetoric and law under the great scholars of his day and has developed a reputation for penetrating to the "real meaning" behind the words of key Islamic texts. His followers

speak of his holiness, personal asceticism and intellectual rigour characterised by a keen interest in modern science, economics and international politics.

Most revealingly he is a specialist in ijthad, the use of reason to apply Koranic values to contemporary situations - a discipline which only the most distinguished Shia clerics are allowed to practise. (The "gates of ijthad" were closed to Sunni Muslims 1,000 years ago.) This allows Islam to be reinterpreted in light of changing circumstances.

Thus Sistani's website concerns itself with such contemporary obsessions as whether Muslims can use perfume which contains alcohol (yes), use interest-bearing investments (in some circumstances), gamble (no), masturbate (no), perform anal sex (yes, though it is "strongly undesirable") or oral sex (yes, so long as no fluid gets into the mouth). All of which is some distance from current Western values but which at least offers the possibility of engagement with the West in a way which is inconceivable with such Sunni fundamentalists like the Taliban, al-Qa'ida or the Wahhabi puritans of Saudi Arabia.

There is another interesting strand in his thinking. One of Sistani's fellow students in his early days in Najaf was Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini who believed that, left to their own devices, most people would not live by Islam's precepts and so developed a doctrine of clerical dictatorship - velayet-e faqih (the Regency of the Jurist), which was the basis for the Iranian revolution. By contrast Sistani repeatedly stresses that religion has to be separated from government.

Where Khomeini in his 14 years in exile in Najaf argued that "only a good society can create good believers", Sistani insisted the opposite: "Only good men can

create a good society." Today, about a third of Iraq's 15 million Shia follow the Khomeini line; the majority follow Sistani.

This is obviously of considerable political significance. It highlights Sistani's current dilemma. His theological position insists clerics should not interfere in government. "The clergy are the conscience of society," he has written. "The administrative aspects of society's life must be left to men of politics." Yet he believes that at present Iraqi Shia need some leadership, which can come only from their clerics, to develop the political framework in which religion and politics can have their distinct spaces.

There is clearly scope for much confusion here. Sistani has said that no law in Iraq should conflict with Islamic principles, and he wants Islam to be recognised in law as the religion of the majority of Iraqis. But he wants to secure a model which will mean that a future secular regime cannot pass laws that contradict Islam rather than establishing a state along the Iranian model.

"Mr Bremer, you are American. I am Iranian. I suggest we leave it to the Iraqis to devise their constitution."

The best way of ensuring this, he sees, is through the pure democracy of "one person, one vote". This is why he opposes the complex structure designed by the Americans to ensure that the Shia majority cannot ride roughshod over the educated Sunni elite and the autonomy-craving Kurds. It produces the peculiar irony of an unelected mullah pressuring the world's self-styled greatest democracy to implement the self-determination it ostensibly invaded Iraq to bring. Sistani summed that up in a recent letter to the US

(continued on page 64)

(...from page 63)

administrator which said: "Mr Bremer, you are American. I am Iranian. I suggest we leave it to the Iraqis to devise their constitution."

There are those who worry that once Sistani has had a taste of power his demands will grow rather than recede. The handful of people - including Sunnis, Kurds, secularists and women's rights campaigners - who have recently had audiences with the Ayatollah in his modest home off a crowded market street in Najaf are more sanguine.

"He talked about the ancient pillars of the Sunni doctrine and praised them in detail and said how the difference between the Shia and Sunni was far less significant than the danger facing the Iraqi nation at present"

"He didn't use any of the rhetoric clergymen usually wrap everything they say with. He was quite plain and direct, though he talked so softly, almost in whispers, in a heavy Persian accent," said one. "The man was secular! I have never heard a clergyman saying the things that we lot take to represent our secularism," said another.

"He talked about the ancient pillars of the Sunni doctrine and praised them in detail and said how the difference between the Shia and Sunni was far less significant than the danger facing the Iraqi nation at present," said a third. "They told me he wouldn't meet with a woman," said a female politician, "but I met him and discussed women's issues."

There are many people fervently hoping that Grand Ayatollah Sistani will prove true to his word.

Not least among them George Bush in the coming election year.

We might let the Ayatollah himself have the last word. He recently gave advice to a politician about how to put someone forward for office. "Whoever you nominate, make sure he's not wearing a turban," Ayatollah Sistani said. The question is: will he apply that maxim to himself?

A life in brief:

Born: 1929 near the Iranian city of Masshad, a site of Shia pilgrimage. Lives near the Iraqi holy city of Najaf.

Education: Began studying the Koran aged five, then philosophy aged 11. Apprenticed to a succession of eminent Muslim scholars.

In 1949 he joined the Islamic seminary in Qom, Iran, to study jurisprudence under Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Hussain Brojardi.

Career: 1952: moved to Najaf to study with some of the most important Shia clerics of the time, including Grand Ayatollah Imam Abul Qassim al-Khoei.

1992: selected by his peers to head the most important hawza, or network of schools, in Najaf. Has written many books on Islamic law and gained a reputation as one of the top Shia religious authorities in the world.

He says....: "The clergy are the conscience of society. The administrative aspects of society's life must be left to men of politics."

They say....: "Sistani represents the middle of the road in Iraq's political spectrum... We have to listen to and deal with what Sistani is saying." - Judith Yaphe, National Defense University, Washington DC

Funny Instructions

On a Sears hairdryer: Do not use while sleeping. (Gee, that's the only time I have to work on my hair!)

On a bag of Fritos: You could be a winner! No purchase necessary. Details inside. (The shoplifter special!)

On a bar of Dial soap: Directions Use like regular soap. (and that would be how?)

On some Swann frozen dinners: Serving suggestion: Defrost. (But it's 'just' a suggestion!)

On Tesco's Tiramisu dessert: (printed on bottom of the box) Do not turn upside down. (Too late! you lose!)

On Marks & Spencer Bread Pudding: Product will be hot after heating. (Are you sure? Let's experiment.)

On a packaging for a Rowenta iron: Do not iron clothes on body. (But wouldn't that save more time?) (Whose body?)

On a Boot's children's cough medicine: Do not drive car or operate machinery. (We could do a lot to reduce the construction accidents if we just kept those 5 year olds off those fork lifts.)

On Nytol sleep aid: Warning: may cause drowsiness. (One would hope!)

On a Korean kitchen knife: Warning: keep out of children (hmm...something must have gotten lost in the translation...)

On a string of lights: For indoor or outdoor use only. (As opposed to use in outer space.)

Creating Futures

Together - Dubai hosts

9th Triennial Conference

An 'evolution in the making' is a phrase that can best sum up the ethos of the largest and most diverse gathering ever of the leadership of the Khoja Shia Ithna-asheri Community (KSIMC) from around the globe, numbering over 300 individuals who congregated for the 9th Triennial Conference of the World Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-asheri Muslim Communities, marking 27 years of its existence.

Held in Dubai in October 2003, this was the first time that a triennial conference was convened outside the UK where the World Federation has its headquarters, signifying yet another step in the continuing endeavours of the leadership in projecting the World Federation as a truly global organisation. The single most apparent benefit of the venue and the conference was the networking opportunity for mumineen around the globe. In an amazingly endearing depiction of the diversity in this 124,000 community, spread out in all corners of the globe, Indian accented English was as much at home as Canadian accented Gujarati interspersed with Swahili mixed with Kutchi, during deliberations at the conference and at the dinner table.

The beautiful venue, with *asmaul husna* and Qur'anic calligraphy forming a spiritual backdrop not to mention the unmatched and exemplary hospitality by the Dubai Jamaat, went a long way to creating an ambiance of spirituality, fraternity and positivity to make the conference all the more productive.

Recognising with profound maturity, that unity does not mean uniformity of opinion; community leaders, delegates and councillors candidly expressed their views and aspirations on how to respond to the fast changing needs of the community. In the process, the conference gave an unquestioning mandate, to the newly elected office bearers and the Executive Council, to forge ahead by investing in infrastructure and openly embracing new models of management that continue to be transparent and accountable without compromising on compassion or its core values of simplicity and sincerity.

Strategic planning - Not to engage is not an option

The soul of the conference was the day spent on the presentation of the Strategic Plan, by a young and articulate team of professional presenters, which almost seemed like a 'leadership in waiting' team. One could use the phrase 'the shape of things to come' not just for the content but for the presenters too!. Appropriately titled, "Creating futures together" this was yet another first for the World Federation. The nine month exercise in creating this strategic plan was an unprecedented step in analysing community needs and in providing a roadmap towards building a future for our community. The document is an invitation to the entire community, young and old, men and women, to participate in this vision for the future.

A stunning multimedia presentation on the two scenarios

of the community, in the year 2035, one with planning and the other without planning was a revealing look at the future. The contrast between the bleak look of 'not engaging' and the refreshingly vibrant community in the year 2035 by 'engaging' clearly demonstrated that not engaging is not an option. The plan clearly articulated the aspirations and needs of the grassroots and now the onus of delivery is upon the leadership and frontline workers. At the same time for it to succeed, the leadership must be given a reciprocal commitment of engagement from the community at large to accord its co-operation and resources in facilitating its execution.

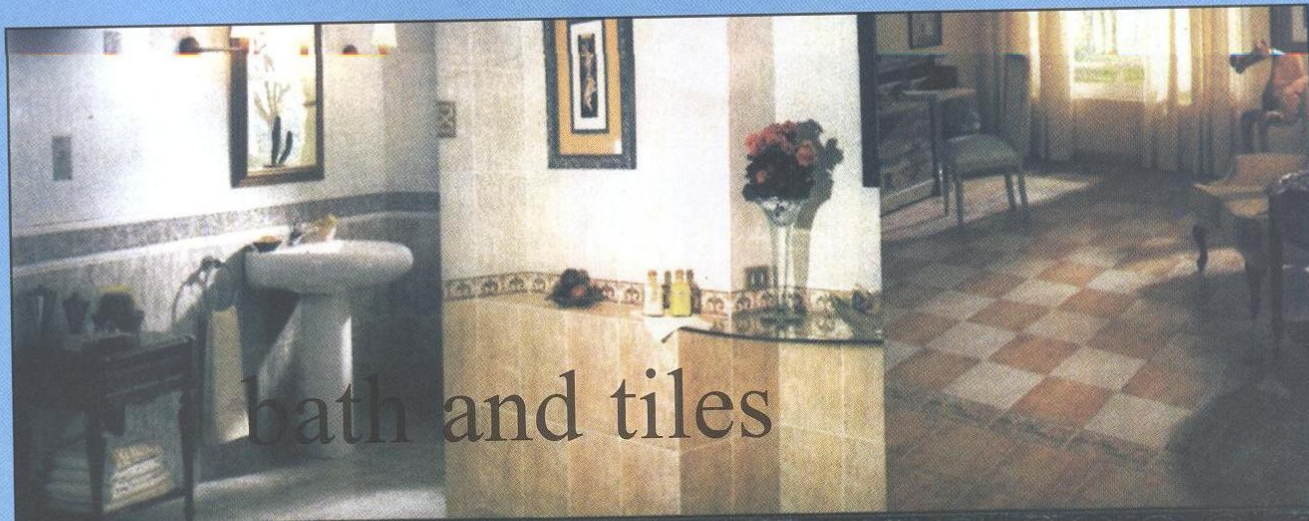
Crème de la crème - standing as the icons of the unity of the KSI Community

In their keynote addresses, at the opening session, the heads of the Regional Federations, whom the out-going President Al Hajj Hasnain Walji called 'the crème de la crème' of the KSI Community, delivered their succinct messages on the state of the community and their visions for their regions. Amongst the numerous themes, the most recurrent was the deteriorating economic plight of our brethren in East Africa, articulated by the Chairman of the Africa Federation and the President of Nasimco.

Each of the leaders underlined their commitment to the concept of our enviable infrastructure of the KSI Community and pledged their support to the incoming President Al Haj Ahmed Hassam.

The Chairman of the Africa Federation, Al Hajj Zulfikar Khimji conferred the Hayderi Medal to Alhaji Hasnain Walji and Brother Sadique Jaffer read a citation on behalf of Nasimco in recognition of his services to the community.

(continued on page 67)



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Parting Message

In his parting message to the community, Al Hajj Hasnain Walji spoke of the need to appreciate and understand the concept of marji'yyat (following of the maraje – the Islamic leaders), as fundamental to our faith during the ghaiba (occultation) of Imam Mehdi (AS), and while one could ask questions of the maraje, it was conceptually inappropriate and paradoxical to 'question' the accountability of maraje as seemed to be in vogue within various quarters of the community. He passionately appealed to the community, to move out of its parochial thinking and engender a more global approach in dealing with the wider affairs of the Shi'i community as well as humanity. The distinctions of being 'Africawalla' or "Americawalla' or "Pakistanwalla' must never be allowed to be the criteria for prioritising the services of the World Federation. In its responsibilities in the service of Imame Zamana (AF), the sole criterion must always be based on the most deserving irrespective of class, colour or country.

He concluded by appealing to the community to accord the same outstanding level of support to his successor Dr Ahmed Hassam as he had been accorded during his tenure in office.

He acknowledged with profound gratitude the gift of US\$1million to the World Federation Foundation Fund by Al Hajj Abid Hemani. The funds were committed to purchasing an investment property in London, the income from which would be used for various projects including a scholarship in the name of the Hemani family. He expressed a hope that this will motivate others to assist the World Federation in entrenching the foundation fund.

'The way we work will change but we will not be deterred from the core values'

In his characteristically focused keynote address, the incoming President, AlHajj Ahmed Hassam acknowledged the support of the community and pledged to deliver in accordance with the objectives as outlined in his manifesto. Accepting the mantle of leadership from his predecessor, he stated that each period in the history of the World Federation had had challenges unique to that time. The leadership had appropriately addressed the issues in accordance with the needs of the era and 'paved their own path to lead it to new heights'.

While reiterating his commitment to ethos of the founders of the World Federation, he candidly declared that "the way we work will change but we will not be deterred from the core values'. However, he added that 'I do not intend to make this journey wearing their shoes' and that the 'discomfort of wearing someone else's shoes' would affect the strides demanded by the needs of tomorrow. He opined that while the direction remained the same, the terrain is ever changing and therefore we must move accordingly. In the days to come he promised greater inclusivity in recognition of the diversity of the community and pledged to do so by listening and understanding people from differing backgrounds and encouraging the sharing of different perspectives. At the same time he reminded the rapt audience that "We must focus on what unites us rather than what divides us."

Recognising the importance of the role of internal tabligh, and the perceived inadequacy of our present delivery systems he outlined several new initiatives at enhancing the role of the Islamic Education Board to empower *dhakireen* and *muballighen* to

cater to the needs of the community as well as the creation of a Religious Advisory Council and the Marja Desk. He also reiterated his commitment to enhancing investment in all aspects of education both religious and secular. He went on to deliberate upon initiatives enabling partnerships with Regional Bodies as well as other NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and the United Nations.

Finally, he challenged those with the notion that one could not hold onto religious values and at the same time be efficient in running our organisations to 'open your minds to the possibility of a new way of working without compromising our values'. He was committed to demonstrate that this could be done.

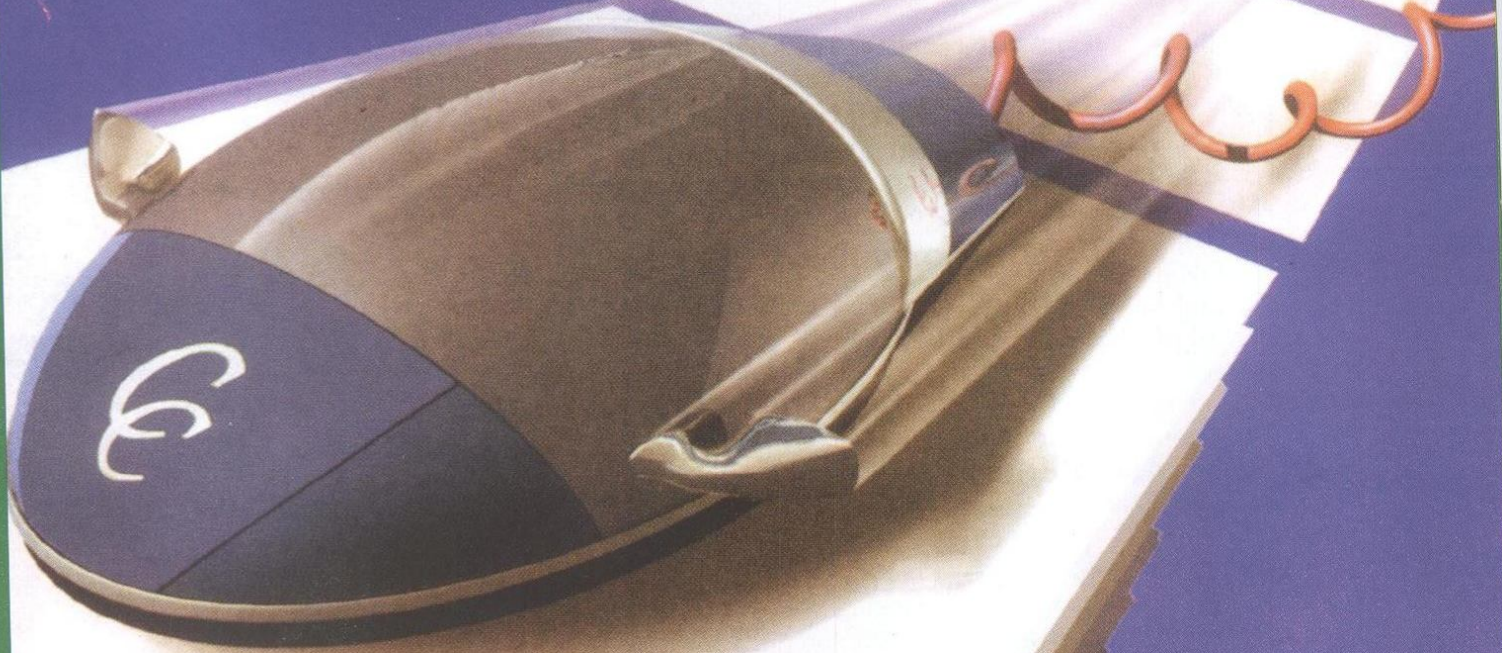
He then conferred citations on the three retiring Office Bearers namely Dr Hasnain Walji, Dr Sibtain Panjwani and Alhajj Ahmed Daya in recognition of their long standing services to the community.

Addressing the most pressing issues facing the community

In this milestone Conference, in addition to receiving extensive reports from the team secretariat, articulated by the increasing numbers of younger members of the team, concluding remarks by the Secretary General, Dr Sibtain Panjwani, the house appreciated the unique presentation of the Financial Report by the Hon Treasurer Al Hajj Ahmed Daya presenting his 7th consecutive report marking 21 years of uninterrupted service. The house also benefited from the profound submissions from councillors Asgher Moledina, Manzoor Kanani, Masum Somji, Mohammed Moledina and Akber Mithani relating to the current challenges of the community. The report by the Women's desk was also well received as was the

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(..from page 67)

report by the Youth Networking Desk jointly presented by several youths.

Successfully addressing some of the most pressing issues facing the community the Constitutional Conference was at long last able to resolve the concern of the Karachi Jamaat on the issue of fair representation and the Chair acknowledged the leadership shown by all, especially the President of Karachi Jamaat, Al Hajj Dost Mohammed Bhojani as well as the efforts of the Constitution Review Committee.

In the wake of the dissension in the leadership of Gujarat, Councillors Manzoor Kanani Councillor Aunali Saleh Mohammed and Councillor Mohamed Moledina had been assigned with the responsibility of bringing about a reconciliation. The Chair acknowledged their efforts as well as Alhajj Noorali Mukhi and Al Hajj Ramzan Asaria in finally resolving the dispute and restoring unity amongst the community in Gujarat at the conference.

The conference unanimously supported the resolution by the Africa Federation to declare the forthcoming term as the 'Term for Eradicating Poverty in East Africa.' The house also passed by a majority the resolution to form the Seniors' Advisory Board, in recognition of its sentiment providing the highest level of service to the seniors of the community.

Funny Signs

Plumber:

"We repair what your husband fixed."

Pizza shop slogan:

"7 days without pizza makes one weak."

On an electrician's truck:

"Let us remove your shorts."

Federation Samachar

MAMAS facilities extended to the whole of Africa

The World Federation Office Bearers and Africa Federation office bearers have been in communication on the Mulla Asghar Memorial Academic Scheme (MAMAS) immediately after nomination of the new Chairman of the Zainabiya Child Sponsorship Scheme (ZCSS) to assist the underprivileged children of our community in Africa for education.

The World Federation has given the Africa Federation total responsibility of handling and overlooking this scheme. All MAMAS organisations will be directly under the Africa Federation. Meanwhile the World Federation has assured its full support on any matters relating to MAMAS. The World Federation, Africa Federation and members of both the institutions shall seek sponsorship to make the MAMAS Scheme a success.

The facilities of the Mulla Asghar Memorial Academic Schemes (MAMAS) will now be extended to all Jamaats in Africa. The Chairman of the Africa Federation will announce the appointment of the MAMAS Chairman in due course.

WF President condemns senseless killings

The World Federation President Dr Ahmed Hassam condemned the senseless and shameful terror attacks on Shia Muslims in Iraq and Pakistan, who were commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (A.S). The bombings in Baghdad, Karbala and Quetta in Pakistan killed over 200 people and injured hundreds.

Dr Hassam said: "We pray for the families and friends who have lost their loved ones....as for those who have perpetrated this repugnant action, we tell them that no matter how hard you try to extinguish the light of Allah, you will not succeed."

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The World Federation Triennial Conference Dubai 2003

- Women's Desk Report

The World Federation Triennial Conference in Dubai in October 2003 saw the greatest participation of women delegates in the history of the World Federation. Approximately sixty women from all corners of the world attended the conference over four days. A special focused forum was held for ladies on the first day of the Conference and was very well attended by international delegates and ladies from the local Jamaat. The hosts, Dubai Jamaat, expertly organised the conference, which was held at various venues and transport between them was organised by the travelling committee headed by Brother Shabbir Damji.

Dubai is renowned for its architecture and building designs, and the conference venues chosen reflected that very well. The stunning decor and excellent facilities added to the atmosphere at the conference, and many young volunteers were always at hand to help people out with a smile. The volunteer boys were smartly dressed in their official shirt and tie and the young girls reflected the best Islamic ethos with their modest dress.

A special programme was jointly organised by the Women's Desk and the local ladies committee, for all ladies over three days, starting with a focused forum on the first day. Speakers from different parts of the world were invited to share their experiences on the current status of the marriage institution in our community. Sister Zehrabai

Tharoo, Chairlady of Stanmore Jamaat London, expressed the difficulties around matchmaking issues and made several recommendations for the leaders of the community. Sister Nargis Valimohammed, Chairlady of Toronto Jamaat Canada, shared the idea of having 'Marriage Educators' within the Marriage Committees around the world. She elaborated on the role of a Marriage Educator following the model of the Smart Marriage Coalition in the United States. Delegates were very impressed by this idea and found that it would be beneficial to adapt this model for community needs.

Sisters Yasmin Nasser and Ismat Mukhtar, members of the Marriage Support Group of Dar-es-Salaam Tanzania, delivered a very interesting and informative presentation, which touched on the many issues surrounding the support of couples before and during marriage. The ideas and the work carried out by this group are extremely impressive, and could be incorporated in Marriage Committees in all jamaats.

Workshops

Three workshops, which were held in the afternoon, were very well attended and all concentrated around different aspects of marriage support. The discussions were vibrant and interactive with participants sharing their experiences and recommendations in order to design the future work of marriage committees to help the community.

Workshop 1: Matchmaking and Spouse Selection, led by Sister Fatema Hassan (Pakistan)

It was clearly established, particularly by the numerous young women who attended, that the time has come to make a more positive move to help youngsters make choices for themselves in a more practical, Islamic manner. Guidance from community elders is still very much appreciated but the younger generation feels that a more positive approach should be taken to challenges facing our youth today. The idea of a Khoja Ithna-asheri Internet Matchmaking site was welcomed warmly but with some caution. More research and work will be required to explore this idea further.

Workshop 2: Pre-marital counselling, led by Sister Nargis Daya (London) and Sister Maher Rashid (Vancouver)

Both young and old feel that there is definitely a need for counselling for couples embarking on the journey of life together and that a structured course covering issues like preparing the wedding ceremony, finances, emotions, relationships etc. should be tailored to meet the needs of society today. It was established that such courses could go a long way to helping people stay married at a later stage. The role of 'marriage educators' as per the model of the Smart Marriage Coalition was discussed and all present agreed that such educators would be very beneficial to the community.

Workshop 3: Marriage Support: beyond the honeymoon, led by Sister Zehra Hassam (Birmingham) and Sister Salma Janmohammed (Mombasa)

It was felt that the model of the

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Marriage Support Group in Dar-es-Salaam could be adapted in all jamaats and that couples going through difficult times needed more specific help and guidance. Support of experienced and professional counsellors from within the community would highly benefit couples contemplating divorce and would be vital in both saving marriages and, in the unfortunate event of a divorce case, would help partners and their families overcome the trauma more easily.

Delegates from all jamaats are looking for guidance from the World Federation in developing a structure to include all aspects of marriage, from spouse selection to marriage support in later years. Statistics collected prior to the conference showed a worrying increase in divorce rates in our communities worldwide and established the need for more structured Marriage Committees in all jamaats. There is a lot of potential within the community to help jamaats worldwide in efficiently achieving this goal and delegates felt that a global network in this respect is necessary.

In the evening, on Wednesday, all women delegates were invited to the Iranian Club to attend the Main Conference Session. The ladies were very interested to hear reports from delegates around the world, especially Kutch and Gujarat and were impressed by the work carried out by the World Federation in those parts of the world.

On Friday morning, the Women's Desk finally presented its report at the Main Conference. The seven objectives from the strategic planning process were well received by all delegates and the ladies were commended on their achievements in the short time the Women's Desk has been in operation.

On the occasion of the birth of the 12th Imam, the host jamaat organised a special programme on Friday afternoon, including a quiz by Sister Sukaina Dhirani on the 12th Imam and the Quran. The afternoon then continued with a very interesting presentation on 'issues around marriages in Mombasa' by Sister Salma Janmohammed, who clearly expressed her concerns on the situation in Mombasa today and highlighted the need for better awareness and education in this respect for both men and women of the community.

A special feature of the afternoon was the work carried out by the Khawateen Committee of the Council of European Jamaats. The Khawateen representative, Sister Nikhat Panjwani presented Khawateen activities in Europe from the organisation of sports tournaments to Girls Summer Camps. She also introduced Khawateen's latest project on Positive Parenting.

Sister Shabnam Valji then presented the work done by the Bereavement Support Group of Khawateen and gave a glimpse of how trained 'befrienders' from within the community are beginning to support the bereaved, especially widows. She highlighted the aim of this group, as providing a listening ear and guiding the bereaved during their traumatic period, to help and support them in a professional manner.

The Dubai Youth presented the afternoon's main discussion: "Internet Matchmaking A Reality". The youth expressed their concerns over the possible abuse and misuse of such a site. Different avenues were explored and results of a survey conducted in Dubai on this issue were shared with the audience. Sister Fatima Bandali, one of the coordinators of the Women's Desk, then took the audience through research done on launching such a site. The solution of a

matchmaking site with a panel of 'secret selection facilitators' seemed to be a good way forward. Two youth delegates from Mozambique present at the conference, shared their views on the positive aspects of such a matchmaking site for their community. They highlighted the need for help from the wider Khoja Shia Ithna-asheri community, specifically on matchmaking issues in their country, informing the audience that a large percentage of Shia girls are now married to Sunni brothers. It was generally agreed that the launch of such a site would be very helpful for such jamaats, however great caution and consideration needs to be taken before launching this. Thorough research in this area needs to be carried out by IT experts and consultants and more jamaats need to be involved in the decision making process. The session on Friday ended with a delightful dhow tip organised by the host jamaat.

On the final day of the conference, the delegates reviewed the objectives drawn out by the Women's Desk and discussed ways of meeting these objectives globally. It was clear that a great deal of work is required in all jamaats to structure women's bodies. The Women's Desk agreed to facilitate the forming of such bodies in jamaats where they do not exist and to work together with existing bodies to help women in the community develop and fulfil their potential.

The most pressing issue brought out was the difficulties faced by our sisters in the Indian Subcontinent who need a lot of help and encouragement in forming and developing women's bodies in their jamaats. The voice of women in such parts of the world need to be heard and elders of the community need to be educated in accepting the

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contribution that women representatives can make for the betterment of the community. It was agreed that ways need to be found to help women from such jamaats to progress positively.

The Women's Desk will soon include representatives from jamaats all over the world. Regional bodies will be contacted by the Women's Desk and given names of women who have offered their services to the Desk team. At the same time the bodies will be given the opportunity to nominate ladies from their region to work closely with the Women's Desk.

The vision of the Women's Desk is to unite Khoja Ithna Asheri women worldwide and engage them to help build a strong community which knows no distance or language barriers.

The aims and objectives of the Desk, in order to achieve their vision, are as follows:

- Build a strong, global Network of Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri women;
- Help address issues and concerns raised by our women globally (spiritual, social and cultural);
- Raise awareness, amongst women, of the work done by the World Federation;
- Engage women in the workings of the World Federation.

Action Plan

The Women's Desk anticipates achieving its aims with the following actions:

1. Build a Global Network of representatives for the Desk

This will enable the Desk to build strong relationships with Women's Bodies already existing within various jamaats and facilitate the establishment of such bodies where necessary.

2. Create a Database of Khoja Shia Ithnasheri Women across the world

A good communication system will be vital for the organisation and co-ordination of a Network. This database will enable the Desk to reach out and communicate with Khoja Shia Ithnasheri women all over the world, to share information on issues relating specifically to women in our communities. The Desk hopes to receive more feedback on women's needs from all parts of the world, especially from those not represented at the Women's Convention in Milton Keynes.

3. Create a List of Lady Lecturers and Zakireen to be used by Jamaats

This list will be created in conjunction and with the help of the Islamic Education Board of the World Federation and will include names and details of Zakireen according to language and field of expertise. This list will be updated on a regular basis and will enable appropriate selection according to the needs of particular jamaats.

4. Build a Network of Marriage Committees

The need for a formation of a global network to help jamaats in issues relating to marriage is identified as being of paramount importance. The Desk hopes to liaise with regional and local Marriage Committees to identify structures already in place, help strengthen these and use them as role models for other jamaats.

5. Seminars and Conferences

The Desk intends to hold seminars and conferences in different regions as and when appropriate. National and International Forums will be important to share expertise and identify needs of women of our communities on an ongoing basis.

Women's Desk Structure

World Federation - Secretariat, London

|

Women's Desk

|

Women's Desk Regional Representatives

|

Chairladies/Local Jamaats

For more information, contact the Women's Desk at the World Federation on email - womensdesk@worldfederation.org.

Community's Capital Projects

The community has many capital projects. Funding comes through individual jamaats, Regional Federations and the World Federation. The main source of funds are individual members of our Khoja community around the world.

The response from Jamaats and Regional Federations on relaying information sought to create a data bank of existing contracts has been poor but from the responses received, currently the total cost of the outstanding and envisaged projects in the community totals US \$ 58,918,961.

| Regional Federation/Jamaat | Cost of Capital Projects (US\$) | Capital projects outstanding (US\$) |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Mehfile Murtaza | 513,044.00 | 86,957.00 |
| South Africa | 1,000,000.00 | 1,000,000.00 |
| Essex Jamaat | 465,000.00 | 465,000.00 |
| Wessex Jamaat | 400,000.00 | 400,000.00 |
| Paris Jamaat South | 250,000.00 | 250,000.00 |
| Paris Jamaat North | 1,042,578.00 | 1,042,578.00 |
| Orlando Jamaat | 3,100,000.00 | Full Donor |
| Minnesota Jamaat | 1,211,978.00 | 757,991.00 |
| Husseini Association of Mianitoba | 190,000.00 | 163,000.00 |
| AFED | 100,000.00 | 100,000.00 |
| Arusha | 100,000.00 | 0.00 |
| Dar-es Salaam | 2,457,889.00 | 1,941,738.00 |
| Mombasa | 331,169.00 | 59,000.00 |
| Mwanza | 200,000.00 | 100,000.00 |
| Madagascar | 2,000,000.00 | 1,141,000.00 |
| Bilal Muslim Mission - T | 378,000.00 | 378,000.00 |
| Bukoba | 22,000.00 | 22,000.00 |
| TOTAL | 13,761,658.00 | 7,907,264.00 |
| Africa Federation New Projects | 51,011,697.00 | 51,011,697.00 |
| Grand Total | 64,773,355.00 | 58,918,961.0 |

For community news from Africa and around the world visit the Africa Federation website - www.africafederation.org

Muslims seek spouses online

This is an edited version of an article published in the IBN News on 6th February 2004.

Imam Ahmad had heard so many stories about members of his mosque meeting their Muslim mates online that he finally decided to log on for himself and see what the fuss was all about. "I went to the site and I saw all these hundreds of prospective spouses," he recalls of his first visit to Al-Ussrah.net. "I was taken aback; I didn't know it was that widely used."

A religious leader at a mosque in Sacramento, Calif., Ahmad, 45, admits to having had initial concerns about whether online matchmaking is sanctioned under the tenets of Islamic law, which prohibits dating. But what he found was a burgeoning community of Muslims seeking other Muslims online, with the sole purpose of arranging a traditional marriage. What he found was the Internet as matchmaker. And he found himself, 15 months later, married to a woman he met on the site.

Traditionally, observant Muslims have marriages arranged through relatives or a matchmaker who scours the local community, friends, and neighbors for a suitable, compatible person. But in a global age when Muslim families, like so many others, have increasingly dispersed, the nexus of some Islamic communities has dissolved, making it difficult for individuals to find people they know and trust. Especially for second-generation Muslims living in Europe or North America, the local field of prospective spouses is increasingly limited. So as families begin to extend their search, the Internet has been

embraced as the newest tool in the oldest practice of an ancient faith.

The numbers tell some of the story. "When MuslimMatch.com was launched in 2002, the site attracted few visitors," Today MuslimMatch.com, probably the Web's most popular Muslim matrimonial site, boasts 47,648 registered members and 1,500 first-time visitors a day.

Within the last two years, online matrimonials have taken a quantum leap forward in terms of social acceptability. Ali Rizvi, whose Texas-based ShiaMatch.com caters specifically to Islam's minority group, points out that he launched his site in 1999 with five or six users (including himself, his brothers and his cousins) and has since seen the active membership logs surpass 9,000.

The exponential growth in popularity of these sites (new ones with names like matrimony.org and muslimweddings.com seem to pop up every day) is easy for those in the community to understand. It's a medium that's borne out of necessity because of the changing demographics of Muslims. In the past, Muslim communities had a lot of people in one area, meaning more prospects available either through family or other acquaintances. Today many Muslims live independently and finding other Muslim partners is difficult, especially when dating is generally not permissible.

At first glance, Muslim matrimonial sites strongly resemble typical online dating services and community forums like Match.com and Friendster. Members create a profile, an ad describing themselves—some times with a picture—and

explaining what kind of match is desired. But a closer look reveals that ads are more tailored.

"Sayinghitoyou" is a 34 year-old Jordanian woman who recently moved to the United States. She writes that she is looking for a "Jordanian or Palestinian [man], educated, responsible, religious, fears God, nice, out going, fun to be with, dependable, warm and kind," and describes herself as "a good muslim wife to start the perfect family!" On ShiaMatch.com it is not uncommon to see women's ads posted by "mother" or "sister" or even "a concerned friend."

These are often signals sent out to other parents or guardians looking for spouses on behalf of their children or nephews. "When a mother submits a profile, there are a lot of parents browsing these profiles, so another parent sees it and it eases the barrier for them in contacting that person," explains Rizvi, 28 (whose own marriage was arranged through his aunt).

When Ahmad began using the Internet to find his own match, he says he specified that "if the woman who was contacting me did not have a guardian, she did not need to contact me at all." Ultimately, his marriage to Aminah, whom he met online, had all the trappings of a traditionally arranged marriage—they agreed to marry in part because it turned out they knew people in common who vouched for each other's position in the community.

But, also like online dating, Internet matchmaking is not for everyone. Fazeel Chauhan has come to conclude that, because online anonymity implies less accountability, many men and

(continued on page 75)

(...from page 74)

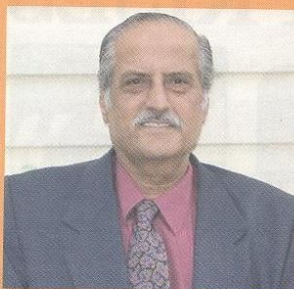
women posting ads on these sites do not actually want to get married. "The experience that I had is that the women were not serious. It was more like they were interested in some attention or chatting," he says.

Chauhan, 40, estimates that over three years he has replied to 2,000 ads. "I would cut and paste the same message and send it to say 100 women in a day. Two weeks later I would have maybe 10 replies.... At the end you might end up with two or three with whom you kind of hit it off in e-mail." After establishing a rapport, he would meet the woman in person—from his home in Diamond Bar, Calif., he's traveled to Detroit, Washington, D.C., and Wichita, Kan., to meet prospective wives. But not once has he found a Muslim woman online with whom he connected. And in his own way, Chauhan makes an interesting point. Many in the community actually see the Internet as just another quiver in the matrimonial bow.

Schwabb Amin, 24, who met his wife Amber in a chat room for Pakistanis, didn't sign on with the intention of finding a spouse and had never visited a matrimonial site. But after getting to know each other online, they decided to get married.

He draws a distinction between finding a spouse online and how Muslim marriages are traditionally planned, when getting to know your betrothed is not always an option. "I see a lot of people going to the matrimonial sites—it's another option for them, but I don't think they're relying solely on that. It's more for the older people; it's harder for them to get married." Which only goes to show how far online matchmaking has come. After all, weren't the "older people" supposed to be the slowest to figure out the Internet in the first place?

Ramzan Manek receives the Queen Elizabeth Golden Jubilee Award



Br. Ramzan Manek was one of several Canadian citizens who were given special recognition last year in the form of a commemorative medal celebrating the 50th anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's reign. The award was presented to Mr. Manek by Hon. Tony Valeri, M.P. at a ceremony in Hamilton, Ontario on June 13, 2003.

The Hamilton Spectator reported that "Mr. Manek has earned the respect and admiration of individuals from many walks of life for his work toward an open and diverse community, and has been instrumental in creating a social vision for our community by developing the Mayor's Committee against racism and discrimination for Hamilton. The committee has helped to advise and consult the Mayor and has reported to the City Council on relevant issues relating to anti-racism and anti-discrimination in the community. Mr. Manek was also instrumental in creating, after the tragedy of September 11th, the 'Strengthening Hamilton Initiative.' The purpose of the initiative is to develop and act on a coherent plan to advance a social agenda that addresses challenges specific to our Hamilton area."

The Golden Jubilee medal was awarded to 46,000 Canadians who made a significant contribution to their fellow citizens, their community or to Canada. Medals were allotted to all provincial and territorial governments, as well as a wide range of national and local organizations.

Br. Saeed Ghabn from Hamilton's Sunni Mosque also received the medal in recognition of his work to build a vibrant and harmonious community that values racial, religious and cultural diversity. Br. Ali Raza Rajani and Br. Gulamabbas Sajan also received the Golden Jubilee Medal in Toronto.

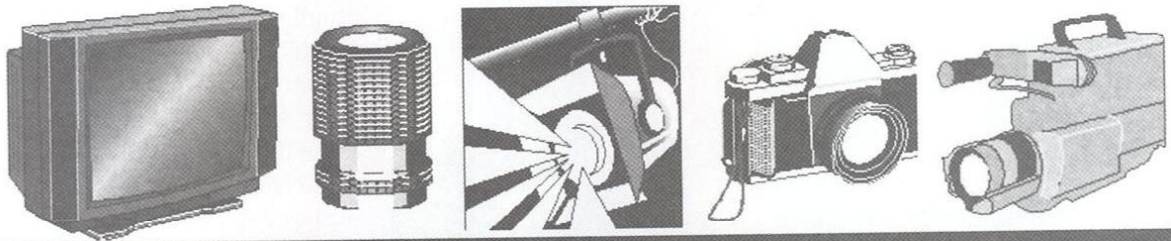
Hijab ban in France condemned

The World Federation strongly condemned the French government's decision to ban religious symbols' in state schools. The French ban is a clear violation of basic human rights. In the case of Muslim women, for whom it has been spuriously argued this will be a way of combating gender discrimination, it will violate their ECHR rights to education and subsequently it will impinge on their right to work and obviously it prevents them from the free expression of their religious beliefs. This will either force Muslim women to the margins of French society or force them to violate their own principles to enjoy what should be their basic rights to education and work.

Hijab and ultimately, the practice of religion is a fundamental human right encapsulated in 'the freedom of religious expression. The foundation of Human Rights legislation, supports the value of the individual as having freedoms against the control and repression of the state. In this respect, Hijab is not a political expression but a religious obligation and a state of mind. Banning Hijab is imposing a ban on the 'state of mind' and this is unacceptable in a civilized society.

The Islamic Education Board (IEB) of the World Federation has sought guidance from the Maraje' for our affected sisters in France.

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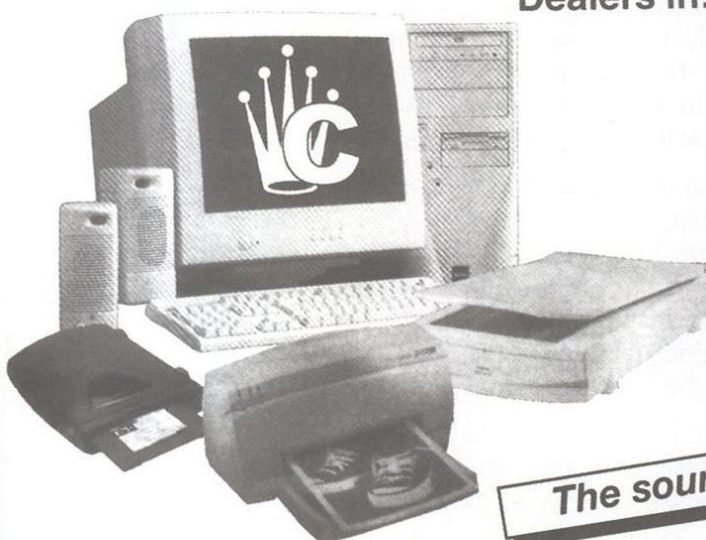
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Los Angeles Festival draws 210 contestants

The Los Angeles Sports Festival organised by Union Sports Club attracted 210 participants who played soccer, men's basketball, volleyball and golf. For the first time ladies participated in basketball which drew 40 ladies from Minnesota, Vancouver, Los Angeles and Orange County, California. The final results were:

Soccer:

Winners: Los Angeles Union SC
Runners Up: Houston IMAN SC
MVP: Muntazir Chandoo (LAUSC)
Final Score: 5-4

Mens Basketball:

Winners: New York
Runners Up: Toronto
MVP: Zahir Khalfan (New York)

Ladies Basketball:

Winners: Orange County
Runners Up: Minnesota (Jaffery Sports Club)
MVP: Sukaena Mithani (OC)

Volleyball:

Winners: Jaffery's SC (Toronto)
Runners Up: United Stars SC
MVP: Mehboob Merali (Jaffery's)
Most Disciplined Team: Minnesota (Jaffery Sports Club)

Golf:

1st Place - Aqil Habib, Seattle (100 points)
2nd Place - Mazaher Sivjee, L.A. (95 points)
3rd Place - Abbas Damji (Toronto)
Akber Mithani (Vancouver) (89 points).

Wessex Jamaat Re-launches website

The new look website of Wessex Jamaat - www.almahdi.org.uk offers an exciting and informative experience to surfers with online lectures, articles and photos. Surfers are invited to send in their comments or suggestions.

Youth Network Desk establishing firm roots

In the 2003- 2006 term, an unprecedented step has been taken of setting up an international Youth Network Desk (YND) under the auspices of the World Federation. This has given the youth their own structure within the wider sphere of the global community and created a sense of belonging and unity. Following the formation of the YND, regional youth bodies have also been set up in Africa and Europe, alongside the establishment and continuation of new and existing local youth groups.

The Dubai Declaration

The Youth Network Desk held its first international forum following local and regional youth meetings. This was attended by nearly thirty youth delegates from Africa, Europe, North America, and the Middle East. The goal was to determine the priorities for the coming term and these were formulated into four key areas and drafted into the Dubai declaration. The agreed aims are to:

- Strengthen the religious and spiritual foundation of the youth;
- Continue to build and maintain internal strength by networking and sharing best practice;
- Increase participation in the decision making progress, nurturing leaders and acknowledging the skills of the youth;
- To network beyond the Khoja community with the Muslim ummah as well as building external relations with non-Muslims, implementing the responsibility of da'wah (education and invitation to Islam).

Focus during the past term: building structures and creating connections

In its first term, YND focused on two main areas: promoting the need and importance of youth structures at various levels within the community and networking, enabling and facilitating youth initiatives and sharing of best practice. Through regional and jamaat visits, specific as well as regional and global issues were identified. The key success has been to create awareness amongst youth of the activities of their peers around the world as well as in their regions and localities and to build on this awareness through contacts and links.

Making an impact on the International Arena

The World Federation Youth Network Desk attended an international United Nations conference in Casablanca in October, 2003 to form a road map for sustainable development for youth around the world. Over one thousand youth representatives from around the world attended. The conference was a series of activities, seminars, and conferences which culminated in forming the Casablanca Declaration. The YND played a central role in its formation over the two weeks of the conference. This was an opportunity to network and share best practice with youth from other religions, cultures and nations, and to convey the universal human values of Islam to an international audience. The World Federation's YND was represented by Zahid Khimji and Mohamed Husein Nasser from London (UK).

(continued on page 78)

WF provides assistance for ghusl in Nicosia

The President of the World Federation, Dr. Ahmed Hassam was contacted from Australia about the death of a mumin in Nicosia, Cyprus and assistance was requested in preparations for ghusl, kafan and dafan.

The three brothers of the marhum living in Australia arrived in Nicosia on Friday 30 January, 2004 and late on the following day requested urgent help. A volunteer fully equipped with the necessary items required for the burial rites left London immediately for Nicosia.

Early on Sunday morning 1 February 2004, Ghusl, Kafan and Salaa were performed at the mortuary with the assistance of the marhum's brothers. The mayyit was then taken to the only centuries old mosque in Nicosia where several hundred muslim brothers joined the Salaa and witnessed the burial.

Obituary and condolence service launched

The World Federation has set up an 'obituary and condolence' service, whereby people can write about the loss of their relatives or friends, and send condolence messages. This service has been setup in order to recognise the lives and achievements of our community members. The obituary service shall therefore outline the person's life, achievements and contributions to the community. The condolence service will be open to all whereby people can send a personal message to the family of the departed soul, and acknowledge the person's contributions. These messages will Inshallah play a part in comforting the relatives of the deceased.

To submit a message, go to the 'news of death' section on the World Federation home page. Thereafter click on the name of the person you are referring to and make your submission.

Aeinullah Eye Clinic and Zainabiya Health Centre in Lucknow

The World Federation has opened a new eye clinic in Lucknow, India. Following on from its successful clinics built in Patna and Bangalore in India the Aeinullah Eye Clinic in Lucknow aims to continue the work to restore sight to those who cannot see. The World Federation has also embarked on the Zainabiya medical project in Lucknow to alleviate the suffering of its poor and needy by providing primary health care, medical aid and treatment for eye diseases. It is possible for about 70% of the world's blind to regain their eyesight, but in India, there is over 3 years of backlog of cataract surgery to be done.

Today nearly 50 million people are blind and another 150 million are victims of severe visual disability. Every five seconds one person goes blind. These numbers are projected to double by the year 2020. The incidence of eye diseases, particularly blindness, is very high in India. Cataracts afflict those even in their thirties and forties. About 90% of the world's blind live in developing countries like India. About 60% of all blindness worldwide is caused by cataracts, childhood eye disease, trachoma and onchocerciasis.

Lucknow is the capital of Uttar Pradesh, a northern state of India. It boasts the largest Shia Muslim population India – particularly of sadaats (direct descendents of the Holy Prophet). It has many hawza-e-ilmia (universities of Islamic studies) and many ulama (Islamic scholars) have graduated here.

It has numerous mosques and is renowned for its rich cultural tradition and architecture. Islam came to Lucknow in the early 18th century and its rulers built exquisite buildings like Bada Imambada and Chota Imambada.

(..from page 77)

Looking Forward

The coming three years will see YND consolidate and expand its work. It will:

- Preserve and enhance the religious and spiritual foundation of the youth of our community;
- Continue to build and maintain internal strength amongst the youth of our community;
- Work with Regional Federations and local jamaats and their youth bodies to increase youth participation at decision-making levels;
- Maintain and strengthen its role as being the port of access for youths into community work at the World Federation level. It will also actively promote active youth participation in the community to regional federations and jamaats;
- Build, maintain, and strengthen unity and relationships with other Muslim youth organisations;
- Build, maintain, and strengthen external relations with non-Muslim youth organisations;
- Acknowledge the contribution, progress, and potential of youths in both Islamic and secular spheres.

DEATH JOTTINGS

Inna lillaahi wa inna
ilaihi raajiuun

The following deaths have
been reported since the last
issue of the *Federation
Samachar*.

Please recite surah-e-fateha for all
the deceased.

- 31/3/04 Marhum Muslim G.
Abdullah of Dar es Salaam.
- 31/3/04 Marhum Haji Amirali
Karim Hirji of Mombasa
- 31/3/04 Marhum Alhaj Hussein
Dattoo of Zanzibar.
- 28/3/04 Marhum Gulamali Dewji
Dhanji of Dar-es-Salaam.
- 23/3/04 Marhum
MohammedRaza Sultan Yusufali
of Austin, Texas.
- 18/3/04 Marhum Kassam
Mohamedali Sherriff of Moshi.
- 28/2/04 Marhuma Nargisbai
MuhammadHussein Raza of Dar-
es-Salaam.
- 26/2/04 Marhuma Fatmabai
Hassanali Fazal Dewji of Dar-es-
Salaam.
- 25/2/04 Haji Remtula Ali, Lisbon,
Portugal.
- 20/2/04 Marhum Fidahussein
Ebrahim Hasham of Mombasa.
- 18/2/04 Marhum Hasan
Ladha Meghjee of Toronto.
- 16/2/04 Marhum Liyakat
Habib of Allentown.
- 12/2/04 Marhum Abbas
Abdulla Jaffer of Lindi.
- 13/2/04 Marhum Kumail
Bhojani of Dubai.
- 10/2/04 Marhuma Nihad-e-
Fatema Salim Mohamed Baker
Bhalloo of Congo.
- 9/2/04 Marhum Shabbir Ali
- Akber Ali Lilani of Hyderabad.
- 7/2/04 Marhuma Kanizbai
Hussein Kermalli of New York.
- 4/2/04 Marhum Mohamedali
Fazal Ladak of New York.
- 31/1/04 Marhuma Sikinabai
Gulamabbas Lalji of Dar-es
Salaam.
- 30/1/04 Marhum Barkatali
Nazarali Bhojani of Sangli, India.
- 29/1/04 Marhum Mulla
Hassan Versi of Dar-es-Salaam.
- 27/1/04 Marhum Mohamedtaki
Alibhai Walji.
- 27/1/04 Marhum AbdulGhafur
Hasanali Gulamhusein (Biremi) of
Dar es Salaam.
- 25/1/04 Marhuma Rukiyabai
Mohammadhusein Mawji of
London.
- 23/1/04 Marhum Amirali
Fazel Manji of Morogoro.
- 21/1/04 Marhum
Fidahussein Mohamed Alidina of
Dar es Salaam.
- 16/1/04 Marhum Yusuf
Mohamed Kermalli of Mombasa.
- 16/1/04 Marhuma Rukiyabai
Fazel Mohammed of Dar-es-
Salaam.
- 12/1/04 Marhuma Zehrabai
binte Mohammedali of Karachi.
- 8/1/04 Marhum Alihussein
Ismail Kassam of Lisbon,
Portugal.
- 8/1/04 Marhum Amirali
Gulamali Moledina of London.
- 7/1/04 Marhum Shabir Shah
of London.
- 7/1/04 Marhum Musa Juma
Okera of Arusha.
- 7/1/04 Marhum Alihussein
Ismail Kassam, Lisbon, Portugal.
- 7/1/04 Marhuma Sugrabai
Haji Mohamed Somji Tarmohamed
of Dar es Salaam.
- 6/1/04 Marhum Haiderali
Mohamed Dharsi of Dubai.
- 2/1/04 Marhuma
Sherbanubai Hasanali Ladha of
Dar-es-Salaam.
- 27/12/03 Marhuma
Masumabai H. Fazal and Marhuma
Sabikabai of Arusha.
- 27/12/03 Marhuma
Rukaiyyahbai Ismail Walji of
Dubai.
- 25/12/03 Marhum
Kasamalibhai Bader of Dar-es-
Salaam.
- 25/12/03 Marhuma Rukayya Ismail
Walji, Dubai, UAE.
- 23/12/03 Marhuma Rukyabai
Jafferali Virjee of Mombasa.
- 17/12/03 Marhuma Faraz
Aman Juma of London.
- 17/12/03 Marhum Ashrafali
Hasham, London.
- 15/12/03 Marhum Akber
Kassamali M. Alarakhia of
Zanzibar .
- 14/12/03 Marhuma Kanize
Fatema F Remtulla of Dar-es-
Salaam.
- 13/12/03 Marhuma Kurumbai
Kassamali of Bukoba, Tanzania.
- 11/12/03 Marhuma Zaibunisa
M. Fazal of Dar-es-Salaam.
- 4/12/03 Marhum Jafferali
Gulamhusein Alibhai of Toronto.
- 3/12/03 Marhuma Raziyabai
Mohamed Kerawala of Dodoma.
- 1/12/03 Marhuma Kulumbai
Yusuf Kermalli Alibhai of
Kampala.
- 1/12/03 Marhum Gulam
husein P. Hemani of Toronto.
- 29/11/03 Marhuma Zehrabai
Raza Abdullah Jaffer Dewji of
Toronto.
- 29/11/03 Marhum Mohsin
Mohamed Halwa of Mombasa.
- 24/11/03 Marhum Haider
Hasham Nanji Miyani of Dar-es-
Salaam.
- 23/11/03 Marhuma Shirinbai
Hassanali Nurmohamed Alarakhia
of Dar-es-Salaam.
- 21/11/03 Marhum Hussein
Mohamedali Janmohamed of Dar-
es-Salaam.

(continued on page 80)

Death Jottings

(...from page 79)

20/11/03 Marhuma Fatmabai
Mohamed Ali Haji Muraj of
Mombasa.

17/11/03 Marhum Anwar
Bhamani of Leeds, UK.

17/11/03 Marhuma Kanizbai
Abbas Merali of Dar-es-Salaam.

16/11/03 Marhum Anverali
Bhamani, Leeds, United Kingdom.

12/11/03 Marhum Pyarali Nazarali
Haji, Toronto.

10/11/03 Marhum
Gulamabbas Mohamedali Fazal
Dewji of Dar-es-Salaam.

10/11/03 Marhum Akber
Visram Meghji of Mombasa.

10/11/03 Marhum Gulamali E.
Karim of London.

4/11/03 Marhum Gulam Jaffer
Momin, London.

23/10/03 Marhuma Khairunbai
Akberali Hassan Walji of London.

21/10/03 Marhum Mushtaq
Hassanali Sabur of Leicester.

18/10/03 Marhuma Aminabai
Shamji of Trollhattan.

15/10/03 Marhum Haji Rashid
Suleman Manji of Canada.

14/10/03 Marhuma Iffat
Muhammad Sadiq of Dubai.

13/10/03 Marhuma Kulsumbai
Hassanali Bhanji of Dar-es-
Salaam.

10/10/03 Marhuma Fatmabai
Pyarali Mohamedali Merali of
Birmingham.

7/10/03 Marhum Mustafa
Bhalloo of Dar-es-Salaam.

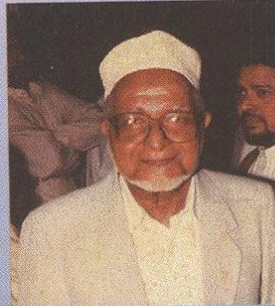
5/10/03 Marhuma Fatmabai
Hassanali Jaffer Alloo of Dubai.

5/10/03 Marhuma Zainab
Ebrahim Jaffer Hirji of Dar-es-
Salaam.

Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi rajeoon.

Marhum Al-Haj Yusufbhai M. Kermali

Marhum Al-Haj Yusufbhai M. Kermali, the long serving former Chairman of Mombasa Jamaat passed away in Mombasa on Friday, 16th January, 2004.



Marhum dedicated over fifty years of his lifetime in continuously serving this community. He was a quiet and unassuming person, one who did not care for position or status, had no false pretences, sought no recognition but dedicated his life with a sense of love and compassion to silently serve the community in any capacity.

Despite holding high positions as an elected leader of the community, Yusufbhai never lost his humility and his acts of consideration and compassion will be fondly remembered by many. He was born in Zanzibar in 1922. In 1942, he joined the British Army on the civil administrative side, and was posted to Somalia. In 1946, he settled in Mombasa and joined the African Mercantile Co. Gifted with mechanical skills, he devoted his evening hours, at times until almost midnight, running an electrical and radio repair shop.

Yusufbhai married in Mombasa in 1949 and was blessed with four sons and three daughters. Alhamdulillah, his children are also following the footsteps of their father in serving the community in many ways.

Soon after settling in Mombassa, Yusufbhai started taking interest in community services as a volunteer and in the activities of the Ithna-Asheri Young men's Union. In 1953 he was instrumental in initiating what was then seen as a "revolution" in the Ithna-Asheri Sports Club. In the election that followed, Yusufbhai was elected as member of the Sports Club Managing Committee.

There is no one branch of the community organization in which he has not served. This includes the Julus and Majlis sections and he was also the Chairman of the Ithna-Asheri Young Men's Union.

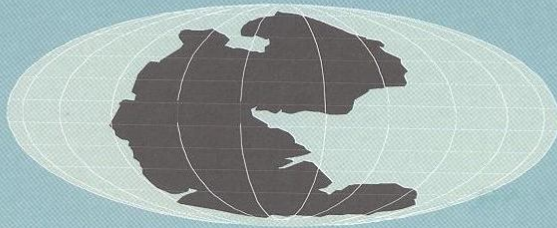
Concern for welfare of community members was of major interest to him. Accordingly he served as an active member of the Faize Huseini, and also as Chairman of the Faize for several terms. In 1974, he played a useful role in collaboration with the jamaat management in helping to unify Faize activities under one centralized organization.

Yusufbhai will be fondly remembered as a long serving Chairman of Mombasa Jamaat for several terms. It was a touching sight to then see him climbing to the roof of the Huseini Mosque to personally repair the water supply pump. He performed many such mundane tasks without the least hesitation. As a Chairman of the Jamaat, and as a member of the Marriage Reconciliation Committee, Yusufbhai is known to have played some key roles, and at times performed some bold acts, in helping to resolve matrimonial disputes.

A unique experience in the life of Yusufbhai took place in 1961 when he went to Iraq with his family for Ziyarat. On their return journey from Basrah to Bombay, the ship they were travelling in caught fire. Passengers had to alight into the lifeboats in high seas. The group of Yusufbhai consisted of eleven individuals – Mr. & Mrs. Yusufbhai, their seven children, his mother-in-law and a relation from

(continued on page 81)

Worldwide Elections



Tabligh Board gets huge representation from Jamaats

The Tabligh Board of the Africa Federation which has a mandate for tabligh activities within the community has the below outlined members. Outside tabligh activities will be undertaken by the Central Bilal Board (CBE).

Aliraza Nanji - Chairman

Akber Karawalli - Vice Chairman

Mohamedarif Suleman - Hon Secretary

Shabbir Janmohamed - Asst. Hon Secretary

Abdulrazak Khalfan - Hon Treasurer

Resident Nucleus Members:

Abbas Chagpar

Dina bai Rajani

Kulsum bai Dossa

Non-Resident Nucleus Members:

Abbasali Nanji

Suhel Janmohamed

Jamaat Representatives:

Latifa bai Bhalloo
- Tanga

Mahboob Somji
- Dar es Salaam

Raziya bai Janmohamed
- Dar es Salaam

Ghulahusseini Mukhtar
- Arusha

Murtaza Jetha
- Arusha

Mohamedraza Dato
- Nairobi

Shaheen bai Inayat
- Nairobi

Mohamedali Vakil
- Mwanza

Mohamedraza Khamis
- Madagascar

Mohamedtaki Jaffer
- Zanzibar Kuwvat

Muslim Bhanji
- Dodoma

Raziya bai Fazal
- Nakuru

Riyaz Virjee
- Mombasa

Sibtain Sadak
- Mombasa

Rustamali Moledina
- Bukoba

Safdar Rehman
- Kampala

Trollhättan, Sweden

The Trollhättan, Sweden Jamaat elected the following to the Managing Committee on 6th September 2003:

Chairman:

Br Mukhtar Hirani

Vice Chairman:

Br. Zulqarnain Mohamed

Hon Secretary:

Br. Anvar Alladin

Hon Treasurer:

Br. Sultan Kanani

Committee Members:

Br. Mehdi Bijani

Br. Mohsin Lakhani

Br. Yusuf Kanani

(from page 80)

Bombay. In the process of alighting into the lifeboats, his mother-in-law fell into the sea. Yusufbhai boldly got hold of her hand and would not let go. The struggle to save her was proving risky for those inside the lifeboat. Despite her urging to let go and abandon her, Yusufbhai never lost hope. In the struggle to pull her into the lifeboat, her shoulder was dislocated. Against many odds, miraculously, she was eventually saved.

At a gathering organized by the Debate and Education section of the Ithna-Asheri Young Men's Union, Yusufbhai gave a graphic account of this episode. A report of his account was published in "The Mombasa Times."

Yusufbhai has also served as Chairman and Vice Chairman of Bilal Muslim Mission of Kenya. In his capacity as Chairman of the Bilal Muslim Mission and the Jamaat, he cultivated very good personal contacts and relationship with various communities living in the Old Town. These personal rapport and connections with individuals and communities living around our Mosque areas proved very reassuring at a time when the political barometers were high in Mombasa during the 1992 general election period.

In 1981/1983, Yusufbhai also served as Vice Chairman of the Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaats of Africa. In the aftermath of the Somalia evacuation, Yusufbhai played an active role in various welfare and rehabilitation tasks and also in managing the feeding arrangements at the Imambara

Haji Zulfikarbhai Khimji, Chairman of the Africa Federation traveled from Nairobi to participate in the funeral. Let us all join to pray for the *magferat* of Marhum Yusufbhai Kermali. May Allah, in His Mercy, *behaqqe Chaharda Masoomeen (A.S.)* grant him place of high abode in Jannat. Amin. Al Fateha.

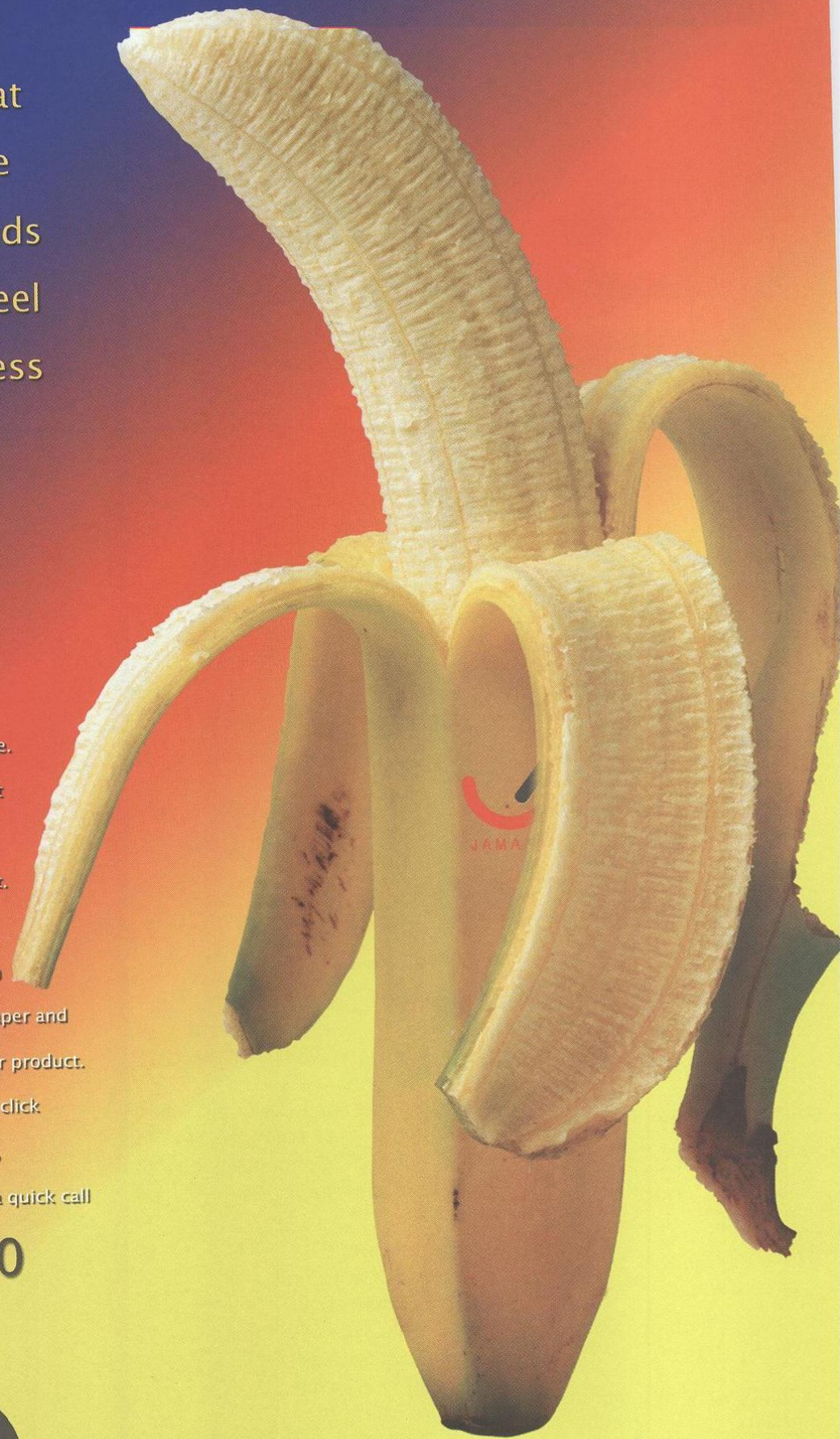
It's hard
to believe that
some people
with sane minds
can actually feel
these sweetness
on paper
!

True! True!
we believe good
printing delivers
the right message home.
A good Dream, a great
concept can be
distorted by poor print.
Though we are not
magicians but we can
put the right emotions on paper and
you can feel the impact of your product.

If this message does not click
right into your head,
Ask your secretary to give us a quick call

2861400

or simply pop in



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Elections

Regional Council of Indian Ocean Islands

The current office bearers of the Regional Council of Indian Ocean Islands are:

Navazaly Rossanally Molou
President

Razaly Kassamaly Daya
Vice President

Shahid Houssenyaly Khamis Vice President

Badouraly Fidahoussen Kourjee
Permanent Councillor

Sheikh Mounir Alihoussen
Secretary General

Arzou Raza Piaraly Hassam
Treasurer

Liakatally Alihoussen Nassor
Assistant Treasurer

Amiraly Mamodaly Djaffar
Tabligh Coordinator

Mohamed Raza Houssen Jivan
Education Coordinator

Zahid Houssenyaly Karim
Sports Coordinator

Zoulfikar Aky Daya
Administration In charge

Dr. Sabir Alihoussen Molou
Health Coordinator

Special Advisors to the President

- Razaly Hirdjee
- Asgharaly Houssenyaly Djaffar

South London

At the AGM held on 21st September 03, the following members were elected to serve the South London Jamaat for the next two years:

Br. Bashir Alidina
President

Br. Hussein Alidina
Vice President

Br. Riyaz Ladha
Hon. Secretary

Br. Gulamabbas Hudda
Asst. Secretary

Br. Salim Master
Hon. Treasurer

Br. Sarfaraz Jeraj
Asst. Treasurer

Br. Sibtain Raza
Mukhi

Br. Musabhai Ravji
Asst. Mukhi

Committee Members:

Br. Hassanain Walji
Br. Gulamhusein Kaba

Senior Trustees:

Br. Riyaz Dattoo
Br. Zulfikar Kassam
Br. Mohamed Hasan
Br. Naushad Visram
Br. Amirali Rahemtulla

- Akbaraly Daya
- Roshan Jamil
- Ikbal Akbaraly (Socomo)
- Moise Hassanaly

Ambassadors of the Regional Council

- Dindar Sulleman –

Edmonton

At the general meeting held on September 28, 2003, the Shia-Ithnasheri Association of Edmonton, Canada, elected the following office bearers:

Mohamed Rajabali as President
(president@jammat.org)

MohamedJaffer Bhimani as Program Coordinator
(mukhi@jammat.org)

Mohamed Jamal as Secretary
(secretary@jammat.org)

Saleem Dhalla as Treasurer
(treasurer@jammat.org)

Akber Walji as External Affairs
(eaffairs@jammat.org)

MohamedRaza Fazal as Past President.
(president@jammat.org)

Trustees:

Husein Jamal
(husein.jamal@shaw.ca)

Hassanali Mavani

Habib Dhalla
(habibd@telusplanet.net)

Ladies Committee:

Chairlady: Mrs. Kaniz Mavani

Assistant Chairlady: Mrs. Yasmin Rajabali

Secretary: Ms Siddiqua Mohamedali

Treasurer: Mrs. Rashida Mohamedali

Committee Members:

Ms Yasmin Jamal
Mrs. Sidiqqa Mavani

- Majunga Ikbal Hedaraly Dinmamod – Morondava

- Galib Hirdjee Karim – Tulear

Amine Mohamed Ramdje – Tamatave

Anjumane Jafariyya

After the election held on Thursday 25th December 2003 at the al-Zahra Centre, Merton Road, Watford, the following is the new Executive Committee of the Anjumane Jafariyya Jamaat:

President:-
Sagir Shah

Vice - President:-
Mashooq Shah

Secretary General:-
Amjad Shah

Treasurer:-
Shabbir Shah

Executive Members:-

Abrar Shah
Arshad Shah
Azhar Shah
Azmat Shah
Shokat Shah
Zakar Shah

Switzerland

During the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Shia Ithna-Asheri Council of Switzerland on 30th November 2003, the following were duly elected into office for the term 2004-5.

Dr. Med. Shabbir Hassam
President
shassam@hin.ch

Mr. Mahmood Khimji
Vice President
m.khimji@datacomm.ch
Mr. Riyaz Mohamed Ali
Secretary
zinat@gmx.net

Dr. Hussein Khimji
Treasurer
n.khimji@freesurf.ch

Election news are also carried on the Africa Federation web site -

www.africafederation.org

Executive Councillors for World Federation

As provided in the World Federation constitution, appointment of the following five Executive Councillors has been made on behalf of the Africa Federation to the World Federation for the term 2003-2006:

Alhaj Zulfikar Khimji - Chairman - Africa Federation;

Alhaj Navaz Molou - President of the Council Regional of Khoja Shia Ithnasheri Jamaats of Indian Ocean Islands;

Alhaj Pyarali Shivji - Chairman - KSI Jamaat - Dar-es-Salaam;

Alhaj Jaffer Dharsee - Active member of Youth Network, Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat;

Alhaj Muntazir Jaffer - Upcoming Youth and member of Managing Committee of Mombasa Jamaat.

Milton Keynes

Following the recent elections at Milton Keynes Khoja Shia Jamaat, the following office bearers were elected:

Mustafa Dhanji
President

Mohamed Dewji
Secretary

Mehboob Ladak
Treasurer

Jaffer Ravjani
Mukhi

Committee Members:

Sajjid Dhanji
Mustaq Dhanji
Gulamabbas Jaffer

For all correspondence with reference to our Jamaat please contact:

Dr. Mohamed Dewji
E-mail: modewji@btinternet.com
Phone number: 01908 233405
Mobile number 0797 407 2020

Yasin Rahim appointed new Secretary General

The President of the World Federation has appointed Brother Yasin Rahim as the new Secretary General of the World Federation.

Yasin is a pharmacist by background. He did his first degree in Pharmacy in the United States and pursued a Masters in Pharmaceutical Administration at Ohio State University. He did his MBA at the University of Portsmouth and an MSc in Economics and Quantitative Methods in Health Care at City University.

Yasin is currently working as Review Manager for the Commission for Health Improvement, a healthcare inspectorate. Yasin is an active community member. He has worked as a madrassah teacher and has served as the Honorary Secretary for Wessex Jamaat and the Secretary General for the Council of European Jamaats. He has also been a member of World Federation Islamic Education Board and part of the team that worked on the strategic plan-creating futures together 2003-2008.

New office bearers?

Recent elections?

Send in pertinent details to

samachar@raha.com

for inclusion in the

Federation Samachar

New Office Bearers of The World Federation

Following the election of the President of the World Federation of KSIMC (for the term 2003 - 2006) - Dr Ahmed Hassam, the following appointments and elections took place at the World Federation Triennial Conference in Dubai, 8-11 October 2003.

President:

Dr Ahmed Hassam
(Birmingham, UK)

Vice President:

Sultan Davdani
(Toronto, Canada)

Secretary General:
Navshir Jaffer
(London, UK)

Honorary Treasurer:

Azad Kanani
(London, UK)

Board Chairmen:

Islamic Education Board
Safder Jaffer
(Milton Keynes, UK)

CETAB:

T B A

Medical Advisory Board:

Dr Mohamed Taki Walji
(Birmingham, UK)

Seniors Advisory Board:

Dr Akber Mithani
(Vancouver, Canada)

Zainabiya Child Sponsorship Scheme:

Murtaza Dato
(London, UK)

Elected Councillors:

Anwarali Rajabali Dharamsi
(Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania)

Gulamabbas Dinani
(New York, USA)

Anverali Mohamedali Rajpar
(Karachi, Pakistan)

Masum Somji
(Dubai, UAE)

Ilyas Vali
(Antananarivo, Madagascar)

Appointed Executive Councillors:

Haider Haji
Manzoor Kanani
Mohsin Kanji
Sabira Lakha
Riaz Hussein Premjee

These appointments have been made to the Executive Council by the President of the World Federation, Dr Ahmed Hassam under Clause 19.1.2 (C) of the Constitution.

Electoral Commissioner:

Amir Somji
(Arusha, Tanzania)

JIBA Office Bearers 2004 - 2005

JIBA is pleased to announce the re-election of Brother Abbas Mooraj, Brother Muhammad Ali R. Merchant, and Brother Ghulam Abbas Badami to JIBA following their nominations for the posts of Chairman, Honorary Secretary General and Honorary Treasurer respectively.

Since no other nomination papers were filed, the candidates were declared elected. The General Body of JIBA International unanimously confirmed the election in its 12th International Conference.

Brother Riaz Nensey, Chief Election Commissioner and Vice-Chairman of JIBA Karachi Chapter, said about the elections, "I congratulate Brother Abbas Mooraj, Brother Muhammad Ali R. Merchant, and Brother Ghulam Abbas Badami upon their re-election and wish them to achieve their goals for the betterment and upliftment of businessmen, entrepreneurs, professionals and the members of the community."

Appointments of Assistants to Treasurer and Secretary General

The World Federation has appointed two new assistant treasurers, Brother Abbasali Merali and Brother Abbas Sadak. They will work with the Treasurer Brother Azad Kanani.

Brother Abbas Sadak, born in Mombasa, is a chartered accountant, presently working for a top 20 accountancy firm in the UK, specialising in taxation. He has worked within the big four accountancy firm, gaining experience with local and national charities in providing consulting and tax advice services. He is a very dedicated and energetic individual who enjoys a challenge. He has taught at various madrassahs including Mombasa, Stanmore and Milton Keynes, where he presently resides.

Brother Abbasali Merali is an Economics graduate from the London School of Economics and is a qualified chartered accountant. He is currently working as an investment banker in London with experience of a number of prominent M&A transactions. He is also a director of a healthcare company. Abbasali is an active community member and has been involved in several initiatives both within and beyond our community. He is a keen tennis player and has led the Stanmore tennis team in international sports festivals.

The World Federation is also pleased to announce the appointment of Fatim Kurji as the Assistant Secretary General. Fatim is a recently qualified barrister and has been involved in community work at Birmingham Jamaat, Council of European Jamaat, and the World Federation. Recently, she toured East Africa as a member of the CETAB Professionals Group.

Questioning our marriage ways

by Mohamed N. Takim, Dar es Salaam.

Way back in March 1998, an international conference was organized in Birmingham, England, by the local Jamaat on "Our Marriage Ways". A few keynote speakers presented papers on different issues on marriage, and many papers from different parts of the world were filed for this conference. Subsequently the Birmingham Jamaat published a book containing all the papers presented in person or from a distance. The book makes very interesting reading, covering topics from preparing oneself for marriage, choosing the right spouse, criteria for selection, traditions, problems encountered after marriage to reconciliation and ultimately divorce.

Many ideas developed and suggestions were made on different aspects. What seems rather sad is that no action appears to have been taken at formal levels, that is by the Executive Committees of various jamaats. Or at least there is no news of what action any jamaat has taken or even considered some of the issues presented. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say no action seems to have been taken in East Africa, the motherland for the majority of our community members living in the west and still deriving inspiration from.

It is not my intention to write a report of this conference; rather it is to highlight one area of great importance, which is of socio-religious nature- the first step of getting into matrimony.

There are problems in the community on the issue of matchmaking, choosing the right partner etc. It is a known fact that due to gender segregation, an intending boy or girl has no chance of being able to choose a prospective spouse. The only way these days is to arrange a

meeting of the two in the presence of parents or some adults. This is fine but it is not enough for either to be able to meet for a short period of time and arrive at a very crucial decision as concluding a matrimony.

One meeting is surely not enough to enable either the boy or the girl to reach an informed and calculated decision. If a decision is made, it is more of an emotional one, placing one's judgement on physical features and the reputation of the individual and family in the community.

Subsequent meetings are generally not held, some times resulting in secret meetings between the two, a situation that parents of both would not encourage. Even at the initial stage of arranging a meeting between a boy and a girl, there is a hesitation that after the meeting if the boy decides not to propose, he fears the girl would feel rejected and would offend her sensibility. Hence he had better not ask for such a meeting.

There is a cry from various directions that our youths are going in the wrong direction due to late marriages and a more serious matter, marrying OUTSIDE the community. Such a situation was reported by Dr. Amir Lakha of London (once the President of Stanmore Jamaat) in his paper, when he mentioned that "in September 1997, 5 of our young girls and 1 young boy married outside the community. In November 1997, of the five weddings that took place in one particular week at Stanmore Imambada, two girls and two boys were getting married outside the community." Dr. Lakha found this shocking, just as many others.

Whilst we would respect the decisions of the individuals to

marry whosoever they like, presumably they would have converted their spouses to Muslims if they were not, or brought them closer to Shia beliefs if they were. But there must be a core problem which has not been tackled sufficiently for such a situation not to arise too often or in such numbers. And this, one can attribute to lack of chances for the eligible boys and girls to get to know each other. Some readers might immediately recoil and say "But this is haraam!" well, is it?

For some time now, and indeed in various papers, it has been suggested that we should arrange seminars, debates or other formal gatherings where both boys as well as girls would participate, all within Shariah, and participants would get a chance to know one another in their formal roles. This idea cannot sound revolutionary because many people who have asked our Mara'ja have been told clearly that such gatherings are in principle permissible.

Some might argue that it is enough for an intending boy, for instance, to get a chance to see and meet a girl once and come to his conclusion, and vice versa. But seeing a person in a more articulate role, involving himself/herself more of their personality enables one to get a better picture of the kind of person one is looking for in marriage. If both boys and girls engage themselves in such gatherings in "the respectful exchange of character and conversation to avoid putting themselves in any sin or situation of corrupt conduct" (Ayatullah Seestani) why should we hesitate? Interaction would only be allowed during such formal gatherings. Not only have such gatherings been legitimized by Sheria according to Ayatullah

(continued on page 87)

(..from page 86)

Seestani, but our Marja' permits two individuals meeting, with the girl without Hijab, and there is no ceiling placed on the number of meetings.

How to ensure that strict observance of Hijab is enforced is upon the organizers. Such gatherings are being held in other countries, we can do the same.

Children of today, the youths of both genders, are constantly exposed to "mixed gathering" situation either in a co-educational school or at work. Very forceful external pressures create a situation in which youths find themselves getting closer to members of the opposite sex who are outside the community, with no chances of being able to meet those within the community. Result? The reader knows it. As a vibrant community, we must improvise our ways to keep interest of the youths within the community, allowing for legitimate interaction, especially when marriage is being contemplated.

Not infrequently do I hear in either meetings or private chats that we are a very organized community, a comment often made by other Shia communities about the Khojas. Traditions in any society have an important role to play. They bind individuals together, and the more predictable a pattern of behaviour, the more cohesive individual members of a society, community or tribe are. But traditions can also be repressive, when, as it sometimes happens, the socio-psychological functions they were meant to serve no longer do so, have become dysfunctional, but continue to linger in a community. At this point, some individuals with foresight need to come out in the open and declare that some changes in certain aspects of our communal behavior must be allowed to take place, in the long-term interest of its survival. If positive changes are not allowed,

a community can disintegrate slowly over a period. And for a small community like ours, this can be disastrous. Remember what Imam Ali (a.s.) said about not trying to raise your child like he was of your times, but that he is born of a different time? There are certain inherent changes that come about with each generation and it is because of changing times that *ijtihad* helps us to interpret events, *ahadith* and indeed certain passages of the Quran in a contemporaneous manner.

See what one bold lady has openly written in one of the papers: the "waiting game" an expression made popular by Abdulhusein Akbar in an article many years ago in Stanmore Jamaat's newsletter. Have we stopped to think of the plight of spinsters who reach marriageable age but who have to keep on waiting until a message from some boy comes home? I wish to quote this lady who says:

"We all have a dream, a dream of marriage, the marriage of our daughters who share our dreams shyly and secretly but who at the same time harbour apprehension that their dream could easily be shattered for lack of suitable partners.....Our daughters too share the agony but again silently and secretly. They wait and still keep on waiting for a suitable partner. In the meantime that time which waits for no one passes and so does the marriageable age"

Traditions arise or evolve in order to fulfill some purpose in a society. It is traditions which keep communities, tribes, groups of people bound together. When traditions cease to fulfil their overt or covert functions and are not changed to be in tune with different circumstances or situations, such a community becomes imprisoned in the very behaviour its forefathers created for their purpose. Traditions become goals in themselves, an

end rather than a means to an end. Life situations in such a case will have been determined by ancestors long dead, whose circumstances were or may have been different from the present. Hence it is not uncommon to find members in a community getting disenchanted with its outdated customs, rebel and do their own things. The extent to which our community will remain a cohesive group and not disintegrate will depend upon how our leaders envision the present and try to shape the future.

Will our community be so blinded by our repressive customs that we must wait for a rebellion rather than systematically change such customs to suit changed conditions? Our youths may not rebel openly, or hesitate to do so, but must we sacrifice the legitimate dreams of our girls and boys in order to maintain our anachronistic traditions which are not only doing us no good, but are actually a hindrance to the healthy growth of our new generation?

It is now upto the leaders of our various jamaats to take the initiative and organize such functions. I can see initial resistance from some quarters, but perhaps the first step the jamaats can take is to organise debates and dialogues on this topic in men and ladies' fora separately. The reaction can easily be gauged and support sought and consensus arrived at. I believe this is the least we can expect our jamaats to do on this issue, busy as they are on other issues facing different jamaats. I take the liberty to state, at the risk of offending the powers that be that if this matter is not given the serious consideration it deserves, the leaders will have let down the community. No one is asking our jamaats to undertake any activity not within the shariah.

I would be happy to see some form of dialogue started on this topic in the *Samachar* or by private views to my email - mntakim@cats-net.com

CURRENT LEGAL ISSUES

Purchase of lotteries:

Question: I work at an exchange office but they also make me sell lottery cards. Is it permitted to sell lottery cards in this case?

Answer: Selling lottery cards is not permissible. Yes, it is permissible to take the property with the intention to contribute in a charitable project such as building a mosque or a bridge not with the intention of earning profit or a prize.

Shahadat Salesa (3rd Testimony):

Question: Is it permissible to recite the third Shahadat (i.e. *Ashhadu anna alian waliullah*) in tashahhud?

Answer: No, it is not permissible as a measure of obligatory precaution to recite Shahadat Salesa in Tashahhud.

Oral sex:

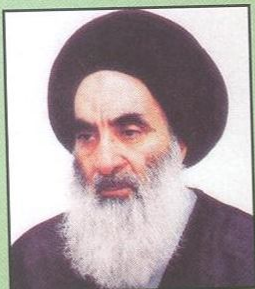
Question: Since I grew up in a western country I really don't know much about our religion. My question is, can we have oral sex before or after sexual intercourse or can we have oral sex at all? Is it haram?

Answer: Oral sex act is permissible with the consent of both husband and wife provided that no liquid gets into the mouth.

Temporary Marriage:

Question: Can a Muslim do Muta with a prostitute in order to satisfy his physical needs?

Answer: Marrying a woman who is known publicly as an adulterer is not permissible as a measure of precaution except after her



Ayatullah al Uzama Syed Ali al-Husaini Sistani

repentance (tawbah).

Question: I want to enquire "what rights are given to a woman to have a husband of her own choice?" Actually, I have been engaged to the first cousin of mine, he rejected me for another girl. Now my parents want me to marry that same person just because he is my cousin. I cannot accept this. So I need to persuade my family to let me make my own decision. Please, help me.

Answer: If you are independent in your living affairs, it is not permissible (for your guardian) to force you to marry him. If you are virgin and not independent in your life and your father wants to marry you to him (cousin) - at the same time there is no harm in that (rationally viewed as harmless), then it is necessary as a measure of obligatory precaution to obtain your consent for that.

Question: Is it necessary for a woman, who has married once, to get her father's permission for marriage.

Answer: No, she is allowed to marry without her guardian's permission.

Question: I want to do Muta'h marriage, what are the rules?

Answer: Temporary marriage has the following rules:

If you have already a Muslim wife, you can marry another Muslim woman. You cannot have Muta'h contract with a woman from ahle-kitab (People of the Book) unless your Muslim wife agrees with it. If she disagrees, it is haram (illegal). Temporary marriage with a kafir (an unbeliever who does not belong to Ahle Kitab) is absolutely forbidden.

However, in temporary marriage, you will have to read *Sigha* and you should follow the rules of a permanent marriage. In the *Sigha*, you will mention time (duration) and Mahr (dowry). Without specifying them marriage would be void. Moreover, it is necessary to read the *sigha* either yourself or

make someone else your wakil (representative) to read it on your behalf.

Question: I have certain questions about temporary marriage (Muta).

1. If the woman is not in need of any money and 'mahr' and is not asking for it in order to perform muta with the man, does he have to still give her the dowry, or is the muts okay without the dowry?
2. If both man and the woman, have no certain time-period in mind under which muta takes place, is it okay not to specify the time interval for the muta and simply accept that whenever one of them decides to leave the muta it will be over?
3. Is it okay to say in the condition for muta, that we will be together for one year, and after that we will continue until one of us, either the man or woman, states that they would like to end the muta after that one year?
4. In a permanent or temporary marriage, can the woman put the condition before the marriage that the man does not marry any other woman, without giving away her dowry?
5. If the man accepts not to marry another woman in his contract and still does so, does the woman have to right to divorce him, without giving away her dowry?

Answers: 1: You may give her a bouquet of flowers as Mahr (dowry), for instance.

- 2: The contract is invalid.
- 3: Time and duration of contract should be determined. After duration, they are as strangers to each other.
- 4: It is permissible.
- 5: Divorce is absolutely in the hand of the husband.

WOMEN

Questioning sitting arrangements for mothers

By Sakina Zainul Dattoo

It was with frustration that I endured sitting arrangements during the Holy month of Ramadhan this year in the mosque in Dar es Salaam. Since I felt robbed of the golden opportunity to attend and learn from the important lectures of the very practical Sheikh Jihad, for the simple reason of being a mother, I cannot let it go quietly.

More importantly, because the month of Muharram is here now, and I do want to be involved in the very important azadari, it is vital that I raise this debate on behalf of dozens of mothers who confessed similar frustrations.

According to regulations, mothers of small children are not allowed to sit in the ladies upstairs imambaras. This has always been accepted by mothers since they acknowledge that children can make noise and disturb others hence a separate area for such mothers is ideal.

Normally, these mothers sit in the downstairs hall and are able to hear whatever is recited or preached from the gents section just as ladies in the upstairs hall do, hence they still gain from their visit to the mosque. This year however, the mike was switched off downstairs to allow a separate programme. Because of this, mothers missed lectures directed at them on how to raise a righteous future generation.

This is really very sad. These mothers, I believe, made the Sheikh's target group. Being young mothers who are raising tomorrow's nation, they more



by Sakina Zainul Dattoo

than any other group needed to hear the vital advice that the lecturer was dishing out.

Many mothers acknowledged that it was unfair to be denied of an opportunity to hear the informative lectures.

The Ladies Managing Committee said the mike was switched off downstairs for a separate Madressa programme. And there was no separate space to put mothers and their children. This raises a few questions. This seems to imply that children can sit downstairs with the permission to make noise. Does this not disturb Razia Janmohamed's lectures given to Madressa girls?

Secondly, some of the mothers requested that they be allowed to sit up but right at the end of the hall such that if children started making noise, they would come down, being conscious of not disturbing others. But this was not seen as viable.

Being a huge jamaat in Dar es Salaam jamaat we need to improve facilities for mothers of small children. While on the subject, there isn't an appropriate feeding room or a small nursery within the mosque compound for breast-feeding mothers. While big-time renovations took place recently, I wish the plight of mothers had been taken into consideration.

Mothers of young children are an important category of an audience at a lecture or majlis. They have an opportunity of relating what they learn from the pulpit to their offspring and we therefore need to offer better honour and facilities to these women.

On my recent visit to South Africa to attend women's international conference, I was amazed at the

openness and willingness to incorporate a child into the programme. Having travelled with a six months old infant, I was repeatedly told not to worry at all if the baby cried during the conference, or I had to walk in and out several times causing minor disturbances, in addition to being offered baby sitting services.

This, they said, was because the very issues women were meeting to discuss involved being able to do all our duties without any presumptions that children hinder us from success. Having a nursing child in the conference, who now and then would cause a few ripples, was testimony that motherhood is a woman's greatest duty, but not exclusively.

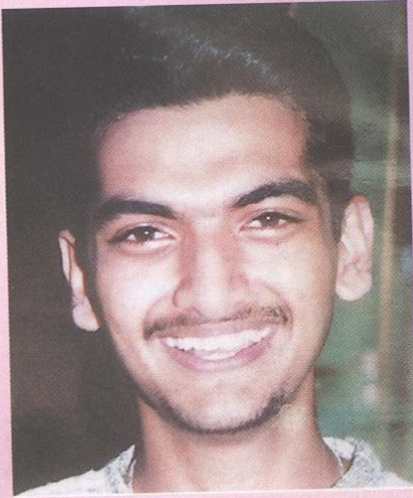
Being able to breast feed a child in such conferences is normal. But within our gatherings, the uneasiness of the people around sometimes makes a mother feel more comfortable offering a bottle than breast-feeding.

During the amaal nights in Dar es Salaam last Ramadhan, the downstairs hall, an official place for women and children, sometimes became unpleasant. If any child dared make a tiny sound, mothers were asked to go out! Children cry — that's what they do — and if the hundreds of women were to obey the volunteers and walk in and out as their kids cried and kept quiet, it would have been interesting to see the commotion that would create.

Since the azadari month is here, mothers worry about the same ordeal again. It is my appeal to the concerned Dar es Salaam Jammaat authorities to find a solution soon. Mothers with young children must feel part and parcel of our vibrant community.

The death of a young son

....a young mother's story of loss and courage
by Tasneem Kiyani



"Mummy, York University in Toronto has accepted me!" Areef was full of excitement as he swept me up in his arms. We were both laughing with happiness and joy as we savoured the fruit of months of hard work. Watching him read the many papers in the acceptance package, I smiled at the endearing way he impatiently pushed a wayward hair out of his eyes. How my son had grown up! It seemed like only yesterday that I was watching him take his first steps, saying "Mummy" and putting his first sentence together. Now at 18, he towered over me and his youthful, charming looks took my breath away. His friendly personality drew people to him like a magnet and his sense of humour often had the whole family laughing together.

As he chattered on about campus housing, tuition fees and course selections, my thoughts were far, far away. Having him move so far away from home could be so difficult. How would I be able to get through a day without his bubbly presence in my life? The past year had been so busy for him and I was already missing our mother and son chats because of his long hours at the

library. He had successfully completed the last challenging year of his International Baccalaureate at the International School in Dar es Salaam and I was looking forward so much to spending more time with him now that summer was here.

"Mummy thanks for all your support this year," Areef's voice interrupted my thoughts and I looked up to find him standing beside me. His ability to express his affection like this always filled my heart with so much love and gratitude. The past year, although a very busy one for him, had inexplicably brought us even closer together. He freely spoke to me about his dreams, his wishes and his fears and together we would discuss his future aspirations. A reef going away to university was a dream that the whole family had shared and I was ready to do my part in making that dream come true. "We have a lot of work to do," I told Areef. "Let's start making the travel arrangements to Canada". He smiled his lovely smile and I knew that someday my son would make me very proud of him.

The next few weeks went by in a whirlwind of events and activities. Areef's many friends regularly dropped by to say goodbye, family members came to visit and we became busy packing for his upcoming trip. Soon, only two weeks remained for his departure and there was bittersweet happiness in all our hearts. I could see his 14-yr. old brother, Alireza, was having the hardest time. He was extremely fond of his one and only sibling and would miss him the most.

Everyone was trying to keep up a brave front; at least Areef would visit during school breaks and summer holidays. We would make up for lost times during those vacations, we vowed. It was only a matter of few years and these would go by fast. The plan was that I would be accompanying Areef to Toronto to get him settled so the house was busy with preparations of the impending trip.

When Areef began to complain of nausea, stomach aches and dizziness, we took it in stride. The doctor confirmed our suspicions: it was malaria. In East Africa, this common, mosquito-borne illness has been experienced by mostly everyone, sometimes even 2/3 times a year. So we weren't overly alarmed when Areef was admitted to hospital since we knew malaria can often dehydrate a person and may require close monitoring of the patient. Nevertheless, I was at Areef's side day and night for three days.

It was late at night when my brother-in-law offered to stay with Areef so that I could change, shower and get something to eat. I reluctantly left for home and was at home only a short while when I received a call to come back to the hospital. Again, nothing seemed out of the ordinary in Areef's case to cause us any alarm but when we reached Areef's hospital room we were suddenly met with a crisis atmosphere. The doctors were working hard to revive him and I was shocked to see that Areef's condition had deteriorated. Within minutes, I was holding my teenage son close to me as his

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life slowly left him. My husband and I looked at each other in bewilderment and utter shock, unable to comprehend the words that were being said to us. Our 18-year-old, beautiful, vibrant son had passed away. Our tiny family had been shattered forever.

Grieving for Areef has been the most challenging '*imtehan*' of my life. My grief knew no bounds but as a mother, wife, daughter and daughter-in-law, I had to support the grief of everyone around me, as well. It can be difficult to search for the strength to give to others when your own tears and mourning leave you feeling totally spent and empty inside. The process of healing was long and it was difficult to go on with day to day affairs. The support of loved ones, family, friends and community, was like a constant cushion against the pain that threatened to consume our family, and yet we began to realize that true healing would have to come from within ourselves.

I have learned that for many, the subject of bereavement or death may not be the most comfortable one to talk about, more so for those who have been closely affected by it. In fact, people often shun it and would rather talk about something else, and yet it is that reality of life, which presents itself all the time as a constant reminder of our mortality. So when it does come, how do we deal with it? When an elderly or ailing member of a family, say a grandparent, for instance, passes away, there is a good chance that their children and younger members have mentally and emotionally conditioned themselves to this normal progression in life. The parents would have probably talked and explained to the younger ones that there will come a time when they would have to say goodbye to grandma or granddad. It's a kind of preparation for that time when it

does come. Of course the sense of loss and pain is still there and nothing can change that. However, the situation is totally different when a young person, a child passes away. The pain manifests itself many, many times over. The family is suddenly caught in this hurricane of deep pain, profound sense of loss and bewilderment that leaves the world around them shattered and changed forever. Things just don't make sense anymore.

The family unit can suffer when such a tragedy occurs within it and everyone grieves in their own way. For all of us, this was a lesson that made sense very slowly because we were so deep in our own pain that we almost looked at each other through a blurry haze of grief.

During healing the hearts and minds are not able to comprehend and emotions are tossed around in turmoil. Healing can go through a cycle, which spins back and forth instead of like climbing a mountain with an upward trend. Sometimes you can wake up feeling that you will now be able to cope, and yet, there are days everything seems futile again. On top of that, you live with others who are experiencing their own fluctuations and cycles. I have learned that what is required is unending patience and understanding. This is the only way that one can wait for the other to catch up on the road of recovery. If the family unit is not strong to begin with, it can be destroyed since everyone perceives the other as being selfish or uncaring of the deceased or personally isolated and unloved.

I feel that there comes a point when the parents are faced with two options: to either give up the world and resign to grief for the rest of their lives, or to go on, but look at life from a changed and totally different perspective and try to gather the strewn pieces of life once again.

The Qur'an - 'How it continues to heal my wounded heart'

Ultimately, I found true healing in the one thing that gave me the solace and answers that I was seeking: the Holy Qur'an. Deep pondering, analyses and discussions of the Quran gave me the answers to the questions and thoughts that had been plaguing me and I cannot begin to describe the immense feeling of relief I was experiencing. My fears of the unknown were allayed and I felt at peace with God, with myself, with what had happened around me. I was comforted by the fact that death was not annihilation and that my son was now in a better existence, in the safest of hands and in His Divine Mercy and Compassion, we would be reunited again, some day. The recitation and reflection of the Quran, itself, began to fill me up with a sense of well being and love. Together, with a group of friends, I embarked on *tadabbur* group discussions and the Quran offered philosophies on living, loss, after-life, Allah (s.w.t)'s compassion, mercy and will. I would say, with full conviction that the Holy Quran truly saved me.

There are ethical and moral aspects that death attaches itself to and with a deep understanding of what religion teaches us on the philosophy and purpose of life, death and the hereafter can become instrumental in helping the family to comprehend, reflect and accept. Perhaps most beautiful of all, is that when the mind just cannot comprehend due to its limitations, we can find solace and comfort in just submitting to Allah's will, knowing that in His hands there can be nothing but good even if that 'good' appears in a way that is hard to accept.

People often ask me what wisdom I have gained in bringing up my children. Would I do

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The death of a young son.....

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anything differently if I had the chance to bring up my child once again?

The death of a child will always remain one of the most painful experiences in any person's life for the simple reason that we love and care for our children so much. A mother-child relationship is probably one of the most unconditional kind there ever will be. A mother's love defies all norms and reasoning. We love our children no matter what and we value them so much that many times we ask ourselves "Am I doing enough for my child?" The truth is you can never do enough. No matter what their age, there is always something to impart and in order to do that, we need to be knowledgeable ourselves to ensure that they have a good foundation in human relationship. This way we can help to mould them into happy, caring, successful members of the family, community and society at large with a good sense of values, the quality to distinguish between right and wrong and to act accordingly.

A good education, healthy sports life, love and support at home cannot be over-emphasized. Many times our children face their share of growing pains, especially as they approach adolescence. Give them their space. They usually need extra doses of patience, understanding and firm advice at these times.

The important thing is to be there for them whenever they need you. No matter what a rough day they may have had out there, the feeling of knowing that everything will be all right when they come home is what is so important. It is important that we as mothers endeavour to do our best for our children so that when they grow

up into the wonderful people we want them to be, we can sit back and enjoy the fruits of our toil and labour. If, on the other hand, destiny parts them from us, we may at least have the comfort and consolation of having given them the best that we could.

Over the past few years since Areef's death, I have slowly come to terms with the many unfulfilled dreams and expectations that I, like any mother, had built in my heart. This difficult process, which I continue to undergo, has had its own small miracles. Friends and family have recounted detailed anecdotes about the different ways that Areef had helped or touched their lives. Some spoke of Areef's acts of kindness, others remembered working alongside him towards some social cause (volunteering at leper colonies and orphanages) and many described conversations where he had said wise and caring words.

Hearing these stories from adults and his own peers has illuminated a wonderful, hidden side of my son's life that I had never known about and the joy this gives me has filled my heart with pride and love. Areef, being the modest person that he was, had not revealed the extent of his affectionate and caring nature to me until after his death.

Allah (s.w.t) had truly blessed me with a gift to savour all my life. Even in death, Areef has managed to fulfil the dreams and expectations that every mother has. I knew that someday my son would make me really proud of him.

Request for Suratul Fateha for Marhum Areef and all Marhumeen

(Published before by Ja'ffari News, Canada).

From the Nahjul Balagha....

SERMON 52... downfall of the world and reward and punishment in the next world.

Beware, the world is wrapping itself up and has announced its departure. Its known things have become strangers and it is speedily moving backward.

It is advancing its inhabitants towards destruction and driving its neighbours towards death. Its sweet things (enjoyments) have become sour, and its clear things have become polluted. Consequently, what has remained of it is just like the remaining water in a vessel or a mouthful of water in the measure. If a thirsty person drinks it his thirst is not quenched.

O' creatures of Allah get ready to go out of this world for whose inhabitants decay is ordained, and (beware) heart's wishes should overpower you, nor should you take your stay (in life) to be long. By Allah, if you cry like the she-camel that has lost its young one, call out like the cooing of pigeons, make noise like devoted recluses and turn to Allah leaving your wealth and children as a means to secure His nearness and high position with Him or the forgiveness of sins which have been covered by His books and recorded by His angels it would be less than His reward that I expect for you or His retribution that I fear about you.

By Allah, if your hearts melt down thoroughly and your eyes shed tears of blood either in hope for Him or for fear from Him and you are also allowed to live in this world all the time that it lasts even then your actions cannot pay for His great bounties over you and His having guided you towards faith.

FAMILY ISSUES

Housewives should be mentally prepared for busy work-places!

When questioned, the husband apologetically admits to the wife upon his return from his work-place that he entirely forgot to send someone on an errand which she had requested him to do.

He would not however point out in defense that he was more pressed with the amount of work that day. He knows the wife would argue by reminding him that she too remains under the pressure of house chores and children-care including Sundays, when the husband normally has a break.

He would not also point out that the work assigned by her was not that important and could wait for another day. If he did, he would lose the argument in the debate as to whose work is more important - hers or his! *Could he go on working with an empty stomach?*, could be one example of an argument put up by her.

Such scenarios and the pattern of dialogue are not uncommon where the wife is a housewife who is only focused on housewifery. Her home is her small but important world and she perceives the house-chores as the real challenge in life.

A great majority of families in our community have housewives. They are wrapped up in their own

small world, otherwise called "home" which is their domain while unaware of the challenges and problems faced by the head of the family in their daily occupation of making out a living for the family. They are not aware that the pressure of work at the work-place descends in waves with unpredictable quantum and with it there is the mental stress which has its toll.

The faint idea, which a housewife has about the pressure of work a male member in the family bears, is what she perceives on the surface when she visits shops. What she finds there is an easy occupation for men, leisurely selling items and collecting money. She takes that as a normal example of occupation believing that it prevails everywhere including the offices.

A housewife while quite experienced in her rounds of shopping would not be aware that even behind the shop there is an office frantically busy with a catalogue of office work like compliance of trade regulations and taxation, assessing fluctuating financial liquidity position, banking work, ordering of goods to replenish stocks, queries from the accountant,

auditors or tax departments, disputes over deliveries or quality of goods, etc.

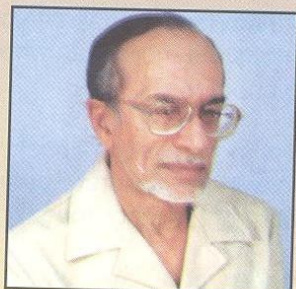
A housewife is not aware that in commercial and industrial offices, the "normal" pressure of work is even greater, especially where the place of work is short of staff.

It is therefore the duty of the husband or the head of the family to acquaint the housewife in the family with the normalcy of the nature and pressure of work at the work place

This information will enable the housewife to establish priorities. She would know when it is not necessary to get certain household errands to be handled by the husband. She will learn to manage most of the errands and work on her own without inconveniencing the husband at his work-place.

The improvement will be remarkable. The wife will prove herself more dependable, and therefore seen more lovable. The daughters in the family will copy the example of the mother when they get married and assume the household responsibility with a fair degree of self-reliance.

Let us remember that wife is what the husband makes her. The exercise has however to begin much early after the marriage.



by Mohamed A. Khalfan,
Dar es Salaam.

Sayings of Imam Ali (A.S.)

Man is a wonderful creature; he sees through the layers of fat (eyes), hears through a bone (ears) and speaks through a lump of flesh (tongue).

When some blessings come to you, do not drive them away through thanklessness.

Failures are often the results of

timidity and fears; disappointments are the results of bashfulness; hours of leisure pass away like summer-clouds, therefore, do not waste opportunity of doing good.

The best form of devotion to the service of Allah is not to make a show of it.

Contentment is the capital which will never diminish.

ANON

True history and love of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.)

Muslim students in western universities are drawn into a reassuring sort of solidarity in the spirit of Islamic brotherhood because they sense that as a minority they need to get close to each other to observe their Islamic traditions together. Among them there are many who hail from different Eastern countries and practice different sects of Islam.

For the first time, the Muslim students while away from their respective community, see themselves attaching value more to the fundamental beliefs that bind them together than to the secondary beliefs which divide them.

The students often on suitable occasions find themselves exchanging information on their respective *madh'hab*. They also discuss historical facts, which relate to the holy Prophet (s.a.w.).

However, what surprises some of the Shia students are the different

versions of the history which they come to learn for the first time from other students. And when they make inquiries, they are even more surprised to find that the versions they hear of are also according to the historical facts mentioned by some other renowned Shia Ulema.

Muslims of all Islamic faiths have love and profess devotion for Bibi Khadija (a.s.) and also to Bibi Fatimatu Zahra (a.s.) not only because one was a wife and the other a daughter to the holy Prophet (s.a.w.). They had additional individual attributes of their own and therefore a special place in the history of Islam. The historical facts about them therefore is a concern of all Muslims and are mentioned in all renowned historical books of both the Shias and Sunnis, though the facts may slightly vary.

The Shia students begin to ask themselves: Do the Shia books indeed mention about the previous marriages of Bibi Khadija (a.s.) and the issues from them, and also about the other

three real sisters to Bibi Fatemah (a.s.); and if so, why are the differences in their history not mentioned?

Let us remember that the status, the holy position, the honour and reverence of these two immaculate ladies are not dependant upon whether the historical facts about them are as narrated traditionally or as appearing differently in other Shia books. They are what they are by virtue of their individual lofty position in Islam and their unique individual closeness to the holy Prophet (s.a.w.) and the favours of light attained by them individually from Allah (s.w.t.).

No version, true or false, can ever rank our love differently for any one among the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). Our love for them is not based on any particular version of what history writes about them. That will be a love of an emotional ignorant with a closed mind if that were so.

Sayings of Imam Ali (A.S.)

If you are greeted then return the greetings more warmly. If you are favoured, then repay the obligation manifold; but he who takes the initiative will always excel in merit.

People in this world are like travelers whose journey is going on though they are asleep. (Life's journey is going on though men may not feel it).

Do not feel ashamed if the amount of charity is small because to refuse the needy is an act of greater shame.

Whoever wants to be a leader should educate himself before educating others. Before preaching to others he should first practice himself. Whoever educates himself and improves his own morals is superior to the man who tries to teach and train others.

I want to teach you five of those things which deserve your greatest anxiety to acquire them: Have hope only in Allah. Be afraid of nothing but sins. If you do not know a thing never feel ashamed to admit ignorance. If you do not know a thing never hesitate or feel ashamed to learn it. Acquire patience and endurance because their relation with true faith is that

of a head to a body, a body is of no use without a head, similarly true faith can be of no use without attributes of resignation, endurance and patience.

A man hypocritically started praising Imam Ali, though he had no faith in him and Imam Ali hearing these praises from him said "I am less than what you tell about me but more than what you think about me".

One who imagines himself to be all-knowing will surely suffer on account of his ignorance.

I wonder at a man who loses hope of salvation when the door of repentance is open for him.

Interview with Sheikh Jihad

Having visited Dar es Salaam jamaat for the holy month of Ramadhan for two consecutive years, Sheikh Jihad, a Lebanese by birth, now residing in Sydney, Australia has connected with Khoja youths amazingly. Samachar's Sakina Zainul Dato interviewed the Sheikh on diverse issues. Excerpts follow.

Q. The past month of Ramadhan was your second visit to Dar. You were here the year before too. How were you introduced to the community and what was your incentive in coming?

A. Bismilahi Rahmani Alrahim, Peace and blessing be upon his beloved Prophet Muhammad, his purified progeny and selected companions. Firstly allow me to thank you for availing me of the opportunity to have this interview with your magazine for the benefit of your readers. May Allah bless you and advance you further in your services for Islam and Muslims.

My first contact with the Khoja community started back home in Australia through a close friend who himself is a Khoja from Kenya! It was through this brother and his eagerness to spread the word about me to his community by forwarding my lectures to many parts where the Khoja communities live that I received many invitations to read Majalis during the Holy months of Mahe Muharram and Mahe Ramadhan!

The very reason why I accepted the invitation was mainly based on the fact that the Khoja community is a very well organized community and their youths are highly motivated with the right approach! The

community in Dar, I was told was the biggest, is a very vibrant community and there are so many things that can be done for the development and advancement of this loving community!

Q. Tell us about your first impression of the community.

A. My first impression is that the community is very reserved when they meet you for the first time, however once they get to know you there are no limits on their part to be with you and to offer you every possible assistance they can give. As I said earlier the community is very vibrant, very loving and very willing to change with the right approach and presentation!

Q. Why the second year in Dar in succession?

A. I think the chemistry just clicked between me and the community at large! Secondly through the vision of many people serving the community, the likes of Br. Mehboob Somji and the Management Committee found it worthwhile to invite me again to basically continue the work that was left undone due to time constraints from the previous year! I also believe that the community liked the approach and the style in which the lectures were delivered and that with other factors paved the way to a second visit!

Q. What differences, if any, did you find in the community within a year?

A. Many! Just within that year I have felt that there was a bigger role allocated to our youth. I personally believe that without giving our youth a much bigger part in running suitable programs for the community, the community will face lots of difficulties in

attracting our youth to our programs! I also feel that Dar tabligh is progressing at a very fast rate, which gives you a proud feeling that the community knows where its priorities lie! What remains lacking though is a bigger role for our woman and initiatives to involve them in more programs that help uplift the image of our woman amidst our own set-ups!

Q. What other jamaats within the Khoja Shia Ithna asheri network have you visited?

A. I have visited the New York, Allentown, Dubai, and the Orlando Jamaats so far!

Q. What differences have you seen in other jamaats compared to Dar in terms of outlook and practice of the sheria?

A. I have found many similarities between most of Jamaats, however I have found that jamaats living in the West are much more in tune with current issues affecting Muslims worldwide than the more traditional jamaat of Dar!

Q. Your concentration here in Dar es Salaam was highly on family life with marital relationships in focus. Why was that?

A. I have found from past experience working within my own communities that one of the most difficult problems our Muslim communities are facing at large are problems of this nature i.e. social and family issues! I also feel that if we probe very deep into our Islamic Sharia, you will find that it revolves around shaping the social behaviour of people to what is best! In fact the Prophet himself declares in the loudest voice through what the

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Qur'an has reported to us that Allah defines the mission of his Prophet as "*Wama Arsalnaka Illa Rahmatan Lil-Aalameen*" which means "*We have not sent thee but as a mercy unto mankind*" and the Prophet declares: "*I have not been sent but to perfect the moral standards of people.*"

Therefore, once our own social behaviour is intact and within the Islamic guidelines everything else becomes possible after that!

Q. The youths here felt particularly connected to you and have huge admiration and love for you. A rare fate. Why do you suppose this is the case?

A. I am not a person who likes to speak about himself, therefore I will limit my answer to one sentence, humble yourself to people and live through their concerns, people will admire your simplicity and humbleness!

Q. You are also seen as a champion of women's rights within our society that is particularly patriarchal. Your comments.

A. Well, I am not the one who is a champion of women rights; in fact it is Islam and our Creator Allah (s.w.t.) who have taught us to be like that! It is Allah (s.w.t.) who has guaranteed women's right in that way and fashion! Who are we then to challenge Allah (s.w.t.) on what He *Subhanahu Wataalla* has guaranteed women with!

Q. What did you gather as major problems facing the community?

A. Basically a willingness to move on and replace highly traditional values with more Islamically based ones! Again I must stress that lack of support for more youth and women based programs will endanger the progress of this community!

Q. What, if any, did impress you?

A. What impressed me in particular about the community is the commitment to time and running programs to schedule. This I feel has been lacking quite a great deal in our Muslim set-ups for a long time! Another thing that impressed me is that there are many ordinary members within the community who are willing to change their life style from a traditional one to an Islamic one if they find the right approach and methodology.

Q. Community members here, youths in particular, feel strongly about world events and politics involving Muslims, Shia in particular, such as the war in Iraq. Yet they find themselves unable to play any pivotal role in the liberation of Islam. Your advice.

A. To revive one's own soul back into shape is in itself a great achievement! For once this is done the whole set up of the community will change. Allah (s.w.t.) has said in the Holy Qur'an: "*Verily Allah does not change the state of people they are in unless they change themselves.*" Thus once there is a commitment to create change from within, this will pave the way to change from outside! It is quite unfortunate that our biggest failure has been in neglecting our inner selves and pointing the finger at others. Our priorities at times are not in focus! We are often engaged in how to set a future for ourselves without taking into perspective how to include into that the future of Islam and Muslims at large! We are not politically motivated nor moved for as long as we fulfil our daily requirement of du'as and prayers we remain indifferent to anything else in my life that affects the wider community.

We must employ all our efforts in whatever way possible to be actively involved in changing our Ummah's state of affairs! This cannot be done unless we allocate time and money into a certain fund that goes to

strengthen ourselves in the field of media first and in the field of political lobbying second! We need a well-synchronised effort between all Muslim communities living in countries outside their own to form a body that can move and speak on behalf of Muslims and defend their rights wherever they are found! This needs preparations on all levels, commencing from our educational syllabuses that we teach in our schools right through to our community based programs. Without that sort of awareness we will always be where we are now and will never be in a position to pave the way back for the return of our 12th Imam!

Q. You spoke in some gatherings during your visit about issues touching women that were interpreted as too revolutionary. Would you please give your advise again in this forum on:

a) Pre-nuptial contract:

A. I feel that in this area in particular there are so many objections on the part of our men counterparts for they think that they are waiving some of their rights to women when they consent to such a contract! This is not so when taking this issue into perspective! The need for a Pre-nuptial contract boils down to better organising our priorities in that marriage set up and to ensure the least possible problem that may arise in regard to issues that were unheard of during the engagement period because this period is often a time where partners only exchange mutual exchanges of admirations, love, respect and gifts! The real issues that ought to be discussed during this period are often overlooked! Such as: What living arrangements are to take place, what sort of commitments are in place to ones own family, what

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sort of religious commitments do each partner have in their own life prior to getting to know one another, how compatible are they to one another physically and intellectually etc, etc! These questions are often left unanswered and that is what complicates marriage life later on. If therefore, Pre-Nuptial contracts are understood in light of the above then both parties involved will surely consent to its validity

b) Living with in-laws:

A. One of the biggest problem facing young couples is commitment to their own individual families just before and after the marriage. There is nothing wrong with living with one's own in-laws primarily! However, matters get worse when the wife movement and freedom becomes more restricted in particular if the groom's brother/brothers live in the same house. This problem becomes more complicated if the wife is in hijab. That means that the only time the wife is allowed to be herself is inside her own room. Independence of the wife inside her house is an Islamic right of a woman and no one can deny her this right unless she herself consents to it. There have been no authentic traditions to state that our Imams or their companions lived with their in-laws. If this issue is addressed candidly prior to marriage and there is agreement by both parties on the living arrangements they both feel comfortable with, and I stress on the word "BOTH" then the issue of living with the in-laws becomes a minor issue later on into married life.

c) Retaining a woman's maiden name:

A. Men feel that once they marry a woman she becomes one more item that is part of their properties list! That is not so, Islam considers a wife as an

individual person in her own right and in as much as she has obligation towards her husband, she is also entitled to receive her right prescribed to her from her husband as set out by the Islamic Sharia. One of these rights is her right to retain her own maiden name, which Islam has insisted on in order to retain her individual identity within that partnership which we call marriage! If at any stage into married life this concept is lost, problems begin to emerge in particular when one partner tries to erase the very existence of the other and the first step in achieving that is to deny that individual his identity from which he has emerged from, i.e. her family! That is why Allah (s.w.t.) stated in *Surah Ahzab* the following: "Call them by their fathers name, for it is more righteous before Allah."

Q. In our last issue, which I am sure you read, we carried an opinion about too many majlises being held in Dar es Salaam. This has generated a huge debate with some feeling deeply offended. Would you please give us your views on the subject?

A. If more majalis are set in place in order to focus on the wide issue affecting the Muslim community and the solution to overcome these problems then the more the better.

However, if these majalis are there simply on account that every centre wishes to have their own program in isolation of one another, then this will not serve the interests of the community at large. That ought to be taken into account. In fact this may have an adverse effect such as disunity and fragmentation!

I must stress however in answering this question that I am not in any way questioning the intention of the people involved in setting these majalis, the community knows better because they are in a more qualified position to assess the situation as

I do not live within your own set-ups! Wallahu Alam (Allah knows best!)

Q. Many a times, it seems like our Indian heritage and the culture that comes with it halts us in practicing real Islam as taught by our fourteen masumin. The debate is ongoing on how much of this culture we should maintain and what needs to go. Your comments please based on your understanding of this community.

A. I must speak very candidly about this issue without I hope anyone taking any offence to my comment for we are speaking about Islam now and not our own personal likes or dislikes! Islam says whatever contravenes its laws must go and whatever conforms to it can stay! If therefore, in our own traditions be it Indian, Lebanese, Iraqi, Iranian etc there is anything that does not conform with Islam then there is no question of it being practiced at all. Islam comes first, and we are Muslims first and not second or third!

Q. What do you suppose should be the focus of our Khoja community as a whole at present in preparing for the arrival of Imam Mahdi (a.s.)?

A. Give Islam priority over anything else!

Q. Your comments on the Federation Samachar.

A. I wish this magazine every success. I pray that Allah (s.w.t.) advances you in guidance and in your struggle to say the truth in any situation you find yourselves in! This path is the path of the Prophets and Imams so do not give up! It is not a path that is paved by roses and flowers, quite the contrary! This is the major Jihad and it requires from us every bit of steadfastness and courage!

I wish you every bit of progress and success in all your endeavors! Ameen

FROM DOWN UNDER

Crucial days ahead for the Khoja Shia community

Fresh from the Triennial World Federation October meeting in DUBAI, the obvious question that comes to mind is the future of the Khoja Shia community.

The Triennial meeting of the World Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-asheri Muslim Communities which was held in Dubai last October was a historical one for several reasons.

For one it successfully dealt with the constitutional review of thorny issues of representation. Thanks to the excellent ground work done by the Constitutional Review Committee!

Secondly it ushered in a democratic change in leadership whereby the grass roots of the community had an opportunity to exercise their democratic right to choose their leader. Of course we learnt several lessons from this exercise, which I hope will be taken into consideration when the next elections come.

Now with the Electoral Commissioner in place, my dear friend Haji Amirbhai Somji, I am confident that he will ask for inputs from the grass roots and the leadership as to how the elections can be best conducted in a more transparent and just



by Dr. Asghar Moledina,
Maputo

way. The issue of census and conducting the elections on one day the world over, keeping the various time zones in mind will hopefully be given the consideration that it deserves. However generally our community demonstrated the maturity, wisdom, unity and patience for which it is well known. The most important factor that must be borne in mind that the leader, once elected democratically, is the leader for all, and deserves the utmost respect and cooperation from one and all.

We have embarked upon the most crucial exercise that the community has undertaken and that is – Strategic Planning. An excellent overview was presented at the Dubai meeting, mainly by the youths of our community. This desk is already at work and of course will need a lot of input from the grass roots of our community world-wide from Mombasa to Minneapolis.

For the Strategic Planning (SP) Desk to implement its most important task it is very important that an extremely active role is played by one and all, otherwise I am afraid it will remain only a shell and only on paper. This task now with the globalization of the world should not be a difficult task. However communications from the secretariat to the grass roots and vice versa is vital.

We must understand that not all members have access to the computer or internet and hence the local jamaats and organisations will have to be very inter-active with their members so that the message coming from the leadership and the SP desk

gets to the people. The SP desk is focusing on all spheres of lives of our community, be it social, educational or religious. In order for us to gauge the progress and future of our community it will be important for all of us to participate and the leadership at jamaat level will have to play a very important role.

We are only a community of the "holy" figure of 124000, which is even disputable and the figure may be under by 10000 to 20000. Yet the impact that we have, in not only the Shia World but the entire Muslim world is commendable. Our humanitarian activities stretch to India, Africa, Bosnia, Bam – Iran, Thailand, China, America, Australia, Iraq, and probably more countries. Our system of working and organization is generally commendable and praise-worthy. It makes one proud to belong to such a well organized community. The question is how long we can continue to be the way we are. The answer squarely lies on the success that the SP desk will have. The work of the SP desk will only show results if there is mass cooperation by one and all. The drivers at the SP desk will have to work with all humility and sincerity and the 'KNOW IT ALL' attitude will be found to be leaking in many aspects.

Satan in whatever form will be hard at work to derail the work and good intentions of God Fearing people. If the Satan dikd

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try his best to misguide (although unsuccessfully) the Prophets of Allah (s.w.t.), then who are we? We must bear in mind that we are not immune to the wickedness of Satan and we must be on our guard all the time.

The community members residing in North America and Europe will have to play a crucial role, especially to correct the wrong image of Muslims given to the Non-Muslims and the world at large, post the tragic event of 9/11. This year being the Election year in the USA, it is all the more important!

Just convincing a convinced non-voting neighbor or a friend to go and vote for the right candidate will make a significant difference in this world. It is heartening to note that now we have established at the World Federation level an External Liaison Desk to make sure that our voices and views are at least heard. This desk carries a great responsibility and Alhamdulillah so far it has been doing an excellent job!

What about the responsibilities of our brothers in Africa? I feel that we must focus on the upliftment of our indigenous brothers. Our community has been in Africa for now nearly 130 years or so. What have we done for our indigenous brethren? It is not enough for us to teach them the True Islam. Without trying to help them in their social, educational and health needs we will be doing a futile job. I am cognizant of the fact that first, we need to focus on the needs of our own community but honestly, 130 years is too long a time for not to do anything significant for our indigenous brethren, when we can find or have the means and capabilities to do the same. Let us at least resolve to make at least five scholarships for further education to deserving students from this sector. That will be at least a humble beginning. We have been

doing a reasonable job in spreading Islam through the Bilal Muslim Mission and other community organisations but it is time that we tried and looked after their other needs. We are not going to make them good Muslims if they remain hungry and wanting. By educating one child we shall change the whole future of that family!

I sincerely hope that the *Federation Samachar* will initiate a debate on these issues and especially on the workings of the Strategic Planning Desk of the World Federation so that we may all actively participate in shaping the future of our proud community.

The questionnaire put up by the SP desk prior to the October meeting was perhaps only accessible to those who have a computer and that is why the response may not be representative of the whole community and I hope that there will be more interaction at the jamaat level so that the grass roots of the community are heard and represented.

The structure and shape of our community in the decades to come will depend on the work being undertaken now by our leaders and the co-operation that they get from members. Therefore the onus is on all of us and there is no greater responsibility than this on the shoulders of all of us. Let us not be like a stream flowing water and leave it for gravity to take it wherever it wants. Rather we will have to be like live salmon and at times swim against the flow and current. Only dead fish flow with the current!

Let us make sure that all of us take this responsibility with the seriousness that it deserves. After all, brothers and sisters it is our future, it is the future of our community, it is the future of our children!

Funny instructions and messages

On a food processor: Not to be used for the other use.

(Now I'm curious.)

On Sainsbury's peanuts: Warning: contains nuts.

(but no peas?)

On an American Airlines packet of nuts: Instructions: open packet, eat nuts. (somebody got paid big bucks to write this one...)

On a Swedish chainsaw:

Do not attempt to stop chain with your hands. (Raise your hand if you've tried this...)

On a child's Superman costume: Wearing of this garment does not enable you to fly. (Oh go ahead! That's right, destroy a universal childhood belief.)

On the door of a computer store: "Out for a quick byte."

In a restaurant window: "Don't stand there and be hungry, come on in and get fed up."

Inside a bowling alley:

"Please be quiet, we need to hear a pin drop."

In the front yard of a funeral home: "Drive carefully, we'll wait."

In a counselors office: "Growing old is mandatory, growing wise is optional."

Outside a hotel: "Help! We need inexperienced people."

On a desk in a reception room: "We shoot every 3rd salesman, and the 2nd one just left."

LETTER FROM INDIA

Community Human Resources need to be respected

Respected Brother Moledina presented a ground-breaking paper in the World Federation conference held in September, 2002 at Stanmore, U.K., emphasizing the value of human resources as compared to financial resources, being generously poured in by the well-endowed well-wishers of the community. The subtle hint must, or should have been picked up promptly by the leaders of the federations and organizations sincerely devoted 'in the service of the community.' I was instantly inspired to engage the theme in greater detail in line with my personal experiences and expressions.

I am not aware of the background with which my dear brother wrote the article, or the precise implications that he had in mind; but a decade of active involvement with community service and leaders has convinced me that what is happening on the ground is ironically just the reverse. There is a keen, pretty predominant tilt towards finances and financiers, while the people who put their personal prosperity at stake for a divine commitment are considered petty creatures to be



by Syed Ali Mehdi in Aligarh

used and thrown at will, at the right time. Even as the high-profile philanthropist, often based in the glamorous West, is extravagantly received with picturesque arrangements and devout humility, the humble humans who burn their midnight oil to make the show pleasingly impressive and pound-stirring are no more than performing artistes who are duly rewarded in accordance with their performance. Perhaps, all the world's a stage, and men are but actors. Or, the donor 'stands like a colossus, and we petty men walk under his huge feet.'

This financial tilt does not end with itself; it gives rise to far more serious ailments. The institution is seen, not as a means for community development, but in terms of buildings and belongings, as a stronghold of one's household. A globe-trotting, financial liaison officer once recounted: he asked a maulana that if he were to put the Quran on his right hand and his son on the left, which would he prefer? The maulana, being his companion, confessed that he would go for the latter, although he loved the former very much. I salute him for his forthrightness—what to say of those who are the epitomes of selflessness and piety in the public eye but grotesque 'pragmatists' in their real lifestyles?

I am not in favor of disquieting issues being put under the carpet for fear of public reprisal/dissension, for such a conspiracy of silence will worsen the crisis in

the community and the ice of backwardness will never melt/break. Let me quote here as a reminder what I wrote in an earlier article: "What we recite in the ziyarat of Imam Husain (a.s.) should also be a part of our practice: *la'na Allahu ummatan qatalatka wa la'na Allahu ummatan sami'at bi zalika fa razi'at bih* (May the curse of Allah (s.w.t.) fall on the nation who assassinated you [O, Imam Husain], and may the curse of Allah (s.w.t.) be on those who heard about this [assassination] but sat content)." Let us not be of those who go for the latter, for we will then, unwittingly, be a party to those who have generated and pampered the crisis.

The human resource (ideally, a derogatory term) in the service of the community can in no categorical manner be compared to any other resource, because it is the human will and commitment that brings success to any program of reform or renewal. There are people who have turned the tide of history with sheer humanity, the model of the Prophets and Masumeen (a.s.) being the most glaring. How often has it happened that men, who have the support of their conscience alone, rise up and change circumstances.

Finance, on the other hand, has in many, if not all, cases corrupted and corrugated the human will by becoming a resource for manipulation, nepotism,

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politics of 'use and throw', culture of sycophancy and dependency etc. Rather than supply the means for the amelioration of the community, donations have more often than not provided the infrastructure for deterioration in standards. It is upto Allah (s.w.t.) to reward the acts of pious charity in the Hereafter—as also the acts of pious service—but, certainly, both are appropriated for purposes primarily personal and profane by the movers and shakers of the community, a good number of whom are appropriately said to have some sort of religious project in their pockets.

All this is leading to more and more disgruntlement, especially among the educated and talented youth, who have lost all faith in the religious leadership. The radical among them have, by extension, given up religion itself, a fact which many would prefer to ignore or underplay.

If we fail to take note of this phenomenon, we will not even have the justification to lament the loss that looms large on our next generation. We complain that convent-educated and brilliant students do not turn up into the madaris/hawzas, while only the less sophisticated attend. But, have we gone out into society to find out why does this happen? Career is certainly the prevalent concern. But not every bright one is career-obsessed; in fact, the truly bright and creative would love to search for the meaning of life, the mysteries of existence, how the world works, and how it ideally should - provided there is an healthy atmosphere and attitude.

What has happened with those who, under the spell of brainwash and daring, burnt their ship and disembarked on the shore of religious learning and service? Do we ever feel for those who, had they held on with their

colleagues, could have easily become successful professionals, executives, doctors or engineers with earnings in six-digits and mainstream respectability, but are presently nowhere in the reckoning? What is their possible fate? Either they are constrained to learn the tricks of the trade to survive, or they are overcome by nostalgic frustration in the haunting deserts of estrangement, staring despondently at their burnt ship and old buddies who by now become established people in their lives. They have become social misfits, except a few of them who manage to satisfy themselves of the sanity of their emotional decision, and somehow keep themselves firm on the path of struggle. But how many can really afford this idealism? Are the thirty-plus kindly listening?

This is not a statement of pessimism or surrender, but an exhortation for waking and rising up to the challenges in the path of community service and development, the far-reaching (not far-fetched) costs of prevalent financial tilt, at the cost of human resource.

I expect that my description will, insha Allah, not be universally applicable, but is nonetheless a candid portrayal of my insights and experience since my teenage rendezvous with religion began.

When we present USA and Europe as standards of progress, we should also remember that it could not have been without their insistence on human rights, without value for the life of each and every citizen, even though they are capitalist economies, where the highest value is conferred on capital.

My suggestion to the concerned patrons and leaders of the community is that they should earnestly pay heed to the golden advise of Brother Moledina (even if they consider my expressions

to be distasteful). To the spirited and energetic youth, wisdom and perseverance are the watchwords, for they are the backbone of society.

Eventually, to the well-endowed well-wishers (for there are innumerable un-endowed well-wishers) of the community, I would like to say that they are doing a wonderful job, but let not they be forgetful that their role is at best that of a Khadijah (a.s.), for it is Muhammad (a.s.) and his committed men—the human resource—who have to bring about the revolution in the fortunes of the community.

Syed Ali Mehdi
(syed_alimehdi@hotmail.com)

Funny messages

On maternity room door:
"Push, Push, Push."

At an optometrists office
"If you don't see what your looking for you've come to the right place."

On a taxidermist's window:
"We really know our stuff."

In a Podiatrist's office:
"Time wounds all heels."

On a Butchers window:
"Let me meat your needs."

On a fence: "Salesmen welcome, dog food is expensive."

At a car dealership: "The best way to get back on your feet - miss a car payment."

Outside a muffler shop:
"No appointment necessary, we hear you coming."

At the electric company:
"We would be de-lighted if you send in your bill. However, if you don't you will be."

WAYSIDE WISDOM

Don't live to regret the death of a spouse

In life it is strange how we forget that our lives are dictated by time. We imagine we will perform the same role and live with the same people all our lives but what we don't realise is that time flies and soon our babies become teenagers and while they begin to settle into the rigorous demands of modern-day life it will soon be time for us, their parents, to have a role more to ourselves.

Priorities will change. Previous worries about a child's grades, schools, universities and so on will be history and now in addition to work or business there will be more time at home to spend with one's spouse while the children fend for themselves.

If you were nice to your children, gave them fine religious and secular education, spent time with them, abstained from beating them, took them on holidays and encouraged them to blend with society through schools, religious classes or through sports you will feel great to have performed an ideal parental role. If you didn't do enough for your child you will regret this and ultimately accept this to be among the things you did wrong in life.



by Munir H. Daya,
Dar es Salaam

If one lives long enough, one gets into a further stage in life where after retirement from work there is more time to spend with one's spouse. In due course if one has to lose one's partner, this is psychologically rated as the toughest situation a person has to deal with in life comparable to the plight of one who loses a child.

A broken man who lost his wife after 39 years said that he felt very sad and lonely but his biggest relief was that he had no guilt. "I did all for her that I could do in our 39 years. There was nothing more that I could have done. If she asked for the moon, I tried to reach up and grab it for her."

Those were his words. Those were his feelings. He was not an academically educated man. He was not truly rich. But he had something that few possess, an undying, unselfish love.

He said, "We married for love and made a vow "till death do us part" and we kept it."

Sooner or later, in all married couples, one must leave the other behind. Rather than to live and regret, now is the time to begin traveling a path so that if you outlive your spouse you can say, "I did all that I could do, I did my best."

Don't live to regret why you shouted at your wife in front of others, don't live to regret why you spent excessive time with friends, don't live to regret why you forgot to comfort her in her ailment, don't live to regret why you forgot to give her gifts, however small, during her birthday or anniversary, don't live

to regret why you suppressed her thoughts or desires because you were the boss, don't live to regret why you deprived her of necessities or luxuries when you could afford these, don't live to regret why you went around with other women when she waited for you at home, don't live to regret why you spent hours and hours in office when she would want you home and don't live to regret on why you beat up your children or insulted her in front of them because when she is gone, it will be too late.

For a wife, don't live to regret why you cheated your husband's trust in you, don't live to regret why you continuously nagged him for petty issues when he would come home tired from work, don't regret why you blamed him for not being wealthy despite him being a devoted worker, don't live to regret why you made fun of his physique or undermined him for not being a success in front of your children, don't live to regret why you suspected him despite his continuous loyalty to you, don't live to regret why you failed to keep his secrets, don't live to regret why you failed to respect his parents because of trivial reasons. When he is gone, you will realise that there is a big vacuum and the man you took for granted will no longer be there for you to vent out on.

Islamic teachings have a lot to say about the duties towards one's spouse. There is a 50% chance that we will outlive our spouse. In case we do, do we want to live with regret? If not, let's begin respective our spouse today and let us chart out solutions to any differences we have.

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PRIZE QUIZ

QUIZ BASED ON AKHLIQATE, SAYINGS OF

HARDHAT ALI (AS) AND ISLAMIC TRADITIONAL HERITAGE

- 1) On which THREE occasions a person is advised not to be alone?
- 2) Which THREE acts ought to be performed as soon as possible?
- 3) What THREE characteristic qualities ladies may possess while the gents must have its opposite?
- 4) Which THREE situations are approved or appropriate for a person to go out of his house?
- 5) Decrease of which THREE items is indicative of one approaching the end of life in this world?
- 6) Friendship or association with what THREE type of characters should be avoided?
- 7) How should one take the THREE daily meals-breakfast, lunch and dinner?

OPTIONAL QUESTION:

- 8) What are the FOUR pillars of FAITH (Iman)?

1st prize of She:10,000/= for all correct answers.

2nd prize of Shs. 7,500/= for at least four correct answers.

3rd prize of Shs. 5,000/= for two correct answers.

Note - Answers should reach the Editor by **20th June, 2004.**

This quiz has been repeated because there were no correct answers for the last quiz. The quiz has been sponsored and compiled by:

M. G. Pardhan, Advocate, P.O. Box 527, Dar es salaam.

Elderly members of our community need care

by A.G Panjwani, Essex, UK.

*'People pan kharat hai hansti
kupali am viti tam vitse –
Dhira bapalia'*

**(The yellow leaves are falling
down and the new buds are
laughing at them. The yellow
leaves are suffering. But
what the new buds do not
know is that their time will
come)**

It seems the children of our society today no longer play a serious role in looking after their parents. It becomes complicated when parents start ageing and children sometimes begin to look down upon them, thinking that they have opinions of a low value and are 'simply not good enough.' So in the name of freedom of enjoyment, they may take their elderly parents to a new environment but this is certainly disrespectful and harsh to do so.

Our community, however, is still fortunate enough that very few have been sent to this new environment – namely the old people's home. But we must be aware of forthcoming challenges and in particular, the behavior of the new generation, which has changed in a major way – both in terms of our society and community. It may seem obvious and repetitious to say this but we have to take steps to comfort elderly parents, before they are disintegrated from society and do not receive enough attention and care. This probes a good question to all of us: What happens if you were to reverse the role of the parent and child? *As the children grow up with the*

responsibility of looking after their parents, would they appreciate the effort and time their parents put in, to look after them when they were young?

The most difficult time is when the parents reach old age and become feeble through serious illness, disability and impairment. The children should realize that their elderly parents, after bringing them up all these years, have become less self-sufficient. It is now the children's turn and duty to take care of them.

Now, what if things do not improve? Apart from household care, what community steps are we going to take for these elderly people – for the present and the future?

It is absolutely necessary to have projects, which can look after the welfare of elderly people. This does not mean small or slow-moving projects but far-ranging and realistic ones that would be helpful in an elderly person's life. In this regard, to cater for religious and social activities, elderly people's complexes should be constructed. This would carry out the function of holding majalises, reducing loneliness as well as keeping elderly people busy in their daily life.

Secondly, specific schemes should be designed to help those with certain difficulties. A broad outlook is needed so that those who need to go to the hospital and face transport difficulties can be transported. Another scheme would be to

initiate an education project to them. Linked to this scheme, elderly people should also be made aware of how to combat discrimination both outside and inside the community. This would be a most informative way of allowing elderly people to take advantage of their status.

I would finally like to conclude that one of the real strengths in our community is elderly people. They have experiences to share with the community at large and can contribute in different ways. But they can only do this with help. It is a fact that some elderly people do not come from wealthy families and it is those citizens that require greater help. Over the last two decades in our community, we have seen that elderly people have a variety of needs and should be consistently catered for and kept mentally active on Islamic affairs and general pertinent issues. Therefore, we must make sure that every effort is geared into building a beneficial infrastructure to care for our elderly and this must start with their children in respective Jamaats and Regional Federations.

Readers are welcome to air their opinions on the Back Page of the *Federation Samachar*.

Opinions should be focused on issues pertaining to the community, seeking improvement or calling for changes on irregular issues.

Editor

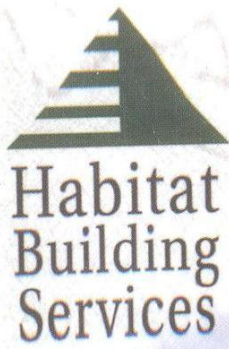
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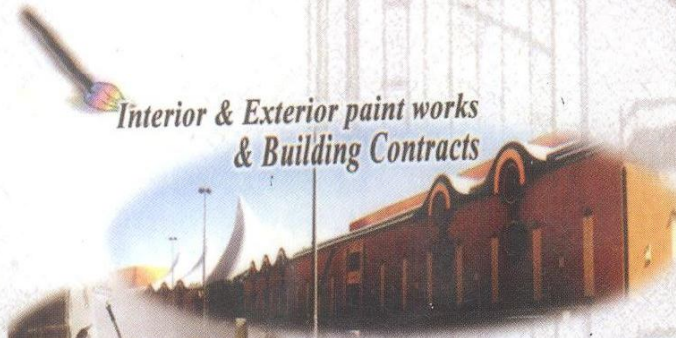
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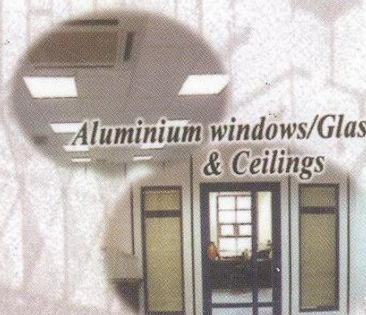
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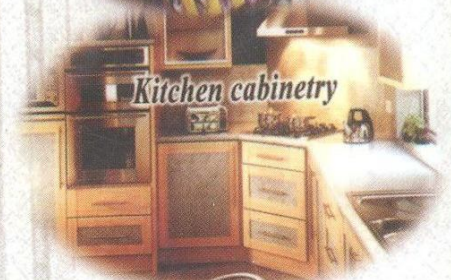
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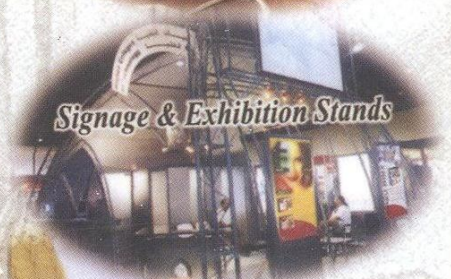
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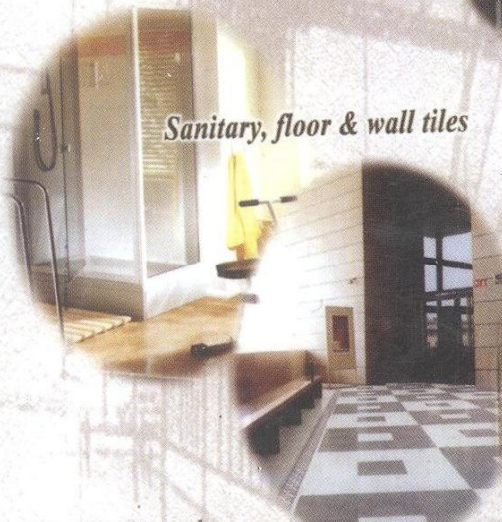
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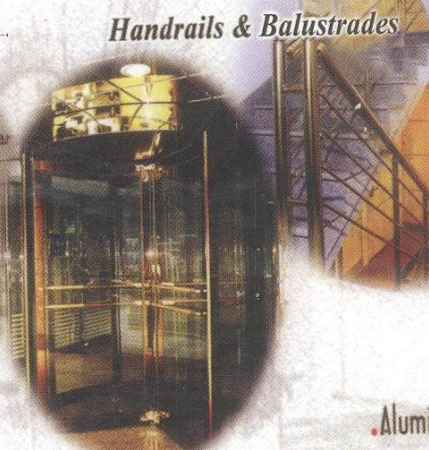
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