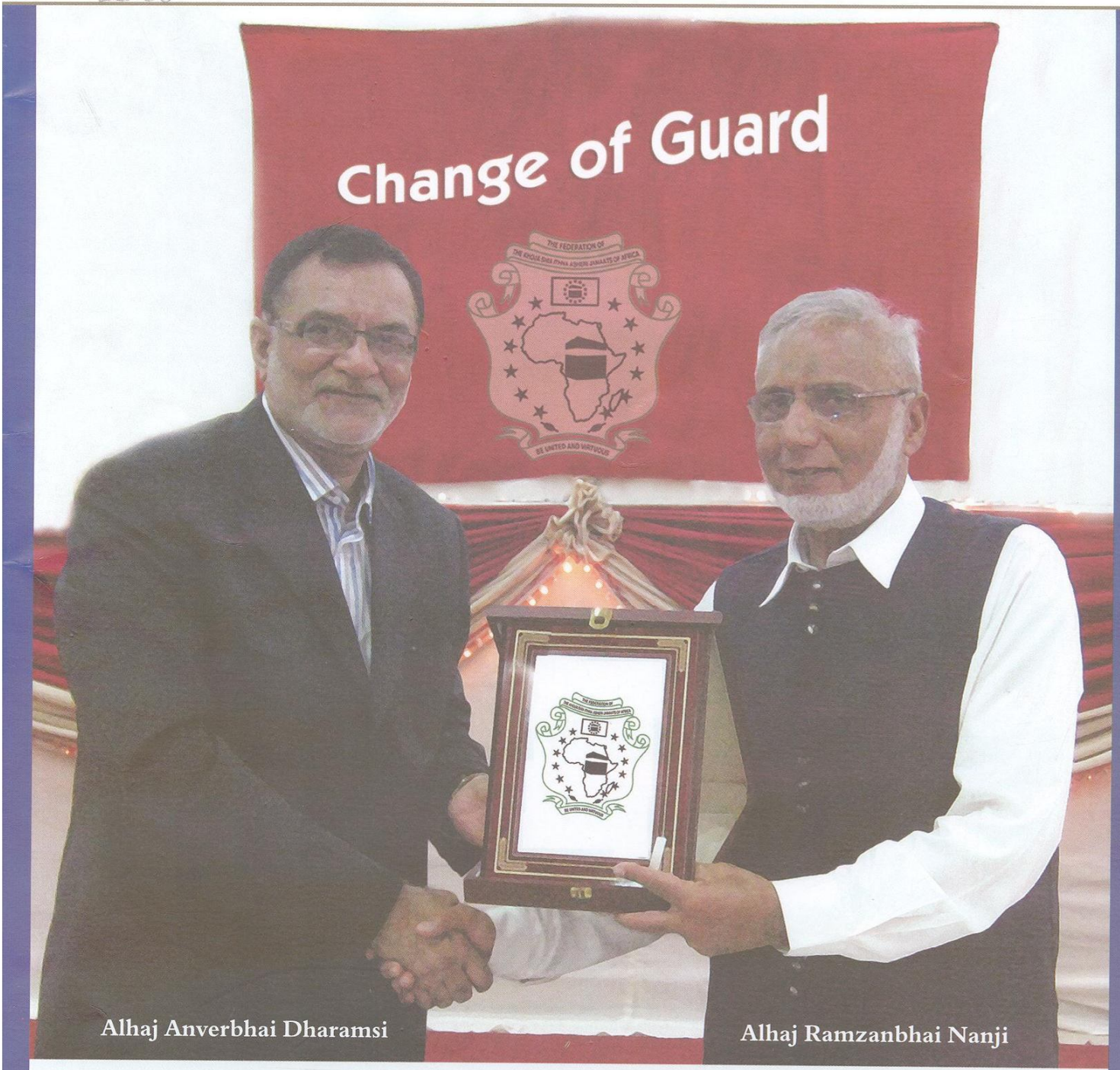
Federation Samachar

Bringing community together

Issue No 10 Rabiul Akher 1431 April 2010



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Federation Samachar

Bringing Community Together

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The Views Expressed in the Federation Samachar
are not necessarily those of
the Africa Federation or the Editorial Board

Samachar welcomes articles, features, events news, happenings in the community. Please contact the editor.

O Allah,
Bless Muhammad and his Household, inspire us with knowledge of its excellence, veneration of its inviolability, and caution against what Thou hast forbidden within it, and help us to fast in it by our restraining our limbs from acts of disobedience toward Thee and our employing them in that which pleases Thee, so that we lend not our ears to idle talk and hurry not with our eyes to diversion.
JAWSHANE SAGHEER

DTP

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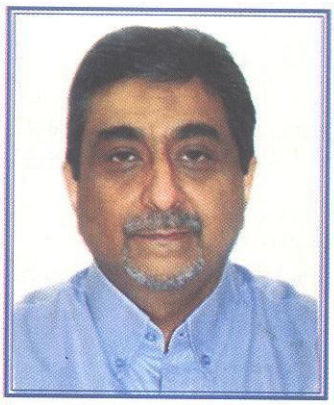
Editorial...



Assalamun Alaykum,

Welcome readers... Welcome to the 10th edition of Samachar.
As usual there's plenty to digest in this issue... A lot has been happening in our community and the most exciting news is we see a change of guard at Africa Federation.

However, the inevitable question on everyone's lips is where do we go from here? History tells us the community has always been united and has always forged ahead with the opportunity to re-create itself and take on new challenges.

We focus our collective gaze ahead this post election of WF and AF, to the positive prospect of a new decade, mindful of the imperative that we also glance back, briefly, to assess from where we've come and review the past years.

Approaching the new decade, the question of where we go from here is not only by the prospect of new growth in coming years, but it is acutely challenged by what the new leadership will enhance to create unity and progress in our vibrant community.

Today, at AF level under the stalwart Alhaj Ramzanbhai and his team, a lot has been achieved in terms of educational opportunities for our community students; Bilal Muslim Mission is being centralized and the focus is to make it independent financially.
I believe, the focus now must be on Economic upliftment and Housing issues. We have an array of challenges ahead that rival the complexity of the past era and my judgment is that the new leadership must get down to work without much ado...
It is not a secret that our community is divided along partisanship which is deeply driven into our collective psyche.
We hope the new leadership can meet the expectations of the community and achieve meaningful unity.

Alhaj Anverbhai Dharamsi the Chairman - On everyone's lips we hear.
"Where do we go from here?"
Heed the call in earnest...

Federation Samachar wishes you all the best...Amen.

Federation Samachar
congratulates the new Chairman
Alhaj Anverbhai Dharamsi
and his team of Africa Federation.

Editor Says Farewell...

It's uncanny to sit down to write this column. I have only been with FEDERATION SAMACHAR for five years but it seems like a huge part of my life. I've skipped my clinic days, skipped multiple social engagements and lost many hours of sleep for the Samachar. It's been a huge part of my life because it has taken over my life and that's not entirely a statement of sentimentality.

But after the tenure of five years it's hard not to look back with nostalgic feelings for the magazine and realize how much I am going to miss Samachar that has meant a lot to me in many ways.

It was my passion! It was here that I made many friends across the world, met many personalities and discussed community affairs. One of the best parts about Samachar was that I learnt how our community thinks.

When I assumed the role of editor, I had a goal: to produce the best publication in both design and content and again as an editor my task I assume is to stimulate and, if necessary, provoke people into thinking for themselves. If we fail to do that, a free society won't last. I can safely say as I finish my tenure, I have accomplished this goal modestly.

The greatest task initially on me was to consolidate non-payment by the advertisers incurring heavy debt thus a challenging task lay ahead to strengthen the Samachar. It was just after a few weeks that when I took over we lost an illustrious Chairman Alhaj Zulfikar Khimji and I was saddled with a task to take out an Obituary Issue. Gathering the bio data was an excruciating task. Having appealed to our community leaders through our editorial bore fruits when the Archive section was established with Alhaj Roshan Fazal as a chairman and regular email shots are sent every few weeks. The articles on poverty (Issue nos. 8/9) in our community indeed ruffled many a feather but as Samachar is renowned for its autonomous media, it was worthwhile to draw attention to the distressing issue of poverty and we asked for solutions that is all!

There is no possibility of having a perfect product, no matter how much work goes into it.

But we learned as we went along and improved the product on each issue.

There will always be critics, and there will always be fans. But I can honestly say that both play an important role, I've learned more from both the critics and admirers of Samachar.

Our advertising section was streamlined and I am pleased to say that as we leave, the Samachar has been self financed.

Our treasurer Mahmood Mukhtar is to be commended for tireless efforts. We also focused more on community issues and news and events happening in and around our community both in Africa and the Diaspora.

Admittedly, some of the changes I've worked hard to implement would not have been possible to achieve without the support of the higher echelons of Africa Federation especially our Chairman Alhaj Ramzanbhai Nanji & Mukhtarbhai Asaria to whom I say Asante Sana for being so forbearing with me and understanding on delayed issues at times!

I relinquish my post with no regrets and my only hope is that there will be a continuation from where I have left. Things can't stay the same forever; It's time I moved on to serve my community in earnest as I have been elected as a councilor of Dar es salaam Jamaat to Africa Federation and my intention is to move on the ladder to serve my community diligently till my last; inshallah with your prayers.

I deserve none of the praise without a doubt; none of it would have been possible without the help of my committee and to the advertisers I cannot thank enough. The contributors of articles no doubt deserve thanks as well; to them I am eternally grateful.

But For once, I can't think of much to add. I realized recently that I have been looking out of the same windows for the past 5 years. The view has been great, but it's time to see the world from a different place isn't it? There have been some bumps along the road, but the scenery has made it all worthwhile.

I won't disappear entirely. I may write occasionally for the Samachar or start my own blog may be!

The journal will be in good hands I assume. Whoever takes it over, I wish him and all of you well, as I embark on a new journey to serve the community in other areas.
The magazine you hold in your hands is an irreplaceable treasure. Please, please, never let it go; I have enjoyed my time as editor. I now happily join your ranks as a reader.

Lastly, special thanks to DeskTop Productions Ltd.

I wish you all a fond farewell.
Masalaam.

EDITORIAL BOARD REPORT

1425-1431(2005-2010)

CHAIRMAN & EDITOR:
Al Haj Husseinali Datoo
MEMBERS:
Fatimabai Patel, Akber Karim, Mahmood Mukhtar Minhaal Kassam, Shafiq Abdulrasul, Sajida Tejani.

The team of the Samachar have taken out 11 issues since appointed by AF. The Samachar after facing some teething problems got to a good start with some changes in the Editorial team.
The SAMACHAR fortunately has been self financed from advertisements and a subsidy of 2000 US $ from AF.
Members felt that more money can be raised from adverts but it needs a very affirmative collection procedure and ideas were floated to collect money in advance from the advertiser.

SAMACHAR CONTENTS
Articles have to be gathered in advance and all of them must be vetted for their contents as members felt that some articles are not worth publishing as they did not portray the real issues in our community. Advertisers are also duty bound not to have contents which are un Islamic. During our tenure we concentrated on community issues and a lot of issues like Zakaat, Housing, Welfare, Islamic issues and interviews enlivened the issues.

CIRCULATION
The circulation remains a very great issue. At the moment we print 1000-2000 copies of SAMACHAR. The circulation was well received and we were able to send to various Jamaats in the world. At the same time, a major constraint being experienced is that we need to do more to increase the circulation. Overseas copies have been sent with helpers who would volunteer to take them but it has been a difficult exercise. However, as we upload the issues on the website, we have received reports that many of our readers access the issues regularly.

PUBLICATIONS
The first issue was published and distributed in Rajab 1425 August **1425**. It contained an Obituary of ALHAJ MARHUM ZULFIKAR KHIMJI ISSUE. Combined it was a bumper edition. To date we have 11 Issues. Alhamdulillah we have received good feedback from our readers.

FINANCE
Saddled with a heavy debt when we took over, Todate our finances are in a healthy situation and together with the subsidy, we managed to pull through although no surplus was recorded but we can easily say we were self financing unlike when we took over the SAMACHAR.

BUREAU REPORTS
At the moment it is difficult to gather news, events & happenings inspite of sending several reminders to Jamaats and I would only say this is lack of protocol. I strongly feel that each Jamaat appoint a liaison officer who sends us regular reports of the community for inclusion in SAMACHAR.

FUTURE and CONCLUSION
The Samachar team has further to be strengthened and perhaps the new team will look into going global. As for financial viability more efforts have to be made that a subsidy can be utilized elsewhere and more revenue must be derived from subscription and advertisements. With a note of special "ASANTE" to The Chairman Alhaj Ramzanbhai and our coordinator at AF: Alhaj Mukhtar Asaria. I must confess we have enjoyed full cooperation and suffice it to say that all editorials have been well received by them. Samachar has been sent to various organizations throughout the world and the contents have been noted with satisfaction. Our team of AF have also been very cooperative To all our ADVERTISERS I say AHSANTUM...In final note I say thank you to all our contributors who whole heartedly supported us and of course most of all our readers... Wassalaam.

Letters to Editor

In the June 2009 issue of Federation Samachar on page 15 of *'Date Line Canada'* ,you ran an article entitled, **"The Kitchener-Waterloo Jamaat Makes History."** Being a resident of the Kitchener-Waterloo region for the past nine years and a **former member** of this *"history in the making"* Executive Committee, after reading your piece, I decided to respond to your invitation for the readers to weigh in on the topic of *"the role of women in the leadership of our community."* Within my thoughts, I would like to share the concept of leadership in Islam in general (based on the Qur'an and traditions) and also touch upon the role of women in the community decision making process.

At the outset, let me say that I feel that the article is some-what one sided as you first state that the election of two ladies was the "brightest side of democracy" and then go on to mention that *"the members ... did not take into account the gender-identities of the candidates but only their leadership credentials..."* and then went on to mention that *"Democracy is the domain ... without any preclusion based on gender over which no one had control."* If democracy is rule, *"of the people, by the people and for the people"*, as Abraham Lincoln described it on November 19, 1863 at his famous Gettysburg Address, then there should be no discussion of "male" or "female" as it is merely human beings electing whom they feel **best** represent them and whom they feel should govern over them.

Let me also say that many intellectuals in the world have 'problems' with democracy. The famous economist, Milton Friedman has stated that such a form of government is formed on the backs of the 'irrational voter' – individuals who are highly uninformed about many issues any thus, may have a strong bias in regards to a few issues which they are fairly knowledgeable about. Since in a democracy, those who have a vested interest in a particular candidate may be able to sway the votes to one side for the particular candidate who suits their own personal agenda, such forms of governance can never be thought of as being fair and just. Have we not seen this happen in many of the 'first world' nations and also in dictatorial regimes with their 'fixed elections'?

This is the same fallacy we see in the 'industrialized world' in which foreign powers **impose** democracy on other nations and then **impose** conditions such as the number of **women** and **minorities** (of different religious ideologies, etc...) which need to be present in their government to ensure 'equal representation' rather than letting the natural course of events run (what they call the vote). Personally, I would rather have seen a discussion in Federation Samachar on what the 'true credentials for leadership' in Islam are rather than 'the gender of the person who leads a community.' However, since you requested a discussion on 'women in leadership' I will try to tackle this topic and a general review on leadership in Islam, insha-Allah.

Let it be known from the outset that I do not direct my comments to a specific individual nor do I wish to discuss the dynamics of the ISIAJ of KW in this piece.

In addition, I should make it clear that in no way am I misogynistic nor do I wish to subjugate women to the same predicaments they are experiencing in society in general and in other Jamaats in "The East" and also "The West" in which they are banned from membership or an active role in community affairs – other than the kitchen and baby-sitting area. Rather, I would like to see the "liberation" of our Muslim women from the yolk of 'cultural baggage' and the 'traditional ways' of the big boys club (and the rich and powerful at that). At the same time, I also wish to see them "freed" so that they can re-gain their God-Given role in society whilst maintaining their Islamic modesty and character and not to have them "lower" themselves to the political pundits and tricksters that we see in the world today vying for power and authority and the "right to rule".

Indeed, democracy "shone brightly" in Kitchener-Waterloo in 2008 in which two (and now thanks to an unnatural constitution) three ladies are in the top position within the EC for the 2008-2010 term. Before I go any further, let me remind ourselves of the following important traditions from the Infallibles (extracted from the up-coming publication, 'The Fundamentals of Islamic Management'):

- *"This leadership is a trust (given to you). So then may the mercy of Allah, until the Day of Resurrection, be removed from that person who acts with treachery in regard to it."*
- *"Love for others that which you love for yourself, and hate for others that which you hate for yourself; and do good to others just as you would like others to do good to you, and do not oppress others just as you would not want others to oppress you."*
- *"The person who has been charged with looking over the affairs of the people and keeps his door open (to the people) and removes the impediments (which prevent people from having access to him) and thoroughly reviews how he can solve the matters of the people becomes such a person that it would be the responsibility of Allah to ensure that on the Day of Resurrection, he is protected and that He enters him into Paradise."*

In order to better understand the "role of women in leadership of our Islamic centres", I will endeavor to answer the following questions which will then naturally grant the readers a logical conclusion to the topic at hand:

- **Why does women's leadership in temporal affairs matter?**
- **What kind of leadership does Islam want?**
- **What does Islam consider as the credentials for management?**

The corpus of Islamic literature (The Qur'an and traditions of the Infallibles) are replete with references to leadership and management and the responsibility which is on the shoulders of each and every one of us, as the Prophet has said, *"Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for your flock."* This tradition and the other quotations give us numerous 'general' guidelines on the way of life – they do not always go into details on how Muslims should organize themselves or how to choose their leaders. However, what is clear from our faith is that leaders are to be 'obeyed' (obviously within the boundaries of the laws of Islam); that they are to *'consult their followers and one another'* for guidance and inspiration (there is no dictatorship in the Jamaat workings, unlike what we currently see around the world - the EC need to consult with one another before they make decisions which affect the paying members rather than them arrogantly thinking that they know it all); and that they are, whether we like it or not, 'role-models' for the masses (as the Prophet has said that the people follow the religion of their rulers and thus righteous leaders come about when a community is righteous; conversely if we see members of a community who are less than pious, chances are that they will elect someone to the highest position of their community who share the same ethos of life and are also irreligious individuals - or else why would they choose such people to lead them)!

In addition, the Islamic legal code is clear that 'temporal' and 'spiritual' leadership go hand in hand and that a Jamaat which has no 'spiritual' leadership in the form of a *Scholar in Residence* (what we refer to as the *Resident Aalim*) is akin to a hospital without a doctor but has numerous nurses trying to fulfill their responsibilities. Indeed, a Jamaat in which the Scholar in Residence is but a mere 'paid employee' of the community and is treated as such by the 'Executive Committee' and thus, the membership also look towards him as being nothing more than one who is the payroll and can be hired and fired as they see fit, is bound to, sooner or later, falter and be destroyed.

For some reason, even though we pride ourselves on the fact that the separation between 'church and state' is not an Islamic concept and we incessantly gloat at the fact that our Marja'iyyah are as much 'spiritual guides' as they are 'temporal leaders' (see the events which unfolded in Iraq after the 2003 U.S. led invasion), when the concept of 'church and state' come home to our Jamaats, we make every effort, including codifying such draconian laws in our constitutions such that the Scholar in Residence is not entitled to be a member of the Jamaat, to ensure that our Scholars remain 'second-class citizens'. As I do not wish to detract from the discussion of women in leadership positions, I go onto the questions posed at the beginning of this discussion.

To answer the first question let me state that:
Many Muslim women feel (and perhaps rightly so) that the 'temporal' authority in the Masjid has been used on various occasions to suppress them. This would obviously have an impact on the woman's religious experience if she was to face such suppression and oppression as this would defeat the prime goal of all of our Jamaats. Thus, it seems to me that one of the primary goals of a woman seeking leadership should be to ensure that men and women alike are able to, within the limits of the faith of Islam, engage in worship and the other uses for which our centres are built. With having the female voice on the EC, this would

ensure that the concerns of the women are heard and addressed and having a female on the decision making body would ensure that such demands are timely heard and implemented.

So then, what kind of leadership does Islam want?
The answer to this second question can best be summed up in the famous verse of the Qur'an which reads, *"Lo! men who surrender unto Allah, and women who surrender, and men who believe and women who believe, and men who obey and women who obey, and men who speak the truth and women who speak the truth, and men who persevere (in righteousness) and women who persevere, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their modesty and women who guard (their modesty), and men who remember Allah much and women who remember - Allah hath prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward." (al-Qur'an 33:34).* Islam does not want impious or immodest "men" from leading a community just as it does not want impious or immodest "women" from leading a community!

The faith of Islam - which is made up of the rules of Allah, the guidance of the Prophet and the other thirteen Infallibles as explained to us by the great chain of scholars during the period of the occultation of our 12th Imam are not limiting Islamic leadership to "men" due to their gender as I can safely say that there are many "men" out there today who sit on the EC of Jamaats and are Presidents, Vice Presidents and Board of Governors of our various local, national and international organizations who should also NOT be in the positions they are! Islam is looking for those who are true submitters who fulfill the criteria for leadership and management!

What does Islam consider as the qualifications for the ideal Muslim manager?
If one was to write the CV for the position of the ideal and exemplary Muslim manager, they would need to possess the following traits (based on the traditions which we have and practical examples of leadership in the time of the Imams – specifically the life of the Commander of the Faithful and his appointment to Egypt, Malik al-Ashtar al-Naka'i):

- **A believer in the core fundamentals of the faith of Islam and an active display of practice of the teachings – we can summarize this into one word: TAQWA.**
- I am cognizant of the fact that in the past, many of the true leaders of our community tried to implement the rule of Taqwa into our community's political system but were not able to. As the ahadith tell us, the only way that one's inner core beliefs can 'show' is when our 'outer shell' reflects the religiosity. Thus, for a MAN or WOMAN who wishes to be the ideal Muslim manager, they need to openly reflect their submission to Allah - this means that men need to have the full outward appearance of Islam (beard, modest clothing, manners, etc…) and women too need to have the full outward appearance of Islam (hijab, modest clothing and attitude and the way that she interacts with men who are not her Mahaarim, etc…).
- At the secondary and equally as important is the mannerisms of Taqwa – so not only is it important to have the outward Taqwa, but also the inner heart and soul needs to be clothed with the garments of awareness of Allah and the observance of the etiquette of Islam.

- **Well acquainted with the religious teachings:**
- Since in MOST instances, the EC is responsible for the disbursement of religious funds and may be called upon to adjudicate on issues that come forth during their tenor, I submit that our 'temporal leaders' must have in-depth knowledge of the faith Islam - more than the traditional Madrasah teaches. It is a shame when our 'leaders' can not even understand and respond to basic enquiries of the faith of Islam or can not understand where the best place is in which the rights of the Imam (Khums, etc…) are to be spent. I don't propose that at this juncture in our community's growth that the Ulama sit on the EC (although this is the ideal situation and should be the modus operandi of all Jamaats just as you have experts in the medical field sitting on the boards of their institutions, etc…), however for the time being, let the EC be formed by people who have knowledge of the faith of Islam and make it incumbent upon them to have religious leaders - locally, nationally and internationally hold special advisory roles and powers of redirection of Jamaat affairs when they are opposed to Islamic dictates.

- **The leadership of our community need to have an expansive heart:**
- When we think of an 'expansive heart', we only tend to think of the Du'a made by Prophet Moses and which most speakers begin their Majlis with which states, *"O my Lord! Expand my heart for me, and make my affairs easy, and loosen the knot which is on my tongue and make the people understand my speech"*, however a 'spiritually expansive heart' is much more than the recitation of this supplication! The person which such a heart has traits such as patience in the face of those who are ignorant, is one who governs and leads with leniency and shows tolerance for those around him or her. In summary, in addition to the theoretical knowledge of Islam and the practical 'appearance of a Muslim, they also embody the noble ethical teachings of the religion and are welcoming of all members - male or female, Khoja or non-Khoja, young or old; rich and poor and respect all of them and respond to them and their needs! In most instances, the "more" money you give, the more respected you are; the "more" Khoja you are (African vs. Pakistani/Indian) the more important you are, etc...

As this letter has already gone on too long, I close with one final traditional on leadership and management in the Islamic system which I hope and pray all leaders of our community will read and sincerely think about. Such gleams of illumination from the infallibles need to be written in gold and mounted on the doors of our offices and the pages of our heart such that we can refer to them on a daily basis: *"The person who seeks (to govern over and) to work for the Muslims while he knows that amongst the people, there is someone who is much more capable and worthy of that position and that other person is much more knowledgeable in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet, has been dishonest to Allah, His Messenger and to all of the Muslims."*

Was Salam Alaykum,
Shaykh Saleem Bhimji
www.iph.ca / www.al-mubin.org

Dear Editor,
Salaamun Alaykum,

The publication of the book on Zakaat by the WF Islamic Education is timely and rewardable. How much so, this can only be gleaned more by reading the article attached which is also on Zakaat. The publication, as it happens, represents part of the recent series of the Wake-up call to the truth that the obligation of Zakaat is relevant to the modern form of wealth also and likewise for the poor in the modern time also.

The Wake-up call started when Federation Samachar of the Africa Federation carried some weighty articles and reader's letters crowned by the editor's own consonant editorial on the subject of zakaat in its recent issues.

Then what followed was an introduction of a Discussion Paper on Zakaat by Nasimco at its Conference held in June, 2009 in Minnesota, USA. The discussion created great interest in the subject though, unfortunately the visiting scholar who was to high-light the Paper could not attend the Conference.

And now by the grace of Allah (swt) we see the WF book on Ahadith which goes to show how much importance Ma'sumin (a.s.) have given to this obligation of Zakaat, and this is apart from what Allah (swt) directs in the Qur'an.

The attached article that appeared in the last issue of SAMACHAR is heart-rendering as it narrates a few examples of some aspects of the poverty that had agonised many families in the community in Zanzibar over a period of 30 years in the recent past. This was because the obligation of Zakaat was denied and the dues to the poor therefore were denied "religiously"!

It is believed that the Dar es Salaam community, as one example, which can pride over having a large number of wealthy families and where as large investments as USD five million through donations are not difficult to raise for the community's recent projects has about 600 poor and needy families out of the total of 1,800 families. Of these 600 families, 280 are "partially" helped on a "regular" basis because they are on the welfare records, but the other 320 families are "periodically" needy during the unforeseen emergency situations and would not want to be on the Jamaat's records and compromise their self-respect openly.

Besides, it is known by those who become needy periodically that the funds available to the Jamaat for the poor as voluntary contributions are not adequate anyway.

As the rich are not made or advised to pay Zakaat, the funds collected and available to the Jamaat cannot meet even the genuine needs of those who are on the welfare records. Situation like this is said to prevail every where in the community. It mirrors what happened in Zanzibar in the recent past. Now after knowing what is the divine directive in the Qur'an and the exhortation in the Ahadith on Zakaat, concealment of the truth, for example about Zakaat, is severely condemned by Allah (swt) in the Qur'an.

In this respect, I reproduce a pertinent section of an email that was posted in a Forum by a member as follows:

Quote: The true obligation regarding Zakaat is concealed. What is worse, some of the Qur'anic verses are mis-interpreted willfully to achieve and perpetuate the concealment.

Now let us see what judgment or wrath has Allah (swt) prescribed for those who conceal what is in His Book: *"Surely, those who conceal the clear proofs and the guidance that We revealed after We made it clear in the Book for men (Naas), these it is whom Allah shall curse, and those who curse shall curse them (too)." (2:159)*
Similar admonition, even more pertinent, is found in the following verses:

"Surely those who conceal any part of the Book that Allah has revealed and take for it a small price, they eat nothing but fire into their bellies, and Allah will not speak to them on the day of resurrection, nor will He purify them, and they shall have a painful chastisement. These are they who buy error for the right direction, and chastisement for forgiveness; how bold they are to encounter fire." (2:174,175).

S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali has the following to say in his commentaries on these two verses: "Here is a warning to the Muslims that they should not, like the Jews, conceal what God has revealed of His Book and sell away their faith for a mean price, else they would be no better than the wicked Jews."

He goes further to say : "Concealing of the truth is so grave that it is compared to eating of fire...

Those who hide the truth are compared to those who purchase error for guidance."
As for those who propagate or defend the mis-guidance, the following verse commands attention:
"That they may bear their burdens entirely on the day of resurrection and also of the burdens of those whom they lead astray without knowledge, now surely evil is what they bear" (16:25)

But then Allah swt is Merciful for those who before death make manifest what is the truth and repent.

"Except those who repent and amend and make manifest (the truth), these it is to whom I turn (mercifully) and I am oft-returning (to mercy) the Merciful" (2:160)

Seeing the concealment still lasting for centuries, they are not likely to want to be the beneficiary of this Mercy - before the re-appearance of Hadhrat Hujjat (af).

And what about those who would rather believe those who are engaged in the great conspiracy of concealment instead of believing in the "clear proofs and the guidance" in the Qur'an?

Allah (swt) likens them as the worst of animals who are deaf, dumb and do not use their mind. (Q. 8:22), despite the gift of "Aqal" which is not given to animals.

What I have written is by the courtesy of the Papers of Sheikh Fadle Saqalain which are the source of most of my comments.

Unquote The subject of Zakaat was discussed by the Committee of the Organisation of Islamic Learning in July 2009 in Toronto as also at a monthly meeting of the Dar es Salaam Elders Group in May 2009 - all after the appearance of the first feature article on Zakaat in Federation Samachar. The consensus was that Zakaat is payable on the present form of wealth also.

It will be a great service of tabligh for the good of our souls after death as also a service for the poor if copies of the WF Book are made available widely across the global community. No amounts of money spent on distribution would seem enough in the context of helping the poor in the deepening poverty in the community and saving us from the attendant sinning by denial of their dues to them.

Keen Observer Dar es salaam.

Letters to Editor

Qualities of a Leader for an Islamic Community

Allow me to join this debate with little bit of my views on the topic of Islamic Leadership.

I have divided this article in two parts:

1. Leadership qualities
2. Types of Management and its implication on our Community

This is the first part, the second will come out in a week or so...

A Leader by definition is supposed to lead or show way. this basic definition will vary depending on what type of leader he is or type of institution he leads, and what values he holds. I will come to this later.

Nevertheless, I think you will agree with me that any society, club, business etc appoints a most astute competent person well qualified in that field to the a leader in that club, society or business. A well versed architect or civil engineer will be best suited to lead an architect or engineering club, of course under no circumstances would you appoint a doctor or a programmer however well qualified they are!

I think this is basic premises that we all agree. Lets call it Premise 1.

Now lets come to an Islamic Society or in particular say Our Jamaat institution. Who qualifies to be a leader?

I am sure you will answer this question depending on our outlook of what is our community:

1. Is it a social organisation?
2. Is it a cultural organisation?
3. Is it economic assistance society?
4. Is it is racial organisation?
5. Is it a religious organisation?
6. Or may be a combination or some two or all of the above?

Once you answer this question then we can narrow to what type of leader do we need.

If you were to ask me: The first and the foremost, we are a Shi'a religious organisation, and being a religion that encompasses all aspect of life as part and parcel of religion then certain additional function become automatically part and parcel of the organisation duties and responsibilities, social aspect, cultural, economic etc. Lets call this Premise 2

If we agree to this point than the main question now: Who qualifies to be a leader?

Before I try to attempt to answer this question, let me say our history is very rich with exemplary models of leaders. From the Prophets, Aimah (as), ulama and just rulers. Leaving Infallibles, (on a lame pretext that we cant imitate them) there are many rulers/leaders in the history whose justice, progressive vision, etc have left foot prints in the annals of history. If you were to study all such leaders who are sweetly remembered you will find common thread of traits that they all had: bravery, vision, justice, fairness, kindness, humility, etc

In other words for an leader to be acceptable and successful there are basic traits that a person needs to have, you either have them or you do not. And if not, you have to acquire them BEFORE you take in the realms of power! (I will come to this later: Is it power or...) I call this "leadership" qualities. Lets call this Premise 3

NOW. If we all agree on Premises 1, 2, and 3 above that If a leader of an institution has to be a person well conversant, at least, if not an expert in the matters of that institution, that our is an institution encompassing all aspects of a human life, and that a leader has to have some basic "leadership" qualities, we come to a natural conclusion that a leader of a Shi'a Islamic Organisation MUST possess those basic qualities enumerated viz: be well versed with at least basic Islamic principals, and possess the basic "leadership qualities" such as bravery, vision, justice, fairness, kindness, humility, etc

On the other hand apart from values and qualities that a leader must have there are some negatives aspects that he MUST NOT have as a leader, namely rudeness, "haambiliki" (he wont listen), pride, irresponsibility etc I am sure we all know these and I don't need to enlist all these.

Going back to good qualities, many years back there was a big uproar: of pros and cons when the Late Mulla Asghar made a statement that a leader aspiring to lead our khoja shi'a community must be "muttaqqi" or have "taqwa". I do not wish to revisit the debate but just add that a sort of taqwa is necessary. Which sort? Let me explain below.

I don't know what is your understanding of 'taqwa', but the general understanding of a 'muttaqi' is a person with big sajdah mark on his forehead, fasting throughout, big beard, serious facial expression etc. Far from it! As our Aimah (as) have said, 'don't judge people by the prayers they pray and fast, they fast but by truth they uphold and trustworthiness". Else where we are told taqwa is a quality of standing firmly by truth and justice to the point that one would even give a ruling against himself or against his beloved one for the sake of principles. I would define taqwa as, 'a state of constant God-awareness, desire to please Him at all cost, and fear of displeasing Him at any cost'.

Apart from these qualities, there are certain 'mindsets' that any leader must have, and certain question that he must answer to himself.

A question that a potential leader must answers sincerely to himself is why does he aspire to lead? for pomp? honours? for recognition? respect? power? What has actually motivated him? I remember Nyerere once asked the multitude of potential presidential candidates, "'What is prompting so many of you to aspire to go to State House? What business do you want to do from there? Its a tough job there!"

A leader must also have one important mindset: leadership is about serving and not being served. Imam Khomeini once said, "Leaders are servant of the community". With this mindset a leader or potential candidate has to realise that the objective of standing up and assuming the leadership is to move the community forward and "literally serve the community in its needs". Its not AT ALL about getting respect, honours, accolades, etc.

And finally and the most important: Sincerity-khuloos! How many noble projects have failed or halted some initially, some later just because of personality clashes involving mere fact that 'I was not mentioned', 'I did this", "I will do this", "I will prove" etc. The very moment sincerity of working solely for pleasure of Allah without need or recognition goes out of the window prepare yourself the obituary of what you are doing!

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Dear Editor,
Salaamun Alaykum,

We genuinely appreciate the concern of Br. Inayat Manji who brought to our attention the poverty in our Dar es salaam community but the solution that he has given has stirred a bit of concern to us, the Hawza students.
It seems that the concept of Zakaat has not been fully understood by him.
We would like to make our community aware of the misconception of zakaat which our brother has portrayed .

Our brother has quoted 27 verses from the Qur'an which talks about Zakaat and Salaah linked together, to show the importance of zakaat. e.g {23:1-4}
He has also quoted other verses in which Zakaat has been mentioned on its own and the benefits of paying zakaat, e.g {2:277} {30:39}
Here the writer says that this verse uses the word "amwaal" which means wealth, assets, property etc...

The writer also quotes some hadith from the 6th Imam about the importance of paying Zakaat.
Our brother concludes that the obligation to pay Zakaat is there and goes on to say "The need for money in the community is also there, but the only thing that is hindering the people from paying the Zakaat is the rulings of the Mujtahids. The Mujtahid say that zakaat is wajib only on 9 items only, other than the 9 items zakaat is not wajib, hence the poor are suffering because of this exempt from the Mujtahids" and he further writes "The mujtahids are defeating the purpose of Zakaat they have given a wrong definition for the word "amwaal" mentioned in the verse of Zakaat" {30:39}.

According to the mujtahid they say "Zakaat is wajib on the following 9 items:
Wheat, barley, dates, raisins, camels, cows, goats, and exchangeable pieces of pure gold and silver. The current form of monetary wealth includes cash, shares in the banks, companies of rental cars ships, etc...this kind of wealth is exempted from the Zakaat".

Our response to brother Inayat Manji:

- First of all, in order to understand the verses of the Qur'an independently, a person needs to have strong background knowledge; i.e. he

must be an expert in Arabic language. Together with it he must have knowledge of the hadith and the other knowledge that is necessary for interpreting the Qur'an.

- If a person doesn't have the above knowledge, then he will have to depend on the translation done by other people.
- If he depends on the other translations, then it is inappropriate to depend on one translation only and base your whole argument on that translation.
- He must check and verify that translation with several other translations and then put up the argument.
- In this case the word "Zakaat" has been interpreted differently by different mufassireen. For the information of our brother zakaat has been mentioned more than 27 times in the qur'an and they have different meanings. It is not restricted to tax only!

- {23:4}...And who are givers of poor-rate (Zakaat) (M.H.SHAKIR)
- At alms giving are active (aja}
- Those who act for purification (Mir Ahmed Ali)
- Pay alms to the needy (Tahera. S)
- Who carry out their (duty of) Zakaat (Ali Qulli Qrai)

Zakaat verses in Holy Qur'an:

Secondly, some verses of the Holy Qur'an were revealed in Mecca and others in Medina the Macci verses don't have obligations {furu-e-deen} mentioned in them because Islam was still in initial stage.

All the wajibaats have been mentioned in the Madani suras.

- The Zakaat mentioned in the Macci sura doesn't mean the wajib Zakaat because the obligation of Zakaat was made in Medina.
- In the Surah revealed in Mecca Zakaat is mentioned for past Prophets.

{19:31} is for Prophet Isa (a.s)

{2:43} is for Prophet Musa (a.s)

{2:83} Soleman

{19:55} Prophet Ismail

{21:7}3 for all the Prophets.

Holy Qur'an has 2 types of verses

Descriptive verses:

- 23:1 Truly to a happy state shall attain the believers.
- 23:2 those who humble themselves in their prayers.
- 23:3 and who turn away from all that is frivolous
- 23:4 and who are intent on inner purity.
- 27:3 Who are constant in prayers and spend in charity: for it is they, they who in their innermost are certain of the life to come!
- 31:3 providing guidance and grace unto the doers of good.
- 31:4 who are constant in prayer and dispense charity: for it is they who in their innermost are certain of the life to come:

Prescriptive Verses:

- These were revealed in Medina.
- 2:110 And be constant in prayers, and render the purifying dues: for, whatever good deed you send ahead for your own selves, you shall find it with God: behold, God sees all that you do.

Notice that just like Salaah, the details of Zakaat hasn't been given in the qur'an. The details were explained by the Holy Prophet and his Ahlulbayt.

- Incidentally There are 8 verses in Holy Qur'an that talk about wajib zakaat, but Allah (swt) uses the word "Sadaqa" for it (hence in Qur'an the wajib Zakaat is being referred to as Sadaqa. {9:60}
- Elsewhere Allah tells the Prophet to tell the people to pay Zakaat in order to purify their wealth.
- Hence notice that while referring to the wajib zakaat qur'an uses the word "sadaqa" and the word Zakaat has been used to mean "purification"!

From the entire above example we can come to a conclusion that Zakaat has wider concept, it doesn't have one meaning only: instead it has many meanings; It can be general charity, sunnat charity and wajib tax {which includes khums} etc.

- So it's wrong to accuse to narrowing down the definition of "amwaal" and for saying that zakaat is wajib in only 9 things {and the present wealth is out of the boundary of zakaat}.

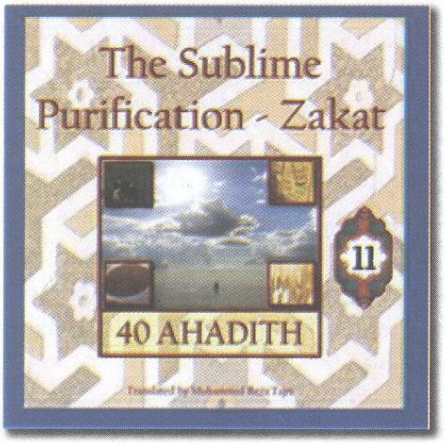
- We have hadith of our 6th Holy Imam Sadiq: "Holy Prophet has legislated Zakaat only on 9 items"
- Wheat, barley, dates, raisins.
- Camels, cows, goats
- Gold and silver.
- Anything other than this has been EXEMPTED.
- Imam was asked about corn?
- Imam knew that the man was implying that may be corn was not available in prophet's time that's why prophet didn't mention zakaat on it.
- Imam Said: not only corn, but also simsim and durr were available during Prophets time, but he exempted Zakaat on all except these 9 items.
- "EXEMPT" means that they were available but Zakaat was not legislated on them.
- The man said: "schools of companions say that Zakaat was not legislated on them because they were not available".
- With this hadith the concept of paper money is Exempt from Zakaat.
- Imam explained that the Holy Prophet was the last prophet and the rules which are been taught by him they are to be followed till the end of the world.

Therefore let us have a better understanding of Zakaat and we must not rush in doubting the ulema for things which we cannot comprehend.
They have studied Qur'an, Fiqh laws, for years, how can we take a few verses and hadith and base our argument on it?
What about the other hadith and verses?
Can we overlook them?

We must be thankful of our Aalims and Mujtahids, they have taken the responsibility of our acts on their shoulders by giving out the appropriate rulings and that's why we are able to perform our wajibaats so smoothly.
Imagine if they had not given out the rulings, would we have been able to study the Qur'an, interpret the hadith and deduce the proper laws for each of the furu-e-deen?

Students of Madrasatul Zahra-Dsm

WF prints Zakaat book: 40 Ahadith



This book is the 11th in the series of 40 Ahadith. Translated by Muhammad Raza Tajri, this looks into the aspects of Zakaat, containing forty short easy to understand hadith from the Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h) and his family. The book is available for purchase for $2.00 CAD $1.50 USD £1.00 GBP: For further information, email islamiceducation@world-federation.org

Imam al-Ridha (peace be upon him) has said: "Allah, the Mighty, the Glorious, has commanded three things with which he has associated three other things. He associated payment of zakaat along with prayers such that one who offers prayers, but desists from offering zakaat, his prayers are rejected. He associated gratitude to Him with gratitude towards parents such that one who is grateful to Allah, but ungrateful to his parents, will be deemed as ungrateful to Allah. He associated righteousness with bonds of kinship such that one who is righteous, but has severed relations with his kin, will be deemed as not being righteous."

Biharul Anwar, Volume 74, Page 77

Editorial

Commentary

by Abizer

Difficult times ahead for a profoundly divided community.

In the just ended WF elections there is much wailing and gnashing of teeth, not to mention a hefty portion of sour grapes.

In the aftermath of WF presidential election, many have voiced that the vote was a failure, while some insist it was a success. It wasn't a failure; many turned out to exercise their rights. Nor was it a success; not everyone could vote, and there were significant reports of malpractice. While using the word "success" we can be over simplistic and would create expectations for the future that may be impossible to meet. What's important is that the election took place anyway!

From a broader long-term perspective, the question often arises whether one should be more optimistic or pessimistic. It is more important to be realistic.
There is no short-term solution to all our issues that have been said and printed in glossy manifestos-far from it.
The election process remains crucial to our community's future. The merits of conducting an election far outweigh the alternative of not having one - even amid challenges that are simply overwhelming. The internationally-administered presidential election recorded 60 percent voter participation.

This can be difficult to grasp for audiences accustomed to quick-fix solutions to problem-solving as we see there is an eerie of silence from the leaders, as time passes, it has grown more so. But the situation is not lost, as many at the highest levels have concluded though these shortcomings are more so evident, there is extraordinary work being done on the ground by WF. However, much of it remains a patchwork that must be streamlined more effectively and structured into a more coherent framework.

In sub continent the canvassing was vehemently pursued by all candidates and the trendy talk in every circle has become whether Sub continent - is a vote bank of choice or necessity. Unfortunately, this issue continues to overshadow Africa. What's at stake goes beyond basic necessity and rhetorical battles fought on the podiums.

It goes to the core of the very foundation of the interest of the community at large. With the eyes of the world upon WF, that is the question that is on everyone's lips is these vote banks in Asia are being utilized to marginalize Africa the Mother of all Jamaats and more so WF as well.

Whatever the accepted wisdom... At the moment the most crucial task is to try to end a crisis that is threatening to tear the community apart. The stand-off is also straining relations between various organizations the pressure is piling amid the confusion that who is in charge?

Time is a commodity and in this fast changing world it is time that we move on rather than bicker on issues that further cause any disunity. If the simmering crisis is left unchecked it can eat into the fabric of our community and rot it from the inside out.
In my conversations with various people all over the world many feel that our leaders are out for themselves and not for the people; they are tempted by their egoistic tendencies.

The whole issue of WF elections no doubt has left an indelible black spot and the longer the issue is left in abeyance the more it will be difficult to unite the community. The people are further alienated and the consequences are glaringly visible.

Many of the community members feel that the ruling in Toronto by the President of WF to the effect that the polls were free and fair, was not just shocking, but robbed our beloved community of the chance for a fresh start and to show that we can do things better. It also plays up the stereotype that anything is acceptable at the expense of the community-regardless. It is no secret that the WF general elections were not to the expectation.

The general outcry and public disquiet that have attended the ruling are proof enough of how an uninspiring judgment from the higher echelons of power can erode confidence in the system.

It is imperative now that we have to look into the Electoral system and appoint an Electoral Reform Commission who scrutinizes the last election as well as other laws relating to the electoral process. Above all WF should be drastically overhauled, with efficient speed.

The entire community awaits the intervention of the sane leaders with the hope that it will help to dispel the confusion, mockery and danger that the Election has brought into our community.

The leaders are you listening?

Submission to Allah's Will is the best companion; wisdom is the noblest heritage; theoretical and practical knowledge are the best signs of distinction; deep thinking will present the clearest picture of every problem.

Imam Ali (AS)

Counting 20 Years From Now, *Where Shall We Be?*

(Some high-lighting excerpts from the Paper presented by Alhaj Mohamed Khalfan of Dar es Salaam at the Conference of Benefactors and Charitable Institutions organized by Ahlul Bayt Association of Africa on 7 and 8 July, 2009 in Kibaha and Dar es Salaam. Editor.)

"The topic assigned for Presentation of this Paper is "Counting 20 Years from Now, Where Shall We Be?" The answer is: We shall be FINE insha'Allah if we make CHANGES in succession as we go along and take them to be the key to being FINE"

"CHANGES are the characteristic of this earthly life for the human race and that is why this is seen as a transient world in which we live. Every thing here has its end - "ilaa ajalin musamma" (until the appointed term). Every thing that has an end has also a beginning. The beginning is not the same as the end. The duration in between has successive moments and no moment is the same as the one succeeds and the one that preceded. Such is the Glory of Allah (swt).

As TIME is unstoppable and so are the successive CHANGES around us because it is Time which is the Vehicle or the Carriage for CHANGES.

So what is permanent in this temporary abode is the continuous PROCESS and PATTERN of CHANGES which the human race is subject to and has to respond to by its own CHANGES".

"But no changes can come about without first letting thoughts arise and accept that things keep changing around us and we too must keep pace with adoption of our own changes to counter or cancel or cushion the effects of the changes around us if we have to survive and then thrive when the changes appearing around us are not friendly, and indeed, many are not."

Changes as the Spring-board

"A community or an organisation or a group of organisations with a common mission which has not taken CHANGES as the spring-board for jumping forward loses their sense of purposes, direction and pride; and with it their distinct and dignified identity. What remains of them is stagnation leading to decadence and nonentity. This is not a matter of research but simple commonsense.

It is therefore with great admiration that we see those who pioneer changes; it is with great satisfaction that we see those who adopt changes pioneered by others; it is with great sadness that we see those who are unaware of the need for changes; and it is with great frustration that we see those who fight against changes, and worse still, those who do so in the name of religion, traditions or culture".

"Leadership is not position but action and motion is not action. Thinking and pondering is a pre-requisite of action; Leaders assuming the responsibilities vested in them by the trusting people need to be in a constant state of AWAKENING for changes to rival others in the endeavours for success"..

"What do we need to do is to ensure that 20 years from now we do not land randomly and with a rude shock not knowing where we are and why. Normally small children have this dis-orientation when they board a huge aircraft like a building to them and then come out from the "building" only to be mystified by the sight of a different surrounding not knowing that the seemingly stationery building was making CHANGES for them in terms of lands and time."

"However good our present system of operation, co-operation and co-existence may be or seem, if it is so, it will not remain the same good if the thoughts, aptitude and propensity for changes do not exist".

"There can never be a situation where we can say that we have no cause for changes unless of course TIME stops! And the sun is stationery!"

Courage for Changes

"Sadly however, if the present system is not satisfactory, if it has weaknesses and if it has examples or risks of being counter-productive in many aspects, then it is a testimony that we lacked the courage to think, to reflect and to ponder over changes in the last solid 20 years.

The organizations with such noble missions and a repository of trust need to have things absolutely right. Less right means absolutely wrong. "

"It is the thoughts for changes which bring about an awakening, a new attitude of mind, a re-assertion of purpose and commitment, a re-alignment of direction, and there it is as if by a magic wand– a straight path and a clear vision. The thoughts for changes cost nothing and yet they are a huge asset.

For the first time we shall find that we as organizations are not only introvert (looking into ourselves) but also extrovert (looking at how other organizations fare or falter and want to know why and feel concerned."

For the first time we shall find that though we operate separately, we think collectively alike for better common results though the results are separate. For the first time we shall find that we feel anxious about the successes of each others and this sense of concern pays materially and spiritually.

"Doing nothing can get real tiring and then we cannot rest."

"So in concluding this Paper, in 20 years time from now we shall be fine insha-Allah only if we are already fine at this stage of time in which case this Conference would not have been found necessary. But it is here right now – not without cause. This Conference is a step for a CHANGE and the first step is always a giant LEAP and the rest nine steps are inspired by Allah (swt)."

JESS OPTICIANS

Now at Zahra Tower

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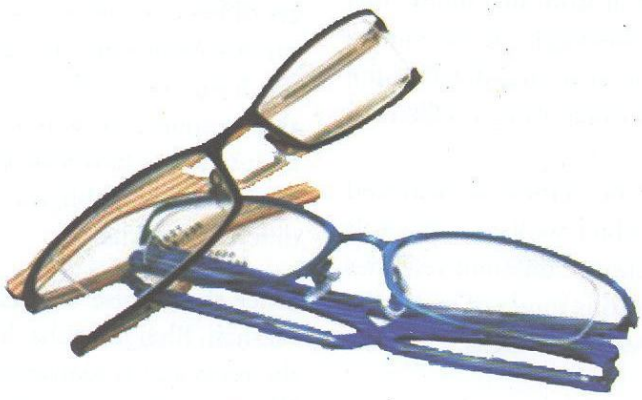
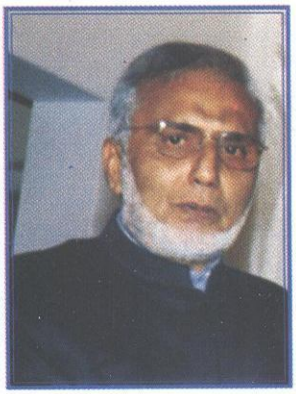


Eye Care for All.....

Past Chairman
Alhaj Ramzanbhai Nanji
takes stock of AF.



Assalamun Alaykum

I wish to convey my thanks to Allah (swt) and 12th Imam, Imam Hujjat (A.S.) as we come to an end of our tenure of Africa Federation.

Firstly, I would like to request that we remember those who are no longer with us. Amongst the ones who have left us are Alhaj Jaffer Visram, the Chairman of the Tabligh Board of the Africa Federation and Brother Marhoom Aliraza Nanji. May I request that we recite a Sure Fateha for them and All Marhumeen.

It is been a custom for me through my tenure as the Chairman of the Africa Federation to visit the Jamaats every year and brief the general memberships of the Jamaats on the Activities, Developments and Achievements through the year.
Though I don't intend to shift from this mode, this time I will cover a little more seeking to advise you the progress since I took over the helm in 2004 after the tragic demise of the then Chairman Alhaj Zulfikar Ali Khimji.
As you are aware most of the service is delivered through the Various Boards which we have in place. It is my firm belief that the matters of different activities are better addressed through this mode of operation as they are focused in their respective areas.

Tabligh Board

The Tabligh Board is mandated to address issues relating to Tabligh within the community. This refers to Maulanas posting as Resident Aalims, Qur'an Competitions for members of the community and Muharram Posting for Aalims to various Jamaats etc. Currently we are assisting 9 Jamaats by contributing towards the Monthly Hadiyo, gratuity and return passage Maulana.

The Federation has been working with the Jamaats to regularise the Contracts of all Aalims, with a view to ensure that all Jamaats and Aalims have a consistent Contract. Inshallah with the cooperation of the Jamaats we will achieve this very soon.

The Qur'an Competition which has become an annual event in the Federation Calendar has also seen active competition in Recitation and Memorisation, amongst the youth is very encouraging.
In this regards I wish to single out Mwanza Jamaat who have proved that the youths who have demonstrated their skill in this area year in year out.

During the months of Muharram and Ramadhan, Maulana's are exchanged within Jamaats, while some Jamaats recruit directly from outside Africa. This has given opportunity for the different Jamaats to get different experiences and share the knowledge of various Aalims during these months.
We have recruited an Aalim on a Full time basis as a resource person for the Tabligh Board. The intention is to have a strong administration which can coordinate the Tabligh activities of Tabligh within the different Jamaats.

Since the demise of Alhaj Jaffer Bhai Visram, Alhaj Hasnain Bhai Jethabhai has kindly agreed to take over the reins and is managing the portfolio satisfactorily. We are looking at making the Tabligh Board more active in the different areas and hope that we will be able to deliver more to the constituent Jamaats.

Bilal

The Central Bilal Board is charged with managing the Tabligh Activities outside our community. As a start the Bilal Muslim Mission of Kenya and Tanzania which are the institutions of the community were taken on board and the structure and activities were looked at closely.The Federation continues to fund the complete Deficit of both Bilal Muslim Missions of Tanzania and Kenya, as has been the case for the last 5 years now. This amounts to US $ 2.1 million over the period of five years, and is by far the largest expenditure of the Federation.I am also pleased to inform you all that there has been good progress where in the Mission of Kenya has amended its constitution to reflect the interest of the community. As for the Mission of Tanzania this was already embedded and we have embarked on rationalizing the property portfolio of this Mission with a view to improve the income for the Mission.Inshallah we hope that within the coming year this exercise will be completed and are looking at this Mission being self sufficient financially.It is our sincere hope that in the near future, CBB will embark on a journey to invite those Tabligh institutions that are currently not within the umbrella of the Federation to work hand in hand with those that are. The intention being that the activities must be complimenting each other and not competing with each other.We have to accept that these institutions are managed and funded by our community members, and by working in harmony and cooperation, we can ensure that the continued existence of these institutions is secured, and that all organisations in the Propagation of the Mazhab of Ahlul Bait work closely and support each other with their strengths.

Recognising that those communities that accept Shi'a Mazhab constantly face the challenge of earning their day to day livelihood, the Federation established the Bilal Loan Education Scholarship Scheme also known as BLESS, to avail to the Local Shi'a Communities the opportunity to gain Further Education and Training. This will allow young Shi'a men and women to enhance their status and become proud and independent members of their respective localities. The BLESS program has continued to blossom and to date, by the grace of the Almighty, over 50 students have benefitted from this Scheme.
An important activity that has been introduced by Bilal Kenya is the Economic Upliftment Programs and Training for the Shias in various centres. This project will Inshallah bear the fruit of Economic Independence for the Shias who live in and around the various Bilal Centres.
I wish to commend the Management of Bilal Kenya for embarking on this forward thinking Activity. I wish to record the selfless and exemplary services of the team of dedicated volunteers and the full time engaged staff of both Bilal Missions for helping spread the message of Ahlul Bait to near and remote corners of our countries.
In 2005 at the Supreme Council meeting I had announced the vision for the community which I had.

My Dream was:

- To see each and every child in this community is highly educated.
- To see each and every member of our community is living in a decent dwelling.
- To see a healthy community.
- To see that each and every member of our community displays unity of purpose.
- To see each and every member of the community is self sufficient.
- To see that the Africa Federation having no financial constraints.
- To see resident Aalims in every constituent Jamaat is from our own Mubalighs.

Today I will endeavour to take stock of what, by the Grace and Blessings of Allah has been achieved through the last few years.

Higher Education

The Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) of the Africa Federation has been the biggest success story in the recent years.

Having started with a meagre 20 students under this portfolio in 2001 we now have over 150 students benefitting from this program. An encouraging total of 257 of our young men and women have successfully applied for this program in the last 5 years.
From a mere US$ 2,000 Dollar per student per year being shared 50 - 50 by the Federation and the Respective Jamaat, we are now at a stage whereby the Jamaats does not have to burden any of this and the Federation disburses US$ 6,000 per student per year.
With the income towards this portfolio anchored and growing regularly we are hoping that this amount is

steadily increased to US$ 8,000 and further to 9,000 per student per year in the next two years.

I stand before you humbled and with Thanks to the Almighty and Generous Lord, to say that we have successfully created a system to ensure that the youth of our community will receive funding for the most basic requirement to face the challenging world out there.

This enormous milestone was achieved with the contribution of members of our community towards the Zulfikar Khimji Memorial Education Fund - ZAKMEF I am pleased to report that with a consistent Income to support the Higher Education portfolio, the Federation has approved and disbursed funds amounting to a little over US $ 2 million in the period of 5 years.Not losing sight of needing a good foundation of Early Education, the Mulla Asghar Memorial Award Scheme MAMAS is also a growing portfolio which assists students from those Jamaats, where no community schools are established, in funding their primary and secondary education.

Health

Our Health program which is being delivered through the Central Health Board is very strong. We have provided Medical Advice, Assisted in Funding and offered direction to any of our community members for their various requirements.The regular medical screening program has also been a popular activity which moves from Jamaat to Jamaat offering subsidized screening with a view to bring to the surface the ailments amongst our members. We have recently also embarked a Cervical Cancer screening exercise to help our members recognize their respective conditions with a view to seek medical treatment if necessary. We are now looking at enhancing Medical Insurance for the membership and also assisting in subsidizing the cost of medicines for our membership. The expertise available under this portfolio has also guided many patients in various remedial treatment including organ transplants. I am sure that the community has and continues to benefit from the regular health bulletins which are circulated by the Health Board. The Federation has disbursed just over US $ 370.000 towards enhancing the health and well being of our community. In effort to enhance the services rendered by this Board, we have a resource person currently based at the Federation Secretariat, who attends to the day to day affairs of the Board.

Economic Upliftment

In an effort to support our Community members from the effects of the increasingly tough economic climate in Africa and all over the world, we have embarked on the Economic Upliftment program.

This program is still in its infant stage, and we are working with various Jamaats to cater to cases where our Community members who have a business or a plan for a viable business can access Financial Support in the form of Loans. Whereas the demand for this portfolio is very large, the Funds available for this disbursement are limited.

Despite these limitations the Federation has assigned approximately US$ 200,000.00 towards this. It is my sincere hope that the allocation towards this fund will increase by a sum of US$ 100,000 annually over the next few years, Inshallah a healthy sum of US$ 1 million as outlined in my appeal of 2007. We are in constant discussions with various organisations, with a view to enhance this portfolio for the benefit of our membership across all Jamaats.

Housing

At last, there is light at the end of tunnel. The Federation, with support from the World Federation, and availing of land from Dar es salam Jamaat has started a Housing Project comprising of 18 Flats for the less fortunate members of our community. This project is expected to be ready for occupation by the end of 2010. (MOMBASA ONLY) I appeal to Mombasa Jamaat management, trustees and membership to look into the future and work with the Federation to see such a project get wings sooner rather than later.

Welfare Assistance

The Federation continues to offer assistance to various Jamaats on a regular basis to support monthly expenses, to the amount of US $ 1.3 million in the period from 2004 to 2009. This is in addition to the support extended for Medical Treatment and School Fees support which are managed under MAMAS and CHB. The Federation will continue to assist Jamaats in reducing the pressure on the lives of the less fortunate members.

Secretariat, Administration and Archives

The Federation can only offer services to its membership through the tireless efforts of the various volunteers who serve in various capacities at the Federation and its Boards and functions. However, in this day and age, it is mandatory to have a team of equally dedicated full time staff to ensure that the delivery of services to the community is conducted in a timely and efficient manner. I am pleased that over the last few years, we have on board, full time staff to manage the affairs of Central Health Board, Education Board, Tabligh, Bilal in addition to the team at the Secretariat Offices in Dar es salaam and Nairobi.

I wish to record our thanks to Alhaj Roshanbhai Fazal who over the last few years has pains takingly combed through the past records and historical documents of the Federation, since it was established. These records have now been digitally stored on DVDs for future reference.

Property Portfolio

With the support of the trustees of the Federation, I am glad to report that the Property Portfolio of the Federation has now been rationalised.

The Portfolio now stands valued at US $ 10 million, with a Gross Rental Income of over US$ 1 million. After the successful sale of older properties which were not generating a fair market rental, the Federation has embarked on a rationalization Program and has successfully re invested in real estate bringing in much better returns. I thank the Almighty for having had the opportunity to create, what I hope will be a steady and increasing income from which the members of the Community can benefit for a long time in the future.

Collection of Huqooq Funds

This has traditionally formed the main source of Income of the Federation, and is the primary source from which Tabligh and Welfare Support activities of the Federation are funded.

In the last five years, momineen have paid their huqooq to the Federation amounting to just under US$ 12 million. Half of this remitted to the offices of our Marjae Taqleed Aga Sistani – May Allah grant him a long and healthy life. The balance of approximately US $ 6 million has been disbursed in line with the guidance from the Marja, in the previously mentioned activities.

It is, once again, my humble appeal to all Momineen to continue to channel their Huqooq dues through the offices of the Federation, which is then spent for the benefit of the followers of Ahlul Bayt in our region. Alhamdulillah, the Federation continues to offer the highest level of accountability, to its membership on collection and expenditure. (DAR ONLY) I am pleased to note that the Federation accepted the request from Dar es salaam Jamaat , and availed a total sum of US$ 750,000.00 towards the purchase of the plot in front of the Imamabara.

As this term of the Federation draws to a close, I stand humbled and thankful, to the Almighty Allah, the Lord of the Universe for having given me the opportunity to serve my Community, for his pleasure. I have endeavoured, at all times to offer my services, to the best of my ability solely for the pleasure of Allah.

On this journey, I have had numerous Happy Moments when the community has reaped benefit from the efforts of the Federation, for which I shall remain forever thankful to Allah and to each and every one of you. Along this path, there have been moments of sadness, when we have allowed issues of minimum importance to threaten to tear our United Fabric. I am again thankful to Allah who in his Endless Bounty and Mercy, has guided us and kept us together - United in purpose if not in Action.As the new term begins I wish to humbly inform the community that, with your permission and endorsement I would be willing to continue for the next term and serve the community as chairman.

I wish to close my remarks tonight with a quote from Nahjul Balagha, where Amirul Momineen advises:

"Remove Mutual Enmity, Ill Feelings and Hatred, It is better than Prayers and Fasting". Wassalaamu Alaykum Warahmatullahi wa Barakatuh.

Federation Samachar
wishes
Alhaj Ramzanbhai long life.
May Allah grant you all favours.
Amen!

Mother's True Love For Son Is:

Her Sharing His Love With His Wife.

by Alhaj Mohamed Khalfan, Dar es Salaams

On the third day of her marriage, the bride, that is, the daughter-in-law, requested her mother-in-law to assign to her those of the house responsibilities which she would want her to assume, as her share, to relieve the mother-in-law of some of them. This was done.

However, the mother-in-law was quick to point out that she, and not the daughter-in-law, who would prepare and take the early tea to her son, "as always" after they all have performed "sub'h" prayers. Again, it is the mother who would wait for the son and join him at dinner, "as always", as he returned late from work. The daughter-in-law would join her father-in-law and children at dinner earlier.

The mother-in-law said she had been doing so for years for her son; but what was obvious although not to her was that the son himself had also been a bachelor for years!

The mother continuing to be possessive with regard to her son, or more so after his marriage is seen as part of a centuries' old culture. The mother-in-law herself tasted the brunt of the culture when she was a daughter-in-law in the husband's family. It is a culture which provides justification for many a failure of a marriage between otherwise the loving spouses.

However, the culture can be tampered with some degrees of good sense so that the matrimonial happiness of the son is not sacrificed at the altar of the culture. The mother must understand that she has no cause for jealousy when she finds the son now being engrossed in the novelty and the taste of a married life, and this naturally may have curtailed his companionship with his parents to some extent. The novelty wears off. In the meantime, moved by jealousy, the mother will have caused some irreversible harm in her emerging relation with the daughter-in-law.

This culture, however unfair, is revered or endured because it is given the garb of family ethics and values to be upheld 'religiously' by every daughter-in-law if she has to prove herself worthy of not only her husband but also his family. After the marriage, no parents would want to accept their daughters back who fail to abide by the culture because the same culture would be prevailing in their families too. To them it is the cultural values which count more than the religious values where they conflict and they always do. Mother's possessiveness is part of the culture.

Culture of Taboos

It is no wonder if it is taboo for the daughter-in-law to mention her husband by his name or refer to him as "her husband" in a conversation with her mother-in-law. She will respectfully mention him as "your son", as an admission that her share of his son rests larger and ranks higher than the daughter-in-law's share of him as her husband. It is in the interest of the daughter-in-law to avoid mentioning how loving "her son" is to her. That would mean an encroachment over the mother's share.

In fact the degrees in which the culture is followed even at present in an enlightened society, like in East Africa, on the contrary is considered as offering a considerable favour to the daughter-in-law especially when it comes to enjoying a conjugal life.

Let us recount how far has the culture been tamed in our society in East Africa. The culture had or has perhaps even now more "teeth", otherwise called "ethics and values", in the rural society (in villages) in India and Pakistan, of which our community is part, and the victims are not only the daughters-in-law but also the sons, both in millions across the sub-continent.

The daughters-in-law in a family in a rural society are required to remain in a constant company of their mother-in-law during the day time while engaged in the domestic chores or farm and dairy work or even while taking short rest, napping. It is considered highly disrespectful for a daughter-in-law to display a faint smile to her husband in manifestation of shy love or a signal of a yearning for his company - in the presence of the parents-in-law.

Fake Headache

There were times when in villages it was considered indecent for sons in a family to share the same room each with their respective wives every night when retiring for the night. The adult females slept together with their children separately from the adult group of male members in an extended family. However, it would rest upon one of the sons, in turn, who would discreetly fake a convenient headache now and then before retiring for the night and request the mother for "her daughter-in-law" to attend to him. Of course, the mother knows and accepts the situation. This had happened to her also when she was a daughter-in-law.

Of course, but for the loyalty to the culture which transcends the religious values, no marriage could survive this cultural intimidation, but then divorce too was contrived smartly as unthinkable within the ambit of the same culture to ensure a blind loyalty to the culture to the end.

It should be remembered that Allah as the Creator has placed love and compassion between the spouses and each derives satisfaction from them by matching them in contrast. The husband derives his satisfaction by obeying his masculine instinct and urge of protecting, maintaining and caring for his wife. The wife realises her satisfaction from that love and compassion placed by Allah between them by the feeling of being protected, maintained and cared for by her husband which in turn sharpens her love for him.

No wonder that Allah mentions in the verse 30:21 pertinent to this "love and compassion" that "surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect." The culture survives when the reflection is still amiss.

It is for this reason that, even in the community living in cities, a husband harbouring love in his heart for his wife must keep expressing it in words, but then the cultural inhibition, if not intimidation, may yet not permit it even where the mother-in-law is not around.

It should also be noted without the raise of eye-brows that Islam accords more concern for that mother who is expected to have yet a longer and more useful life in the society for fulfilling the purpose of producing and nursing children than that mother who has already fulfilled hers during her useful life.

Tearful Scenes

There arises however a problem with far reaching consequences when the son, as husband behaves exactly as is dictated by his masculine nature and Islamic obligations in defiance of the family or societal culture. The mother would interpret it as being against her share of love from him brought about by the influence of her daughter-in-law on her son, this having come about only soon after his marriage. So in order to prompt sympathy and protection from her son, she would create quarrels with her daughter-in-law, exaggerate them and then keep reporting them to her son with the punctuation of emotional and tearful scenes.

It is however not the intention to say that all the mothers are wrong or always wrong or suspect in this connection. On the contrary there are examples, growing in numbers, more in the West, of both the parents also being callously subjected to a sinful maltreatment by their daughter-in-law with the prompting or support or tacit approval or connivance or knowledge of no other than their own son! What is worse is if the son is docile in nature or of a weak personality in the presence of his wife.

There appears to be a catalogue of such ill-treatment committed openly by daughters-in-law for all in the community to know as if to give rise to a new culture to be applied by all daughters-in-law, as a change in contrast, especially those who have a greater say in the affairs of the family than their husband. Worse examples of such families are generally not unknown and they are rated poorly in the community.

Love And Loyalty

The sincere advice to the parents is to let their son uphold the demarcation set in Islamic obligations for the respective shares of love and loyalty for them and the wife. Each of them has to address determination (mind) to accepting those obligations. This however can be done only if the son too from the very beginning

of the matrimonial life upholds the Islamic rules in managing the affairs of the family in which the broad interest of the family as a whole ranks higher than that of the couple.

That indeed is a true love of the parents for their son if it motivates them wisely for the success of his matrimonial life which is yet to run its course after they are no longer around. When the mother gives birth to a baby-girl, she knows the reality of life - that she is raising her up for her husband, and the daughter's love will be shared between the mother and her husband. And when it is a baby-boy there is no difference. His love is similarly to be shared by the mother with his wife.

As the light of a candle is not dimmed by lighting another candle, so is the love shared among the members of a family even with the arrival of a daughter-in-law and later grand-children.

The wisdom lies in the parents facilitating the "greatest enjoyment" by their daughter-in-law of her share of love from their son in order to secure for themselves the "greatest share" of his love; and then there are congenial smiles all around. There are prominent examples for emulation in this direction. This approach of appeasing the sentiments of the son is a master-piece for success because it accords well with the human nature.

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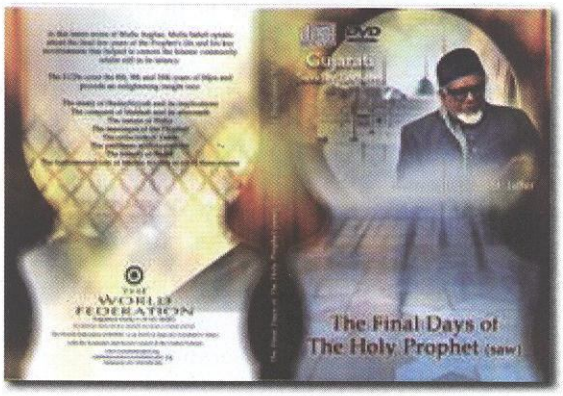

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AL MADRASATUL ZAHRA

Student Speaks...

I begin with the saying of Imam Ali (a.s) "Whoever set right his inward self, Allah sets right his outward self. Whoever performs acts for his religion, Allah accomplishes his acts of this world. Whoever's dealing between himself and Allah are good, Allah turns the dealings between him and other people good".

Struggle and hard work are key to any accomplishment. As stated by Imam Ali, Allah (swt) will take into his own hands the efforts of one and translate them into achievements.

The hawza experience is said to be one of self realization and cannot be conducted without the earlier mentioned cornerstones of accomplishment and the aid of the Almighty.

As fresh hawza graduates we still recall the day we were called for an aptitude test and interview during the Holy month of Ramadhan. The good news and results of the mandatory test arrived in the month of Shawwal, and we began on a new path to overcome new challenges to come. We had to adjust to all the requirements from family responsibilities and students tasks. Every morning we had to finish our house duties and rush to class before 9 am, climbing the stairs in that rush was so tiring but the goal was high so it didn't matter. In the 1st year we did our Arabic grammar and conversation, ulum ul Qur'an, Tajweed , Fiqh, Aqaid, Akhlaq and study skills classes. The next year brought us new subjects that were even more interesting namely: Mantiq, Islamic history, ilmul-hadith, tafseer, public speaking and an Introduction to Authentic Books. The education of Hawza is just amazing as it is totally different from any sort of secular education. Here every student is so keen to help their fellow students so as everyone is able to live up to the requirements. We were students of different ages and thus were handed a chance to learn from our elder students and at the same time be enveloped with the liveliness of the younger.

Our teachers were in no way below average as they repetitively introduced thought provoking topics and outlooks on their subjects. Although the preliminary exams were tough, in true spirit they were fought through with every ounce of enthusiasm and commitment any student could muster. The variable methods of understanding were new to most of us, and therefore it took a while for me to adjust. We were required to be resourceful and determined to stay on top of all our classes and with the study skills tips where we learn 7 inventories of education which aided in broadening our scopes. This also brought in us our own ways of studying. We were given a student portal where we got notes, slide shows and references of books to read etc. The Babul-ilm library is the place where we spent most of our time. We had study groups where we exchanged ideas and reviewed each other's understandings. As a result, we would like to encourage our community members to fully utilize this blessed facility.

Finally, the words of our principle Sukaina Bai still echo in our heads as she told us once that we should reveal in our personal connection with Allah (swt) every day from 9 a.m to 12 p.m. When everyone walked to get their certificates and memorable as we were overcome by a new responsibility to practice what we have taught as this is the aim of our existence.

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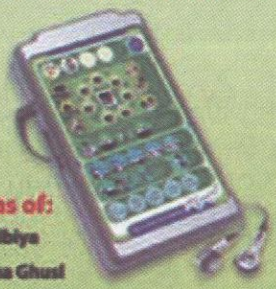

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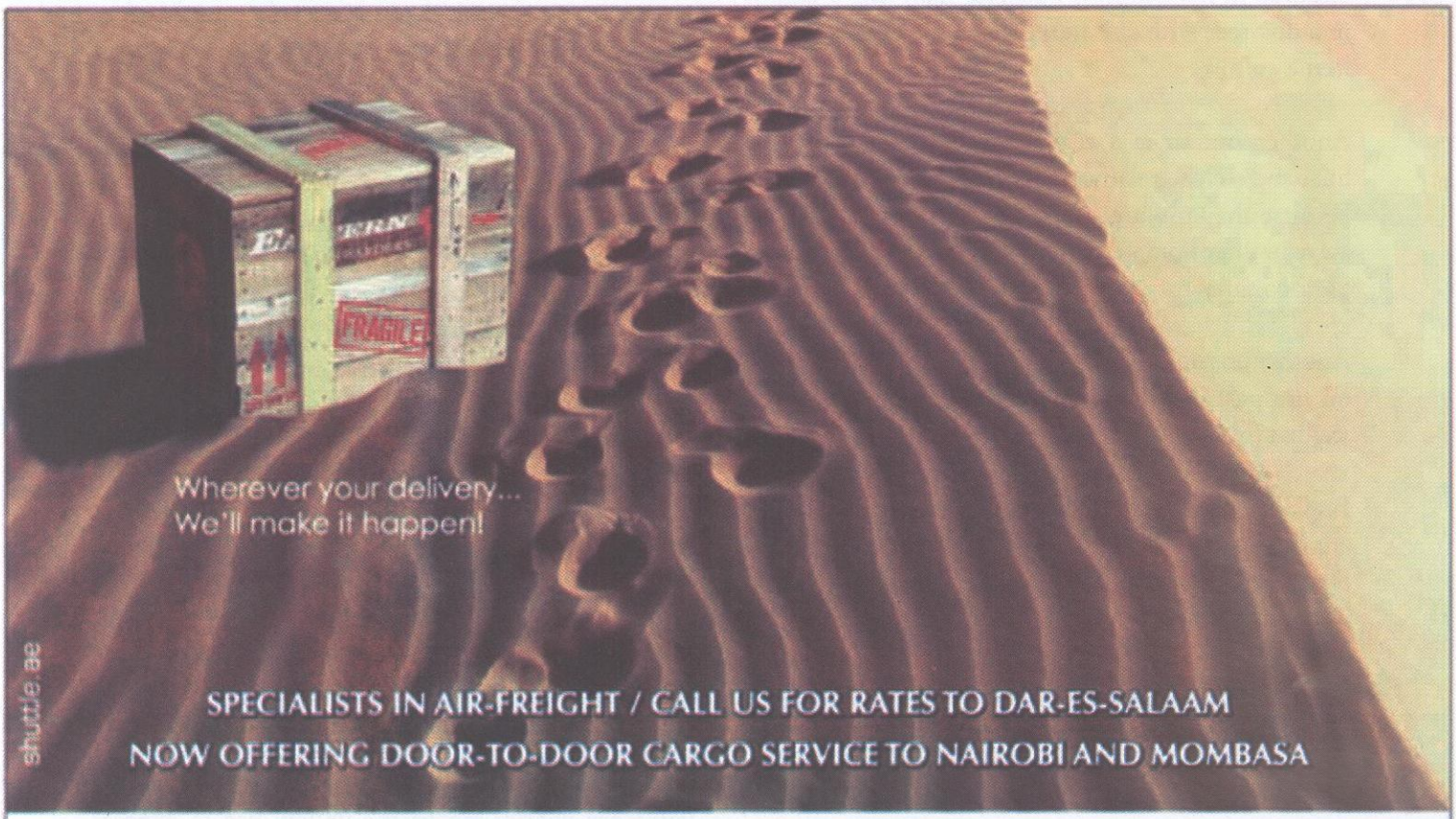

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Anon

Young Widow with Orphans

by Anon, Dar es Salaam

Hers was a happy family, with the husband having a modest monthly income for a humble living until he died young suddenly of burst appendicitis. He avoided a visit to a clinic to save a consultation fee thinking that what was a seriously inflamed appendix was a normal stomach pain. He saved the few shillings only to lose his life in the bargain of budgeting his expenses.

Though young and pretty, the prospects for a re-marriage for the widow are almost none because she has three children of whom one is physically handicapped. This is because normally, a new suitor would be a widower, much older, with his own children in his family. A bachelor marrying a widow or a divorcee with children is also not common either in the culture.

Another option is a regular help from her or her husband's close relatives. But this too is not possible because they too are relatively poor and residing far away in their home-country. She is now a foreigner in their country.

Another possible solution is charity which is voluntary on the part of donors in the community and not a wajibat (obligation).

But Islam has "the solution" to these situations, which are common in the society. These are dues owing to the poor by the rich like any other debts. Not paying is sinning.

However, this solution is in the form of Zakaat which has its rules of exception. This solution is there if the poor, like the widow with the orphans, are in a community where the wealth is in the form of camels, cattle, barley, wheat, dates, raisins, gold and silver coins. The rulings on Zakaat cannot be ignored.

No Dues

Sadly, the widow and her orphans are part of that community where the wealth (amwal) is in the modern form of monetary investments in profitable businesses and assets including Banks' deposits and Stock Exchange shares. There are therefore no dues religiously and rightfully payable to her though needy she and the orphans are.

And yet the widow must feed herself and her children. She must find money to pay for also her house rent, water, electricity, school fees and medical expenses.

In a human society, the moving moments for the parents are when the children do not know why the mother is not serving them the evening meal before they are sent to bed on any particular day when they are hungry and pleading to her for some food.

There is a saying in Kiswahili "Pasha Maji Moto Walale Watoto". This relates to the mother who makes a pretense of now beginning to cook the evening meal by keeping water boiling at a slow pace so that the children cease to complain of hunger and later drift into sleep while in the state of anticipation for the "delayed meal" when there was no meal for that evening.

This of course assumes that there was some charcoal left for the pretense. This is an example of the emotions suffered by the parents in a family of children when poverty is intense in a society which has also rich families.

Like other parents, hers too were never exhorted or lectured at the majlises to give a higher education to their daughters so that such situations as befallen her could be self-managed to some extent.

Voluntary charity means the widow has to express her gratitude; and being young, such a charity is not always without a string. The widow is advised to sell

cooked food. She has to employ a maid to look after the handicapped child while the mother is engaged in cooking and later to go to a school for sale of the food.

Capital is required, again through the favour of voluntary charity; and even then the income will not be enough.

Hadith

Imam Ali (a.s.) warned: "Allah (swt) has fixed as an obligation, the livelihood of the poor in the wealth of the rich. Therefore, it is because some rich persons have denied (the poor their share) Allah (swt) will question them"

The Prophet (s) said: "By pleading for help the poor already humiliate themselves. Do not humiliate them twice by rejecting their pleas".

If the Qur'anic verses 5:48, 6:53 and 165 are consulted, it will be found with great worry that the poor in a community serves, by a divine design, as a means to test or try the rich. Many of the rich in the community fail the test.

The poor will long be gone as if they never existed. Gone also will be those who are not poor. What will exist however will be the records with Allah swt as to who among the rich owed dues to the poor, as ordained by Him, and died without having paid any such dues in their life time to the poor.

Perhaps the rich in defense would say, of course after death, that they were not aware of the poverty of others who though lived together as brothers and sisters with them in a small community; or that the poor did not come out to beg. The reply to them is in the Qur'an:

"(Alms are) for the poor who are confined in the way of Allah - they cannot go about in the land; the ignorant man thinks them to be rich on account of (their) abstaining (from begging); you can recognize them by their mark; they do not beg from men importunately, and whatever good thing you spend, surely Allah knows it (2:273).

Recent research studies carried out at the University of Bergen, Norway and the Institute of Psychiatry at the King's College, London reveal that those who suffer from depression and anxieties risk early death. It is known that a life of poverty is attendant with depression and anxieties which are commonly shared by all the adult members in a family. A number of illnesses can be ascribed to poverty as the primary cause.

The Prophet (s) has explained Islam in short as: "Worship (servitude) to the Creator and Compassion for His Creatures".

The "Shiqayat" or "Far'yad" is: where are the obligatory elements of compassion for the poor in the Qur'an so that they get their rightful dues without humiliation and while protecting their self-respect and chastity!

Now, apart from the widow and her orphans, there are many other poor families in dire need of help, some regularly and many others periodically.

Who can say that their family has never tasted the brunt of grinding poverty in one of their previous generations or will not do so in any of the succeeding generations?

Rightly Warned

Rightly warned by the Holy Prophet: ***"Human beings are asleep; When they die, they wake up" (to the truth),*** But then after death, the time is up for a fate which is irreversible – eternal, with no room for 'bargaining or friendship or intercession' Khalaas! (2:254). Those who sinned would wish they had swapped their positions with those sinned at - right in this world during their earthly life. Some would wish they could return and amend the deeds. We cannot say that we never came across the following verses in the Qur'an and got warned:

"Lest a soul should say: 'O Woe to me! For what I fell short of my duty to Allah, and most surely I was of those who laughed to scorn" (39:56)

"Or it (soul) should say had Allah guided me I should certainly have been of those who guard (against evil)" (39:57) and against the sin.

"Or it (soul) should say when it sees the punishment: Were there only a returning for me, I should be of the doers of good" (39:58)

"Aye! My communications (ayaat) came to you but you rejected them, and you were proud and you were one of the disbelievers" (39:59)

And yet one more: "...**Or could we be sent back so that we should act other than we did act? Indeed they have lost their souls and that which they forged has gone away from them" (7:53).**

Or **"Send me back my Lord, send me back, haply I may do good in that which I left."**

Forsaken

But then, if all this is clearly warned in the Qur'an, the arrogant (mustakbireen) will say for now: "so what"? How true then that the Prophet will complain before Allah that his people have treated this Qur'an as a forsaken thing. (See 25:30). And Allah says: ***"Do they not then reflect on the Qur'an? Nay, on the hearts there are locks." (47:24)***

There is however, poverty in every generation of our community and in other regions too and the fate of people waking up to the truth only upon dying continues even now. There can be no returning for any soul after death which seals the fate. This is a Wake Up Call for all - every where - for all the time while death is drawing near and near. The Friday Sermons are for such Wake-up Calls also, or perhaps the present 45 long minutes taken are not enough to include the Calls!

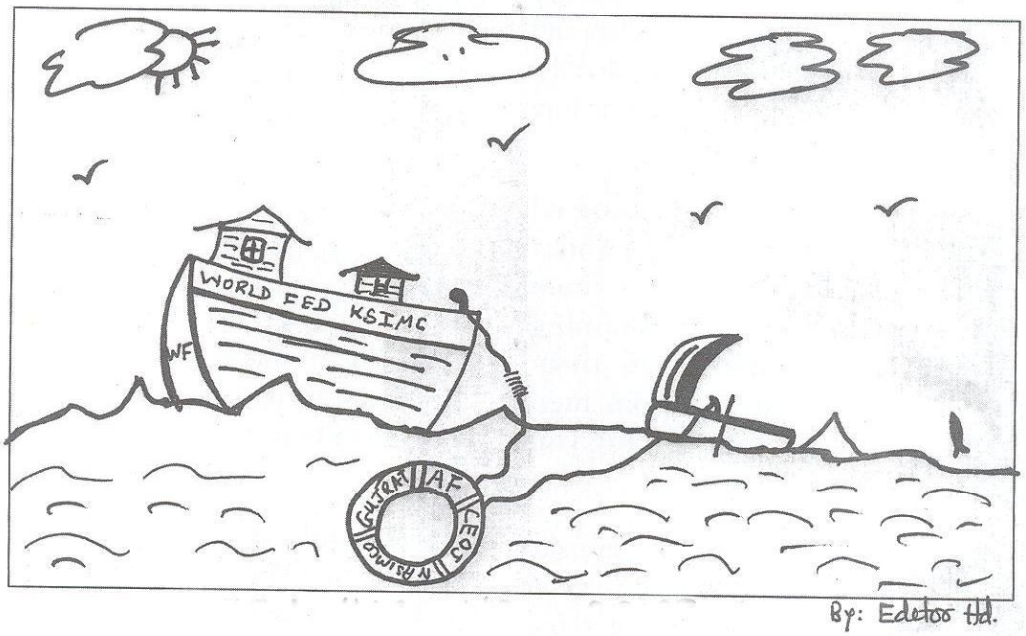
According to the Qur'anic verses 96: 6 and 7, there arise in man arrogance and rebellion against Allah in what He asks for in return for His bounties. When a person thinks he is not needy and looks upon himself self-dependant, he disowns any divine obligations attached to a wealth he calls entirely his. The wealth spells doom for him.

The poor on the other hand with no wealth escapes the burden of the obligation on his head and therefore he safely becomes exempt from the test that dooms the soul of the rich who was arrogant and rebellious. At the end, by the grace of Allah swt, the poor still survives the poverty in this life which is mere a fleeting moment. The rich will wish he had swapped the positions with the poor.

But then there is a trap also. Quite understandably, the denial to the poor of their dues subjects them to a severe trial of keeping themselves upright and avoiding sins while they struggle for their livelihood, though others may falter and succumb to varieties of sins in sheer desperation and ramification of poverty. For this too, the rich takes the toll.

STOP PRESS!

WF to deliberate on TORONTO CONFERENCE in Dar es Salaam on 1st May 2010.



By: Edetoo Hd.

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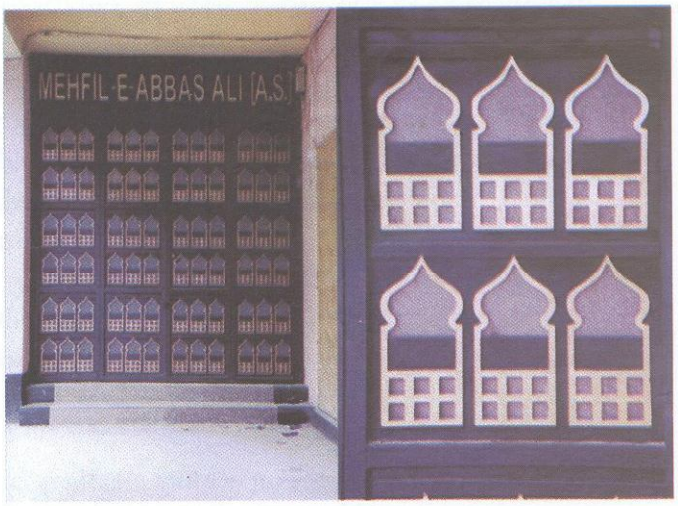

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Doors
Main Gates
Window Grills
Balcony Grills
And all types of Fabrication Work

JSS
An Ambitious Organisation
First of its Kind.

by Raihanna Hirji-Khalfan, LLB, M.Sc., M.A.

Jaffari Support Services (JSS) is an ambitious organisation said to be first of its kind everywhere in the community, aimed at undertaking unprecedented challenges and proving its worth in previously unchartered waters.

As the Islamic Jaffari Center of Toronto continues to evolve at an ever fast-pace, a group of people along with the Executive Committee of ISIJ came together and recognized that an independent body was needed to address social issues being faced by youths, adults and seniors within our community.

Jaffari Support Services is an organisation that was created in March 2008 and is presently chaired by Brother Mahmood Ahmed, to address the various social issues faced by the members of our community. The Goals of JSS are to create for Muslims the awareness of services being offered and to help address crisis situations, serve as interventionist, follow up and provide solutions for long term prevention.

The organisation focuses on helping members facing issues such as domestic, physical and sexual abuse, child services and matrimonial issues. A 24 hour helpline that is confidential has been created so that individuals within the community can call at any time of the day or night to get assistance.

Confidentiality

JSS is founded on the principle of confidentiality and is comprised of professional social workers and dedicated volunteers. Akilah Haneef-Jabari, JSS's full time coordinator, has her Masters in Social Work and brings years of experience to the group.

JSS is committed to enhancing the social fabric of our community through workshops, programs, and crisis management interventions. It also has various resources that provide aid to those where needed. Recently introduced is a Welfare Support Program, which provides temporary financial relief to community members in financial crisis.

This year, the Ramadhan Campaign Against Hunger (RCAH) was also added to the list of programs, and provides food to needy Muslim families within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) during the month of Ramadhan.

JSS workshops cover topics such as parenting, sex education, work/life balance, marriage enrichment and coping through difficult financial times. It is hoped to soon have as part of our organization, a big brother big sister program whereby the younger children within the community will have mentors that they can look up and discuss their ongoing daily battles that they face in the western society.

One of such events slated for Winter/Spring, 2010 at Jaffari Community Centre, Toronto is "PREP: A Marriage Enrichment Workshop" where the Speaker is Marzia Hassan.

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Matrimony?

Let "Chemistry" Come into Play.

We do come across examples of a good-looking boy having married a girl by his own choice, who is not relatively as good-looking and yet the marriage is a big success.

There can most likely be no reason for this except that he truly liked "her" as a charming person, and therefore he also liked - her look, her complexion, her height and other physical characteristics, whatever these were.

This "charm" is called personal "chemistry". This chemistry can be assertive enough to transcend even a strong racial or a cultural barrier. We also see a happy blooming family of parents of different race or culture. This is because the chemistry of two minds clicked.

Compatibility is the key to a successful marriage and it is more influenced by how the minds of the couple reacted to each other when they met and talked, and not the appearance only.

The real beauty which can make the wife endearing to the husband is primarily her sharp intelligence. It is this, as a base, which then extends her other qualities, like her general knowledge, her sense of humour and reasoning, her modesty, her single-minded love for the husband, and the formulation of her thoughts and values - to make herself as the charming wife to the husband.

This beauty does not pale away or diminish but increases with the advancement of the wife's age, while the fate of the beauty of the "look" is not the same.

It is this beauty that the husband would want the wife to pass on to their children.

But then this beauty is not revealed by a girl or a woman from a distance or from her pictures. It is an interaction between the two minds which reveals this beauty, and the chemistry is triggered consequently leading to wedlock.

Now what message can we pick up from these every-day examples for our community?

Simple! Let us not inhibit but facilitate a meeting of minds and indeed it is this which determines prospects for compatibility.

Fairness

However, the tradition, as is currently in the community in this respect, is not conducive to lead to fairness for those who are extremely charming as persons and as prospective spouses but the "look" is all that is available for assessment from a distance; and all persons are not "good-looking" in any community by the respective community standard.

There was a time when education was what seemed to be a privilege denied to many, mostly the girls. Therefore often the educational merit of a girl or a boy was enough to out-weigh a consideration about their look. This is no longer the situation when now most of the girls, like boys, are fairly educated, and therefore a highly educated girl or boy no longer has an edge when it comes to how they "look from a distance however short it may be".

On the path of a matrimonial arrangement and pursuit, we have come from very far, and therefore our move forward has yet to continue. There was a time when traditionally a marriage became so arranged that the spouses met and saw each other for the first time only on the occasion of their wedding. Photographs were an early invention then, and even later women were not allowed to be photographed. Travelling documents were issued to them with bold words "PURDANASHIN" stamped across the blank space for a photograph. Burqa and not hijab was imposed on girls upon reaching the age of 9.

A Gamble

Compatibility was a gamble. If a marriage survived despite an incompatibility, it was through a cultural intimidation within a family and a community.

Fortunately things have since eased to some extent. A couple intending marriage can now be made to sit in a company of family members with a view to "seeing" each other personally and/or their pictures.

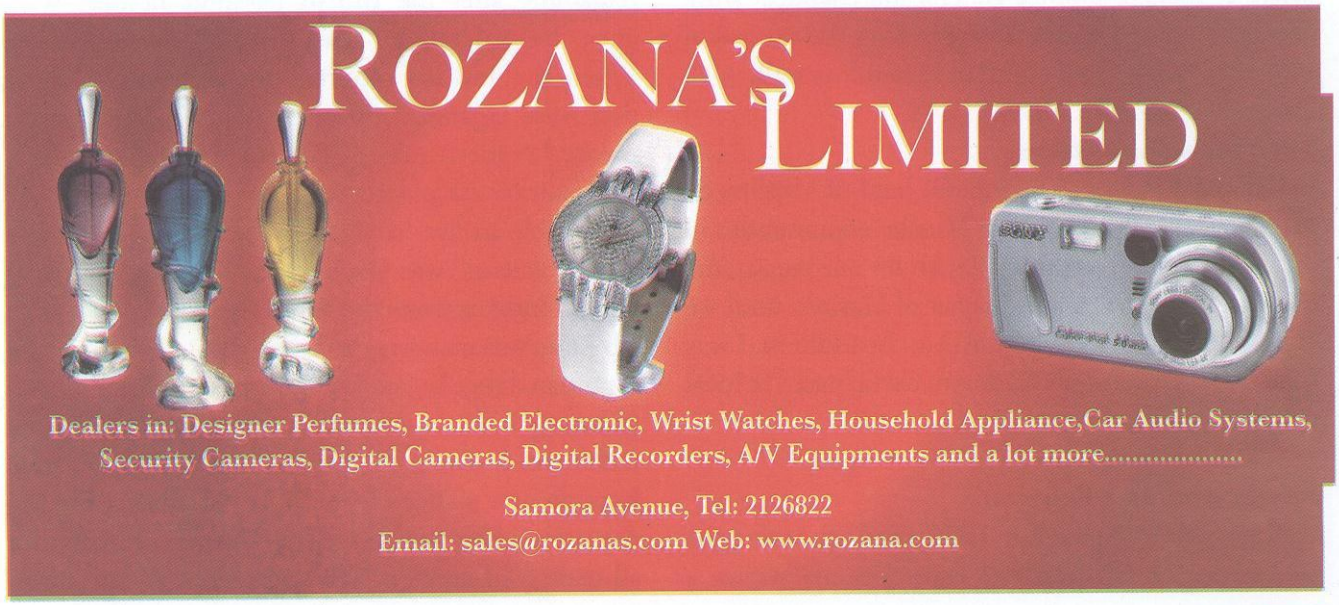
It is often boys who now make a decision which is still mostly based more on what is accessible, that is, the appearance of the girl, as he sees it, than her thoughts, values, attitudes and aptitudes commensurate with her level of intelligence. The best choice is therefore often missed if the criterion is restricted to only her appearance and not to her personality as well which can be very charming and congenial to attract any boy who is serious about making a sound decision.

Personality

Let us be fair to all girls, whatever their appearance. Make opportunities available to them to reveal their individual intelligence and personality as well. Such a revelation can come about only over a period of time in a course of meetings at the community's organised gatherings when girls will have summoned their self-confidence to exchange thoughts on various subjects without feeling that matrimony is the aim for the exchange.

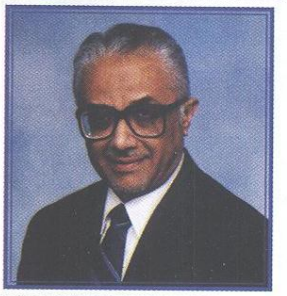
This is a serious issue which touches a large number of families in the community. It has a respectable solution which has not yet been pressed within the parameter of our traditions. Traditions in the past have changed and can still change further for a good cause if trust is placed and the vision is sharpened with courage - such courage as is a credit to any leadership.

Let us all rise to the need for ensuring fairness to all daughters in devising **"chaperoned opportunities"** for them to show not only their appearance from a distance but also their charm which can make appearance a secondary merit.



Thirty years ago, tens of thousands of Ugandan Asians were frantically packing their bags to beat Idi Amin's deadline for them to leave the country. The Ugandan military ruler told the country's approximately 60,000 Asians to leave and on 26th August 1972 gave them until 9th November to pack up and go. The vast majority did, leaving behind most of their wealth and possessions. But over the years the settlement of the Ugandan Asians and their work, wherever they have settled has helped create a "shining example" to others of how a community that was dispossessed can build their lives with hard work and devoting -Atypical example of East African Asians-.

One such personality whom I met recently, Alhaj Akberali Rajmohamed Soonasra - A Ugandan Refugee, reminisces about his hasty departure from Uganda and settlement in USA. (Editor)



Tell us about yourself:

I was born in Uganda in 1931. My parents migrated from India to Uganda in 1921. I went back to India to complete my education. After completing my education, I got married and returned to Uganda with my wife. Upon returning to Uganda, I opened a small general merchandise store in town called Jeza. After a few years, I moved to another town called Masindi, where I opened another general merchandise store which I operated until I left Uganda in the exodus of 1972. My whole family lived in Masindi as well.

Community Affiliations

In Uganda, I was involved with the Jami-ul-Muslimeen Anjuman, an organization of Muslim communities in Uganda. I also served as the Zaakir for our Jamaat, the Khoja Shi'a Ithna Asheri Jamaat of Masindi until we were able to have a resident Aalim. In addition, I was a member of the Lion's Club and participated in local sports.

Recollection as a Refugee:

I left Uganda in November 1972, after Idi Amin gave his orders for all Asians to leave Uganda within a period of ninety days. Initially, his orders were for only the British passport holders to leave the country. Uganda had a total Indian population of about 60,000. Out of these, roughly half were British Subjects. The rest were citizens of Uganda. Virtually all the Indians were major business owners and thus were an integral part of the overall economy of Uganda. When Amin realized that there would be at least 30,000 Indians remaining after the British passport holders were gone, he ordered a "census" of all these Indians. When the Indians reported for the census, those that were Ugandan citizens had their legal papers revoked rendering them stateless. The other Indians had restrictions placed on them making it virtually impossible to live in Uganda. In retrospect, this so called "census" was just a means for Amin to insure that no Indians would be left in Uganda.

Idi Amin was man who had risen through ranks in the Ugandan Army. In January 1971 he overthrew Obote. In June of 1972, Upon returning from his trip, his first order was to expel the Israelis and the British from Uganda in a matter of weeks. It was during the 90-day period, that he also ordered all Indians to deposit all their gold jewelry in the nearest bank. He stated

that the army will conduct searches of the homes of all Indians to insure that they complied with this order. So I, along with all the other Indians, deposited our jewelry in the bank. Shortly afterwards, Amin nationalized all the banks.

I, along with my family, had built a complete life in Uganda. Just as many other Indians who had built a new life away from the Indian subcontinent. To see your entire legacy slipping away was devastating. A nightmare that I cannot forget. Needless to say, our family was doing quite well. And all these successes were beginning to crumble in front of my very eyes.

The situation in Uganda was not the best for Indians in general during this 90-day period. It was very tormenting for the Indian community as a whole. Earlier I had sent away my daughters to Ethiopia While my daughters were away, I began the process of determining where I would go after leaving Uganda. Masindi was about 130 miles from Kampala, Uganda's capital. Since all the arrangements were being made in Kampala, I was making two to three trips a week to Kampala to determine where we would go. I went to the British Embassy and was denied passage to England since I had renounced my British passport to obtain Ugandan citizenship. Sadly no Muslim countries came to assist us!

The 90-day deadline date of November 9 was approaching fast and we still had no where to go. Members of the Red Cross began going house to house in Kampala urging the Indians to begin preparing to leave. With virtually no other choices left. During the final days, we transferred the property ownership for everything that we owned to our two truck drivers who were with us for years. We left Uganda for the last time on November 7, 1972 (27th of Ramadhan 1392 A.H.) two short days before the deadline after which, according to Amin, any Indian remaining would be sitting on fire alive!

The Red Cross made all the arrangements for our departure from Uganda and we arrived in Rome, Italy. After arriving in Rome and contacted my daughters in Ethiopia who were shocked to hear we were in Rome! We were housed in a hotel and arranged for a sight-seeing trip of Rome, including a meeting with Pope Paul VI. After spending nine days we were sent to refugee camp in Naples. Families were housed together in rooms as best with basic amenities. In the cold weather that at times was unbearable we were provided with warm clothing as well. The local Italian community was quite helpful to all of us. It was an experience that is difficult to describe being so suddenly in a totally different country!

Religious Activities

One key practice that we maintained while in Rome and in Naples was observing the Thursday night prayers of Dua-e-Kumail, Sura-e-Yaasin, Majlis and Ziarat-e-Waritha. In addition, observing the Wiladat and Shahadat of the Holy Personalities of Islam was also maintained. I am thoroughly convinced that it was these prayers and the Azadari that we held on to that helped us in many ways. While in the camp, families were provided with forms to list where they would like to go for permanent settlement. I listed the United States as my first choice and Canada as my second. After very lengthy interview process, we were authorized to settle in the United States. We were to be with our sponsors though most of were church based organizations within the United States. My whole family were sponsored through the refugee resettlement agency of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). We were told that we would be going to a state called Pennsylvania and depending on which church sponsored us, we would go either to a city called Pittsburgh or Allentown. We were sponsored by St. John's Lutheran Church in Allentown.

New Life

It would be here that we would start our lives all over again. We left Uganda with sixty pounds of luggage per person and $112 per family. When it was time for us leave Italy for the United States, we did not even have the airfare for this journey.! The LWF subsidized the cost by paying fifty percent of the cost and the remaining fifty percent would have to be repaid by us over the course of three years.

We arrived in New York's Kennedy Airport on December 19, 1972. After the usual formalities, we were greeted by about twenty members of the church that had sponsored us. They greeted us as if we were the long-lost family members who were finally returning home. My father and the family were overwhelmed. These fine people handled our luggage and took us to a big luxury bus which they had rented to take us home to Allentown.

Arrival in Allentown USA:

We arrived late at night in Cold and snowy! Allentown. Our hosts handled were very kind to us and offered

us a large house where our whole family was accommodated. We noticed that the kitchen area were full of all kinds of food. Even more surprising was that most of the food was items that were consumed by Indians such as dal, moong flour for chapatti as well as all the different spices. When our sponsors came later in the morning, I asked them about the food items and they knew what we were included in our diet. They told us that when they realized that the families being sponsored were Indians, they contacted the India Association of Lehigh Valley (IALV). Allentown is located in an area known as the Lehigh Valley. IALV consisted of individuals & families who were living in the Lehigh Valley area who were students at local universities or who had migrated here from India. Our sponsors discussed our situation with them and inquired about the type of food Indians ate. Based on this information, they were able to buy quite a bit of ethnic Indian food. We were truly touched by the sensitivity of our sponsors Jazakallah…

Pastor received us:

A week later was Christmas. The Pastor of the church requested that on Christmas day, they would like both our families to come to one of the church services as the entire church congregation wanted to see and meet us. He further clarified that if we felt uncomfortable going to a church, we would not be obligated to attend the service. We decided to attend the service. During the course of their service, the Pastor stopped his sermon and recognized our families. We were all asked to stand and the entire congregation gave us a standing ovation. At the end of the service, we were told to stand by the church entrance. As each member of the congregation prepared to leave the church, he or she would shake the hand of every member of our families and they all warmly welcomed us to their town. Shortly after the Christmas & New Year holidays, our sponsors got together with us and told us that if we needed monetary support, the National Lutheran Organization would be able to assist. The U.S. Lutheran Church Organization, which was headquartered in Chicago, consisted of over 3.2 million people. Our sponsors told us that if 50% of the population of this organization gave $1 towards our families, we would have well over a million dollars. We graciously expressed our gratitude for this overture. However, I told them that they should help us find a job so that we can become self-sufficient.

Settling down:

After the New Year's holiday, our sponsors made arrangements to find jobs for us. Some of the members of our sponsors worked for Western Electric, a large electronic manufacturing company. This company had developed the first transistor and was connected to Bell Laboratories. I found a job in the manufacturing divisions and was trained for the job later on. It was difficult to see that, I was used to operating my own business in Uganda. Now I was working to earn a living. The most difficult part of the job was I worked the third shift, which began at 11:30 pm at night to 8:00 am in the morning. Working these odd hours was a big challenge for all of us. It was particularly difficult during the winter months when we had to walk in the cold weather to go to work. In addition, the eldest of my four daughters was able to get a job and helped me support the entire family and slowly with Allah's help gradually we began to establish ourselves. I worked in Allentown companies for 21 years retiring in 1994.

Our children were placed in schools in the appropriate grades. Since they were not completely familiar with the school bus transportation system, the sponsors arranged to drop off and pickup the children from school everyday for about two weeks. We became members of the IALV to help us get better acclimated with our new surroundings. This task was simplified as we were associating with people of our own ethnic origins.

There were no halal meat shops so finding halal meat was a challenge. I then met a Muslim brother who worked at Western Electric who used to go to a local farm to do his own zabiha. Through him, we were finally able to get some halal meat. Until then, our families had become devout vegetarians.

Getting used to the weather and a whole new way of life was a big challenge for all of us. Three months after our arrival in Allentown, I requested our sponsors to help us find our own place to live as we were will still living in the church provided home. I opted to purchase a home Since I did not have any credit and had just gotten a new job, the bank was reluctant to give me mortgage.

Once again, our sponsors came to the rescue. They actually co-signed for the loan guaranteeing the bank that if I failed in making the monthly payments, they would be responsible then. But thanks to the Almighty, they did not have to make even one payment on my behalf.

AZADARI is our cornerstone:

When we left Uganda, I was able to bring some of my religious and majlis books with me. We held regular majlises in our house and Thursdays was no exception. Two of these families had come from Uganda and the third family had migrated from Tanzania. During Muharram, families who lived in the surrounding cities would also join us for the majlises. Since our house was not big enough to accommodate everyone, we requested our sponsors to help us in getting a hall for the holy nights when people from out of town came. The church obliged and gave us gratis.

"Each teach one"

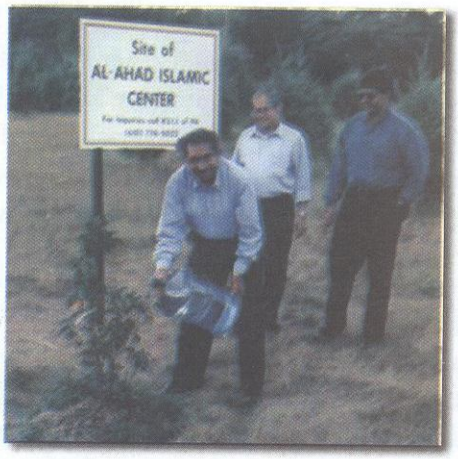
We also started to hold religious classes for the children. The classes were initially held in an apartment of a couple who graciously allowed their apartment to be used as a madressa. Some of the elder learned members of the Jamaat taught to the older children during the first part of the madressa time. During the second half of the madressa time, these elder children would teach to the younger children of the Jamaat. These way children of all ages were accommodated according to their age group.

Formation of Jamaat:

After a year in Allentown, we all got together and decided to form a Jamaat. We discussed our ideas with our sponsors who helped us with registering the Jamaat as a non-profit organization with the State of Pennsylvania and with the federal government. On March 26, 1974, we officially held the first formal meeting of the Shi'a Ithna Asheri Jamaat of Pennsylvania (SIJPA). I had the honor of serving as the first President of the Jamaat. My father advised me that the Jamaat should look into purchasing a graveyard as death may come upon anyone at anytime. Without many resources, we once again turned to our sponsors for help. Through their contacts and efforts, we were advised of availability of land in a cemetery. The purchase of graves would be in lots of ten graves with each grave costing $50 for a total of $500. The Jamaat at that time had less than $75 in its account. Once more, our sponsors came to our rescue. They co-signed for us for the purchase of the ten graves, in the instance the Jamaat fails to make payments. By the Grace of the Almighty, we were able to make the entire payment not too long after the purchase.

In February 1975, on very cold and snowy day, my father breathed his last breath. This was by far the saddest day in my life. There was so much snow the day he passed away, that a grave was not able to be dug. After many pleas from me, the cemetery people were able to clear the snow and dig the grave. My father was the first person buried in the graveyard whose site he himself had chosen. Fourteen months after my father's death, my beloved mother also passed away. It was at this time I realized my father's farsighted advice of purchasing our own cemetery. I did not expect that my parents would be the first people to be buried on our cemetery.

Allentown community:



AF Chairman Mohamedbhai Dhirani watering trees planted on the new land purchased for building the Al-Ahad Islamic Center in Allentown. With him are Abdulrasul Khalfan and Shabbir Baker.

Over the next several years, the community in Allentown was slowly growing. Families from New York, Louisiana as well as East Africa moved to Allentown. As our community grew, one family decided to fix the basement of their home and made it into a Mehfil. All majlises were held at the Mehfil. With an established Jamaat and a proper place for holding all the religious functions became known, more people continued to migrate to Allentown. With the continued growth, the Jamaat began to look for a bigger place to hold the religious programs. We found a very nice hall. However, during the council hearing held for the approval of the sale of the hall, several of the neighbors objected to the hall being sold to be used a place of worship. As a result, we were not able to get the first hall. The story of this hearing appeared in the local newspaper, including the approval that was denied. This story was read by the congregation of Jehovah's Witness Church. Their leaders contacted us and informed us that their place of worship was for sale as they were moving to another facility. Our community went to see the place and approved of

it. It was purchased in 1981 and became our place of worship.With the renovations, we were able to accommodate many more people. However, with time it was becoming this hall was becoming too small to accommodate the growing Jamaat population.
In 2000, the Jamaat purchased a large tract of land with the intention of building an Islamic Center. Construction of the building began in early 2001 named Al Ahad Islamic Center. The official opening of the Center was held in May 2003, during the celebration of the birth anniversary of our Holy Prophet (PBUH & HF). This was truly a remarkable feat for our Jamaat. Never in my dreams did I expect to see such a beautiful Islamic Center in my lifetime in Allentown. The Center is purpose built and reflects a true Islamic centre .The Jamaat in Allentown continues to grow. The rate of growth is slower now than it was during the eighties when we had a significant growth.

The American Dream

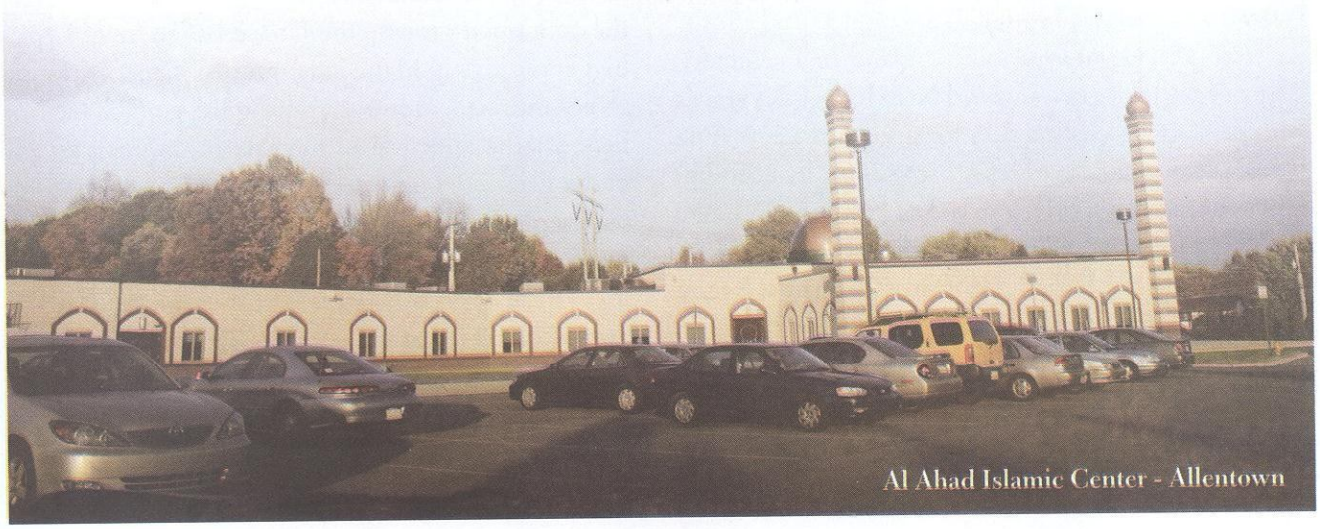
I became a citizen of the United States in 1980. I cannot describe my exact feeling when I was taking the oath of citizenship. I felt as if I was finally becoming part of the quilt that is the American Society. I use the example of a quilt because it is made of several pieces of cloth that are sewn together. Each piece is unique, yet part of the whole. Our case is essentially the same. Never were we asked to abandon our religion or our heritage when we first came to America. We still maintain our religion, our culture but we are still an integral part of the American Society. When we lost everything, it was this country that helped us out. And in virtually every major hurdle we faced, whether as a family or as the Jamaat, it was this society and its members that helped us overcome these hurdles. I cannot say "thank you" enough, especially to our sponsors. After thirty-seven years, our sponsors have not forgotten us nor have we forgotten them.

America:

A country which I now call home. I look back and I see how far we have come, not only as a family but as community. The help and opportunities provided to get us from where we were to where we are now cannot be understood by many. I have no regrets of coming to America. America opened her arms and warmly welcomed us. She took care of us in our time of greatest dire straits. We were accorded free educated us, enabled us to earn a decent living and has helped in the growth of our community without having to lose our identity.

Uganda memories of the past:

What do I remember about Uganda? There is so much to remember and so much to forget. I certainly remember the beautiful climate, the fresh fruits and vegetables. The country with its lush forests and flowing rivers - home to some of the greatest wild life in Africa. The serene lifestyle. Many have turned into successful businessmen and women, leading to the Ugandan Asian resettlement being seen as one of the most successful resettlement ever. After losing everything in 1972, I have built a whole new life in the Unites States. I would hesitate to settle in Uganda again... America is my home. Though I would love to visit Uganda to see my small town. I would love to go and see who is working in the store that I had built. In fact, again I do not see myself or my family leaving the United States to go to live anywhere else. US is my home. And I feel proud to be a American.!



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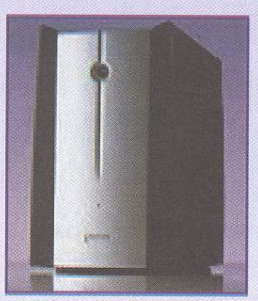

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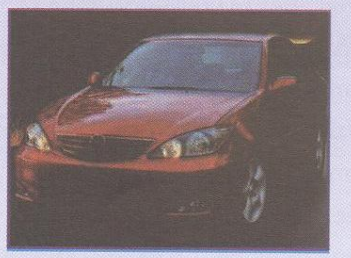

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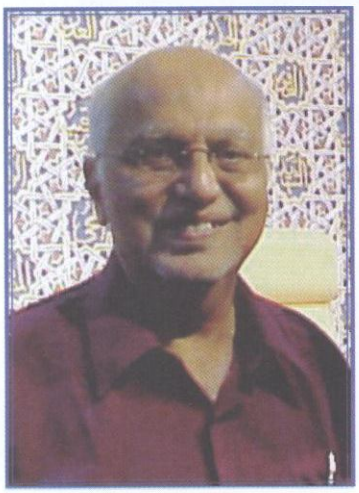


Nisar Hussein Sheraly (Ndege)
who passed away in Toronto,
on Tuesday 09th February 2010, 24 Safar 1431
and was buried on Wednesday 10th Feb 2010,
at York Cemetery on Senlac Road.
Marhum was also popularly known amongst
his old friends as "Georgy".

Brief biography of the Marhum:

Marhum Nisar Sheraly (Ndege) was born in Zanzibar, Tanzania. From his earliest days, Nisar showed a talent for writing and a keen interest in stories and poetry. At the early age of nine years, he wrote his first story, going on to write poems in Grade 9 that were highly regarded by his teachers. He studied in Sierra Leone, West Africa achieving his first BA (University of Durham) in 1968.

Coming to Canada in 1974, he worked as an A/V technician whilst taking additional courses in media and working on his second degree, a Masters in Education and Bachelor of Education from the University of Toronto and with a specialist qualification in Media. Not surprisingly, Marhum Nisar was hired to teach English, Media and Photography at a High School in Markham, with the York Region District School Board in 1988, where even after his retirement, he continued to work from time to time.

This dynamic and creative individual, whose many qualities and achievements put the rest of us to shame, continues to give of himself to his community in a wide variety of ways. He has been a school principal, chaired Multicultural and Race Committees, presented workshops around the globe - in North America, the United Kingdom, the European Union, East Africa, India and Pakistan.

He is also the author of several children's books. He loves to relate the Folktales of Zanzibar, while at the same time drawing the Anansi stories from his repertoire. One of his famous publications include "Who Will Be the Next King Of The Jungle?" and "The Cunning Hare", published in English & Swahili.

Winner of many awards in his journey, Marhum had also been given the Educator Excellence Award for 2007 on South Asian Heritage Day in Markham. Other awards include, Canada Day Achievement Award (for promotion of multiculturalism - a cause so very close to Marhum's heart), an Ontario Government Volunteer Award and the Mulla Asghar Memorial Award for Excellence in Education.

With this rich background and his desire to continue to serve his community, Marhum Nisar Sheraly was appointed to the Richmond Hill Public Library Board. The community has indeed lost an effective educationist. Mumineen are requested to remember the Marhum in their prayers and Sura Al Fateha.

Mr. Mohamedhussein M. D. Kermali (Bha Mamdu)

A kind, gentle and humorous person. He was born in 1915 Zanzibar. He settled in Arusha in June 1968. He had a flair of leadership qualities and was elected as a Chairman of Kilimeru Gymkhana in 1968. An enthusiastic Tennis and at times Cricket player. He held the post of the Chairman until 1978. He was also elected as a Chairman of the Arusha Cricket Association.

In 1969 he was appointed as Vice Chairman of the Arusha Chamber of Commerce. He became the Chairman of Arusha Jamaat in 1969 -1971 and he served in different committees for many years…

His guidance and wisdom has helped many in the community. He was nominated as an Executive Councilor by the Chairman of the Supreme Council in 1980. During his term he has represented the Chairman of the council in visiting various Jamaat in Tanzania. He visited Tanga, Singida and Morogoro and also represented the Chairman during the merger talks between two Jamaats in Zanzibar.

As a senior and active member of the Jamaat. He became the first Governor of Golden Crescent Group in 1976 and that is where I met him and I was captivated by his vision for the training of leaders in our community:

Indeed many leaders have been inspired by him. His wit and humour far outweighed hi serious demeanor and in meetings he was a focus of attention with his witty remarks that enlivened the participants.

The last time was about 4 years ago that I met him in my eye clinic and he was quite alert and energetic and when asked what his age was? He quipped: 45-46! (91)! A remarkable wit and humour was still is quality at he age of 90+. All who knew him, and for whose lives he touched with his sense of humour and kindness will sadly miss him. (Editor).

Marhum Jaffer Hussein Visram, Mombasa

Chairman Africa Federation Tabligh Board {AFTAB}) who passed away in Mombasa on Tuesday 11th August 2009 19th Shabaan 1430. Jaffer was a very active member of AFTAB and was a regular participant in meetings of AF. Mumineen are requested to remember the Marhum in their prayers.

Marhum Shakir Moledina

He became the chairman of Arusha Jamaat in 1979 to 1982.

In his time he has been able to improve the facility for performing ablution in the mosque and also extending the security wall around the Mosque.

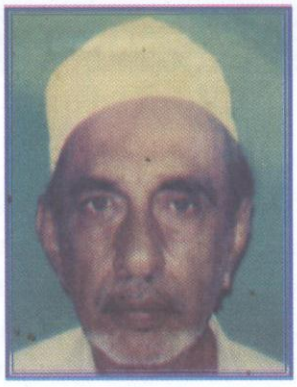
During his term of office he had the privilege to host the 37th council Meeting in 1979 at Arusha school and 39th council Meeting in 1981 at The Arusha International conference center.

He also served as a chairman of Stanmore Jamaat.

Mr Shakir Moledina died in London in 2009

May Allah rest his soul. AMIN!

Marhum Hussein Mohamed Wali Dharsee (Hussein Tazia)



Originally from Zanzibar, who looked after Tazia Khana in Zanzibar. Marhum's recitation of Nauhas and Marshiyas would captivate the listeners heart.

He died in Dar es Salaam on 20th January 2010 at the age of 77.

Please recite sura e Fatiha.

World Federation Autistic Day Care Centre (WFADCC)

The World Federation Autistic Day Care Centre receives state of the art Minibus On 31 January 2010, Mr. Zulfiqar Rajwani and Mr. Shakeel Jaffer presented Dr Zulfiqar G Abbas, Managing Trustee of The World Federation Autistic Day Care Centre (WFADCC) with a fully air-conditioned, automatic 23 seat Coaster Minibus. This will alleviate several transportation issues for the students attending WFADCC as several did not have adequate means to get to and from the centre. The minibus will also make it easier for the children to attend swimming classes and plan field trips.

The World Federation would like to thank Mr. Shakeel Jaffer for providing the bus at cost price and Mr. Amin Valji and Beta Charitable Trust for facilitating and liaising with various donors to raise the required funds.

ABOUT THE CENTRE

The WFADCC was established on 19 February 2006, the first of its kind in the whole of East Africa. The centre's mandate is to support children with disabilities such as Autism, Down's syndrome, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and other learning and developmental disabilities by providing a daily programme that combines therapy and academic education. Amongst the centre's goals are to increase child autonomy, create awareness about disabilities, and break the barriers of discrimination and stigma against children with developmental, intellectual and physical disabilities.

The WFADCC provides children with the right to academic education, social involvement and skill development that is necessary to integrate into the larger realm of society.

STUDENT PROGRAMME:

There are 25 children who are benefitting from the state of the art services provided by WFADCC. Upon arrival to the centre, the children are given a complete occupational therapy (OT) assessment that evaluates their strengths, physical and cognitive deficits, behaviour, academic skills, and developmental stage. WFADCC adopts a holistic, family-centred approach, involving the family in all decision making matters that involve the child. After the initial assessment is complete, the child and family determine the child's goals with assistance from the WFADCC staff. The staff then works towards achieving those goals. This individualized therapy allows the child to progress at his or her own pace. The progress of the child is assessed routinely. The teachers assess the children on a monthly basis, and the OT performs a routine evaluation every three months.

WFADCC SUCCESS STORY:

All students have shown immense progress and improvement. For example, one student who joined at the age of seven had not been to any school before and had serious behaviour issues, needing assistance in toilet training, eating habits, and social & other obsessive behaviours. Within six months of joining the centre the student showed dramatic improvement. Dr Munir M Datoo, Assistant Secretary General of Health stated 'This is a great achievement for the WFADCC and am grateful to all the donors who have contributed towards the purchase of the Minibus. The centre will now be able to cater for even more children, who were not able to attend the centre because of the distance'

The World Federation attends Muslim Charities Forum Workshop on Zakaat

On 4 November 2009, The World Federation, represented by the Assistant Secretary General for Islamic Education, Shaykh Abbas Ismail and the NGO manager Imran Janmohamed, attended a workshop organised by the Muslim Charities Forum. The focus of the workshop was to find a common view for the understanding of Zakaat between several organisations working in relief and international development. The workshop was held in central London, UK, at the headquarters Islamic Relief UK. The Muslim Charities Forum (MCF) is a newly formed umbrella organisation of UK based Muslim charities whose goal is to provide humanitarian aid and assistance to the poorest and most vulnerable people around the world. Several organisations such as Human Appeal International, Human Relief Foundation, Muslim Hands and Islamic Relief and Ummah Welfare Trust were present.

Br. Abdul Rajab Ali, the Deputy Manager of Islamic Relief UK welcomed the delegates to their offices. This was followed by a short presentation by Rianne Tanveen, from Islamic Relief WorldWide, on the importance of Zakaat highlighting the fact that there was need for shared understanding on the concept. The Chairman of the Muslim Charities Forum, Dr Hany El Banna OBE began the day by welcoming the delegates from the different organisations for attending the workshop, while the Coordinator of the MCF, Abdulrahman Shariff presented the Agenda for the day.

This was followed by a brief discussion by the delegates from the various organisations on their thoughts and views, and how they wished to conduct the discussions. Shaykh Abbas highlighted the key differences between Zakaat and Khums within the Shi'a perspective, and how the system of Marjaiyyah and Khums can offer such immense potential for work to be undertaken due to the Marja's excellent awareness of issues in the global Shi'a community and his determination to empower communities with relevant resources. He stated that it was the ultimate authority of scholars like Ayatullah Sistani to collect the Khums and use it for worthy projects, or by his trusted wakeels, who had the ability to use the funds based on Ayatullah Sistani's guidance.

The day followed by two small group discussions which covered areas such as the intricacies of Zakaat and other charitable giving, definitions of the recipients of Zakaat, the scope of the expenditures of Zakaat and the administrative costs. One key element of the discussions was on the use of administration costs from Zakaat (or any other charitable giving). In one of the groups, a poll of the 6 large and small NGOs was held. The results showed that 5 of 6 charged administration costs between 7 – 15 %, or project based costs which can sometimes be up to 50 %. One of the charities did not charge any administration cost; however, they were able to recover their admin costs from other sources such as charity shops.

The workshop concluded with a consensus that further sessions were need with scholars and delegates on the concept of Zakaat and to provide a general narrative on the general understanding of Zakaat and other charitable giving and its uses.

Shaykh Abbas Ismail said, "This was an excellent workshop where The World Federation was recognised as a key Muslim organisation that could add value to the agenda through its experience. We were able to communicate some of our best practices and highlight the strengths around Khums and Marjaiyyah. It was also interesting to hear the challenges faced by other organisations and how they deal with them. We realised that to have the guidance of Ayatullah Sistani that is based on piety and justice is a great bounty indeed."

Youths Excel

Ali Salim

HELP University College is delighted to announce that Ali Salim Alimohamed, a student in the Help Matriculation Centre (HMC) has been awarded the highest student achiever for the year 2008 in Diploma year 1.

Furthermore, he has also been awarded by the Business Department for scoring the highest marks in the year 2009 for Diploma year 2.

Ali is currently studying in Malaysia and intends to further his studies in the field of Accounting and Finance.

Mohsin A. Khalfan

From Al Muntazir Secondary School in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania journey to Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, USA as an undergraduate student in Business Administration from 2002 for higher learning.

After two years at Kutztown University, he transferred on to a renowned business school, Rutgers University in New Jersey, USA. He graduated with B. Sc. degree in Business Management and Economics in May 2006.

Mohsin worked as Business Development Manager for UNIGLOBE Skylink Travel & Tours Ltd. in Dar es Salaam for two years, gained good experience in the Travel Industry and moved to New York in 2008. He is grateful to Mr. Moustafa Khataw, the Director of UNIGLOBE Skylink Travel & Tours of Dar es Salaam for the opportunity to work in the company and being his mentor at work.

Mohsin from his childhood enjoys challenges and is prepared to venture in new avenues, as always, looking for new opportunities. He established Tanzania's first online recruitment agency *'SimplyHired'* in 2007, and is currently managed by his partner.

Mohsin is a keen sportsman, enjoys the game of squash and was the captain of Rutgers Squash Club where he represented the team in the national tournament in USA. He was also the squash captain in Union Sports Club, Dar es Salaam, until he migrated to USA.

In Association with UNIGLOBE Skylink, Mohsin took over an established Travel Agency based in New York, USA, Skyline Travel Inc. Skyline Travel Inc. has been in business since 1981 and with the experience he gained from his previous employment, he plans to expand the business to attract a wider target in the North American market and promote Tanzania Safaris, which offers endless opportunities.

Mohsin has the following motto; he says - *"We have the resources, **knowledge and experience**. Our vision is to offer **business solutions** that work efficiently and economically for everyone."*

Website: www.skylinetvl.com & www.skylinesafaris.com

He can be contacted by email: INFO@SKYLINETVL.COM

ENGINEERING INTERNS GET INNOVATIVE

Solar panels have gone intelligent. Think of one which comes with a Solar Tracker, a device that follows the movement of the sun, allowing a maximum amount of light to fall on the panels and increase its yield by 30 to 60 percent. The tracker is the brainchild of our very own community member, INTI University College engineering student Imran Mohammed Jaffer, together with a group of his colleagues. Together they recently interned at Ricoh (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd.

Consisting of a motor, light dependent resistor, control unit, battery, switch and solar panels, the tracker is compact and cost-effective. It comes with a Solar Switch invented by fellow students. The switch is a controller that automatically selects between alternating current and solar power depending on the intensity of sunlight. This effectively reduces the amount of electricity needed to power appliances.

Setting off on their solar projects with minimum instructions from their supervisors, the interns were given the bare essentials to come up with their inventions. They had to conduct their own research and draw on their knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom and through experience. Many a time, improvisation was required when their tools were inadequate or unsuitable for the task. The students' stints as interns went beyond technical knowledge and practical innovations. "They adapted quickly to the working environment at Ricoh, and were quick to learn," said Ricoh Malaysia managing director Lim Eng Weng.

Congratulations to Imran on this wonderful achievement!

AF Education News

BASELINE SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Among the Terms of reference of the Africa Federation Education Board is to assist educational institutions under member Jamaats to achieve stipulated objectives.

Mr. Terrence Ward

The Baseline School Assessment was conducted by Mr. Terrence Ward, an Education Advisor with immense experience in different education levels within different schools across the world. Among the schools that participated and visited by the consultant were Mombasa, Nairobi and Arusha.

The Specific tasks outlined for this visit were:-

- To evaluate the assistance that needs to be extended to the schools in order to help them to continue to raise the quality of the education they deliver.
- Mr. Terrence Ward conducting an in-service training to School Teachers
- To recommend to each board possible courses of action they can take to consolidate and develop the educational support they are currently giving.

The Board of each school visited was given a confidential report about the perceived state of quality of teaching and learning observed. The report included some recommendations that might help their development and which the schools have been asked to consider.

Matters of the heart

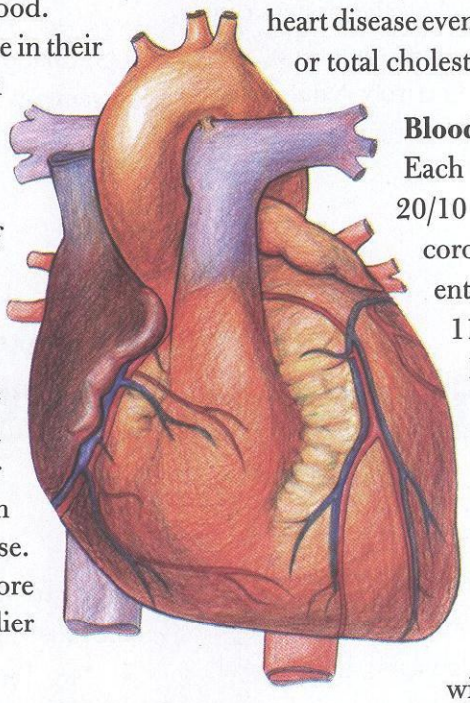
The causes of heart disease are complex. Busting some myths.

Keeping fit: Make an early start. It's always about the heart! Anything remotely related to it has never been spared of speculation and debates. But there is a thin line that separates the myths from the facts.

Myth 1: Heart disease affects only the old/middle aged.

Many people think that heart disease as a problem of middle and older age, because that's when the manifestations of heart disease, such as angina and heart attack strike. Although the manifestations of coronary artery disease typically occur during the middle and later years of life, the roots of coronary artery disease lie early in life- in childhood.

Heart attacks can even happen to people in their 20's and 30's, from unusually high cholesterol levels that are hereditary. High paced, stressful lifestyles with irregular eating habits and lack of exercise are one of the causes of coronary artery disease striking early. Adopting a healthy lifestyle early in life works much better than changing one's lifestyle later in life. Ideally one should have their cholesterol and blood pressure levels checked in their 30's and 40's, which, if too high, can be early indicators of a heart disease. Moreover, Indians are genetically more prone to and suffer heart disease earlier than their western counterparts.



Myth 2: Heart disease doesn't really affect women

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in women older than 40, especially after menopause. Loss of estrogen is a significant cause of heart disease after menopause and therefore the risk for heart disease increases after the age of 50 for women. There are also some unchangeable factors like family history which make one more prone to heart disease. Lifestyle plays a crucial role. Smoking and fatal heart diseases go hand-in-hand. If a woman smokes, she increases her risk for early heart disease. There are some differences, though, in how heart disease affects men and women. For instance, women usually get heart disease 10 years later than men, but they have a lower chance of surviving a heart attack than men. They are also more likely to have a second heart attack compared to men.

Some interesting and educational facts about heart related problems:

Cholesterol deposition in blood vessels begins in the first decade of life. So, good eating habits and regular physical activity should be inculcated from early childhood if coronary heart disease is to be prevented.

One third of patients with coronary heart disease have normal cholesterol levels. Low levels of good cholesterol (HDL cholesterol) increases risk of heart disease even if level of bad (LDL cholesterol) or total cholesterol is normal.

Blood Pressure

Each blood pressure increment of 20/10 mmHg doubles the risk of coronary heart disease across the entire BP range starting from 115/75 mmHg.

High blood pressure originally thought to be a normal occurrence with increasing age is a misconception. Increased blood pressure is harmful irrespective of the person's age.

Risk of heart attack in diabetics with no prior heart attack is similar to non diabetics with prior heart attack.

Risk of heart disease in "mild" smokers is almost as high as "heavy" smokers. So, for risk reduction smoking should be completely stopped and not merely reduced. "Physical inactivity" or lack of regular physical exercise is as important and as harmful a risk factor as high blood pressure or diabetes. Regular physical activity is the best preventive effort for coronary heart disease as it prevents all its risk factors.

Clinical benefits of blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol reduction are similar irrespective of the treatment modality chosen.

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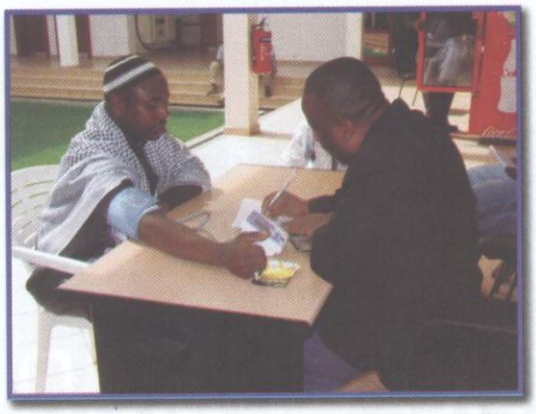
BILAL MUSLIM MISSION MWANZA BRANCH

Blood Donation Day

In order to commemorate the great Martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS) The Bilal Muslim Mission Of Tanzania (Mwanza Branch) organized a blood donation day on 9th Muharram 1431 (Sat 26th December 2009).

Total 27 members participated and the officer in charge of the NATIONAL BLOOD IN MWANZA thanked the BILAL (MZA) BRANCH and the donors for their generosity by donating 27 bottles of blood to bank which will be used to save lives of many Tanzanians.



Wheelchair Donation

On Tuesday 21st February a tricycle was handed over to Mrs Ester Masubo (75 years) of Capripoint Hesawa area and the event was witnessed by the councillor of the area Hon. Bhiku Kotecha, the neighbours and the family of the recipient.

The recipient, the family members and the local leaders of the area thanked the donars of the tricycle as now it will enable Mrs Ester to go to church, visit friends and family and will able to go out for fresh air as previously she was house ridden.

BILAL MUSLIM MISSION TANGA BRANCH

28th Safar Procession on the Wafat of Holy Prophet (SAWW) from Duga Maforoni Centre

Duga Centre of Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania, Tanga Region organized the procession on the day of 28th Safar, 1431 AH to commemorate the wafat / death anniversary of our Last Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (SAWW). The procession was led by the Sheikh, Ulemas and leaders of the community. It was attended by the momineen from the various centres of Bilal Muslim Mission and other shi'a institutes. Various banners were displayed on the route of procession. To propagate the message of Islam and Ahlul Bait different Islamic articles and messages were distributed to the general public while the procession was proceeding from different places. Speeches were delivered. The procession started from Bilal Mosque, Duga towards Duga Police station passing on the highway towards Horohoro Boarder and returned on the same route and ended at Bilal Mosque.

Tabligh in Bosnia in 2009

The World Federation Bosnia desk has been very busy throughout 2009, conducting several Tabligh activities throughout the year. Below is a summary of some the various activities:

Radio Programmes Following a successful initial year of Tabligh programmes that were broadcast by The World Federation has continued of these excellent programmes. The content is presented in the Bosnian language in the format of questions and answers.

The Radio programmes in this period were based on the following books:

The Rights of Women in Islam by *Murtaza Mutahhari*

Ma'ad (The return) by *Murtaza Mutahhari* Muslim Teens: Today's Worry, Tomorrow's Hope *by Ekram Beshir*

Four other radio stations in towns of Mostar, Vogosca, Olovo and Lukavac are now broadcasting these programmes. CDs with copies of the programmes are copied and distributed to those brothers and sisters who cannot listen to the broadcasts.

Several programmes were held throughout the year at the centre. Attendance varied and there were between 10 and 60 guests at each programme. They came from the neighbouring towns and cities like Visoko, Breza, Ilijaš and Sarajevo.

Prayers were held after or before the main functions in the centre. In addition various discussions about different issues were held after the main programmes.

On 13 Rajab, Prof Esad Baji from Konjic, Shaikh Akber Eydi and Ertan Basarik, Prof Sayed Muhammad Javad Vaziri, Nermin Hodzic, Efendi Derviš Imamovi , Chorus "Ak Saraj" visited our centre to commemorate the birthday of Imam Ali (as).

Regular programmes were also held in Mahe Ramadhan. Food was prepared at the centre and Iftaar was held for everyone.

Our Muslim brothers and sisters in Bosnia commenced their Muharram programme on 17 December 2009 with Br. Hasnain Rajabali's lectures which he had delivered to Al-Amaan Jamaat of Sydney in 2006. On Ashura days mourners gathered at Sarajevo Husainiyya, where main lecture was delivered by Shaykh Akbar Eydi.

The youth

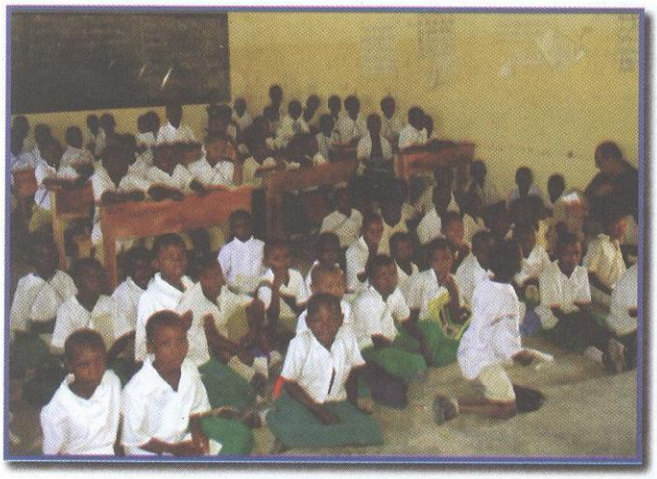
The centre is always open to the youth. Several have made their friends from attending the programmes. Some enjoy coming to the centre to study or complete homework while others enjoy the computer room. A table has also been set up for girls to work on sewing and tailoring. Feedback from our brothers and sisters in Bosnia has been enthusiastic. Comments include: "Your CDs have delighted me. May God reward you for your kindness" - Osman Guzina, USA "I cannot wait until Friday to come and listen to your excellent programmes.

Please keep up your good work!"

Munevera Dobraca, Sarajevo

URGENT DESK PROJECT APPEAL

In a surprise visit made on Thursday 11/2/10 in three Primary Schools in Nyanguge area in the Mwanza, this was the situation found that almost 50% of the children were sitting on the floor in the classrooms during school hours.



This surprise visit was done by Dr.Shiraz Datoo the Secretary General of **Can Aid Africa**, Mr. Sibtain Meghjee the representative in Tanzania of **The Desk and Chair Foundation** and Brother Elisha Hilal a student with St.Augustine University studying Mass communication.

During this visit it was also observed that the Teachers did not have staff rooms and instead they were using classrooms to do their work where as half built classes needed finishing like doors, windows and roofing only.

One classroom was found absolutely empty without a single piece of a desk!!

With these photographs attached that are self explanatory **The Desk and Chair Foundation** in collaboration with **Can Aid Africa** hereby appeal to all touched by this sad situation of our tomorrow Nation/Leaders to please contribute/sponsor desks for these little angels so that they can complete their primary education in a decent environment.

During this visit Dr.Shiraz Datoo could not resist to taste how it feels to study while sitting on the floor, hence he joined the effected students and sat with them for a while. All the way back to Mwanza he was complaining of pains in whole body, how are these children feeling sitting everyday on the floor for so many years?

The costs of one set of desk and chair single sitter is about 70000/= Tshs including transport from manufacturing site to the effected school.

The cost of one three sitter desk is 130000/= Tshs. including transport from manufacturing site to the effected school in the suburbs.

All are humbly requested to donate for the remembrance of their beloved ones,for themselves and their friends also.
One can also donate by involving groups of friends etc. say a group of five friends can donate one desk.

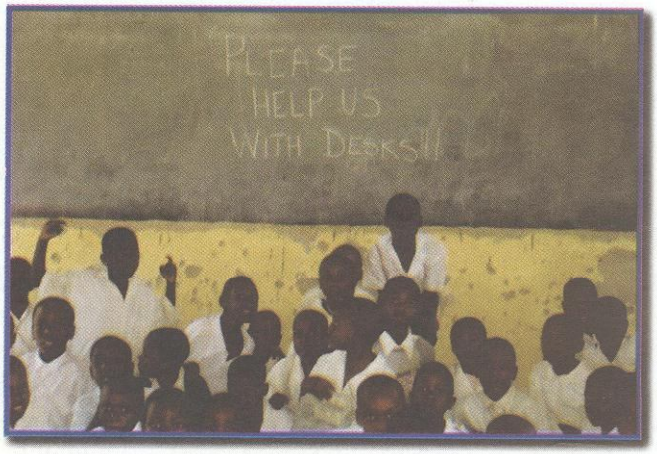
The names of the donars will be marked on the desks for those who wish to.

The Desk and Chair Foundation will plant two trees for every desk donated in order to compensate for the wood that will be used in every desk.

We intend to start with making 300 three sitter desks to start with and as now already we have funds from donors for 20 desks that will accommodate 60 children.

What is your contribution for our tomorrows Nation/ Leaders? Act now please so that we can reduce the pain and sufferings for our children!

For more information visit: www.tdcf.org.uk

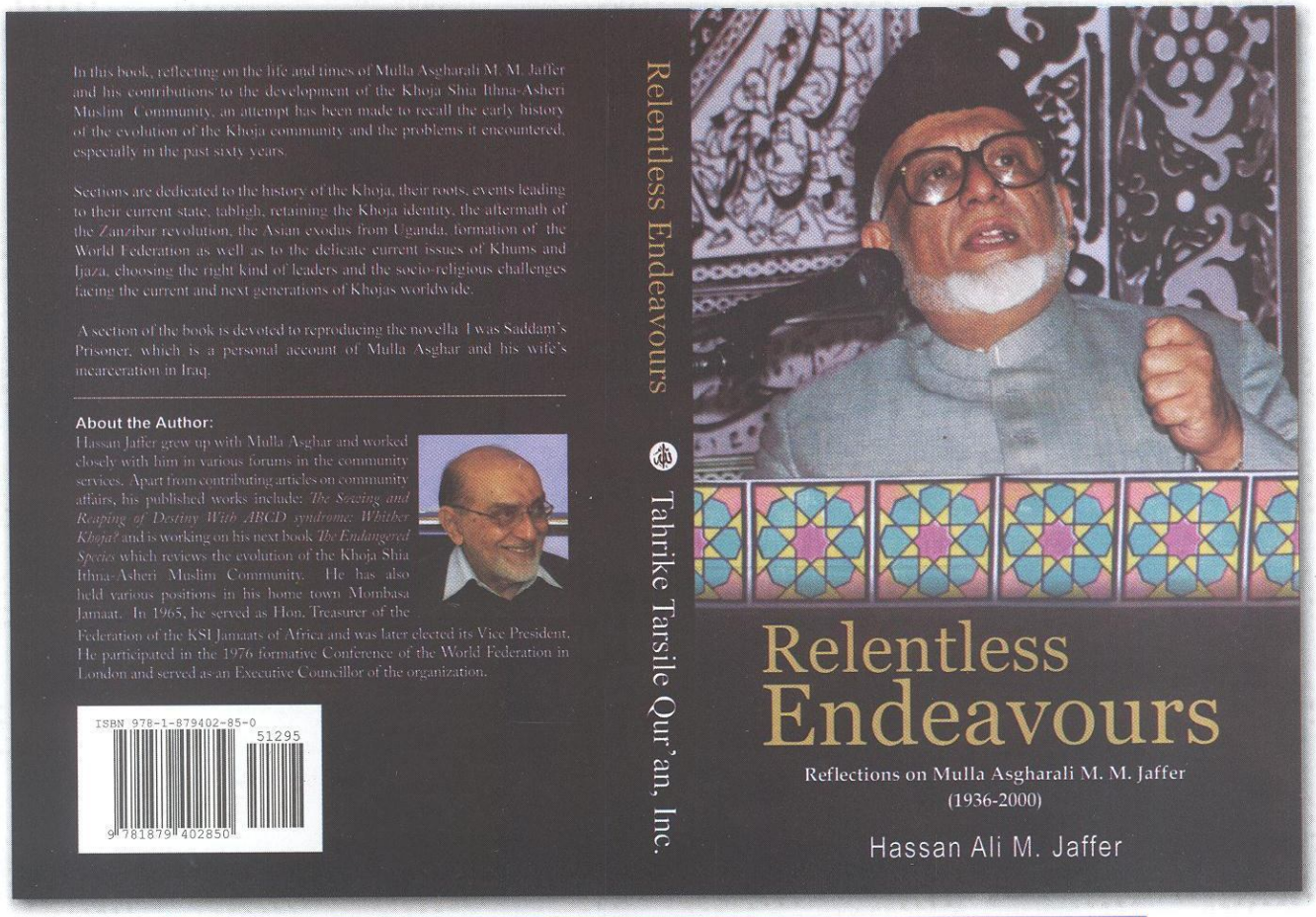


Relentless Endeavours

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

By: Hassan Ali M. Jaffer.

Published by: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., New York.



Mulla Asgharali M. M. Jaffer
(1936 - 2000)
Launched on 24th October, 2009 in Toronto
at the Grand Opening of the Magnificent
Mulla Asghar Memorial Library and Islamic Resource Centre
Serving as a Cultural Museum of Khoja history.

Change is in the air in the community. The younger generation, women, the educated elites (both western university and Hauza educated) and many members of the community are increasingly challenging many of the community's religious, political and cultural practices today. Why are our long cherished practices being challenged now? What is wrong, if anything, in our history that the modern day members are resisting?

Why is the Khoja Shi'a community as it is? Are our political, religious and cultural practices of the past responsible for how we behave today? Must we then not understand the past in order to reflect on the future?

Among the youngsters, born after 1970, how many know about the history of the evolution of the Khoja Shi'a Ithna-Asheri Community?

Would understanding history of your community assist you in understanding your present situation? Would it equip you to prepare for a better future for your community and your progeny?
In this book, reflecting on the life and times of Mulla Asgharali M. M. Jaffer and his contributions to the development of the Khoja Shi'a Ithna-Asheri Muslim Community, an attempt has been made to recall the early history of the evolution of the Khoja community and the problems it encountered, especially in the past sixty years.

Sections are dedicated to the history of the Khoja, their roots, events leading to their current state, tabligh, retaining the Khoja identity, the aftermath of the Zanzibar revolution, the Asian exodus from Uganda, formation of the World Federation as well as to the delicate current issues of Khums and Ijaza, choosing the right kind of leaders and the socio-religious challenges facing the current and next generations of Khojas worldwide.

A section of the book is devoted to reproducing the novella "I was Saddam's Prisoner", which is a personal account of Mulla Asghar and his wife's incarceration in Iraq.

Among the subjects tackled in the book are:

- History of the Khoja.
- What is great about being a Khoja?
- Why retain the Khoja identity?
- On conversion and Tabligh.
- On leadership – outlook and qualities
- Zanzibar revolution and its aftermath.
- The forced marriage saga.
- Evacuation of Sadaat from Zanzibar to Iran.
- Asian Exodus from Uganda.
- Political turmoil and its effect of the community in Madagascar, Mozambique, Somalia and the Indian sub Continent.
- On formation of the World Federation and its role.
- Before President Moi of Kenya.
- On retention of the Islamic laws of marriage, divorce, inheritance.
- On Khums and Ijaza.
- Need for an intellectual renaissance
- On feelings of the youths, their disenchantment with the society and the attitude of the hard core traditionalists.
- On customs and traditions and the need for reformations.
- European experience.
- Modern warrior of change.

This book is an invitation to the community to reflect on its history and begin a process of public debate and discussion so that you, as a member of the community, can take charge of your collective destiny and provide informed suggestions for a way forward.

Change is a given right. It is reality. Do you want to be a part of driving the change or you will be driven by change.

Read the book. Inform yourself. Reflect on its messages, discuss and debate in your circles. Add value to its contents. Be part of the driving the change.

Available from:
Dar es salaam: Tabligh Book corner.
Mombasa: Mr. & Mrs.Muntazir Somji and Bilal Book Shop.
Also from Jamaat book outlets in Nairobi, Arusha and all Jamaats in Africa and overseas.

Petals of Taqwa and Adalah

The Fragrance of the rose will linger on,
Petals of Taqwa and Adalah will live ever on,
Forget we will not, the name of Asghar Mulla,
We will go on using it on and on and on ...
- Abu Faiyyaz

The list of values that one must ask oneself if he aspires for Community Leadership:

Am I a practising Muslim?
Am I honest?
Will I be able to work for common good?
Do I have a vision for the Community?
Editor - Federation Samachar

"The Sowing and Reaping of Destiny: With ABCD Syndrome: Whither Khoja?"

By Hassan Ali M. Jaffer.

(Published by the Al-Itrah Foundation)

One of the features that truly serves as a unique and distinguishing feature of our Khoja communities around the world, apart from their democratic setup, dedicated leadership, and meticulous organization, is their sustained focus on accountability, self-evaluation and introspection. It is this praiseworthy quality that is at the heart of their growth and progress in the face of nearly overwhelming odds and rapidly changing circumstances.

Our Aimm-e-Tahireen (as) have frequently pointed out that as long as the process of both regular as well as rigorous self-assessment and self-examination carries on, success and deliverance is guaranteed. This principle holds true not just for individuals and small groups but for entire nations and civilizations, and history is a witness to this fact. The moment an individual or community stops taking stock of its actions and policies and abandons the task of questioning its preconceived and traditionally inherited notions, its decline and eventual downfall becomes inevitable. Fortunately for our Khoja Ithna Asheri communities, the aforementioned process is steadily carrying on thanks to a devoted and enlightened group of wise and foresighted individuals who have achieved a fair degree of success, by the Grace of Allah (SWT)).

The author of the present book, Al Hajj Hassan Ali M. Jaffer is an exceptionally learned and experienced writer and thinker who has served the community in various official and other capacities and is campaigning on the frontlines of this movement for self-appraisal and self-reformation. The experience he has accumulated during the course of his long-standing service to the community has equipped him with rare wisdom and insight, and he generously shares some of his insights with us in this well-written book.

I was delighted to read this book and found it to be highly instructive, in addition to being a veritable storehouse of knowledge, historical touches, and interesting facts.

I am glad to report that Al Hajj Hassan Bhai has raised many serious and important questions in this book, and it is refreshing to see that he did not shy away from raising some of the more tough, difficult and sensitive questions which are bound to force readers to come out of what he has aptly called the 'traditional comfort zones.'

His intellectual and moral courage is indeed commendable, and I pray to Allah (SWT) to Enhance it and Increase it manifold.

I am also pleased to report that the author's grasp of world history and current affairs is remarkable, as I observed he made certain statements regarding the history and politics of the Indian subcontinent which came as news even to someone like me.

The part where he writes about 'Historical Realities' demands a great deal of reflection on our part. The refusal of the Muslim clergy to allow the printing of the Qur'an and their shunning of new and advanced technology during the period of Ottoman rule was very tragic and unfortunate, but the worst part is that such attitudes still persist today to some extent. Muslim scholars have displayed a great deal of inertia in this regard, and have been awfully slow to embrace the advances and developments achieved in the fields of science and technology. This regressive attitude and inflexibly rigid medieval mindset has significantly contributed to the academic, scientific, technological, educational and economic backwardness of Muslims in the world today.

I really enjoyed the parts in which the author discusses

the colonial past of the Khojas, Khoja identity, and the maps he has thoughtfully provided indicating Khoja migratory patterns in the last few centuries are very helpful indeed.

The 'Generation Chart' he includes is also very compelling, as it is designed to instill our younger readers with a sense of urgency and also give them an idea of how the future of our communities falls squarely within the range of their responsibility, as they are the ones who will have the power and influence to shape and carve out the future of their choosing.

I was greatly enamored by the author's remarks on 'Hijab' which were spot-on.

While it is true that after the Islamic Revolution of Iran, Hijab became more popular in our communities, but the fact still remains that the definitions and applications of Hijab have been distorted and misrepresented by pragmatists to suit modern fashions and trends, thereby making permissible what at one stage was rightly believed to be 'forbidden'. So we notice these days many new and fashionable forms of Hijab emerging that are so outrageous that they actually end up defeating the spirit of Hijab.

I was also relieved to see that the author had the courage to deal with another issue that is quite delicate and sensitive. Under the heading 'Danger Signals', he has very aptly criticized the 'class priesthood mentality' that is harbored by some of the Sadaat and the Mullahs. This leads them to think they have a birth-right to be treated differently, to be considered superior, to be given preferential treatment.....in short, there are many among them who begin perceiving themselves as a superior class and everyone around them as inferior in every respect.

Hence, Hassan Bhai is absolutely right in pointing out that such an attitude is unacceptable, unjustifiable, not to mention un-Islamic. He courageously states that this class priesthood is 'a concept not necessarily in keeping with the Islamic outlook.' I would add that it is not only that such a conception in not in keeping with the tenets of Islam, but that is it goes against the very foundations of the Islamic worldview. Because as far as racial or tribal or class-based superiority is concerned, one of the most fundamental and basic aims of Islam was to eliminate and fully uproot, once and for all, all ideologies that call for any discrimination in treatment or dealings based on caste, class, race or social background. Establishing Taqwa as the sole criterion for superiority, the Qur'an decisively negates and abrogates all distinctions that are artificial and man-made, thereby closing all doors and sealing all routes leading to exploitation in all its diverse forms. And what's more, the Holy Prophet (S.a.w.w) himself, and all of our noble Imams, took great pains to explain to the people that being a descendant of the Holy Prophet does not, should not, and cannot entitle a person to any special privileges in the sight of Allah in this world or in the hereafter. No doubt, one should honor and respect them, as the Holy Prophet and Imams did instruct their followers to protect the life, property and honor of the Sadaat, defend them from their enemies, and let no harm reach them, but this was only in the context of the all-out oppression, persecution, torture and cruelty that was unleashed by the despotic Umayyad and Abbaside rulers, and which was directed specifically against Sayyids.

But this does not mean that they have a justification for expecting or demanding special treatment like some of them do today.

The concept of Sayyid and Non-Sayyid has been blown out of proportion to such an extent that if an objective and neutral outsider were to view the scenario, he would regrettably have to conclude that Islam abolished all forms of tribal and class based systems for judging superiority only to replace them with another equally exploitative and racist system that is the Sayyid and ghair-Sayyid system. I passionately believe that this issue needs to be dealt with in greater detail because of the way this concept has been exploited and how it has been misused by some to gain unfair advantage. There is no doubt that one will face resistance in raising this issue, especially from those who are the beneficiaries of this system, but I think bold and courageous intellectuals and scholars like the author shouldn't be bothered by this kind of opposition in the way of serving and propagating the truth. This statement on my part is far from any kind of prejudice or bias as I happen to be a Sayyid myself, and have experienced the privileges of Sayyid-hood first hand, but I have always felt in my heart that the amount of honor and privileges bestowed upon Sayyids is grossly disproportionate.

In the end, I think this short albeit enlightening book is a must-read for everyone concerned about the present state and future of Khoja communities around

the world, as it presents a very objective, penetrating and incisive account of the dynamics of their past, the scenario in which they find themselves today, the future that they should look forward to, as well as the future that lies in store for them should they fail to address the pressing questions, multi-faceted problems, and complex challenges facing them at present in a proper and satisfactory manner. Though I have some reservations about the thoughts that the author has put forward in his book, I would, nonetheless, strongly recommend this book for all those who have a stake in the future well-being and progress of our communities worldwide. Our community members, especially the youth, would do well take heed of the author's wise advice and benefit from the fruits of his rich experience in the realm of community affairs.

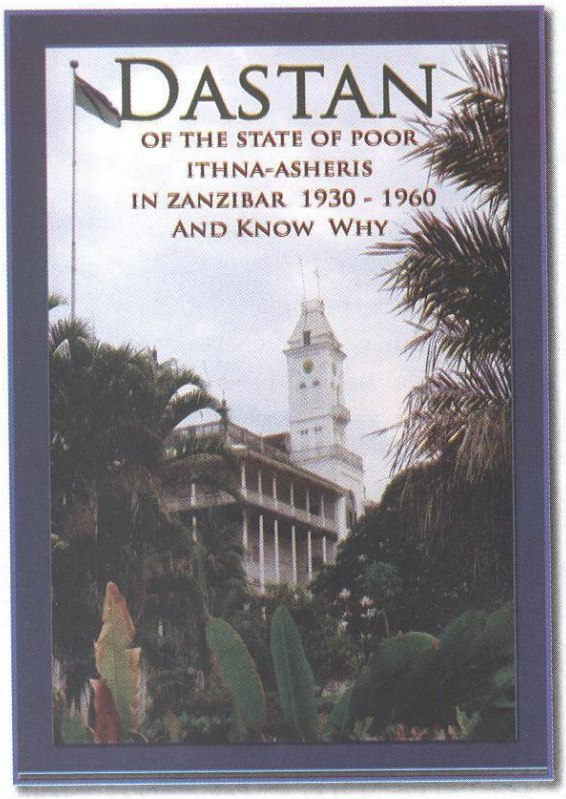
It is my belief that our communities are in dire need for such publications that shed light on the living record, origins, history and heritage of the Khoja people, and I really hope that our educators introduce and integrate such books into the educational system and curriculum at either the school level or the Madressa level for the benefit of our next generation.

If this is done, I am certain that it will prove to be a very positive step forward, as it will sensitize our youths to the contemporary problems and challenges that they are currently facing, or are likely to face as they step into an increasingly changing and dynamic world and the uncertain future it holds for them.

We humbly and earnestly pray to Allah (SWT) to Guide us in the right direction, to Open our eyes to the realities that we need to take in account, and to Inspire us to make the right decisions and opt for the best and most advisable course that leads us to His Pleasure, here and hereafter.

Dr. Sayyed QMM Kamoonpuri
DIRECTOR
M.U.College
Aligarh- UP
INDIA 4

"DASTAN of Poor Ithna-asheris in Zanzibar During 1930 – 1960 And Know Why"



It is a compelling booklet with a few pages to read in a few minutes, but the message it impacts and the reality it articulates will linger on hauntingly for the remaining life of any reader who is gifted with the nature of human compassion and blessed with taqwa.

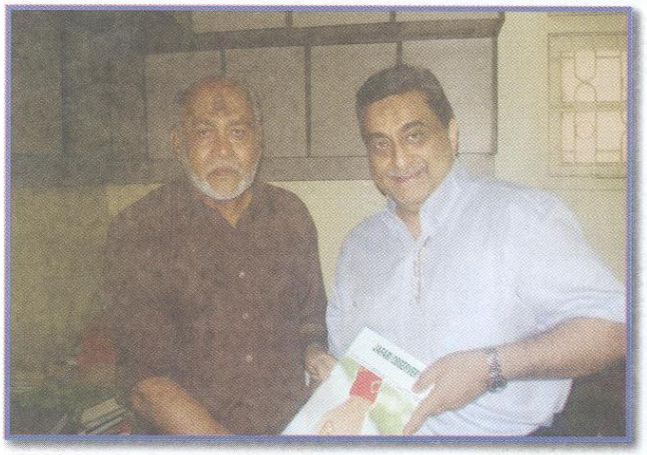
The writer picked up our community in Zanzibar which lived during a small span of an historical period as only one example for a moving and captivating narration of the various aspects of the pain, hardship and desperation suffered by the poor families who were in great majority during that period.

However, according to the writer, poverty is everywhere in the community and in every generation. Our present generation is no exception.

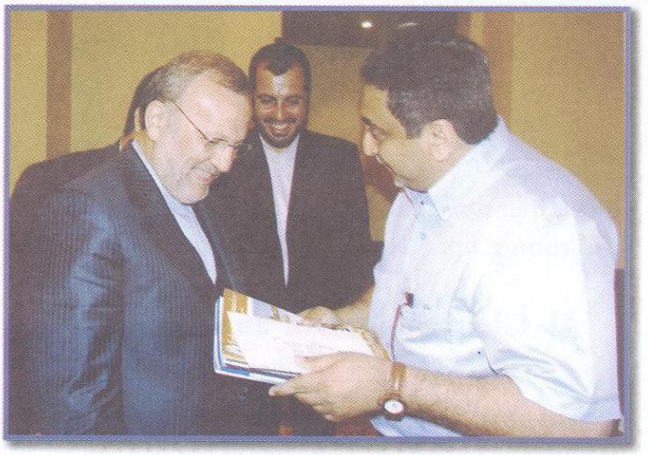
Limited copies have been printed for free distribution. These are unlikely to meet the anticipated demand. The publisher requests that individual copies are circulated to widen the readership and extend the message far and wide.

Inquiries for the booklet should be directed to:
optimec@cats-net.com (Africa), ghulamsajan@bell.net (Canada), kmsaeeda@yahoo.com (USA), and murtaza@alif.co.uk (UK).

Editor's Rounds

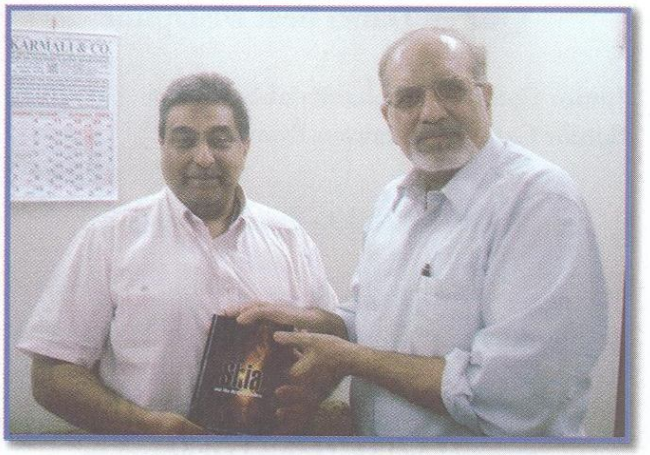


With editor of Jafari Observer- Mumbai



Presenting copies of Federation Samachar to
Hon. Manouchehr Mottaki (Foreign Minister of I.R. of Iran)

With Mehdi Hasan. Senior editor of New Statesman, UK.



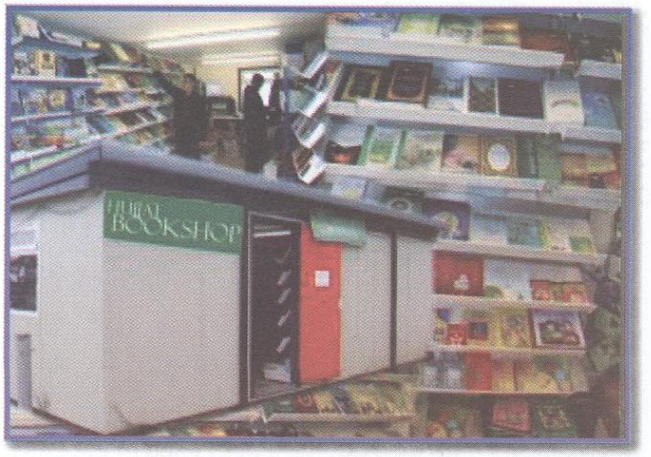
With Shokat Mewawalla (EXPO GAS) of Mumbai presenting one of the many books that he undertakes translating to English.

Stanmore Hujjat establishes bookshop

It is now almost 17 months since the bookshop was established in the portacabin, which sits besides the main hall. The whole project started as an experiment, an upgrade from a trolley, stacking CD/DVDs to a more spacious cabin, stacking CD/DVDs with the added Books.

In that time, we have been so surprised by the eagerness of the members to take up the readership of the books available, that we had to increase subjects and stock, so that today we carry almost 700 titles in Books, CDs & DVDs.

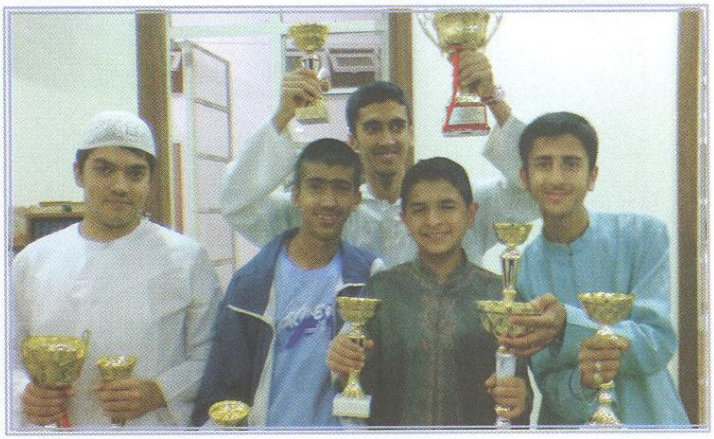
In the ladies, they have designed and created a more spacious, friendly and accessible bookstand that has helped to attract even more interest and readership.



Qur'an Competition - Arusha

Al- Ghazi Super Qur'an Competition Junior Boys

Winner: Kumayl Rahim
1st runner up: Alijawad Khalfan
2nd runner up: Mujahid Manji



Al- Ghazi Super Qur'an Competition Senior Boys

Winner: Mubashir Sheriff
1st runner up: Faisal Sheriff

Qur'an Darsa Best Discipline

Junior Category: Mohamedabbas Peera
Senior Category: Maisam Pyarali

Darsa 2009 - Junior Boys

Winner: Hamza Sajan
1st runner up: Mohamedali Saleh
2nd runner up: Ijaz Lalji

Special trophy for good effort in Qur'an recitation

Hussein Dhirani

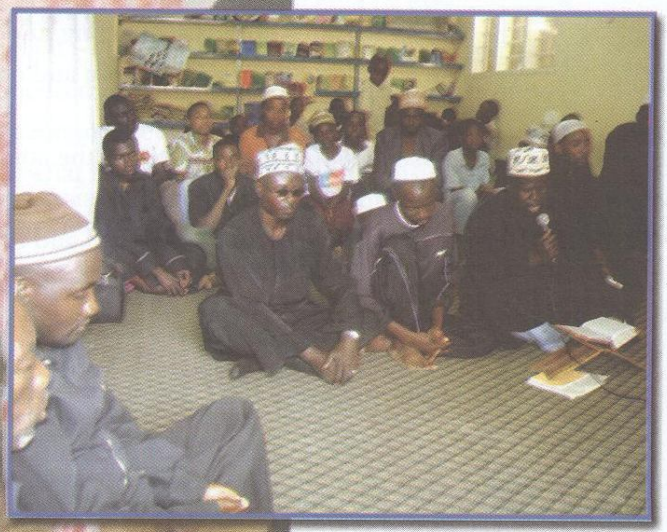
Darsa 2009 – Senior Boys

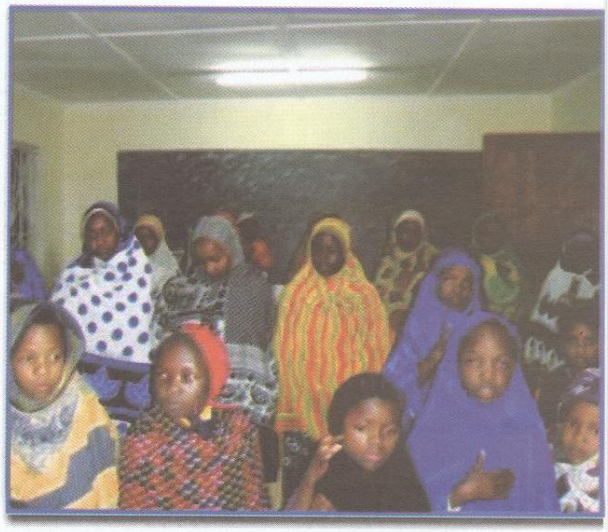
Winner: Imran Sheriff
1st runner up: Zuhairhassan Khalfan
2nd runner up: Alijawad Alwani

Special trophy for good effort in Qur'an recitation

Kumayl Rashid

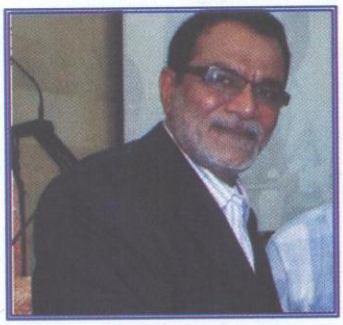
Muharram 1430





New Chairman talks to Samachar:

"Let us all unite and help our institutions"



Anverali Rajabali Dharamsi

Born in Kilwa, Tanzania, on 21st March 1951. Married. Managing Director of Tanzania Road Haulage (1980) Ltd.

Secondary education in Lindi, and started my first business, a general merchandise shop in Masasi, at the age of 17 after my father's death. I moved to Dar-es-Salaam in 1970, and continued operating a general merchandise trading business. In 1976 we established Tanzania Road Haulage (1980) Ltd.

Community Affiliations

I served as Co-Chairman of SETWEL under the late Chairman of AF, Zulfikarali Khimji from 2001-2004. In 2004, I took a bold step to vie for the leadership of one of the largest jamaats in Africa – Dar-es-Salaam, I was reelected twice, my third and final term ends this year – 2010.

Why you decided to head AF?

After having served Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat for 3 terms, With that experience, I believe I can lead the community towards progress and development.

Who or what are the biggest influences in your life as a leader?

My conviction and my confidence – and to serve for the pleasure of Allah (swt)

What are your biggest challenges as a leader?

I see the biggest challenge currently is primarily to build a strong sense of responsibility towards our institutions, bring the community together on a single platform of unity. We can only make progress when we have unity and good understanding in our institutions.

How do you assess the AF & WF relationship?

The relationship between AF & WF has always been cordial and that of respect and good understanding. The recent events following the WF elections has to some extent affected many institutions including AF. We are one community and unity is the key to our success. I hope and pray that we can all bury our differences overcome this predicament, Insha'Allah.

The WF is undergoing turbulent times, do you agree?

Yes.

If yes, how do we move forward?

There is no one answer, the matter is rather complicated and I am saddened to note that a lot of accusations and counter accusations have been sent by emails which is very discouraging and does not serve the community in the long run and can destroy our unity.

My personal opinion to this is that the community is matured enough to make good decisions, our leaders - be it in WF, AF, NASIMCO, CoEJ and others need to sit together, commit themselves seriously to find a lasting solution to the current predicament.

How will you serve the Community viz a viz AF & WF

My first call of duty is AF, we have enough work and challenges to keep us occupied, our aim is to bring

back the unity and sense of belonging within Africa, especially the issue of Madagascar is on top of my list of action.

On WF, I shall work hand in hand with the rest of the leaders of our community in the world to find a lasting solution to the WF current predicaments and, I look forward to see that we make progress for the benefit of our community worldwide.

The community is shrinking in AFRICA and we see less Jamaats now while at the same time there are many problems here on the ground like education, housing and economic empowerment.

Yes, I agree, this is basically driven by many factors, political, economic, social and the change in demographics due to economic conditions of each country. These scenarios we can not stop, for example in the recent times the political situation in Uganda, Somalia, Madagascar.

We shall strive and work towards alleviating the problems you have mentioned, though AF has done quite a lot already in the field of education. Housing remains the biggest challenge which during my term, my team and I shall work to find ways of helping our community in Africa. Economic empowerment, our community has a role to play in this regard, and institutions like JIBA can also help.

How do you see the present situation in AF?

I think it is an Institution which can do a lot for our community in Africa by working closely and in association with the constituent jamaats in Africa. There are great opportunities which we let go, unfortunately! – Time has come where leadership must be focused on core issues of importance, have good direction to take AF to a higher level of success, and that is what my team and I shall be focusing on – Insha'Allah.

How would you tackle them as head of AF?

By working with all the Jamaats in Africa and seek help from our sister organizations worldwide. I believe in diversity and inclusion. By empowering the Jamaats, they can take greater responsibilities and accountabilities to deliver for their members. We must get out of the old fashioned concept of seclusion.

Where in five years? In ten years?

This is a difficult question to answer straight away, we have to do a lot of ground work to understand the present situation and the challenges facing our jamaats, - time will tell. We have been entrusted with a heavy responsibility of AF, and hence I shall not pretend that I know everything, it is a process, and planning is an important part of the leadership.

What do you consider as a spiritual gift?

To serve my community with the help of Allah (swt) and also the love and affection of my community members.

If you could give one piece of advice to the young leaders – what would it be?

Be humble and modest and shun arrogancy and serve your community selflessly for there in lies the pleasure of the Imam of our time - Al Hujjat (as).

Message to the community:

Our strongest weapon to fight against the challenges we face today is the unity and sense of belonging - Let us all unite and help our institutions to be able to function effectively and to deliver to the expectations of the members of our community. We have serious shortage of professionals in our Institutions; it is important that we encourage them and not despise or rebuke them. Let us give our leaders the respect they deserve.

0 you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred and enmity of others make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear Allah. (Qur'an, 5:9).

Establishing a personal vision and mission is the first step towards self leadership and self mastery.
Vision can be defined as the ability to foresee the future very clearly as you want it to be and take action towards its achievement. (Anon)

ALHAJ RAMZANBHAI NANJI INAUGURATES NEW MEDICAL LABORATORY

$ 40,000 pledged for New - Digital X-ray Machine.

14th March 2010 was indeed a milestone for Ebrahim Haji Charitable Health Centre in Dar es Salaam.
Alhaj Ramzan Nanji, the immediate past Chairman of Africa Federation was the Chief Guest at the inauguration ceremony of the new Medical Laboratory at Ebrahim Haji Charitable Health Centre. The ceremony was also attended by Chairman of Africa Federation, Alhaj Anwarali Dharamsi, Jamaat officials, Jamaat Trustees, Members of the Medical Boards, dignitaries, doctors, community members and guests from different sectors in the medical fraternity in Dar Es Salaam.

The Administrator of Ebrahim Haji Charitable Health Centre, Mr. Abbas Manji explained that the old Laboratory that has been in use for over 15 years was too small and needed new equipment to serve the patients comfortably.

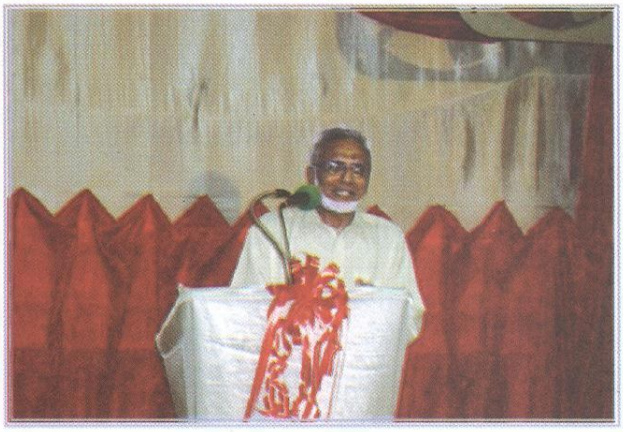
Mr. Abbas Manji further explained that the new Laboratory has been equipped with some latest testing equipment combined with modern technology does not require human interventions. He said "It will greatly improve the results, and will also help the doctors to treat patients with precision. He further emphasized that accurate diagnosis enables doctors to prescribe appropriate medication. This will also enhance the confidence of the general public towards Ebrahim Haji Charitable Health Centre".

The Chairman of Africa Federation, Alhaj Anwarali Dharamsi made the following comments in his address:

"We can be proud that we now have one of the best laboratories in Dar Es Salaam, but it must be noted that – what is important is the best and accurate results that will make the difference, hence the challenge is now up to the Management, Technicians and the Lab Staff to ensure they operate with highest level of efficiency and accuracy, not forgetting that good care, maintenance and quality control tests are vital for any Laboratory Equipment. It is the people who make the difference and not the equipment or machines".

After the inauguration, the chief guest Alhaj Ramzan Nanji pledged US$25,000 from Africa Federation and Alhaj Anwarali Dharamsi on behalf of his company, Tanzania Road Haulage Ltd. pledged US$15,000 towards a new digital X-Ray machine for Ebrahim Haji Charitable Health Centre, Alhaj Anwarali Dharamsi requested the community members and well wishers to come forward to support these projects.

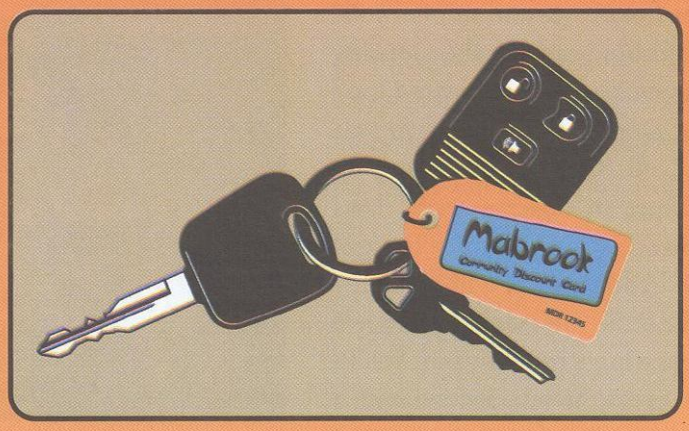
On behalf of KSI Jamaat, Alhaj Aunali Khalfan thanked Africa Federation and Tanzania Road Haulage Ltd for their generous donations.



Mabrook

Community Discount Card

Incentivising Trade Within the Community!



Get your
Mabrook Community Discount Card
and get discounts from
130+ community businesses
in Dar-es-Salaam.

The cards will be available at
the mosque compound during the
Africa Federation and World Federation
conferences in Apr/May 2010

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My visit to India...

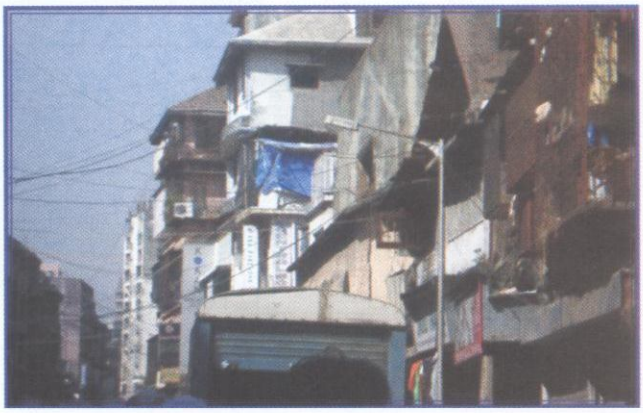
Ask people who have been there, and they will all tell you India is like no other place in the world, a land that stirs every one of the five senses and stays in your heart forever. I caught a cabbie early in the morning towards Dongri and the chaos that I witnessed took different forms. West of Dongri on S.V.P. road was an intersection named Null Bazaar, a case study in Bombay's consistent failure to observe traffic laws or lights-the lights blinked, giving infinite license! Being in the cab was an experience of a lifetime! my cabby would inch out into the intersection, dodge a bicycle, halt noisily before a huge red bus, and, finally, blind to both directions, cross the intersection with a hair's-breadth between his tail end and another. All this transpired amidst a chorus of high-pitched horns piercing your ear drums.

The Bombay street is a paved field. As a cabby of mine once said, with not a little relish: "Left, right, no problem!" During one ill-fated, hour-long journey, my cabby simply repeated the word "problem".

By mid-day, lights had become more authoritative, but few travelers heeded their authority. Traffic proceeded from all directions, as if hell-bent on making a traffic jam. Cabbies berated people pushing handcarts, while the cart-pushers barked at pedestrians. The fat red buses often idled, honking incessantly.

Was it lawlessness so much as law's helplessness I wondered! Bombay traffic consists of cars, auto rickshaws, buses, bicycles, pushcarts, scooters, massive tricycles operated by legless men, cows, and pedestrians -- the fragmentary sidewalks being blocked by shops and homeless families. Cows being fed near the temples and the fodder lying on the street was a common sight.

At the same time on the same day a news article caught my eye: Bombay traffic, as of the mid-1980s, proceeded at a rate of 13 kilometers per hour (8 miles per hour), while congestion only increased (Times of India)- I was there to witness it I said to myself! Much of the commerce around Dongri is that of teashops and watch-vendors. Just west of Dongri is Chor Bazaar ("thieves' bazaar"), a seemingly endless array of antique and curio shops. Here can be found an array of things unimaginable. Literally every corner holds some saleable item, or its seller.



Pala Gali. Near Khoja Mosque

The bazaar spills over into Dongri. Shops sell bangles, backpacks, arrangements of plastic flowers, hand-made kites. Clothes are spread out on the sidewalk to showcase neatly aligned, polished trash. Entrepreneurs busily clean, separate, and bundle metal cans into bright gold bails bigger than a car. The area is a kind of recycling center spread out over city blocks. It rained the same day and was nearly impassable. Dongri is just a stone's throw from Pala Gali where our Khoja Shi'a mosque is situated The noise and the scorching heat caused headaches for the unaccustomed. It was not an environment for reflection, or even productive action..I assumed ... By midday, pala gali became intolerable.

Here I saw cramped conditions that just amazed me. Rents are so high in Bombay that extended families occupied one space. Students often claimed to live with nearly ten people at a time. A solitary visitor like me in such a situation would have been humorous at best. In the bustling area of Mumbai, such as the Ismails, Ithna-Asharis, the Bohras, Memons, Konkani, etc, populate the area .There were streets named as Imam Hussain (as) and H. Abbas (as) chowk. This heterogeneity is compounded by diversity in education, class and language I was told by my taxi driver whom I found to be quite conversant with the social structure in this area.

Editor in session at Najafi House seen here with Trustees.

I found some time to meet and accepted a persistent invitation from Haji Muhib Nasser to visit Najfi House where a sumptuous lunch was served after the Juma Namaaz.

I also visited the JAFERY OBSERVER office and was impressed to see the publications. As I was leaving a diminutive old man wearing a topi approached me. Smiling, he asked me something in Hindi. The old man was asking me where I was going. "I had just come from Najafi House", I said. This pleased him. He shook my hand vigorously, still with that infinite smile.

I visited our Mosque and Haji Muhibbhai took me on a tour of this beautiful mosque the legacy of our forefathers..It has just been renovated and all efforts were made to restore the old façade..it looked wonderful!..

But overall, I left scarcely a ripple in Dongri.

I visited the Agakhan Jamaatkhana and my guide narrated me the historical process of formation of our Jamaat just next door and the tormetations that our community went through during those days.

Editor with Alhaj Muhib Nasser and Alhaj Safder Kermalli of Mumbai Jamaat

In the pala gali mosque, I noticed the photos of the martyrs who stuck to their guns and adhered to the deen of Ahlulbayt A.S. Later in the day I met Br Shaukat Mewawala and was impressed with his great charitable foundation in educating the needy, surely it was impressive. As I left Dongri my host who had accompanied me gave me an old copy of the gujarati magazine where I noticed the following: "In 1899, the petit prince, who was now twenty-two got his first opportunity to address his Jamaat in Africa. He was no longer held on the chain. His childhood hatred was now vented in Zanzibar on 13 July in the following Farman: Within ten, twenty or thirty years, the Ithna-asheri religion will be worn out. After 100 years the Ithna'asheri religion will not exist at all. It will not exist in Iran either because that religion's base is not on Aq'l [the power of reasoning]. Our religion's base is on Aq'l".

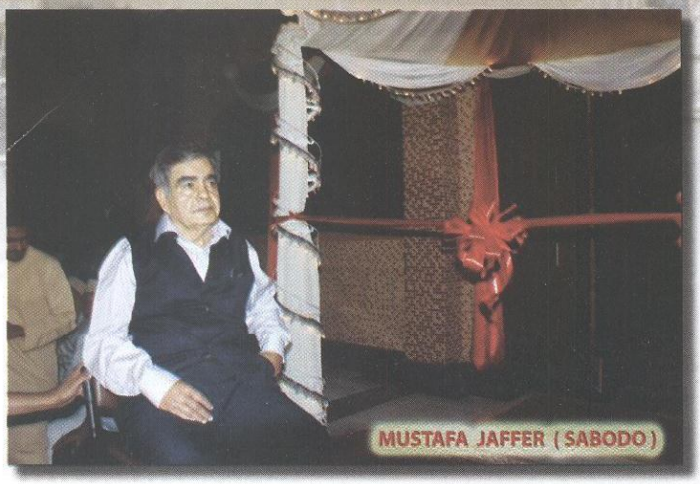
Returning back I was presented with a souvenir issue of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaat Centenary issue. The mosque is more than a hundred years. The Jamaat was formed in 1898 and they celebrated the centenary in 1998. It is already more than a hundred years! and is still ever so strong.

I wondered what Nostradamus had to say about this!

Editor

Opening of Imambarah-Dsm

23rd July 2009



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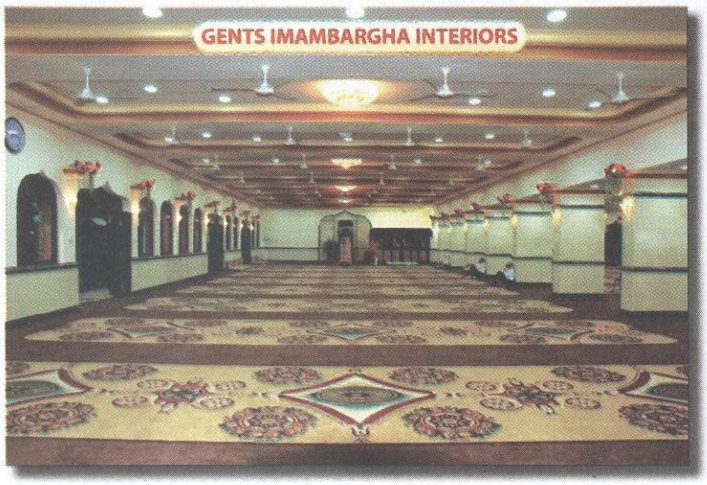
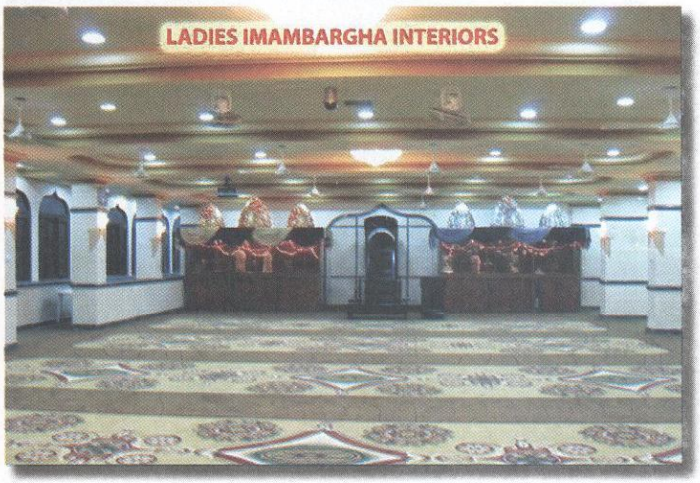


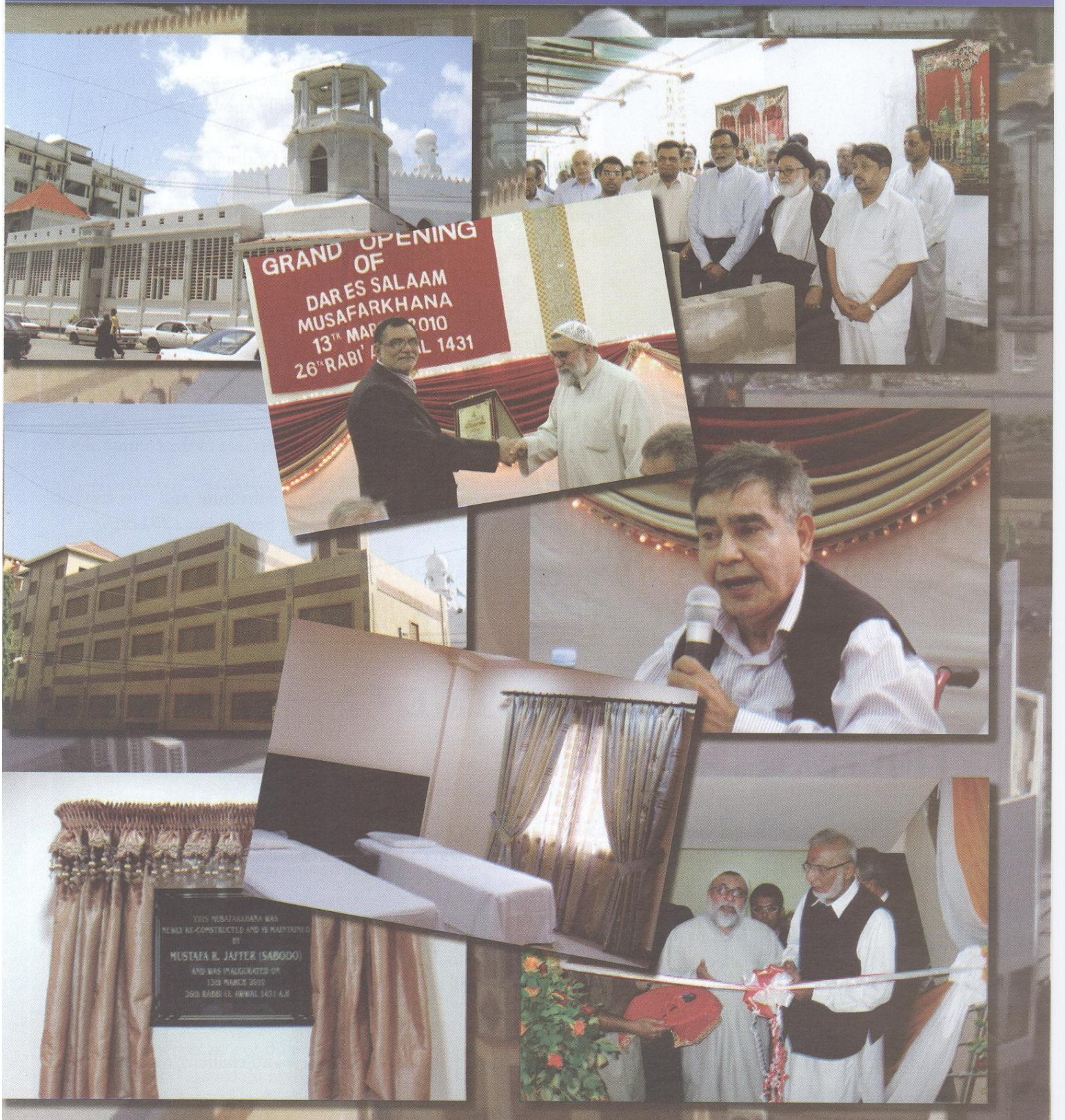
GENTS IMAMBARGHA INTERIORS



LADIES IMAMBARGHA INTERIORS

Opening of Musafarkhana - Dsm

13th March 2010



Late Murrabi Gulamabbas Pirbhai

Late Gulamabbas Pirbhai was born in Madagascar in the year 1910. He arrived in Arusha in the early days to join his brother, late Remtullabhai in their family business.

Murabbi had a pleasant personality and a good sense of humour which enabled him to communicate with the young and old and to all he was fondly known as CHACHA.

His service to the community , especially to the Jamaats of Dodoma and Arusha, need no elaboration. Since establishment of Arusha Jamaat, he had been the backbone of the Jamaat and had supported the Jamaat financially, morally and with guidance. He was a man who believed in serving the community selflessly with wisdom. In such selfless services he had achieved success in life.

A strong supporter of Africa Federation and was one of the first to come forward to contribute towards foundation fund by donating a building to the Federation, whose income is still being used by the council. He continued to take interest in the affairs of the federation until his death and was always out with assistance – both financial and moral – in all the council's activities.

In 1966, the federation awarded him " HUSEINI MEDAL" in appreciation of the services to the community.

It is always sad to loose an elderly person, for his experience and guidance have no substitute and this was felt by the Arusha Jamaat when Murrabi Gulamabbas Pirbhai died on Friday the 18th September 1981.

MAY ALLAH REST HIS SOUL WITH MASOOMIN AMIN !
(From: 25 Silver Jubilee souvenir issue 1982)

APPOINTMENT

Alhaj Aunali Khalfan, the longest serving member of the Central Health Board has been appointed as an Honorary Secretary of Africa Federation by the Chairman Alhaj Anverbhai Dharamsi.

During his Chairmanship CHB achieved great success in formalizing health issues affecting the Community. Alhaj Aunali takes with him experience for having worked tirelessly for the Community. He will be assisted by Alhaj Kumail Manji as his assistant Secretary.

Federation Samachar wishes Alhaj Aunali and Kumail every success in their new and challenging position.

From the Archives of the Federation Samachar

Winners Akhtar Nayani (right) and Hussein Yusuf.

In 1987, Akhtar also took part in the world famous Kenya Safari Rally with Taki Virani. When asked how expensive rallying is, he said that rallying in East Africa is not lucrative particularly if sponsors are lacking. He said cars use jet fuel which barely give 2.5 km. per litre and along with that each car requires at least two service vehicles and about a dozen servicemen. Akhtar said rallying is quite popular among community members in Tanzania. He recalled prominent drivers including Late Mohamedali Virani, Mohamed Taki Virani, Mohamed Zaki Fazal, Mustafa Haji, Rauf Dawood, Murtaza Moloo and Late Shabbir Ebrahim. He also mentioned about two navigators, Salim Kassam and Mrs. Minaz Arif Zaman.

Council appoints Khimji as Matrimonial Matchmaker

To facilitate and enhance communal marriages, the Supreme Council, in October 1999 appointed Zulfikarbhai Khimji of Nairobi as the official Matchmaker for male and female youths and others of the Community.Br. Zulfikar was the past Chairman of Nairobi Jamaat and is a Councillor of the Africa Federation. He is also a successful businessman based in Nairobi. He has accepted to shoulder this heavy responsibility and is expected to discharge his services with strict confidence and complete integrity.Following his appointment.

Zulfikar bhai told the Samachar, "I thank Haji Mohamedbhai Dhirani for having trust in me for this very highly responsible task. I understand that this is not an easy task and I take full responsibility for the confidential information our brothers and sisters will relate to me.I shall try to be a bridge between the two parties and leave it to them to decide on whether or not they wish to tie the nuptial knot.I appeal for support from our community members world-wide and assure them that I will try to fulfill my duties to the best of my ability."

Lantern of the Path

by Imam Ja'far as Sadiq (a.s)

Purification

If you seek purification and ablution (wudu'), then go to water as you would go to the mercy of Allah, for He has made water the key to being near to Him in intimate conversation, and a guide to the domain of His service. Just as the mercy of Allah purifies the wrong actions of His bondsmen, so are outward impurities cleansed only by water. As Allah said,

It is He Who sends the winds as good news before His mercy; and We send down pure water out of heaven! (25:48) and elsewhere,

We have made of water everything living. Will they not then believe? (21:30)

As He gives life to every blessing in this world from water, so by His mercy and overflowing favour He gives life to the heart and to acts of obedience, and to reflection in the purity of water, its fineness, its cleanness, its blessing and the subtleness of how it mixes with everything; through water He also gives life to the heart, when you purify those limbs which you have been commanded by Allah to purify, and which you use to worship in your obligatory and customary prayers.

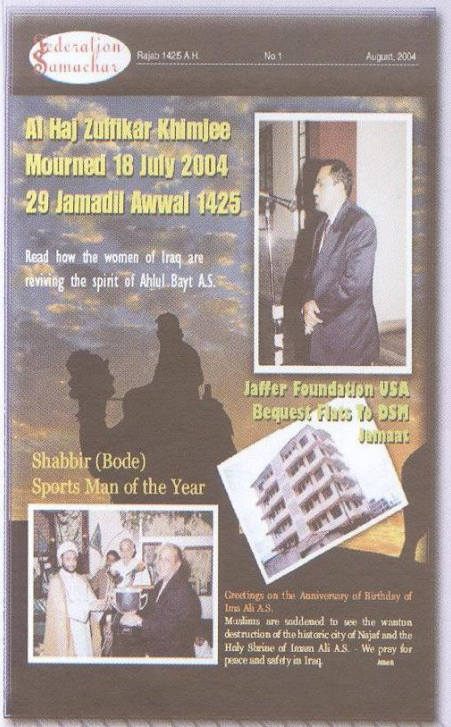
From each limb come many benefits. When you treat the limbs with respect, then their benefits will soon spring up for you. Deal with Allah's creation like water which mixes with things and gives everything its due, while not changing itself in essence. This is expressed by the words of the Messenger of Allah, 'The sincere believer is like water.' Let your purity with Allah in all your obedience be like the purity of water when He sent it down out of heaven and called it pure. Purify your heart with precaution and certainty when you purify your limbs with water.

Delusion

A person who is deluded is wretched in this world, and is duped in the next world because he has sold what is better for what is baser. Do not admire yourself. Sometimes you may be deceived by your property and your bodily health into supposing that you will last forever. Sometimes you are deceived by your long life, your children and your friends into thinking that you will be saved by them. Sometimes you are deceived by your beauty and the circumstances of your birth, which bring you your hopes and desires so easily that you think that you are truthful and successful in achieving your goal. Sometimes you are deceived by the regret you show people for your shortcoming in worship, but Allah knows the opposite of that is in your heart. Sometimes you make yourself worship in a spirit of reluctance; but Allah desires sincerity. Sometimes you imagine that you are calling on Allah when you are calling on another. Sometimes you imagine that you are giving good counsel to people, while your real desire is that they bow to you. Sometimes you blame yourself when you are really praising yourself.

Know that you will only emerge from the darkness of delusion and desire by sincerely turning in repentance to Almighty Allah, and to whatever you know about Him, and to recognize the faults in your self which are not consistent with your intellect and knowledge, and which the faith, the law and the customary practices of the Holy Prophet and the Imams of guidance do not tolerate.

If you are content with your present condition, there is no one more wretched than you in knowledge and action, nor anyone with a more wasted life. You will inherit grief on the Day of Resurrection.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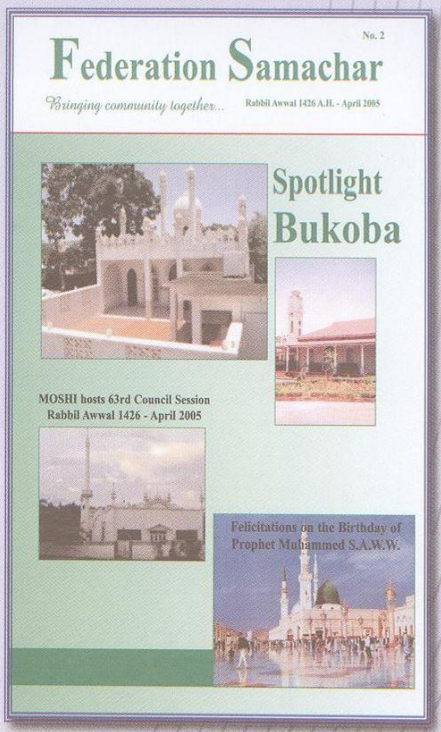
Rajab 1425 A.H.
No.1
August, 2004
Al Haj Zulfikar Khimjee
Mourned 18 July 2004
29 Jamadil Awwal 1425
Read how the women of Iraq are reviving the spirit of Ahlul Bayt A.S.
Jaffer Foundation USA Bequest Flats To DSM Jamaat
Shabbir (Bode)
Sports Man of the Year
Greetings on the Anniversary of Birthday of Imam Ali A.S.
Muslims are saddened to see the wanton destruction of the historic city of Najaf and the Holy Shrine of Imam Ali A.S. – We pray for peace and safety in Iraq.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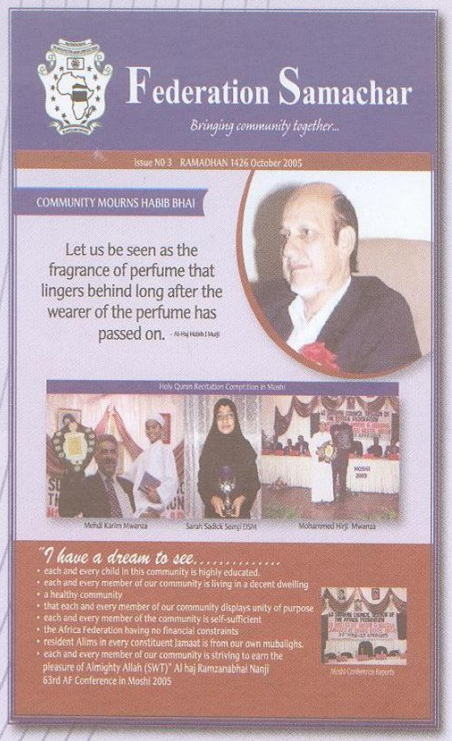
No. 2
Bringing community together...
Rabbil Awwal 1426 A.H. - April 2005
Spotlight
Bukoba
MOSHI hosts 63rd Council Session
Rabbil Awwal 1426 - April 2005
Felicitations on the Birthday of Prophet Muhammed S.A.W.W.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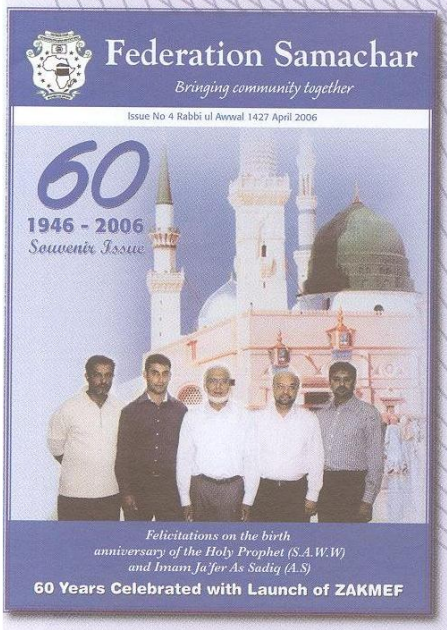
Bringing community together...
Issue NO 3 RAMADHAN 1426 October 2005
COMMUNITY MOURNS HABIB BHAI
Let us be seen as the fragrance of perfume that lingers behind long after the wearer of the perfume has passed on.
Holy Quran Recitation Competition in Moshi
"I have a dream to see....."
each and every child in this community is highly educated.
each and every member of our community is living in a decent dwelling
a healthy community
that each and every member of our community displays unity of purpose
each and every member of the community is self-sufficient
the Africa Federation having no financial constraints
resident Alims in every constituent Jamaat is from our own mubalighs.
each and every member of our community is striving to earn the pleasure of Almighty Allah (SWT)" Al haj Ramzanabhai Nanji
63rd AF Conference in Moshi 2005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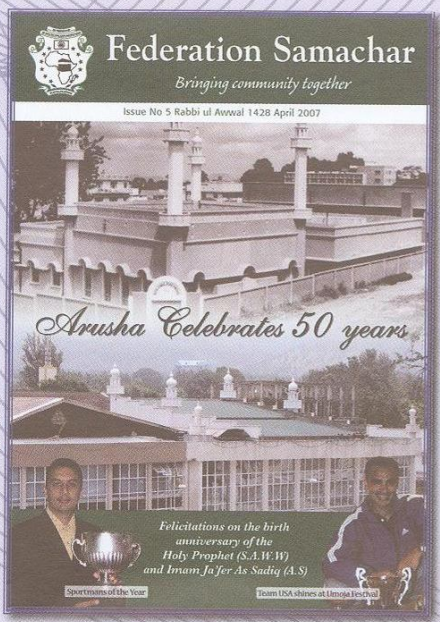
1946 - 2006
Souvenir Issue
Felicitations on the birth anniversary of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W) and Imam Ja'fer As Sadiq (A.S)
60 Years Celebrated with Launch of ZAKMEF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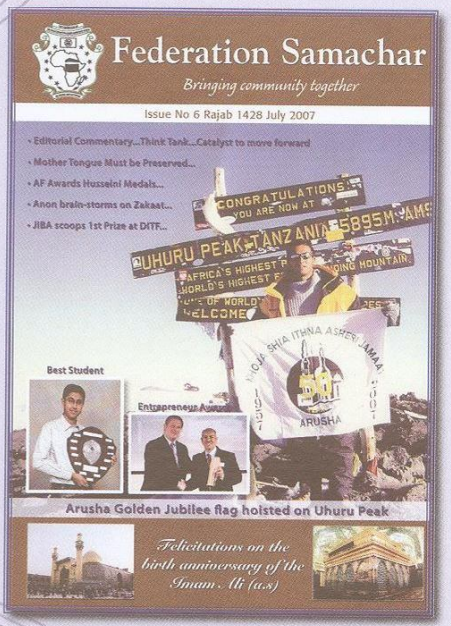
Arusha Celebrates 50 years
Felicitations on the birth anniversary of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W) and Imam Ja'fer As Sadiq (A.S)
Sportsmans of the Year
Team USA shines at Umoja Festival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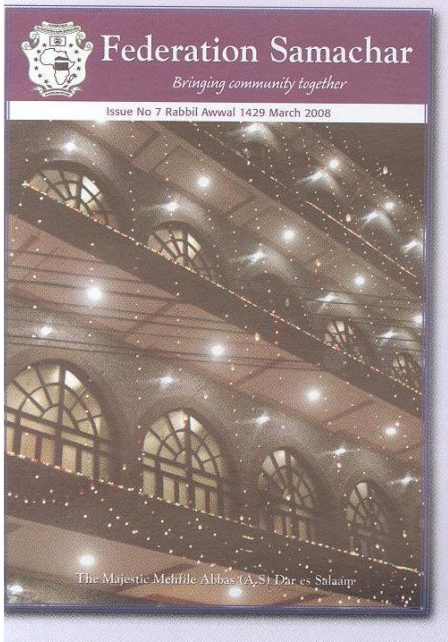
Editorial Commentary...Think Tank...Catalyst to move forward
Mother Tongue Must be Preserved...
AF Awards Husseini Medals...
Anon brain-storms on Zakaat...
JIBA scoops 1st Prize at DITF...
CONGRATULATIONS YOU ARE NOW AT
UHURU PEAK TANZANIA 5895M
Best Student
Arusha Golden Jubilee flag hoisted on Uhuru Peak
Felicitations on the birth anniversary of the Imam Ali (a.s)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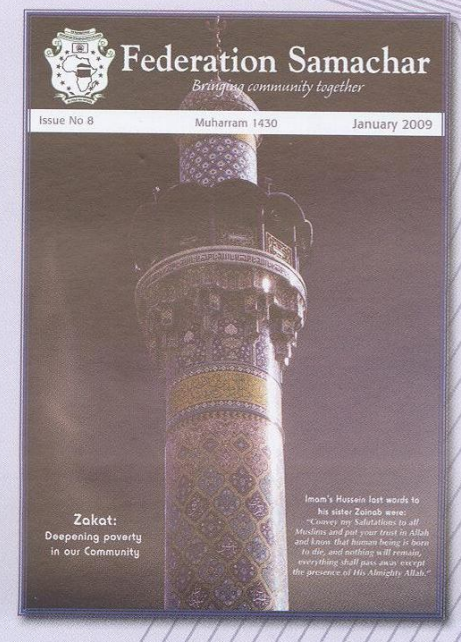
Issue No 7 Rabbil Awwal 1429 March 2008
The Majestic Mehfile Abbas (A.S) Dar es Salaam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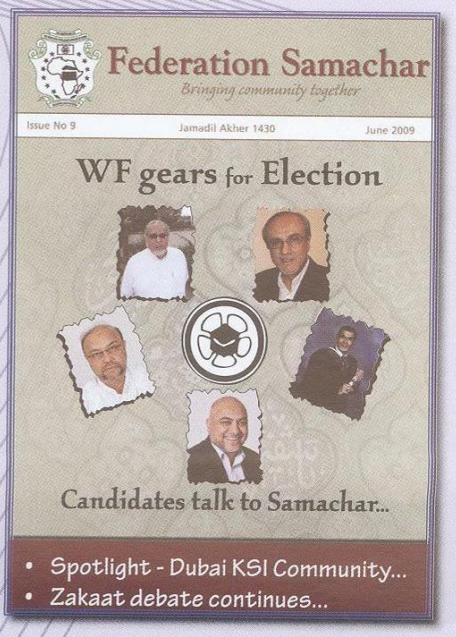
Issue No 8
Muharram 1430
January 2009
Zakat:
Deepening poverty in our Community
Imam's Hussein last words to his sister Zainab were:
"Convey my Salutations to all Muslims and put your trust in Allah and know that human being is born to die, and nothing will remain, everything shall pass away except the presence of His Almighty Allah."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WF gears for Election
Candidates talk to Samachar...
Spotlight - Dubai KSI Community...
Zakaat debate continues...

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