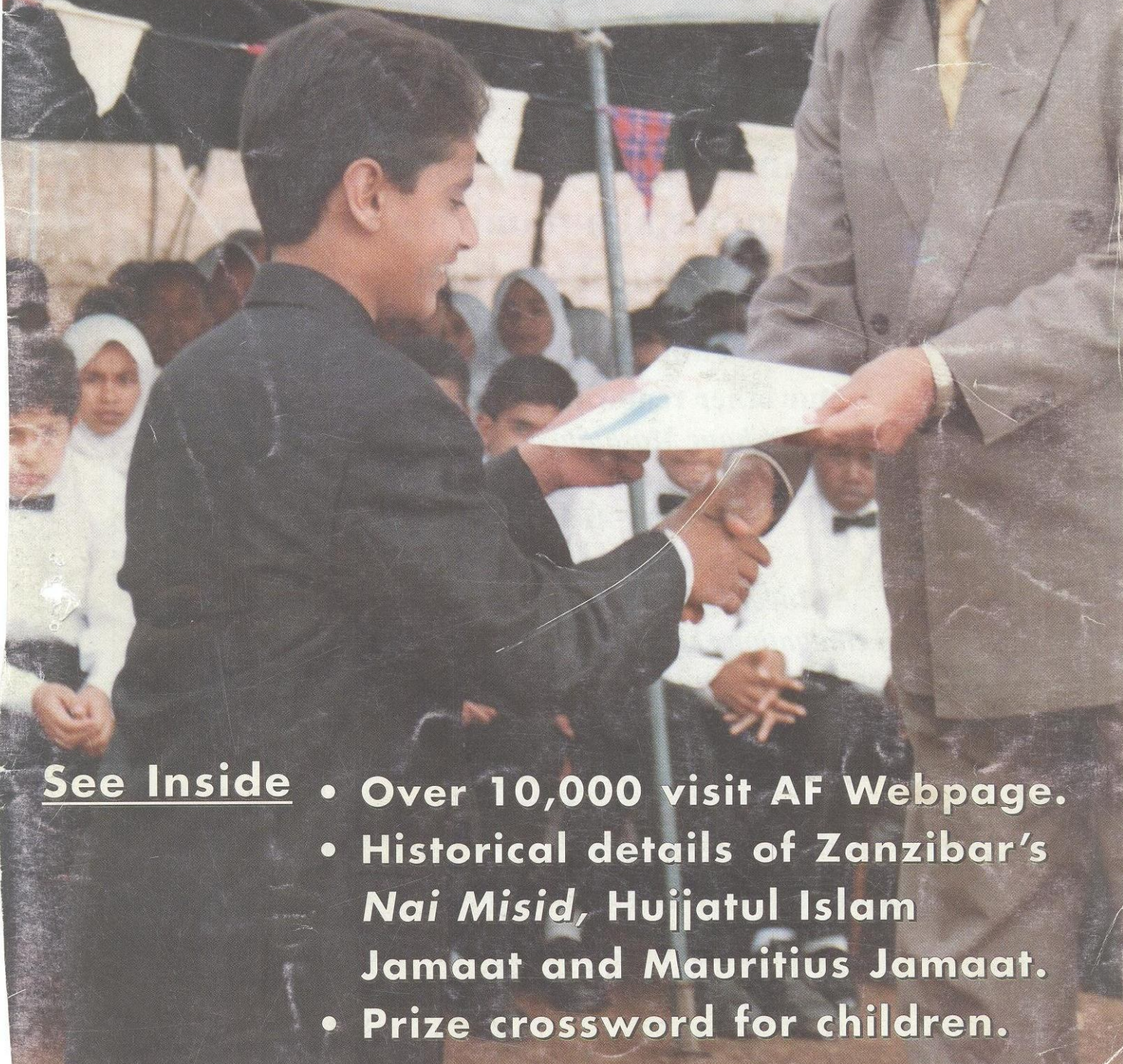


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Federation  
Samachar

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  - Prize crossword for children.



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# FEDERATION SAMACHAR

A publication of the Khoja  
Shia Ithna Asheri Jamaats  
of Africa

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Ramadhan 1420 A.H.  
December, 1999



**Editor:**

Munir Daya

**Advertising:**

Amir Lakha

**Finance:**

Riyaz Nurmohamed

**Circulation:**

Mrs. Fatim Haji

Fatima Patel

**Photographs:**

Murtaza Jivraj

**Internet Edition:**

Fatema Alloo

**USA Circulation:**

Shabbir Master Baker

**North American Edition:**

Baqir Alloo

Nazmul Damji

Gulam Sajan

Correspondence to be  
addressed to:

**The Editor,**

*Federation Samachar*

P.O. Box 6710,

Dar es Salaam.

**E-mail:**

Samachar@raha.com

**Internet edition:**

<http://www.africafederation.org> or

<http://www.worldfederation.org>

**Overseas correspondents:**

Baqir Alloo (Toronto)

Gulam Sajan (Toronto)

Gulamabbas Dhalla (Los Angeles)

Sadik Alloo (Los Angeles)

**COVER PICTURE**

The Chairman of the Africa  
Federation presents the best boy  
certificate to Abbasali Remtulla.



## From the Editor's Desk

### On preserving fading memories

Some 2700 ladies and gents attended a Grand Eid Function in Dar es Salaam early this year at the Al Muntazir Complex which now also encompasses the recently purchased ex-Korean Complex. The occasion was grand and important because this was the first time that such a major communal event accomodating both men and women was held in Dar es salaam. Yet in the men and probably even the ladies side, there were no photographers to record the event. Photographs are worth a thousand words and one wonders why we let such auspicious occasions go by without wanting to put them on record.

That was but one such occasion. Unfortunately there have been many similar occasions held and forgotten in a short time because no effort was made to record these. From the photographs we normally carry in each issue of the *Federation Samachar* on the Down the Memory Lane page, it appears that our community was more consciosus about two decades ago then it is now on preserving records. Among the photographs we have carried are memorable photographs of groups traveling to Ziyarat that proudly posed for the camera to show one and all that they were about to embark on a holy journey.

In photographs snapped decades ago, one notices that photo sessions were by no means taken lightly. Groups dressed well for the photos and considering that many photographs were so clear, it is obvious that the task was handled by qualified photographers. Today we cherish the few old photographs that relate to us what happened in the years gone by.

During the early years of the Africa Federation, group photographs of all delegates attending annual meetings was an important part of proceedings. As a result we now have some very memorable group photographs of delegates who attended the earlier meetings of the Supreme Council. In recent years there has been lesser emphasis on this and as a matter of fact there have been some meetings where group photographs have not even been taken. Don't we want to tell the posterity how proud we were to serve the Supreme Council and the community in order to also encourage them to be enthusiastically involved after we have passed away? If yes, we need to reinvigorate our efforts to create and preserve records. During the last Supreme Council Session in Zanzibar, time was allocated for group photographs but these were not to an 'archive preservation' quality.

In the last two issues, the *Samachar* carried historic details of two Jamaats, the Kuwwatul Jamaat of Zanzibar and Nakuru Jamaat. In this issue we have touched upon the new Mosque in Zanzibar and the Mauritius Jamat. By jotting down facts and figures we actually write history. We have about 40 Jamaats in Africa and we appeal to each one to send us their historical background. This historical information can be covered in future issues of the *Samachar*.

With each passing day, priceless representations of our history now held in old family photographs and documents are being lost or destroyed by lack of proper protection. Jamats should encourage "Life-writing" programmes whereby older adults are officially provided an opportunity for creative expression through sharing and communicating their life stories in relation to the community.

While photographic archives should form the nucleus of preservation efforts, these should be supplemented by oral history tapes, videos and documents, previous Federation or Jamat publications and details of each building or project undertaken by the Federation. It is hoped that what is still available to document our fading memories can be preserved for posterity and handed down to future generations for study and preservation.

- Munir Daya



## IDD MESSAGE FROM ALHAJ MOHAMED G.M. DHIRANI, CHAIRMAN OF THE FEDERATION OF KHOJA SHIA ITHNA-ASHERI JAMAATS OF AFRICA

### "Islam is a practical religion in which there is no room for rituals"

It is the grace of Allah (s.w.t.) that we were bestowed with Mahe Ramadhan the month of Maghferat so that we had the opportunity of having the blessings of Allah (s.w.t.). Let us pray on this Idd day that in His Mercy He accepts our Ibadaats, that our sins are forgiven, that our Community unity is strengthened, that Muslim Ummah is protected from atrocities and is granted happiness and prosperity.

On this day, it would be wise to ponder for a few moments of our achievements and fulfillment during the holy Month. Did we do what we were supposed to do – in the manner it was supposed to be done – all the time for the pleasure of Allah (s.w.t.)? If on this day we do not take stock of our achievement or otherwise of the Month, then we have not done justice to ourselves. Let our deeds and thoughts be examined critically by ourselves so that we become better Muslims.

Perhaps our Community is the most lectured Community of all. There are various majlises and waez during the year and we religiously attend such majlises. If after all those majlises, perhaps not less than 200 hours per year – if we have

not shown any improvement then there must be something wrong – either with the lectures or with us. Either we as participants lack interest or the lectures are not good enough – or perhaps both. Let every individual judge for themselves.

Attending majlises is an act of piety and does bring us thawab. However attending such majlises just as rituals, without understanding it – is really a waste of time both ours and that of the lecturer. Islam is a practical religion in which there is no place for rituals. Sermons and majlises are meant to educate and make us better Muslims. Let us aim towards that result so that we can derive spiritual benefit by being better than what we are in our behaviour, in our dealings with others, in helping the needy and in strengthening our unity.

It is of utmost importance that every member of this Community now takes up education seriously. The world is vast and full of opportunities but only for the educated and the intellectuals. There is no place for those who lag behind. It is now essential to be a university graduate or a professional. Our ladies can also take up some home studies so that in

future it could be useful. With education we would be able to understand our religion better.

Let us form a habit of carrying our serious discussions with the family both on religious and educational matters and strive to fill up our homes with educational tools such as books, computers and educative video cassettes and thus enhance our knowledge.

Finally we wish every one a happy Idd and let it bring with it fraternity and brotherhood in our Community and let us not forget to visit our relatives and friends.

It is also a day when it is our duty to remember our dear and close family members, relatives and friends who have preceded us to the hereafter and pray for their *maghferat*. Let us offer a Sura-e-Fateha for all the departed souls. Fateha.

With Salaams and Iltimase duas,

Your obedient sevak,

**MOHAMED G.M. DHIRANI**  
**CHAIRMAN**

1st Shawwal, 1420  
8th January, 2000





## Your letters

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

Dear brother,

# Our leadership is besieged with hypocrisy

Ours is a community which is rich in heritage and culture and we are blessed as followers of the true religion. Our members are always ready and willing to donate to charitable causes. Yet when it comes to our society, there is no social justice, fair play or care for the ordinary people. The very people who donate time and money, are treated according to what they are and not who they are. Their needs and their problems are not the criteria, but their standing and influence is the barometer.

Thanks to the leadership of our societies, we have now become a double-edged community. We want to do good for the world, while our own community is suffering. What does it matter, if a few individuals or families are poor, desperate and beg for their housing, or basic needs? What does it matter, if our women have to work in cafes as waitresses, to make ends meet? What next?

The leadership has all the suggestions for community members. They lecture us about our moral and Islamic responsibilities but apparently they consider themselves exempted. In my opinion, after having been lectured for so long concerning our moral duties, we should ask ourselves, should we consider only what our leaders are telling us or should we be guided by our religious principles. What kind of leadership is it that when *haqdar* people beg for financial help, only those with some sort of influence receive it? Yet these leaders are entrusted with millions to help the needy.

The leaders call themselves honest and religious. Yet some cannot even run

their own business or profession. They owe money in their own name or in their companies name, which they cannot or will not pay and yet they are imposed on us as our leaders. Some even lecture us during the day and patronise the casinos or night clubs at night.

If I add the moral dimension to these examples, this letter would be three times its current length. Talking of our leaders, why can't we see these leaders on sad occasions in the families of ordinary members of our community? I appeal to the community to act before our leaders destroy our rich and honest heritage and turn our societies into their personal possessions. The pioneers of our Khoja communities gave a lot of sacrifice in setting up our society which is now near the brink.

As a start, let the community break one of the cleverest ploys the leaders have played, where the power in the constitution is vested in the President to nominate his friends in key positions. Leadership is not a gift given by the people to the leader. It is an *amanat* and act of trust by the people in the belief that the leaders will be honest to themselves and to Allah (SWT), and act and serve with the same principle when dealing with the rich or poor. But Alas our experience proves otherwise!

In real life, when we want to get our children married (especially a girl), we make all enquiries. We ask for references from relatives, friends and look at the behaviour of the boy, his honesty and also try and find out about his private life. We should adopt the same method before we elect our lead-

ers, because we are not only handing them the communities finances, but also the well being of our young generation.

Our leaders not only have to be honest, fair and ardent followers of the principles of our religion, but have to be SEEN to be so.

Jaffer H. Walji  
101, Imperial Drive  
Rayners Lane, North Harrow  
Middlesex HAZ 7DH.

Dear brother,

## Faithfully accepting losses

Bitterness mixed with anger over someone's refusal to pay dues or admit the obligation to do so, or excuses to pay less is our common experience.

However the experience of such emotional reaction would seem to be a price in a line of business where agreements are verbal and value is attached to trust and honesty as a normal business practice.

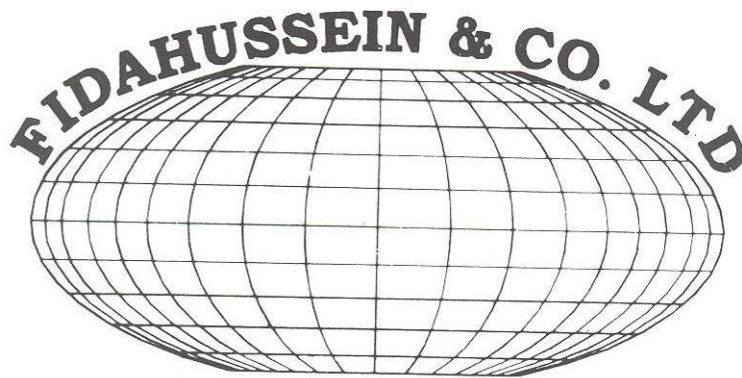
One such line of business, I am told, is an estate commission agency or brokering where commissions are agreed upon verbally in this part of the world.

A person who has been in this line of business for many years narrated to me his emotional experiences. He in course of time developed an accommodating or countering attitude of mind in his resignation to the gains he was deprived off from such transactions. In order to cushion his emotions as and when such incidents arise he almost instinctively says to himself, "Al-hamdu-lillah. Allah (S.W.T.) has saved me from a big calamity."

It has become his conviction that such material losses are transformed into divine rewards by way of reducing other trials and tribulations for him in this world. It is also his conviction that the guilty will bear the consequences in one way or another in this world. If only all of us could light tomorrow with (our deeds) today!

Reader  
Dar es Salaam.





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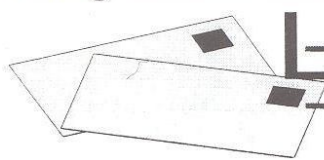
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Dear brother,

## To eat or *not to*

I really wonder about this issue of kuffar preparing najis food. Did the Prophet(SAW) ever refuse the food of the kuffar on the basis that they were kuffar? And is this documented? Obviously he did not drink alcohol or eat their meat, but did he refuse any food from them? Keep in mind that not all the marj'yeeh agree on this issue of the food of the kuffar not being permissible to eat. If he has, then none of us should eat from the kuffar, but if he did, why should our u'lema say it is najis to eat from them?

I understand that as Sh'ii we should follow our fiqh, but sometimes some of our community members make their own Islamic fiqh which ignores true spirituality. We worry more about whether gelatin is haram and petty fiqh rather than bringing people to Islam and studying about the ways to do that. I am not saying that we ignore fiqh, we must follow it, but let us remember that we should not unnecessarily make life difficult for ourselves.

As far as I know, in fiqh there is a ruling that if I know that a brother is eating something which may be najis, I do not need to tell him. HOWEVER, this is different from seeing someone commit a sin. Then it becomes my duty to tell him, if for example he insults his brother/sister in Islam. Both are not allowed (i.e eating something najis is not allowed), but one comes under petty fiqh, while the latter comes under Islamic philosophy and is part and parcel of Akhlaq.

Please think about what I have to say and readers can also opine.

M. Ali Rizvi  
Toronto.

*Federation Samachar*

Dear brother,

## There is a difference between spiritual and physical *najasad*

Is it documented that the Prophet (SAW) refused dinner invitations from the people he was trying to convert, because they believed in idols? Obviously he would not eat their meat or drink alcohol with them, but I would like to know how he refused them because the Prophet (SAW) was always considerate of the feelings of others, and would have done it nicely if he refused their invitations.

If he refused their invitations, then we are in no position to rationalize going to a kafir's house to eat food. If he did not, then why are the u'lema telling us that we can not eat their food because they are najis? There is a difference between spiritual najasad and physical *najasad*.

Even the u'lema do not all agree on this issue, so we cannot make blanket statements. Also, please keep the following in mind: If we do not have any interactions with the kuffar, if we do not invite them to our masjids (because we think they are "najis"), if we do not invite them to our place for dinner (I am not necessarily advocating vice-versa, depending on what our Rasool (SAW) did ---however remember he invited his enemy Abu Jahl, when he declared his prophethood to them and Imam Ali's wilaya when the Imam was a child), if we do not give them Qu'rans to read because we think they are najis, HOW are they supposed to know the truth when we keep avoiding them???

There is a BIG difference between one who KNOWS the truth and INTENTIONALLY rejects it versus someone who does NOT know the truth and does not follow it, although, in their own hearts they may have tried to search for the truth. We can not blame the kuffar outrightly, or those we label kuffar if we do not know how and why they think. Yes, they are responsible for trying to research the truth, and everyone is held accountable for that, but for someone who tried to find his way to Allah (SWT) and did not find Islam, but did his best, only Allah (SWT) can judge him or her, not you or I.

Perplexed  
Toronto.

Dear Brother,

## Impressed by the *Samachar*

I am a student, presently involved in religious studies in the holy city of Mashhad. I come from a Khoja family of Bombay. Being in Iran, I find myself cut off from the activities, events and functions of our Khoja Jamaat. Having read one of your issues, I was impressed by the vast information content encompassed in your magazine.

I shall be highly obliged if you could regularly send me copies of your *Federation Samachar*. It would help me keep in touch with the affairs and activities of our organised and well-defined Jamaat.

Shahnawaz Chithiwala.

Mashhad, Iran.

E-mail: shahnawaz@pars.neda.net.ir

International subscribers can now subscribe through our web site (<http://www.africafederation.org>). Editor.



# LETTERS

Dear Brother,

## The leaders we can all be proud of

May I air my views on the article "World and Africa Federation bury hatchet" which appeared in *Federation Samachar*, (Vol: 31, No.3 April 1999) and then briefly touch upon how we can honour our leaders.

Mulla Asgher took the trouble to travel to Dar-es-Salaam for reconciliation. For every step he took to earn the pleasure of Allah (SWT) and to right the wrong (as perceived by the wronged party) I have no doubt that he must have received ten Divine blessings. Mulla was prepared for reconciliation but at what cost? How far was he prepared to compromise? We shall never know the answer.

The issue of a secret ballot, interested party chairing a meeting etc. raised and discussed at the meeting between the AF Chairman and the WF President was neither at the proper forum nor at the proper venue and ought to be properly deliberated at the WF conference.

In a way I am glad the problem has been resolved as Mohamedbhai and Mulla Saheb are friends and according to our Imam (a.s.) an orphan is not a child without parents but a person without friends. The important issue that remains to be resolved is that we need seriously to consider the future roles of Mulla Saheb and Mohamed bhai, the two great leaders who have led our community to prosperity by serving us with unflinching dedication. My humble suggestions are as follows:

1. They should never be allowed to retire as they have accumulated vast experience and are well conversant with the problems and future needs of our community. Instead they should both hold advisory positions in future. This will have two advantages: (a) they will be able to guide future leaders of our community and (b) as fatherly figures,

*Federation Samachar*

they will be able to offer counsel and advise to individual Jamaats (community) when called upon to do so.

2. They should be encouraged to write down their memoirs so that future generations can read, reflect, ponder and be proud of these great leaders that the community has produced. Personally I would like to read the memoirs of our other past leaders but unfortunately this is not readily available. The memoirs could include for example:

- \*their personal background;
- \*problems and frustrations (things they wanted to do for the community for which they couldn't get enough support) that they personally experienced in leading the community and
- \*their memorable selected speeches given in various venues as leaders of our community.

In this respect I personally feel that as an editor of *Federation Samachar* you have a vital role to play if we are to succeed.

3. Various Jamaats should be invited to make available to the WF various audio and video cassettes of Mulla's majlis, so that copies could be made by the WF and sold to the public. Profits from book and cassette sales can be used in erecting permanent monuments to honour these great leaders.

4. Lastly, I personally feel it is our duty to honour these leaders whenever we can and in whatever capacity we can and this should happen during their lifetime and not during the time of reading out obituaries.

Other readers might have more suggestions and I urge them to come forward and air their views in the *Federation Samachar*.

**Mohammed Baker Hemraj**  
Birmingham.

Dear Brother,

## "SONBAGH" memories



The above photograph of the Dr. Livingston House, Zanzibar has an outside sign which reads: "DR. LIVINGSTON HOUSE: The house was placed by the Sultan Seyyid Majid at the disposal of the famous explorer David Livingston when fitting his last expedition to the mainland in 1866.

It later became the property of the Ithna-Asheri Khoja Indian Community that used it as a sanitarium and as a place of religious meetings, and became known as "SONBAGH". (Seems the lady Son-bai made wakf and so came the name "SONBAGH"). In 1947 the Government purchased the property for use as a scientific laboratory and living quarters. Now the building houses the Zanzibar Tourist Corporation."

I have been to Sonbagh many times. The building became old and uninhabitable but I can still recollect the tennis court and large sports ground for "NGOME" - baseball. On Sundays we used to have a Majlis at 5.00 p.m. and surely tea was served thereafter. Time flies and years roll by but the Livingston building is an indelible part of our Khoja Community history.

**Gulamabbas Dhala, Los Angeles**

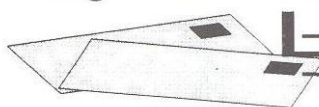
Dear Brother,

## *Samachar* is hard to get

It is rather rarely that I get hold of the *Federation Samachar* these days. I understand that you send it in bulk through the Jamat office, but it seems to finish very quickly. Please advise me on subscription procedures.

**Ahmed G. Virjee**  
North Harrow Middlesex, U.K.  
International subscribers can subscribe through our web site. Editor.





**Dear brother,  
A Zainabiya link...**

Salaams from Zainabiya Islamic Centre. We have a new website - [www.zainabiyacentre.connectfree.co.uk](http://www.zainabiyacentre.connectfree.co.uk) or <http://zainabiya.cjb.net> and have put your site linked to our Islamic link page so that our members can quickly visit your site through our site.

We found your site very well designed and we might want to copy some of your graphics (already designed) to insert in ours. We hope we have your permission to do so.

**Mohammadhusein Rashid**  
Web Editor  
[zainabiya-centre@connectfree.co.uk](mailto:zainabiya-centre@connectfree.co.uk)

**You are welcome to adapt any graphic or information from our site. We too have created links with a number of communal sites including yours.** Editor.

**Dear brother,  
Link to Madressa  
resources**

Please note that the Shia Ithna Asheri Madressa of Hujjat Imambara London, Stanmore has a web site that is a useful source of information for Madressas. The URL is [www.madressa.net](http://www.madressa.net) <<http://www.madressa.net>>. Perhaps you will want to include this as a link from you site.

**Abbas Jaffer**  
Principal, S I Madressa, Stanmore  
Dear brother,

**British not German**

I keep on enjoying the articles, layout, presentation etc. on your Web site. However may I point out that on the "Thought of the Week titled "Think not on what you lack as on what you have" by Munir Daya dated 5th April '99 - 11th April '99, there is a mistake in the statement: "General. Bader with wooden legs became one of Germany's best fighter pilots." Douglas Bader was actually a British and he was an ace RAF pilot.

**Web Surfer,**  
London  
*Federation Samachar*

## Some comments on the newly designed AF Web Page.....

*The Africa Federation Web Page committee launched a newly designed Page on the eve of Ramadhan 1420A.H. We carry a few of the comments received.*

**Dear brother,  
A link with LA.....**

Please update your Web Site with the new LAJAMAAT website address wherever it refers to LAJAMAAT and on any other files that are still on your server. Reason being that whenever a viewer does a search on the word LAJAMAAT or SIIJLA they also get the following sites picked by search engines:

[http://www.world-federation.org/north\\_america/usa/losange](http://www.world-federation.org/north_america/usa/losange).  
[http://world-federation.org/secretariat/losangeles\\_index.htm](http://world-federation.org/secretariat/losangeles_index.htm)  
<http://www.islam.org.nz/links.htm>

It is good that the Internet search engines have picked us up and surely it takes a long time before these register a site. However we do need to update the links on your pages to point to the new site with updated LAJAMAAT information. By cc mail to the LAJAMAAT President and the LAJAMAAT EC, I confirm that I have their agreement.

**Mariam Remtulla-Jiwa**  
Web Manager,  
SIIJLA Website.

**Dear brother,  
Congratulations....**

My heartiest congratulation on your new web site.  
It is very informative and attractive.

**A.G. Karim**  
[karim@euro-comm.co.uk](mailto:karim@euro-comm.co.uk)

**Dear brother,  
An Orlando link...**

We refer to your newly designed Page. Please add the URL of the Husseini Islamic Center, Orlando Jamaat on the links section.

**Raza Dhanji**  
Secretary/Webmaster, HIC, Orlando Jamaat.

**Dear brother,  
A pleasant page**

A pleasant and well set page. Congratulation. The worth of it is to update. Why not establish a question and answer section in regard to the Africa Federation activities and programs

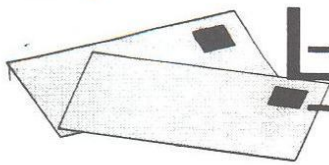
**Baqir Alloo, [baqir@yesic.com](mailto:baqir@yesic.com)**

**Dear brother,  
Easily readable....**

Definitely an excellent web-page. Easily readable and pleasing to the eye. Wondering why the Dialogue section had died out. Keep up the good work.

**Abdulhussain Tejani, Dar es Salaam.**





Dear brother,

## THE HOLY QURAN MUST BE TRANSLATED

I do not see any reason why your anonymous Dubai correspondent, writing in the July 1999 edition of your magazine, objects to the Holy Quran being translated in yet another language, Tamazight, by the Moroccan Berbers. I believe any non-Arabic speaking Muslim translating the Holy Book in the language understood by him and his community is doing a great service to Islam and as such he should be supported and encouraged.

The Holy Quran was revealed in Arabic as our Prophet was an Arab and it was the Arabs for whom it was originally intended. The verses 12:1: "*We have sent it down as an Arabic Quran in order that you may understand*" does not emphasize the importance of the Arabic language as assumed by your correspondent. What it stresses is the need for Arabs to understand the divine revelations so that they may change their lifestyle to conform with the teachings of the Holy Book. By translating the Holy Quran in their own language the Berbers are in fact helping to spread the message of Allah (SWT) to their own people in their own tongue and are therefore doing nothing wrong.

For ages now, the Holy Quran has been taken for granted by most non Arabic speaking Muslims with the result that the pearls of wisdom contained in the Holy Book have escaped their attention. The importance has always been a correct pronunciation and memorization of Quranic verses and if any Muslim can recite these verses with correct pronunciation and a musically beautiful voice then he is highly praised amid thunderous applause from his audience even though what he recited was all Greek to him. But he cannot be blamed for his ignorances because the very people applauding him are themselves nuts as far as un-

*Federation Samachar*

derstanding the meaning of Quranic verses is concerned.

If we are really serious in our much publicised Tabligh activities then first and foremost an effort must be made to spread the meaning of Quranic verses in our mosques, madressas and even homes. Mere parrot-like recitation is not enough, it must be followed by translation of the verses in the language of one's own understanding. Madressa's children should be taught the Arabic language itself and not merely correct pronunciation of Quranic verses. If this is not done now then our future generations will also grope in the dark in much the same way as the previous and present ones.

The importance of understanding the Holy Quran has been mentioned in various chapters of the Holy Book and I quote a few of them as follows:-

**12:1:** "*We have sent it down as an Arabic Quran in order that you may understand.*"

**14:4:** "*We have sent no apostle but in the language of his own people so that he might make (his message) plain to them.*"

**19:88:** "*We have revealed to you (the Quran) in your own tongue that you may thereby proclaim good tidings to the upright and give warning to contentious people.*"

**41:44:** "*Had we revealed the Quran in a foreign tongue they would have said: 'If only its verses were expounded: Why in a foreign tongue (when) the Prophet was Arabian?'*"

**43:1:** "*We have revealed the Quran in the Arabic tongue that you may understand. It is in the Mother book with us, sublime and full of wisdom.*"

Kassamali M. Versi  
Moshi

Dear brother,

## Zanzibar article was exceptional

It is well known that all your editions of the *Federation Samachar* are excellent. The issue Vol. 31, No. 3 was exceptional as it brought back warm memories of our KSI community in my native Zanzibar. May Allah (SWT) grant you and your staff more penmanship to keep on enlightening us.

Very many thanks to Br. Abdulrazak Sheriff Fazal for the well researched article on the origin of our Jamaat. It is a text book example of how to organize ourselves. This resonates with us even today, as we fan out to the far flung corners of the globe. The foresight, leadership, and persistence of our leaders ensured lifelong support for the social and cultural needs of the community, all within the framework of Sharia and in the footsteps of Ahle Baith (A.S.).

It was also a pleasant surprise to see the photo of the 1967 Zanzibar Jamaat cabinet, which includes my late father, Sherali Ahmed Ladha. My family warmly appreciates this gesture.

Let us recite Sure e Fateha for all the marhumins who served our community, and pray for the present generation of leaders.

Gulamhusain S. Ahmed  
Lucent Technologies Intl. Inc.  
COM Quality Manager and Customer Training Co-ordinator  
P O Box 4945,  
Riyadh, 11412,  
Saudi Arabia  
gahmed@exchange.sa.lucent.com

Do you have something to say about our community? Send in your views or opinions to:

The Editor  
*Federation Samachar*  
P.O. Box 6710  
Dar es Salaam.  
E-mail: [samachar@raha.com](mailto:samachar@raha.com)





## First Canadian Shia Directory published

The First Canadian Shia Directory has been published through the cooperation of NASIMCO (North American Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim Communities) and Ahlul Bayt Assembly of Canada and was sponsored by the Islamic Humanitarian Services. Co-operation was also received from dozens of Shia individuals and organizations, without whom this project would not have been possible.

This directory, (approximately 450 pages) contains a listing of all Shia organizations, Shia individuals, an advertisers section, a halal food/restaurant listing and an Islamic event calendar till the end of December 2000. It is meant to be a useful reference tool for individuals, families, organizations and businesses across Canada. Community members around the world can use the directory to contact and keep in touch with the Canadian Shia community.

The cost of the directory is CDS\$ 5:00 (plus shipping & handling, if applicable) and US \$ 5:00 (plus shipping & handling, if applicable) outside Canada.

Sister Juman Kubba thanked the crowd for their overwhelming support in sending their nomination forms for the Muslim Women Awards and urged all to participate annually in this important event. She congratulated all the winners and proceeded to introduce each recipient for their contributions to Islam. She then presented **The Zainab Award** to Sister Soha Yassine, the **Khadijah Al-Kubra Award** to Sister Amina Inlose and the **Fatema Az Zahra Award** to Sister Shabnam Dewji.

Sayed Murtadha Al-Ghazvini wrapped up the evening with supplications as this very successful program came to an end.

## The Muslim Women Day Banquet in California

The Azzahra Mosque celebrated Lady Fatema AzZahra's birthday and The Fourth Muslim Women Day on Sunday, October 10, 1999 at the Sequoia Club in Buena Park, California, with a grand banquet dinner.

A capacity crowd of over 400 people came to honor and acknowledge outstanding women for their efforts and accomplishments to the cause of Islam. The evening started off with Salaat led by Ayatullah Murtadha Al Ghazvini followed with Qur'an recitation by two youths, Jananne Khalife and Zaynab Alshami. The crowd were treated to a chorus of Islamic hymns performed by young girls from the City of Knowledge. Sister Nazanin Wahid, who moderated the event did an excellent job, and together with the eloquent speakers that followed, kept the audience in their seats throughout the evening.

Sister Tayba Yadegari, the first speaker, talked on "Women in Islam" emphasizing their rights as laid down in the Holy Qur'an. That set the tone by engaging the interest of the audience who were treated throughout the evening with outstanding presentations. A well performed skit titled "The Thing" by Layla Shaikley and Ali Rahnama was humorous, at the same time clearly sending a message on the importance and reasons for wearing the Hijab.

Our second speaker of the evening, from Cambridge, Canada, captivated the crowd with a superb talk on "Sayedatu Nisa il-Aalameen". Sister Sukaina Dewji, quoting from the Holy Qur'an and Ahadith of our Aimmah A.S., touched on the various roles and importance that Islam has bestowed on women in comparison with women of other cultures and religions. The program continued uninterrupted while dinner was served in between a beautiful poem titled "The Veil" presented by Tabassum and Sabika Mithani from the Huseini Madressah.

Our last speaker of the evening, a distinguished lady from Lebanon, Sayeda Rabab al-Sadr, addressed the audience in Arabic. In paying tribute to lady Fatema AzZahra, Sayeda Rabab gave a thought provoking talk on the role of the Prophet's daughter and her impact on all women of the world. This was eloquently translated in English by Sister Aateqa Al-Ghazvini to the attentive and appreciative audience. Sayed Murtadha Al-Ghazvini, on behalf of the organizing committee presented a plaque of appreciation to Sayeda Rabab AsSadr. The audience honored her with a standing ovation in recognition of her tireless efforts and services to Islam and, in particular, the communities of Lebanon where she heads the As Sadr Foundation in running orphanages, schools and hospitals.



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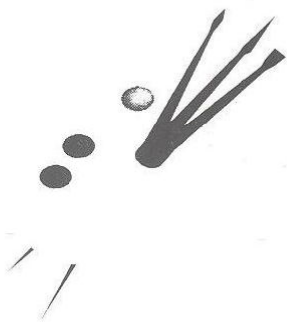
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## Report on the 6th and 7th Executive Council Meetings of the World Federation

The 7th meeting of the Executive Council held on Saturday 20th November 1999 was hosted by Wessex Jamat at Abbey Hall, Southampton. Members from England and France attended. Haji Hasnain Walji, the Vice-President, travelled from Dallas, Texas to attend the meeting.

After the recitation from the Holy Qur'an by Murtazabhai Bandali, the President presented a brief report of the developments during the last quarter. Conveying the Salaams from our Marja', Ayatullah Seestani, the President stated that a special congratulating message had been conveyed to him on the occasion of our 12th Imam (A.S.) birthday. He then informed the session about the recent changes which have taken place in the composition of the management of Gujarat Council under the Chairmanship of Mr Gulamabbasbhai Bhurani.

In September 1999, he said, he had travelled to New York to open Darul Tabligh branch there, and he had laid foundation of the Imambargah Project at Albany. The President requested the Councillors to recite Fateha for all those who had passed away during the last quarter, with a special remembrance for Janab Mulla Bashir Rahim.

### Minutes and Accounts

The minutes were adopted after a pertinent discussion on its contents, subject to some crucial amendments. The President informed the meeting that most unusually, accounts could not be presented this time because of the absence of Haji Ahmed Daya who has resigned from his post of Hon. Treasurer and even after persuasions, has not agreed to reconsider his stand.

The President expressed his fear that the management of funds would suffer a great deal if Haji Ahmed Daya refused to resume his services. Several members present expressed their

deep appreciation for the continuous and efficient services Haji Ahmed Daya had rendered over the last 18 years, and also displayed full confidence in him. An eager recommendation was made to Haji Ahmed Daya to withdraw his resignation.

### The Role of the Secretariat

The President then proceeded to give a detailed report on the activities of the Secretariat of the World Federation. He said that it was because of ignorance prevailing among most circles about the central position of the Secretariat that its activities were neither understood nor appreciated. Enumerating the many facets of the services controlled and performed at the Secretariat, the President made it explicit that the World Federation, because of its wide exposure, could not be compared to any other existing Federation.

The President further stated that all the sections and divisions run under the World Federation, like Medical Advisory Board, Zainabiya Child Sponsorship Scheme, Islamic Education Board, Hawza, Haj Medical Mission and Careers, Education and Training Advisory Board were guided and financed by the Secretariat. He thought it imperative for the notion to be eradicated that the Secretariat, or for that matter, the affairs of the World Federation are run single handed. The Secretariat has a meeting of its Office Bearers every week, and even the Vice President, Haji Hasnain Walji, who lives in the U.S.A., was in contact on telephone line making him a party to the consultations. The Executive Council of the World Federation meets quarterly to submit all the reports and the accounts. Thus, it has a distinct mark of working as a team.

The President outlined the many services which are constantly sought by and provided to its worldwide membership. In addition, the Secretariat has

to remain alive to various developments taking place in the entire Shia World. The World Federation relief projects, handled by the Secretariat, covers places like India, Pakistan, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq and others where refugees are provided with the basic needs. He described the Secretariat as a hub around which the whole wheel of the World Federation rotates.

### HIV/Aids

On the subject of the legal opinion about HIV, the President stated that the required legal opinion could not be obtained because Shabbir Lakha was away for some time. However, since the resolution on the subject had already been adopted, the World Federation will now circulate it further among its membership together with the guideline.

### Establishment of a Consulate in Saudi Arabia

At the reception held in honour of Mr Peter Haine, the Minister of State for Foreign Office and Commonwealth Affairs of United Kingdom, announced the imminent establishment of a Consulate in Saudi Arabia to assist Muslim Pilgrims. The World Federation has written to the Minister expressing appreciation of the government's support for the Muslims living in the UK and offered help, particularly in the field of humanitarian and medical services to Pilgrims.

### New Legislation

The Secretary General reported that the Muslim community in the United Kingdom has to be prepared for new legislation to be effective very shortly in Britain. The legislation will have significance for everyone in the United Kingdom, including charities. They are the Data Protection Act 1998, the Human Rights Act 1998 and The Freedom of Information Act (presently in the draft form). The new legislation will bring significant benefits to all organisations and individuals in the United Kingdom but it will also place new responsibilities on all organisations that hold personal information. All member Jamaats need to

(continued on page 14)



(....from page 13)

act now to review their policies and procedures to ensure that they are consistent with both the letter and the spirit of the new legislation.

### Conference

The meeting decided that the Conference 2000 be held in the first week of October 2000, starting from 6th October 2000 to 9th October 2000. As for the Venue, two places were proposed: London and Orlando (U.S.A). It was decided to issue a referendum on the Venue so that a consensus could be obtained.

The next Executive Council meeting is expected to be held on 1st April 2000 at Leicester.

### THE 6TH EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING

The Sixth Meeting of the Executive Council, held at the Zainabiya Centre, Birmingham on 10th July 99 attracted almost 200 Councillors, invitees and observers from Aden, Africa, France and almost all the Jamats in the UK. Also in attendance, as observers, was a group of senior citizens from Stanmore.

### AYATULLAH SEESTANI

In his review of the past quarter, the President, al Haj Mulla Asgher conveyed recent developments in connection with Ayatulla al-Udhama, Syed Ali al-Seestani. After the recent assassination of Ayatullah Syed Muhammad al-Sadr, certain Iraqi youngsters demanded that Ayatullah Seestani lead Jumma prayers. When he declined to do so, his house was set on fire. Alhamdulillah, the Ayatullah and his son escaped unharmed although part of the house was severely damaged. The President reported that he had spoken to Agha on the phone on the occasion of the Wiladat of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.). Agha had sent his Salaams and had specifically requested that Mumineen be dissuaded from bringing hukuk funds to him in Iraq, as that caused him great difficulties with the authorities. Agha strongly recommended that all such funds be sent to any of his Wakils in different parts of the world.

*Federation Samachar*

### TRIBUTES

The President observed, with great sadness, that in the past quarter the Community had suffered a tremendous loss in the passing away of Marhum Roshan R. Merali, Marhum Nurali Gulamhussein, Marhum Mulla Bashir Rahim and Marhum Habib Walji.

### KOSOVO

The President reported that almost £36,000 had been raised specifically for assisting the displaced people of Kosovo. After thorough research the World Federation has decided to focus on tabligh activities although £20,000 had been sent through various Islamic Relief organisations. The translation of the Holy Quran in Albanian language is in the process of being printed. Haji Nazir Virji, on behalf of the Peterborough Jamat donated £3500 for the Quran Printing Project. According to Haji Kassam Manji who had recently visited the Kosovo region, some 1700 Mosques had been destroyed, 200 of them being Shii. He also reported that 50% of the Muslims in Kosovo were amongst the lovers of Ahlul Bait.

### SOMALIA

Forty two families from Somalia had now been settled in the UK and there were some more elsewhere in Europe. Most of the expenses in the process of their migration and settlement including airfares were borne by the World Federation. He acknowledged the assistance in kind by the Community in the UK and also appreciated the self reliance and initiative of the families from Somalia in their own settlement.

### COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN JAMATS

The President acknowledged that there has been excellent co-ordination of activities with CoEJ and numerous projects initiated by the CoEJ had been supported by the World Federation. Such a cordial relationship was a mark of maturity and sincerity on the part of the CoEJ leadership rather than 'subservience' as had been misinterpreted by certain quarters.

### AL AMALI DISTRIBUTION

The latest publication by the World

Federation, the Amali of Sheikh Mufid has been well received. After Kitabul Irshad, it is the second English translation of the work of this great master. Mulla thanked Haji Shabbir Walji for a donation of \$10,000 towards the publication. He said this greatly assisted the secretariat in distributing free copies to libraries all over the world.

### EDUCATION ASSISTANCE

Though this was a very high priority item on the World Federation agenda, in spite of the paucity of funds, the World Federation has done its utmost. However much more needs to be done to enable the community to have sufficient funds at its disposal to invest in education.

### MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

Appealing for funds he stated that while the activities at the Medical Advisory Board were on the increase, there was a huge deficit in the fund and it has become increasingly difficult to assist even the most needy patients.

### THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S VISIT TO GUJARAT

**OPENING OF HAJI NAJI COMPLEX:** The Secretary General attended the Opening Ceremony of Haji Naji Complex consisting of 70 flats. The flat consisted of two bedrooms with all the amenities and on average covered 475 sq ft area. 66 flats were allocated to families in Bhavnagar and 4 flats were allocated to families from Kukad. He expressed appreciation to all donors and workers who made the project a reality.

### ECONOMIC UPLIFTMENT PROGRAMME IN GUJARAT

On the instruction of the President of the World Federation, the Secretary General had an extensive discussion on the proposal from the World Federation for the economic upliftment of our brothers in Kutch and Kathiawad. He was happy to inform the Council that the Economic Upliftment Committee under the Council Of Gujarat has already been established. Initially,

(continued on page 15)



(..from page 14)

seven economically backward small towns and villages in Gujarat will be adopted. The process will involve the active participation of local Jamats and to begin with a sum of Rupees 21 lakhs (3 Lakhs for each village or town) will be required. Once the scheme is in place and running, it will uplift the downtrodden families of the community to be self sufficient and self employed.

#### FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

The Council learnt with satisfaction that the accounts presented a healthy and positive picture of the financial status of the World Federation. The Hon. Treasurer, Haji Ahmed Daya, reported that the 7% administrative fee for the last two years had resulted in reducing numerous deficits. The figures presented were very much in line with the budget projection at the 1997 Conference.

The increase in revenue reduced pressure on other votes and in particular on Sehme Sadat. The Hon. Treasurer reported that the Sehme Sadat surplus had been reduced down to £ 132 K as per the accounts presented at the meeting and had subsequently been further reduced down to £89,000. This colossal reduction in the surplus meant that the World Federation had been able to send a total sum of £284K to Agha in the five months preceding the meeting.

Drawing the attention of the Councilors to the overdrawn vote of Sehme Imam (A.S.), the Hon. Treasurer explained that a sum of nearly £180,000 was given as a loan to Sehme Imam (A.S.) by the Secretariat from internally generated funds.

Another vote significantly improved by the 7% administration charge was the Jaffery Education Fund. In accordance with 1997 budget projections this deficit which stood at more than £200 K is expected to be wiped off by the Conference in the year 2000.

With regard to the deficit in the Medical Fund, caused by cases, primarily from East Africa, these will also be

wiped off by the Year 2000 Conference as a result of the 7% admin charges.

It is a matter of record that for over a decade the format and the style of presentation of accounts, every quarter and at every triennial conference have been constant and consistent. The Hon. Treasurer took exception to the allegation from certain Councilors that the presentation had been dressed up to portray a falsely rosy picture of the state of affairs. The Treasurer maintained that the so-called 'rosy picture' was not just a picture but a reality. He was particularly aggrieved that certain councilors displayed a negative and caustic attitude despite the efforts of the office bearers to improve the financial health of the World Federation.

He was further aggrieved by the tone of certain Councilors showing no respect to his professionalism, diligence and efforts in managing the financial affairs of the World Federation with an unbroken record of honorary service for the past 17 years.

He then declared his intention to resign and subsequently resigned.

#### Mulla Asghar visits Skardu, Baltistan

The President of the World Federation, accompanied by the Secretary General, Dr. Sibtain Panjwani and Mr. Naseen Valji traveled to Islamabad and Skardu (Baltistan) on 23rd November 1999. During their stay there, they were able to visit several projects completed by the World Federation.

In Skardu, they saw the Academy being constructed for higher studies of our Shia students. The construction cost of the Academy has been partly financed by Brother Naseen Valji, who was able to see the project first hand to his satisfaction.

At a meeting with Trustees of the Jabir bin Hayyan Trust, they were able to exchange important views regarding the future of the educational programme in the hitherto deprived areas of Baltistan. They returned home on 30th November, 1999.

## New York Jamat hosts Hafize Quran Children

The three children, Mohammed Sadiq (Age 14), Zehra (Age 10) and Fatima (Age 6) are Hafiz-e-Quran. Their parents, Hurmat Ali Waziri Saheb and Rukhsanbanu Bai Waziri have spent the last decade in training and providing Islamic education to their children in order to become Hafiz-e-Quran.

The mental capacity of the children which has been enhanced through the devoted training of their parents is incredible and Syed Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, has called these children 'miracles of this Century'.

The children reside in the Holy City of Qum, Iran with their parents. New York Jamaat hosted them for the last 15 days of Mahe Ramadhan and various programs involving the children were earmarked to be held.

## Toronto Jamaat establishes Video Conference link

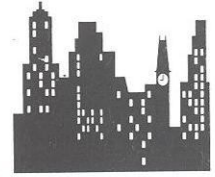
The Holy Month of Ramadhan commenced on Thursday with the first day of fasting being on Friday 10th December, 1999. All Centers in Ontario organized varied programs of Qur'an khani, Du'a recitation and Waez.

West Center (Brampton) moved to their newly leased premises on Friday 1st Day of Ramadhan when they were addressed by Jamaat President, Ali Raza Rajani following which a topical majlis was delivered by Maulana Mohammed Rizvi.

So as to connect all the Centers in Ontario to the Bayview Mosque, an experimental connection with the Crescent Village Center has been established through a high speed newly innovated Video Conference Link. Preliminary reports suggest that the live reception from Bayview is received loud and clear. Centers that are linked with Bayview will be able to receive live transmissions throughout the year.



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## France confirms ban on Islamic scarves in schools

On 21 October, 1999 France's highest administrative court reaffirmed a ban on the wearing of Islamic head-scarves in schools, reversing an earlier decision by lower courts.

The Council of State ruled that school-heads have the right to insist that pupils dress in a way "compatible with the proper functioning of the class, notably in gymnastics and science."

In May, 1996 a court in Nancy in eastern France ruled in favour of a Muslim girl, who had been expelled from school for refusing to remove her head-scarf.

The court argued then that the school authorities had not provided evidence that, as they claimed, the head-scarf was a source of danger to the girl in science and P.E. classes.

But, in response to an appeal by the Ministry of Education, the Council of State over-ruled the decision, stating that "freedom of expression and religious belief does not impede the right of school-heads" to maintain the ban on head-scarves.

The issue is an extremely sensitive one in France, where there is a strict separation of religion and state, but where Islam — with four million adherents — is now the country's second largest faith.

### Some Statistics.....

World Muslims.....	1,482,596,925 (1996)
Muslims in Asia....	1,022,692,000 (1996)
Muslims in Africa..	426,282,000 (1996)
World population..	5,771,939,007 (1996)
% of Muslims.....	26% (1996)
Islam year growth (94-95)..	6.40% (UN)
Christianity growth rate (94-95)....	1.46%
World Muslim population (1998):	1,678,442,000
World Muslim population (Projected in 2000).....	1,902,095,000
<u>Growth of Islam:</u>	
North America (1989-1998).....	25%
Africa.....	2.15%
Asia.....	12.57%
Europe.....	142.35%
Latin America.....	4.73%
Australia.....	257.01%

## IEB ON AIR -- sponsors sought

Sunday, the 1st of October 1999 marked the beginning of a new activity by the Islamic Education Board (IEB). The IEB started, for the first time, broadcasting religious programmes on Radio Asia from 7.10 am to 8.00 am. Lectures, lessons and tips were prepared and presented by Sister Ummulbanin Merali and the President of the World Federation, Mulla Asgherali M M Jaffer.

The programmes aired so far have covered topics including beliefs, akhlaaq and spirituality with special emphasis on Duas. The broadcasts were temporarily supposed to replace the broadcasts from the Muslim Institute whose religious programmes had suddenly stopped being aired. However, the response to the IEB style and content was overwhelming and for a whole week, owing to popular public demand, Radio Asia had to repeat programmes.

The office of IEB has since been inundated with responses. A lot of Pakistani Muslims listening to the early morning broadcasts have highly recommended the programme. They have ordered books, cassettes and most important of all, they have asked questions related to the contents of the broadcasts.

Because of the demand received from Muslims and Shias alike, the IEB has decided to continue airing the programme for at least the next three months. This commitment will cost the World Federation £ 12,000 Pounds for which sponsors are sought. Should the project fail to muster support from members of the community, an important opportunity to perform tableegh will be lost.

The cost incurred is £ 150 per day, which includes all costs towards preparation of the programme as well as airing it. Those interested in supporting this project may contact The World Federation on [worldfed@dircon.co.uk](mailto:worldfed@dircon.co.uk) or The Islamic Education Board on [IEB@tableegh.org.uk](mailto:IEB@tableegh.org.uk)

## Sisters Aged 10 and 12 do an amazing GCSE double

Two Luton sisters have achieved an amazing double by gaining GCSEs in Information Technology - even though they are aged just ten and twelve. Mahdiyya Sachoo, 12, and sister Salma, 10, of Florence Avenue, were relaxing on a holiday in Canada, a reward for all their hard work, when the results came through. Mahdiyya, who goes to Lealands High School, had top marks in the higher tier and achieved a starred A GCSE. Salma, a pupil at Sundon Park Junior School, gained the highest possible grade for the foundation tier, a GCSE grade C.

The girls, whose favourite TV programme is Sister Sister, sailed through the course in 9 months, instead of the usual two years. Their father, Jaffer, managing director of a Luton company, Nasimco International, said: "It was a shock for me. I was thinking that Mahdiyya might get a B. I was very happy to see this!" The girls' mother, Nasim, added: "We are very pleased with both of them. I just told them to do their best."

The youngsters came to England from Tanzania 18 months ago, where they had already been studying computer studies, at a junior school in Dar Es Salaam. Mahdiyya was keen to pursue Computer Studies in her spare time, and last autumn, both girls began studying on Saturdays at Rye College, which was then based in Northwood but later moved to Watford. The girls also occasionally took an hour and a half additional study time at the college on Sundays.

Said Mrs Sachoo: "At first, we were going to take Mahdiyya only, and then we thought, because we were going a long way there, we might as well take Salma along as well."

The sisters returned this week from a trip to Toronto, in Canada, arranged as a reward for their hard work. The girls flew out with cousin Salma Jaffer, aged 12, for a month-long holiday with their aunt. Mahdiyya said: "I was very pleased. I was shocked and happy."



## Khatami stresses on life based on Quranic teachings

When opening the 16th International Holy Quran recitation, memorization, and interpretation Contest in Tehran on 6 November, 1999 which coincided with the auspicious anniversary of the divine appointment of the Prophet Mohammad (saw) to the Prophethood, Iranian President Hojatoleslam Seyyed Mohammad Khatami called on the Iranian people to have a life based on Quranic teachings.

Khatami reiterated the importance of the role the Islamic Republic of Iran should play in establishing credibility for the world of Islam through hard work, precision, and perseverance. He also said that life in Iran should be such that when people of the world look at the Islamic society there, they would see the highest level of awareness, morality, and courtesy and respect and greatness for all human beings.

Talking about the importance of science, ethics, and beauty he said that "the Islamic republic of Iran was established to walk in the pathway of the Quran". The President added that attaining a society based on Quranic values is a very difficult task but stressed that human beings as natural beings are manifestation of God's generosity of which tidings have been given in the holy Quran.

The President referred to science and worship as indispensable tools and added that out of wisdom comes worship, attachment, and affiliation towards the Creator. Khatami pointed to awareness as being a necessary but not sufficient condition for worship and added that in addition to science, love is also needed for establishment of worship.

The 16th international holy Quran contest was attended by reciters from 30 countries. Referees for the contest included master Quran reciters from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Indonesia, Maghreb, and Iran.



## DATELINE IRAN

### UN calls for more European support to Iran's battle against drugs

Professor Pino Arlacchi, Executive Director of the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) reaffirmed on the urgent need for international support for "Iran's brave struggle against drug trafficking" in a statement made during the first week of November, 1999.

He made his statement after an incident in which 36 members of the Islamic Republic of Iran's law enforcement agents were killed by drug traffickers. The deaths occurred during an armed clash in an area near the border with Pakistan on the night of 3 November, 1999.

Arlacchi said: "the terrible and painful incident at the Iran-Pakistan border which took the lives of 36 brave members of Iran's law enforcement agencies is another confirmation of the great commitment of Iran against the scourge of drug trafficking. It also provides further evidence of the need for urgent international support, in particular by the European Community, to Iran's efforts to suppress drug smuggling."

The Executive Director added "regrettably, the magnitude of Iran's efforts to combat drug trafficking has not yet been sufficiently recognised, nor offered adequate support. It is a well documented fact that the opium and heroin which transit Iran are mainly destined to the drug markets in the European Union." He also said that "there is urgent need for greater European Union technical assistance and moral and economic support to Iran, the people who fight the battle against drugs and their families."

"On behalf of the United Nations, I express my most heartfelt condolences to the families of those brave Iranians who paid with their lives through their commitment to duty, to the President and to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran." Arlacchi added.

### Largest Mosque being built in Iran

The Iranian President Seyyed Mohammad Khatami has praised the Imam Khomeini prayers hall which is under construction in Tehran.

During a recent meeting with the Prayers hall board members, Khatami said that the proposed Imam Khomeini prayers hall is the biggest architectural construction which has ever been built in Iran and due attention is needed to be paid to development and completion of this project.

In the commemorative book of the Prayer Hall he wrote "Tehran prayers hall which has been dignified with the name of Imam Khomeini is a symbol of faith, and beauty and I hope it stands in the history as a glorified reminiscent of the Islamic revolution and helps advance valuable Islamic heritage." Khatami thanked all the people involved in the project and hoped for its early completion.



## Council of European Jamaats organises Boys Residential Camp

For eleven days between 14th and 24th of August 1999 the Education Committee Council of European Jamaats (COEJ) organised a residential Camp for boys at Kingswood (near Wolverhampton) which proved to be suitable, convenient and administratively acceptable for the group's academic, sports and social activities.

The success of the Nakuru Annual Camp organised by the Tabligh Committee of Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat, provided the impetus and the inspiration for a similar styled residential camp for boys in the UK. The day to day organisation and administration in the setting up and leading to the final Camp was undertaken by the Chairman of The Education Committee of Council of European Jamaats, Murtaza Dato.

On Saturday 14th August, the campers met at Stanmore at noon and after refreshments boarded a coach for the two hours drive to Birmingham. At Birmingham, more Campers joined the Group. Namaz was offered and lunch followed. From Birmingham, it was another ride of about an hour, to the Kingswood Camp. The Paris and Wessex Campers came direct from Portsmouth to Kingswood in a mini coach. After ten days of varied activities, the group returned to Stanmore, via Birmingham, on Tuesday, 24th August.

### The Achievements:

What was the Camp all about? Was it just purely a vacation for the campers, or did something useful come out of it? Judging entirely from the honest, written and oral, responses from the campers and from their parents and friends, one is left in no doubt what so ever, that the Kingswood Camp 1999 has been an unqualified resounding success. The instructors could visibly see and heartily feel the changes in the Campers as the days passed by. The Camp aimed to provide a friendly and productive atmosphere for learning Islamic issues and manners. The

location of the Camp certainly provided that tranquillity. The friendliness and approachability of the Administrators and the Instructors reinforced the atmosphere not only for learning, but also combining learning with fun, in an Islamic atmosphere.

The Camp hoped for participation in various sports activities and to develop new sporting interests. This was achieved in that all Campers engaged in old and "new" sporting activities - archery, aeroball, nightline, wall climbing etc.

The Camp intended to reinforce a lifestyle of good Islamic practices. The Camp's ethos were based on Islamic principles with activities, timetable and extra-curricular activities being geared and conforming to an Islamic lifestyle that fits easily with the day to day life of a Shia in the western society. Thus, the Campers were shown first hand, and with their own experiences, that it is well within one's will, to live Islam in the West, without any compromises in one's faith.

The Camp planned for raising an awareness of religious issues. This was excellently achieved by the combined efforts of the Instructors. In fact, it went beyond that - some Campers got involved in intricate religious scholastic discussions with their Instructors well into the early hours of the morning, where the Qur'an and the Risala were frequently referred to.

The Camp endeavoured to expose the Campers to the issue of a healthy, balanced and tasty diet in their lives. Combined with this, the issue of abuse and misuse of drugs, were exemplarily dealt with by the medical instructors. The Camp also wished to expose the Campers to their understanding of their Khoja roots. This was admirably explained in a one off presentation by the Guest Lecturer, Mulla Asgharali M M Jaffer, the President of the World Federation.

The Camp also coveted to expose the

Campers from different social, educational, family and cultural backgrounds into a common unit, and learn how to live, tolerate, respect and love each other, looking up to the elder ones and nurturing the younger ones. This was achieved in leaping bounds, as testified by the camaraderie developed and the observed parting sadness.

The Camp desired to instil self reliance, both physically and emotionally, when one is away from the constraints of parents and family. The Camp simply excelled in this objective. Yes, all felt homesick in the early days, it was but natural. However, the warmth of the company soon melted the homesickness away, and Campers started to portray their own individual personalities. These qualities were then further developed by the instructors to help each camper on the path towards excellence.

The Camp aimed for development of self discipline and confidence. By any standards, this was achieved well beyond and above excellence. There was ample opportunity for the Campers to practice their personal development. For example: Timings had to be observed, Notes had to be taken, Criticisms had to be made and accepted, Sports had to be played, Salaat had to be offered on time, Qur'an and Duas had to be recited, Public Speaking had to be practised, Quizzes had to be answered, Debates had to be argued, Personal Hygiene had to be observed, Physical warm-ups had to be exercised; Facilities had to be shared, Conflicting views of others had to be accommodated, Humility had to be practised, Tempers had to be cooled, Modesty had to be exercised, Pride had to be abandoned, Younger members had to be helped and nurtured and much more. The behaviour of all the Campers, as observed by the Instructors and fellow campers, showed that every Camper genuinely tried and succeeded in developing these disciplines - it is hoped this will continue well after Kingswood Residential Camp 1999.

The Religious topics taught included Qur'anic studies; Islamic Laws; Islamic Ideology; Islamic Personalities; Islamic Manners; Muslim Sects; Death

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and the Hereafter, Ghusl and Kafan.

The Medical topics covered and discussed were Smoking; Alcohol, Abuse and Misuse of Drugs; AIDS; Thalassaemia; Diet.

Other topics covered included Khoja History; Euthanasia; Rights of Men and Women; Notes Taking During Studies; Public Speaking; Computer Skills, Internet Search, Web Page Design.

### Extra-curricular Activities:

These activities were held in the evenings, with both genders in the same hall, but segregated, and supervised by the male and female instructors.

### Written Quizzes:

There were eighty questions of written quiz on logical and lateral thinking. 10 questions were given out each evening to be answered in 10 minutes. The highest score was 57 (out of a possible maximum of 80); a prize of £57 went to the winner, Sajida Jagani from the girls' camp.

### Oral Quiz:

This was an inter-gender quiz, each team comprising of a participant picked randomly from each of the 6 classes.

### Debates:

An inter-gender debate, each team comprising of a participant picked randomly from each of the 6 classes, was held. The topics were:

- 1) - Co-education is better than single gender education.
- 2) - Human organ donation is inhuman.
- 3) - Hijab (both, for men and women) is hindrance to progress of community.
- 4) - Early marriages are beneficial to society.

A final debate between two male teams, with a mixture of instructors and students in the teams was held on the topic "This Camp has been a waste of time".

### Public Speaking:

Points were highlighted on aspects of public speaking techniques, which Campers had to practise during their

debates etc.

### News Briefing:

A representative, picked randomly from each gender, had to compile at short notice a news briefing for the day from national newspapers.

### Majlis Reciters:

A number of boys were given the chance to develop and deliver their own theme on Majlis, guided by the instructors.

### Sports Activities:

Each class was scheduled to participate in the following activities:

Aeroball	Archery
Basket Ball	Caving
Computing	Football
Go-Karts	Nightline
Orienteering	Quad Biking
Snorkelling	Swimming
Team Building	Wall Climbing

### Administrators:

There were two Administrators full time at the camp: Murtaza Dato and Muhsin Dharamsi. These two were involved in the pre-stage, in-stage and post-stage of the entire running of the Camp. They were housed in the boys' camp with the male instructors.

### Instructors:

These were very carefully selected by the organisers to impart a broad specialist spectrum of curriculum, topics, styles, knowledge and cross-culture experiences to the Campers. The medium of instruction was English. Besides taking formal classes, the instructors were also freely available, approachable and accessible to the Campers and mentored the Campers round the clock.

The instructors were:

1. Dr Muhsin Alidina, New York
2. Dr Husein Jiwa, Peterborough
3. Ali Akber Husein, Stanmore
4. Dr Mahmood Dato, Stanmore

Some classes were taken by lady instructors from the Girls' Camp. The lady instructors were:

5. Rubab-bai Master, Birmingham
6. Shabnam-bai Mawji, Birmingham
7. Nargis-bai Panju, Hyderi
8. Ismet-bai Kassam, Hyderi

The only Guest lecturer was Mulla Asgharali M M Jaffer, President of The World Federation. The only Guest visitor was Jaffer Dharamsi, President of the Council of European Jamaats.

### Campers:

A total of 41 Campers from across 10 Jamaats attended the Camp. The age of the Campers ranged from 12 to 20 years old.

Birmingham	8
Paris	3
Hyderi	4
Peterborough	3
Leicester	3
Stanmore	11
Milton Keynes	1
Toronto	3
Mombasa	3
Wessex	2

### Classes Divisions:

All the activities of the Boys' Camp were carried out separately from the girls. During the evening extra curricular activity, the Campers from the girls' camp were in the same hall but seated separately. At the CoEJ specific request, all the instructors provided by the Camp Authorities for the boys' activities were male. The boys were grouped into three classes, according to their ages. The classes were Abu Talib, Qambar and Yassir. Each class had no more than fourteen Campers.

### Room Allocations:

The boys were accommodated in their own wing with the male instructors and administrators. The wing was self contained with its own dining room, ablution areas and teachers' quarters. Each bedroom accommodated ten to twelve Campers in double bunk beds. The ablutions' areas had eight toilets and eight showers. Bed linen was provided by the Camp, and fresh linen and a free clothes wash was provided by the Management halfway through the stay. The wing had a block of rooms for the Instructors and Administrators. This had its own toilet and two showers. However, the "staff" quarters soon became the students' space too as there was by then free traffic between the Instructors and the students.

A lot of thought and extreme care was

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exercised by the Administrators to divide the Campers into appropriate groups for their room allocations. Campers from different age groups, different family backgrounds, different Jamaats and different countries were purposely chosen to share a room to ensure a good mixture of social, age and educational cross-culture and experiences. This was done intentionally to allow the Campers to gain the maximum benefit of learning to live with others from different backgrounds.

#### **Food:**

Halal vegetarian food was served by the Camp catering staff. Soon however, the novelty wore off, and the Campers were craving for some meat and spices. Khoja cuisine was thus ordered from Birmingham, three times during the stay. Haji Gulambhai Kassam of Birmingham Jamaat did so well at this that soon his presence at the camp became synonymous with tasty meat dishes.

#### **Closing Ceremony:**

On the last night of the Camp, Monday, 23rd August, a closing session was held whereby dignitaries from UK Jamaats, and parents of the Campers were invited. Mohamed-bhai Alibhai, Vice President of the Council of European Jamaats attended and addressed the gathering.

A Camper from each of the six classes presented an aspect of the Camp activity to the visitors. The final debate and quiz sessions also took place. There was also a drama highlighting the lessons from the Camp, enacted and acted by the girl campers.

The session was followed by a BBQ in the open grounds, which in turn was followed by a display of fireworks.

#### **Mementoes:**

The Council of European Jamaats presented each Camper with the following:

- 1) - A copy of The Qur'an with Commentary by Mir Ahmed Ali
- 2) - File Folder with notes ready punched for filing
- 3) - Pens
- 4) - Highlighters
- 5) - Toiletry Bag
- 6) - Toothbrush, Shaving Things, Face

Towel, Nail Cutter

7) - School/College bag

8) - Academic Pocket Diary for the year 2000

9) - Certificate of Attendance

10) - A mounted Group Photograph copy

Almost all the activities were videoed during the Camp, and is available to the Campers at a nominal cost.

#### **Feedback**

Each Camper was asked to fill out a Daily Assessment Form, giving their views, suggestions and criticisms on each aspect of the lecture, sports activity, extra curricular activity and the catering for the day. These forms were religiously collected and perused by the administrators and the instructors on a daily basis. The administrators met with the instructors, daily, to discuss suggestions, views and criticisms of the Campers. Where appropriate, immediate action was taken to remedy any situation that arose from these daily feedbacks. At the end of the Camp, each Camper was asked to fill another feedback questionnaire, which solicited their views on the Camp's activities and facilities as a whole, together with their views on the invited instructors. This was essential for the administrators to know so that improvements, adjustments and amendments can be incorporated for next year's planning.

Initial indications from the feedback are that the Camp has been a resounding success and every Camper found it thoroughly enjoyable and useful. The campers have made two specific suggestions for improvement for the next Camp. Firstly, the cuisine has to be altered to suit the Khoja palette. Secondly, the order of the activity/lecture has to be altered during the day, to obtain the maximum benefit from the respective activity/lecture. A debriefing of all the instructors was also conducted by the administrators on their viewpoint of the whole Camp.

#### **Summer Camp 2000:**

The planning for the Summer Camp 2000 began on the day when the Summer Camp 1999 ended. It is hoped to be held in August 2000. Exact dates and location will be announced when finalised.

## **A CD to develop one's Quranic recitation**

The Islamic Education Board of the World Federation has developed a CD Rom for PCs to improve one's recitation of the holy Qur'an.

The CD Rom contains Juz Amma, the 30th Sipara of the Holy Qur'an, recited by Suhail Valji. It also has translations of the Suras.

Almost all rules of Recitation are within the Suras of the 30th Sipara. If one can master the recitation of this Juz, one should be able to improve one's recitation of the Qur'an tremendously.

In this CD Rom, Suhail recites slowly and distinctly. One can also repeat an Ayat as many times as one wants in order to master one's recitation.

This CD Rom is available at £6 each including Postage and Packing from:

**Dar al Tableegh**  
Jackets Lane,  
Harefield  
Middlesex, UB9 6PZ  
United Kingdom  
ieb@tableegh.org.uk

In the United States of America, one may find it easier to order for USD 10 each including postage and packing from:

**Dar ul Tabligh**  
786 Summa Avenue,  
Westbury  
NY 11590,  
USA  
(516) 334 2479  
(516) 334 2624  
info@darul-tabligh.org

For those in Canada, one can order from Nasimco, with whose co-operation this CD Rom was developed. Please contact NASIMCO for more information on how to order.

IEB acknowledges the financial assistance given by Sew Canada Industries to develop this CD Rom. Proceeds from sales will go into developing other software.



## JIBA Online...

JIBA has launched a new version of its web site, called JIBA On-Line. The aim is to provide all the JIBA Chapters around the world with their own space on the Internet to enhance communication and collaboration between the Chapters. This is currently being piloted with the JIBA Europe Chapter and will soon be extended to the remaining Chapters.

One of the key areas of the site is the "Opportunities" section which will allow any visitor to the web site to advertise business and employment opportunities free of charge. Community members can make full use of this facility as follows:

1. Go to the JIBA On-Line web site (<http://www.jiba.org>).
2. Select "JIBA Europe" from the list of Chapters and click "Go!"
3. On the JIBA Europe page, click on the "Opportunities" icon.
4. Browse the existing opportunities and add any of your own.

## US Department accepts trainee after intervention by Islamic advocacy group

On 19 October, 1999 the Detroit Fire Department (DFD) decided to accept a Muslim Emergency Medical Service (EMS) trainee who wore what he considered a religiously-mandated beard. That decision came following the intervention of a Washington-based Islamic advocacy group, CAIR.

The Muslim trainee told the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) that after receiving an acceptance letter, he was subsequently denied admittance to the EMS Academy because of his request to wear a beard.

CAIR faxed a letter to Superintendent, Gary Kelly of the Fire department's EMS Division. That letter made note of a recent Supreme Court action that left intact a lower court ruling supporting the right of Muslim police officers to wear beards.

The earlier ruling, issued by the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, said the Newark Police Department's no-beard policy was discriminatory because it allowed medical but not religious exemptions. (*Fraternal Order of Police v. City of Newark*)

CAIR's letter to Kelley also requested that the trainee not face retaliation for his religious accommodation request. Following this letter the trainee received a call telling him to report to the EMS academy.

"The Detroit Fire Department has shown that it is willing to allow expressions of religious diversity within its ranks," said CAIR Board Chairman, Omar Ahmad. Ahmad added that the department's decision was of particular significance given the large number of Muslims in the Detroit area.

There are an estimated six million Muslims in the USA and some 1.2 billion worldwide. Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in America. CAIR publishes booklets called "An Employer's Guide to Islamic Religious Practices" designed to prevent such incidents

## Ruling that ban on beards violates religious rights is maintained

On 4 October, 1999 the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) applauded a Supreme Court decision that left intact a lower court ruling supporting the right of Muslim police officers to wear beards. The officers, Shakoor Mustafa and Faruq Abdul-Aziz, said wearing a beard is a religious requirement.

The earlier ruling, issued by the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, said the Newark (N.J.) Police Department's no-beard policy was discriminatory because it allowed medical but not religious exemptions. (*Fraternal Order of Police v. City of Newark*)

The opinion stated: "Because the Department makes exemptions from its policy for secular reasons and has not offered any substantial justification for refusing to provide similar

treatment for officers who are required to wear beards for religious reasons, we conclude that the Department's policy violates the First Amendment."

The Supreme Court, acting without comment, rejected Newark's appeal of the lower court's ruling. (*Newark vs. Fraternal Order of Police*, 98-1919).

"This decision sends a message to employers nationwide that workplace religious accommodations are compatible with professionalism and public service," said CAIR Board Chairman, Omar Ahmad. Ahmad added that CAIR will seek to determine how this decision will impact a similar case that is being litigated.

In that case, the New York State Park Police earlier this year suspended a Muslim officer without pay for refusing to shave what he regarded as a

religiously-mandated beard. The officer later filed suit in the Federal District Court.

In a related case, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) last year issued a "determination" that Delta Air Lines and its contractor ServiceMaster Company made no effort to accommodate Muslim workers who wore beards for religious reasons.

Also in 1998: 1) A Coca-Cola bottling company in Wisconsin altered its policy forbidding beards on employees who come into contact with customers. The new policy allows beards worn for religious or medical reasons. 2) Adirondack Transit Lines, Inc. of Kingston, N.Y., made an exception to its no-beard policy to allow a Muslim bus driver to wear a beard.



## Council of European Jamaats meet in Stanmore

In an ambience of co-operation, mutual respect and focusing on the future, the leaders of European Jamaats and Khawateen leaders from various Jamaats gathered at Hujjat Imambargahon to enhance communal progress.

After the recitation from the Holy Qur'an by Razaahussein-bhai Rahim, the President, Jaffer-bhai Dharamsi gave a report highlighting the progress made to move the community forward. He highlighted 12 projects that were undertaken by the Council. These included:

- The Islamic Education Course in Qum
- The Namaaz Timetable
- Kingswood Summer Residential Camp for Girls
- Kingswood Summer Residential Camp for Boys
- Workshop for Madressa teachers in Trollhattan and Stockholm
- The Ladies Annual Sports Tournament
- Study Skills Residential Short Course
- An Introduction to University
- Financial assistance to two students
- Workshop for Madressa teachers of Leicester
- Mushaira charity evening at Hujjat Imambargah
- GCSE Study Skills Residential Short Course.

The hallmark of all these projects, he said, was partnership and collaboration at local, national and international level. He also highlighted how the World Federation, by lending moral and financial support, had re-energised the Council with zeal.

Jafferbhai also acknowledged the efforts of the Council Executive and many well-wishers and leaders of various Jamaats without whom, the

community would not have been served effectively.

### **KHAWATEEN DEVELOPMENT:**

Ummi-bai Merali focused the minds of participants on the issues facing the ladies of the community. She and her colleagues, Fatim-bai Mawji, Yasmin-bai Chagpar and Zehra-bai Khakoo, captivated the attention of the participants highlighting these issues and focusing the attention of leaders on their roles and responsibilities. Ummi-bai then left the Jamaat leaders with a Five Point recommendation and to report progress at the Council meeting in June 2000. These were:

- Jamaats to undertake seminars to educate parents on how to raise children. The focus is on 0-7 years, 7-14 years, and 14 years and over
- Jamaats to get in touch in a systematic way with their grassroots (mothers, students, children etc)
- Jamaats to provide creche for parents (husbands and wives)
- Jamaats to energise and inspire members
- Jamaats to learn from good practices evident in London Hujjat Jamaat

### **EVALUATION OF PROGRAMMES**

Members present requested the Secretariat to:

- Undertake evaluation and review of all educational programmes provided by the Council of European Jamaats in terms of their effectiveness
- To recommend strategies for implementation by the Council

### **SWITZERLAND**

It was agreed that the Council of European Jamaats would conditionally accept the membership of the Council of Switzerland subject to:

- Resolution of conflict within various Swiss Jamaats through the offices of Jaffer-bhai Dharamsi and Zulfikarbhai Alibhai

- Changes to the Constitution that would build unity within the various communities.

Subject to these criteria being met, the COEJ President will put forward the membership to the Council meeting in June 2000.

### **LADIES SPORTS TOURNAMENT:**

The deficit encountered in hosting this tournament was highlighted and in the spirit of support for Khawateen Development, the various Jamaats, matching their rhetoric to their actions, responded unanimously to erase this year's deficit and pledge an additional amount of £200 for the next tournament which will inshallah be held in Birmingham in July 2000. The project for next year will inshallah be led by the ladies who had formed their Committee, that was subsequently approved by the Council and will inshallah be supported by Mahmood-bhai Hooda.

### **MOONSIGHTING**

Noting the lack of a Pan-European approach to the moon sighting issue, the members agreed to the formation of a Helal Committee whose responsibility would be to advise and to guide members of the various European Jamaats on moonsighting and to raise awareness of issues surrounding this topic. The Committee would comprise of Jaffer-bhai Dharamsi, Shaikh Mustafa Jaffer and Mohamed-bhai Bharwani.

### **ACCOUNTS**

These were postponed for discussion and will inshallah be sent out to members for their comments and thoughts.

### **MEETING**

The next meeting of the Council will be inshallah held in Stockholm in June 2000. The final of this term of office will inshallah be held on Sunday 19th November 2000 in Birmingham.

### **VOTE OF THANKS**

The President thanked the volunteers and Hujjat Jamaat for their support in facilitating the meeting.



## A case with the US Transportation Department

On 21 October, 1999 the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), a Washington-based Islamic advocacy group, called on the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Inspector General to investigate working conditions for Muslim taxi drivers at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport and at Dulles International Airport. (The majority of drivers at both airports are Muslims).

In an open letter to DOT Inspector General Kenneth Mead, CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad wrote: "At Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport Taxicab Holding Facility (THF), the issue is one of religious accommodation...The drivers' concerns came to our attention when the airport management posted a notice prohibiting them from praying. The notice read in part: 'henceforth, taxicab drivers are forbidden from appropriating space in THF or related facilities to assemble for prayer...'

"We subsequently have requested: 1) A suitable area in which Muslim taxi drivers may offer their five daily prayers. 2) Minor modifications to bathroom facilities so that the drivers may wash prior to prayer without causing inconvenience to others. (The bathrooms themselves are woefully inadequate for the hundreds of drivers of all faiths who use the facility each day). 3) An end to petty harassment of drivers who wish to carry out their religious obligations.

"In response to these reasonable requests, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) has offered only partial and inadequate

accommodation that leaves the original complaints largely intact...In a 19 August, 1999, letter to CAIR, MWAA Contract Manager, Gary L. Myers wrote: '...we do not intend to offer costly amenities based on race, national origins, or religion (sic) standards or requests.'

"At Dulles International Airport, the issues at hand are the poor prevailing working conditions that amount to what the drivers call 'economic slavery' and religious accommodation.

"According to representatives of the Washington Flyer Taxi Driver's Association and media reports, the current contract holder: 1) Implements policies that force drivers to work 18 or even 24 hours a day, six or seven days a week to make a living wage. 2) Has more than doubled the number of taxis at the airport since 1989, despite the fact that passenger numbers have only increased 50 percent during that same period. 3) Forces drivers to pay their own insurance. Taxi companies normally pay the insurance for cars they own. 4) Uses intimidation tactics against recent immigrants who have large families to support..." (Copies of the letter were sent to elected representatives in northern Virginia.)

At a news conference today outside the Taxicab Holding Facility, Awad announced the call for the investigation and said, "The airports make money from these taxi drivers, but are unwilling to offer reasonable religious accommodation." Awad added that the MWAA should not wait for an accident to occur at Dulles airport before changing policies that lead to unsafe conditions for drivers and passengers.

### In brief.....

\* The "Ground Breaking" ceremony of the construction of the new Islamic Center belonging to the Islamic Shia Ithn-asheri Jamaat of Albany was held on 19 September, 1999. The building is earmarked to be ready by Eid-ul-Fitr.

\* The opening ceremony of the Daru-ul Tabligh was held on 18 September, 1999 - 8 Jumada al Thani 1420 in New York. Al Haj Mulla Asgharali M.M. Jaffer, the President of the World Federation performed the opening ceremony.

## Muslim leaders meet with US Secretary of State to discuss international events

On 16 September, 1999 State Department officials asked American Muslims to apply for positions at all levels of government service. The request came during a meeting between department officials, including Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, and a number of American Muslim and Arab-American leaders and scholars.

Secretary Albright briefed the Muslim and Arab-American representatives on her recent trip to the Middle East. The discussion also focussed on topics such as human and religious rights violations in Turkey and Kashmir, the American Muslim community's role in formulating foreign policy and the need for Muslims in policy-making positions in the government. Assistant Secretary of State, Martin Indyk also took part in the discussions. The secretary acknowledged the growth of the Muslim community in America and said officials need to understand Islam as they consider policy issues.

Muslim groups in attendance at the meeting included the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC), American Muslim Council (AMC), American Muslims for Jerusalem (AMJ), American Muslim Foundation (AMF).

"The administration clearly expressed its interest in seeking input from our community on issues of importance to all Americans," said CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad. Awad added that this input can best be offered by having more Muslims working in the government.

"We appreciate this type of frank and constructive discussion," said ISNA Secretary General, Sayyid Syeed who also attended the meeting. "American Muslims have a significant role to play in making sure that foreign policy is based on accurate and objective information that reflects more than one side of each issue," said Syeed.



## Books in Albanian language

In recognising the need for spiritual nourishment of our Muslim brethren in Kosovo and Albania, the Islamic Education Board of the World Federation has, as in the past with the Bosnian Muslims, published several books in Albanian language. To this effect there has been a good response from the Albanian Islamic Guidance Society based in London that is responsible for the plight of Muslim refugees in the UK. The total number of refugees is estimated to be around 20,000. They have not gone back and are not expected to return in the foreseeable future.

The books that have been published and distributed include:

### 1) Translation of the Holy Quran:

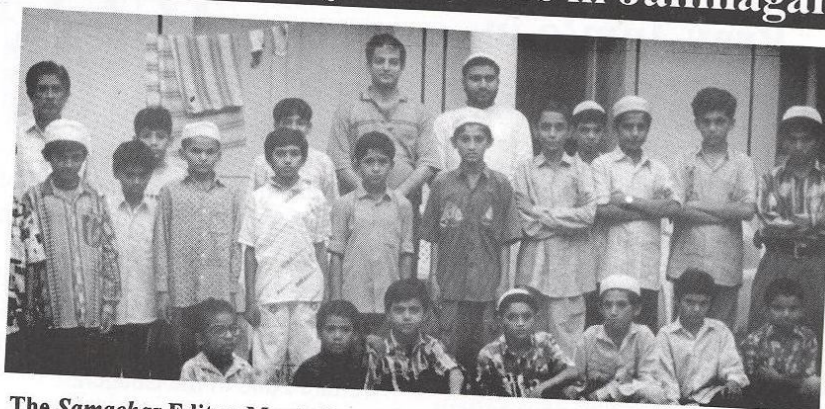
This is an Albanian only translation (no Arabic text) as translated by Sherif Ahmeti, a known and respected translator of the Holy book. The Albanian Islamic Guidance Society were extremely pleased with what they said was the first Albanian only translation of the Holy Quran. The refugees in UK alone immediately asked for 5,000 copies but this could not be honoured because the IEB only published 5,000 with some requests coming in from America and Canada. Copies are available from Dar ul Tableegh in UK as well as from Dar ul Tabligh in New York.

2) 'Principet e Fese': a translation of 'Roots of Religion' originally published in English by Dar Rahe Haq. The translation of this valuable book of Islamic Belief was first commissioned by the World Federation sometime last year. Thereafter, three thousand copies were published. Copies of the book have been distributed far and wide. Recently an acknowledgement of the book was even received from the Imam of the Jamia Mosque of Tirana, the capital of Albania. He frequently quotes from the book during his Friday Sermons. About a thousand of these have also been sent to America for distribution amongst the refugees there.

3) *Dua - e - Kumayl* has already been translated in Albanian. This was done by a group of people in Kosovo be

Federation Samachar

## 220 community members in Jamnagar



The *Samachar* Editor, Munir Daya pictured with Resident Maulana, Ehtesab Husain, host Rajabali Ismail (standing on extreme left) and students at the Jamnagar KSI Boarding House

Jamnagar, also known as the Jewel of Kathiawad, is a coastal town in India about 300 kilometers west of Ahmedabad. Built in 1540 A.D. by Jam Raval, a Jadeja Rajput leader who migrated from Kach, Jamnagar was the capital for four centuries of the prosperous princely state of Nawanagar. Jamnagar is now an important air and naval base.

Originally a walled city with many gates, like all traditionally built Gujarat towns, Jamnagar received a facelift in 1914 A.D. when urban planning was initiated. Present day Jamnagar is a charming blend of the old and the new with its ancient monuments and broad streets, imposing facades, and squares which make it one of the most beautiful cities in the Saurashtra peninsula.

The town is also famous for its exquisite handicraft items such as silk and gold embroidery, silver ware and *bandhani* or tie-and-dye fabrics which command a world market and a premium price at the same time. Nutcrackers (especially the ones made for betel nuts) are made in Jamnagar and are in great demand all over India.

Our community on Jamnagar consists of about 220 members. There are two mosques located near each other. The main mosque, where congregational prayers are normally held, also has a Madressa and an Imambada where preachings are delivered during occasions. The other mosque is adjacent to a housing complex where about a dozen community families live.

Near the two Mosques, there is also a community boarding house which currently accomodates 22 children from Kordinat, Mahuva and Taraja. Also residing at the boarding house is the resident Maulana from Uttar Pradesh, Ehtesab Husain who teaches students religious classes every evening. During the day, students pursue secular education and for recreation they are sometimes taken for group picnics.

The community also has a large grave yard which has been maintained well. Members live in harmony and a fair number of them have children working outside India. Jamnagar is a peaceful place, much less congested than Mumbai and our community members there are extremely hospitable.

fore the atrocities against them. The IEB purchased large quantities from them in a bid to support their noble work. The IEB has nearly exhausted its stock of this valuable book.

The IEB has meanwhile reported that Shias in Kosovo, before the Serb aggression, were quite active and all the major works of our Imams (AS) had already been translated into Albanian. It has in its library, copies of Albanian

translation of Nahjul Balaghah, Sahifa Sajjadiyya and many other works. However, their centre and store was targetted for destruction and a whole warehouse which was used to store these books was razed to the ground. All the books were burnt to ashes, including their original digitised records in diskettes or otherwsie. Years of efforts put into translating, designing and printing these works were reduced to ashes with the Serb aggression.



## Nearly 2 Million Pray Jum'a in Islam's Holy Sites

Nearly one-and-a-half million Muslims congregated for Jum'a prayers in the cities of Mecca and Medina on Friday 24 December, 1999. The two cities are the holiest places in Islam.

Worshippers for these penultimate Friday prayers of Ramadan came from Saudi Arabia and from various parts of the world. The prayers were led from the Grand Mosque in Mecca, and the Mosque of Prophet Mohammed (SAW) in Medina.

In Islam's third-most holy site, Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, some 360,000 worshippers congregated for Jum'a.

The preacher at the Grand Mosque called on worshippers "to give charity to their brothers, particularly in Chechnya and in Palestine, who are facing various kinds of aggression by enemies of the nation."

Many Muslims also come to the holy cities during Ramadan to perform Umrah, or lesser pilgrimage.

In Jerusalem, Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza needed special permits by Israel allowing them to enter. The compound housing Al-Aqsa was captured and annexed by Israel in 1967.

Record attendances are expected at all Mosques in the last Friday of the holy Month which is of special significance as it offers Muslims a special opportunity to seek the Grace of the Almighty.

## FROM THE COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN JAMAATS....

On 23rd October 1999 at the Hujjat Imambara, Stanmore, the Welfare Committee of the Council of European Jamaats organised a Mushaira charity event on the day of the commemoration of the birth anniversary of our First Imam, Amir-al-Moamineen, Hazrat Ali ibn Abu Talib (a.s). This project was very well supported as members from all European Council Jamaats came in large numbers filling to capacity both the ladies and gents halls. They all departed with incredible memories of the main programme which was Mushaira by the three Naqvi brothers. The evening helped to raise nearly £5000 towards the Welfare Fund of the Council.

**Teaching seminar for Leicester Madressa Teachers:** On 2nd October, 1999 the Chairperson of The Council Khawaateen Committee, Ummibai Merali and the Resource Manager of The Islamic Education Board of The World Federation, Mustafabhai Jaffer, carried out an exhaustive workshop for Madressa teachers of Leicester. This Council Project in London, emphasised the role of teachers in a small community.

**An Introduction to UNIVERSITY:** On 5th September, 1999 the Council of European Jamaats invited youngsters to a seminar so that our brothers and sisters who have already attended university could pass on their thoughts and tell those embarking on University studies about their experiences. This Project was successfully carried out on behalf of the Council by Siddikabai Hudda.

**Study Skills - A 3-day Residential Short Course:** This was organised between 31 August and 4 September, 1999 and was completed without a hitch. The Council team led by Dr. Mahmood Datoos showed community students in further and higher education how to take charge of their own affairs, not only in the non-educational side of their college/university time, but also in the learning and study patterns. It was emphasised that learning how to study effectively is a skill that has to be taught first, and then put into practice by the student.

**The Third European Annual Ladies Sports Tournament:** On behalf of the Council, the tournament was organised on 29th and 30th August, 1999 and hosted by the ladies of the London Stanmore Jamaat, under Hamidabai Hussein. Girls from across Europe enjoyed a weekend of competitive sports. Talks and discussions on useful topics were arranged during the period. The prize-giving ceremony was led by Sakinabai Jaffer, the wife of the President of The World Federation, Mulla Asgherali M M Jaffer.

This was the first time for Stanmore to host the event. The previous two tournaments were hosted by Peterborough Jamaat. The venue was the Aldenham Sports Centre at the Aldenham School which is a 7 minutes drive from Stanmore.

In all seven Jamaats took part and the sports contested were netball, 5-a-side football, table tennis and badminton.

## Toronto discusses on Elderly care

Toronto's Crescent Board of Directors recently invited Executive Members of Toronto Jamaat for a joint meeting to discuss about the progress on establishing a Seniors and Nursing Home for community members. The meeting heard reports from Ms Maurin Barrey and

Mr. Starr on different options for accomplishing this task. There was a lively discussion and it was decided that a team comprising of Jamaat members and a Crescent Village Board representative pursue the matter by visiting similar projects that are in existence in Toronto.

It was unanimously accepted, that with the number of aging members in the community on the increase it is absolutely necessary for our Jamaat to provide suitable facilities for the elderly with due consideration for also their religious and cultural needs.



# DATELINE TORONTO



By Baqir Alloo

**West Toronto Center Project** received a needed boost when the Toronto Jamaat General Meeting on 21st November approved the proposal to spend \$900,000 in buying three lots of plots in Brampton for development of our Center there. Up to now the West Jamaat has been using hired premises as masjid, imambara and madressa. The project is on the priority list of Toronto Jamaat and it is hoped that our own center with full facilities, including parking, will be constructed in two years time.

**Distress Line** for youths and families is now in place. 24 dedicated volunteers of both sexes, many of whom are professionals in the field of social services, have completed intensive training by Dr. Imtiaz Ali. They will undertake the task to man this distress line which will be open for all Muslims in Toronto. This project will enable us to handle youth and family problems within the constraints of our culture and religion.

Dr. Ali, who has a private counseling practice in Toronto, began conducting training sessions since September 20, 1999. There was previously no distress line for Muslims in Toronto and this one is expected to be a forerunner for similar facilities in other Jamaats. Sister Sabira Pardhan is heading this committee

**Holy Month of Ramadhan** commenced on 9th December and full preparations are in place at Bayview, Crescent Village and in the West. Crescent Village is linked by satellite with the Bayview Mosque where Maulana Sayed Mohammed Rizvi is delivering lectures on Al-Qura'n every night after Darsa and Du'a.

**Maulana Sayed Muhammad Rizvi's** recent indisposition had worried many in Canada and Overseas. Alhamdulillah he has recovered fast and has resumed his activities. He is grateful to all Mo'mineen and Mo'meenat who conveyed their concern and prayed for his recovery.

**Toronto Jamaat Executive** under the leadership of Ali Raza Rajani has completed the work of setting up some 14 committees for various tasks. All committees have already started working in accordance with their mandate. The Project Development Committee has gems of our community under the leadership of the youthful Vice President Raza Damani. This committee is mandated to bring the 9000 Bathurst Project to fruition as the community is in dire need of a larger and better facility for its religious and social functions due to the rapid growth of members. Progress so far has been encouraging and if the same momentum is maintained the project is expected to be completed by 2001.

**CRESCENT VILLAGE ANNUAL TENANTS BARBEQUE** was held at the playgrounds of the Crescent Village on a beautiful afternoon of Saturday August 21. Besides the Board Members, Management staff and tenants, Mayor Bill Bell of Richmond Hill, President and Executive Members of the Jamaat also attended. The Mayor complemented the Board of Directors for their excellent management and the tenants for being vigilant in keeping the complex clean of physical and moral pollution. The President of the Jamaat, Ali Raza Rajani echoed the same feeling and urged the tenants to live peacefully and help the seniors and the sick in a true Islamic spirit.

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**A SENIORS DATA SURVEY** has commenced in Toronto Jamaat through a specially appointed committee headed by Brother Dilawer Shabban who also represents seniors in the Jamaat Executive. The survey is aimed at finding out the number of seniors in our aging community here and to plan for services such as a nursing home, senior's retirement home, recreational facilities and outdoor activities support for seniors who may be in need of special care. As a preventive measure against lapse into depression, seniors will be encouraged to go out of their houses and participate in activities or socialize with other seniors. Programs for seniors having common interests will be set up so that they can mingle with each other to ward off boredom.

Last summer some 60 members of the Jaffery Senior Group organized a number of programs including about four recreational trips outside Toronto.

**THE ALL SHIA CANADA DIRECTORY** is now ready. The directory has a listing of some 5000 Shias in different towns of Canada and a number of businesses owned by our Shia brothers. This 450 pages spiral bound elegant publication is available to the public at US\$5 per copy. Those who wish to purchase a copy can contact Brother Shabbir Mohamed of Alif Publication, Telephone (905) 508 5122. Nasimco has sponsored the project which is expected to be self-supporting.

**THE CENTRAL MADRESSA AT 9000 BATHURST** has a bright new co-ordinator in the person of Syed Raza Askari. He is a teacher at our As-Sadiq School and has a Masters Degree from George Washington University. Brother Mohamedtaki Remtulla, previously of Dahrn, Saudi Arabia, is co-ordinating Qura'n teaching. Our madressas have enough teaching staff thanks to the Madressa Teacher Training Classes started twenty years before. Nisar Sheraly, a qualified teacher and a trainer, has played a pivotal role in this training course since its inception.



## 3-day Residential Short Course enlightens students on study skills

After the success of the Study Skills course held in the previous two years, the Education Committee of the Council of European Jamaats organised one again this year between 31 August to 4 September, 1999. This year the course was again held at Syeda Zainab Complex in Birmingham and was attended by 21 students.

The aim of the course was to help students take charge of their own affairs, not only in the non-educational side of the college/university time, but also in learning and studying patterns. Learning how to study effectively is a skill that has to be taught first, and then put into practice by the student. The course was organised by Dr. Mahmood Dattoo.

Jamaats may wish to take advantage of the participants by inviting them to teach some of the skills to GCSE and A Level Students. Below is the report of the 1999 Study Skills Course, presented by one of the participants, Riyaz Ahmed Daya, a first year student at Cambridge University.

"On Tuesday 31st August 1999, twenty-one Khoja youths from all over the country apprehensively congregated in the conference room in Birmingham Jamaat's Zainabiyya Hall, for the 1999 Study Skills Course. There was a certain amount of tension in the air since most of us were strangers to each other; everyone struggled to look for a vaguely familiar face in order to strike up superficial conversation with someone.

Also apparent was a level of apathy in the air. "I mean, come on, a study skills course? What a joke!" The boys had been forced to attend by their parents, while the girls had chosen to attend in order to get away from their parents for a few days! An enthusiastic bunch, we were not. After all, how much could one learn (or how much fun could one have) while being cooped up in a classroom full of Khojas for four days? Nevertheless, since the trip

only cost fifty quid (it would have probably cost more to live at home for those four days) things did not look all that bad. If only the four days would pass quickly, we could return home re-energised and ready to enjoy the rest of the summer holiday.

A tour of the building quashed our greatest anxieties; it actually produced some pleasant surprises that were beyond our wildest expectations. It was a relief to most of us to see that there were decent showers. We were also delighted to find a 'pool room' (albeit lacking a pool table). There was also a badminton court, a table tennis table, an assortment of board games and someone even brought a pack of UnoTM. . . . May be it would not be a long four days after all...

That evening, after namaaz we were served a delicious meal; £50 well spent, I was beginning to think. Thereafter, when we discovered there was no curfew we rushed to the Pool room and badminton court. (After all we were all mature 'young adults' who were responsible enough to determine our own bedtime). In due course, a pool table was discovered and some of the games, accompanied by much intellectual discussion, continued well into the night.

As we began to get to know each other we found the group to be full of a variety of different people. Participants came from as far as Portsmouth, South London and Milton Keynes, as well as Birmingham and Stanmore. The universities attended were as far up north as Manchester, and as far down south as Surrey. The group was mixed with loud lawyers, dedicated doctors, egotistical economists and many more. Despite our differences, we all got on well (or at least pretended to!).

We had seven hours of lectures during the day for the next three days. At first glance, this appears a daunting prospect. However, we soon found out that these were not lectures of the con-

ventional nature- rather, interactive sessions which made learning fun and more effective. We learnt many useful skills through the course, some of which were taught to us by outside lecturers. These ranged from techniques such as mind mapping and 'speed reading' to lecture preparation, note taking and essay writing. We were also prepared for the more general aspects of university life through topics such as 'time management' and 'a successful student'.

The evening programmes kept us very well entertained. On the Wednesday evening, we went bowling, followed by dinner at 'Desi Khana'. After Dua and Majlis on the Thursday evening, we were taken to Karachi Fried Chicken, and the presentation ceremony was held at Al-Faidhal on the Friday evening. Representatives of various Jamaats and Khoja organisations throughout the country as well as those who attended the previous year's course came to this function. Among the dignitaries were Dr Bahadur Dalal (guest of honour), Jaffer Dharamsi (President, CoEJ), Nazir Virjee (President, Peterborough), Mohamed Bharwani (President, Birmingham), Husna Khimji (Chairlady, Birmingham), and Murtaza Dattoo (Chairman, Education, CoEJ).

During the presentation, following a touching speech by Jaffer Dharamsi (President of CoEJ) and a short speech by Mohamed Bharwani (President of Birmingham Jamaat), every member of the group gave a speech. This was one of the most educational experiences of the course; many of us had never addressed a large audience before. Some of the speeches were humorous, others were more emotional; but everyone agreed that the course had been greatly beneficial.

After a long night of various sports competitions and numerous intellectual debates, we found that Saturday morning had come too soon for us- it was time to part. The girls hugged each other and wept, promising to keep in touch, while the boys grunted and attempted to look void of any emotion.

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Many of the same thoughts were crossing our minds such as how the four days had passed so quickly, and how useful and enjoyable the entire course had been. As well as the useful study techniques we picked up, the course also assisted in personal development. By thrusting us into an environment with strangers, we were given an idea of what it would be like when starting university; the course will prove useful in helping us to adapt to meeting so many different people in a short space of time. Furthermore, everyone left the course with a more enhanced sense of community spirit and belonging. Maintaining an Islamic identity in the face of all the freedom that university life gives us is going to be challenging, to say the least. Nevertheless, this course helped us all realise that we were not alone in this journey; there are others from our own community in the same boat. I would recommend the course as a MUST to anyone starting university next year, and also those who are already at university at the moment."

## CoEJ organises Girls Residential Camp

The 1999 Kingswood Girls Residential Camp was organised by the Education Committee of the Council of European Jamaats between 14th and 24th August, 1999 on similar lines as the Boys Camp (a report of which has been carried on page 16 of this issue).

A total of 33 female Campers from across 11 Jamaats attended the Camp. The age of the Campers ranged from 12 to 20 years old.

Birmingham	3
Leicester	1
Dar-es-Salaam	2
Paris	5
Edmonton	1
Peterborough	2
Essex	4
Stanmore	8
Hyderi	5
Vancouver	1
Kampala	1

## Noted Indian writer converts

Noted Indian bilingual writer and poetess Madhavikutty alias Kamala Das confirmed on 11 December, 1999 that she had decided to convert to a Muslim. The official conversion took place at the Palayam mosque on 23 December, 1999.

The celebrated writer said that she had cherished this idea for a long time mainly on account of her 27 years in Calcutta where she had a good association with Muslim families and friends. She said she realised that Islam fully recognised the dignity and prominence of women.

"I have also decided to accept the name Surayya and will write only in that byline henceforth" she said. Madhavikkutty, who writes both in English and Malayalam said she had been visiting mosques for the last few weeks in Kerala. Daughter of the late V M Nair, former managing editor of the Malayalam daily Mathrubhumi and Nalappat Balamani Amma, a celebrated Malayalam writer, the 67-year-old Madavikutty said she had taken the decision to embrace Islam on her own volition.

Mother of three sons, including well-known journalist M D Nalappad, former editor of Mathrubhumi and former resident editor of The Times of India, Bangalore, Madhavikutty said she felt that Islam would bring the much needed solace to her life. She has won many literary awards, including the Vayalar award in 1997 and the Asian Prize in 1985. Several of her works in English have been included in the curriculum of many foreign universities.

Ironically the same Das who once took to painting women in the nude is now an advocate of the purdah? "I prefer the purdah. In fact, I have always loved the purdah. In it you can walk around freely, anonymously. It serves as a protection," she explained. Recently, she went to Kannur in purdah and distributed rice to the people as "a Muslim woman, away from the press clicking photographs", she said.

In an interview with *The Times of India* she was asked when exactly did she decide to embrace Islam to which she replied that it was about 27 years ago. She said she took long to convert because when she discussed the matter first with her husband in the early seventies, he asked her to wait. He advised her to first read books on Islam. She again considered converting before the 1984 parliamentary elections but not all her children were married and settled at that time and she did not want her decision to have an impact on their lives. Now that her children are well settled and happy she announced her decision. She said her children respected her decision to convert.

She said her first interface with Islam was through two blind Muslim children, Irshad Ahmed and Imtiaz Ahmed. They were sent to her by the National Association for the Blind since she had volunteered to read and teach the blind. The children virtually stayed at her flat at Bank House at Churchgate, Mumbai and she was required to read to them Islamic scriptures.

She was full of praise for the *purdah* and denied that it circumscribes one's freedom, "I don't want such freedom. I had enough of it thrust on me. Freedom had become a burden for me. I want guidelines to regulate and discipline my life. I want a master to protect me. I wanted protection and not freedom. I want to be subservient to Allah. In fact, for the past 24 years I had worn a *purdah* off and on. I had gone to markets, matinee shows and even while abroad I had worn *purdah*. I have several of them. A woman in *purdah* is respected. No one touches you or teases you if you wear one. You get total protection. I have outgrown the desire for freedom."

She added, "I do not want to personalise God in any form or shape. God's power can be seen in rain or thunder, but not in idols. Recently I was travelling in a car from the Malabar to Kochi. I started the journey at 5.45 a.m. I looked at the rising sun. Surprisingly, it had the colour of a setting sun. It travelled with me and at 7.00 a.m. it turned white. For years I have been looking for signs telling me when to convert. Finally, I got the message."



# Dar-ul-Tabligh North America (DNA)

## opens its doors.

On a crisp spring-like September afternoon, in Long Island NY, Ulama, community leaders, social workers and members of the community, representing a wide cross-section of the community participated in marking yet another milestone in the history of the Shii community at the gateway of America. The President of the World Federation, Mulla Asgherali M M Jaffer, performed the opening Ceremony of Dar ul Tabligh offices on 18 September, 1999. Elaborating on the role and function, he stated emphatically that the DNA would serve to disseminate the teachings of Islam, in accordance with the school of Ahlul Bait (AS), without any compromises.

Maulana Syed Hamidul Hassan Qibla, the Principal of Nazmia College, Maulana Anverali, Maulana Bakiri, Maulana Syed Ali Haider Abidi, as well Dr Raza Dungsersi graced the occasion with their presence. In attendance, amongst others, were - World Federation Vice President, Hasnain Walji; Nasimco President, Gulamabbas Sajan, accompanied by Secretary General Syed Asgher Naqvi, Treasurer Safder Nasser and a number of Nasimco Executive Councilors; the office bearers and the President of New York Jamaat, Sajjad Ladha; JANA President Syed Istifa Naqvi; Allentown Jamat President Mohamed Khaku and the Secretary of Albany Jamaat, Shakeel Virjee.

The establishment of Dar ul Tabligh is the culmination of months of planning and tireless efforts by the Islamic Education Board of the World Federation. The mode of function will be similar to the Darul Tabligh in England established six years ago. The fully equipped facility, has a reference library which has thousands of books in several languages. On display during the opening ceremony was a collection of the translations of the Holy Qur'an in over 30 languages. The ultra-modern facility is fully computerized, with multiple terminals allowing access to all the multimedia resources on the internet as well as on CD. Yet the custom design and aesthetics provide an Islamic ambience conducive to learning and knowledge.

The entire facility including fixtures and fittings and the high tech equipment were generously provided by the Jaffer family of New York. On behalf of the World Federation, Mulla Asgher expressed his deep



**Mulla Asgher officially opens the Dar-ul-Tabligh in New York**

gratitude to Al Hajj Mustafa Jaffer, Al Hajj Abdul Razzaq Jaffer and their families for their contribution in making the establishment of DNA possible. He also thanked Mohamed F.R. Moledina for the gift of the audio/video recording, conversion and editing equipment which would enable DNA to create a library of all audio/video resources and make these available, particularly to remote communities who rely on these videos for holding majalises.

The World Federation President also expressed his appreciation to all volunteers and staff for their efforts. He stated that the Vice President, Hasnain Walji has been assigned the task of overseeing the activities of DNA and called upon all present to assist him in endeavors to make DNA a major center of Tabligh in North America. He also expressed hope that such centers may soon be established in Africa and the subcontinent.

The primary goal of DNA is to assist the community in North America to fulfil its responsibility of imparting religious education to the upcoming generations and to become a source of information on Islam for the public at large.

It is envisaged that the DNA will accomplish this by:

- Publishing & Distribution of books, CDs, and other material
- Distance Learning Programs through a New Internet based approach
- Modular Course in Higher Islamic Studies for undergraduates
- Participation at Conventions and seminars for the purposes of tabligh
- Answering questions on Islam by advertising its web site and a toll free number
- Liaison with schools on the content of textbooks and teaching about Islam
- Enabling the Networking with Shia students in US universities

- Assisting Jamaats with the provision of muballighs
- Assist with Dawa work in Prisons & amongst interested non-Muslims & Converts
- Liaison with other organizations with similar aims

The opening ceremony was followed by a dinner reception hosted by the New York Jamaat at the Husaini Madressa in Queens. The welcome address by the President of New York Jamaat, Sajjad Ladha was followed by an address by Nasimco President Gulam Sajan, who congratulated the World Federation on the establishment of DNA. In a thought provoking address, Mulla Asgher then focussed on the misconceptions and ignorance on the role of the Marja. He stressed that contrary to popular myth, the Maraje, are well aware of the needs and conditions of the community but the community sometimes does not understand the role of the Maraje.

With particular reference to Ayatullah Seestani, Mulla Asgher stated that Agha was extremely well informed about the conditions of the community. He said the granting of a 100 percent ejaza is a measure, not only of Agha's confidence, care and concern but also, of his wishes, that a substantial percentage of Khums funds be spent for the needs of the community. He wondered why some members opt to divert funds to quarters that neither directly benefit our community nor have any transparency or accountability of the utilization of such funds thereby depriving the community of the very resources the Marja has allowed to be spent. He said it is all the more ironical that the very people who divert hukuk funds elsewhere, then come to the World Federation for their own projects. He appealed to the community to ponder over these implications and emphasized on the benefits of centralization of funds, through institutions that were best placed to serve the community.



# The Encounter of Islam and the West - Changing the Yardstick

## ...dissuading 'Grasshopper Muslims' and 'Oyster muslims'

Following the recitation of the Holy Qur'an, the Fourth Annual Islamic Forum Conference was inaugurated with the reading of a khutba, from the Nahj al Balagha, by **Hujjatul Islam, Syed ZulQadr Razawi**. The Conference was held in Dallas, Texas on 4 and 5 September, 1999.

Opening the Conference, held in a packed auditorium in Dallas, **Mohamed Moledina**, the managing trustee of the Islamic Forum, set the agenda by proposing that as Muslims living in the West there is a need to identify and address the challenges of acculturation. It was with this objective that the Islamic Forum had chosen the theme: 'The Encounter of Islam and the West'. Eminent scholars and professionals were invited to deliberate upon the theme from within the context of their speciality. These approaches spanned science, history, sociology, architecture, medical ethics and information technology.

### The absence of religion in the study of modern science

With characteristic profundity, **Professor Syed Hossein Nasr** addressed the absence of religion in the study of modern science and how this was in contrast to the Islamic point of view where the world was the 'theatre' for God's creation. Modern science, he contended, was based on the notion that we are where we are through accident hence there could be no God involved. The actual motivation for this was a struggle for power over the control of science. Following the 'scientific revolution' in the 17th Century, the Christian church effectively cut its ties from any further involvement with science as evolution and the theory of accidental cause of the world gained ground. The effect of this on the West has been to make religion 'unreal'.

Dr Nasr explained why the control of science was so important and how sci-

ence is not about the collection of objective facts. The study of science starts first with a theory that is based on a particular view of the world. This is why science cannot be objective. Once the theory is developed, information supporting the theory becomes a collection of facts. A hypothesis is established, to be tested or rejected and which then becomes 'science'. One particular 'hypothesis' which has become the ideology of science is evolution. As a result, modern science has developed un-Islamic attributes, where science has been reduced to quantification and the search for mathematical formulae.

Islamic science is to understand God's wisdom, and the pursuit of knowledge is in order to attain perfection. It is not about power. In order to integrate modern science into Islam, something we do not have the option to opt out of, we must establish what we mean by Islamic science. It is the pursuit of scientific knowledge within a framework where both the subject and the object (that which is being studied) is connected to God. Western science cannot be accepted in whole but we have no choice but to integrate modern science, for the sake of our need to unify knowledge and to counteract the catastrophes of modern technology.

### Immigrant experience, not unique to Muslims in North America

**Professor Sulayman Nyang** outlined Muslim cultural experiences in North America and talked about the challenges facing Muslim leaders, parents and youth. He emphatically stated that the 5-6 million Muslims in North America are part of American society and need to take advantage of the opportunities offered. There are five areas where he said, the consequences of cultural impact can be measured:

· Muslim identity

- Youth
- Institution building
- Economy
- Political participation

On the subject of a Muslim identity, Muslims wear three hats theologically, an 'Adamic' hat that relates to all Americans; an 'Abrahamic' hat that relates to Jews and Christians and a 'Kamellian' or 'Ahmedic' hat that relates to all Muslims via the Prophet. North American society offers Muslims a unique opportunity due to the mix of cultures, religions that can be seen as a culmination of civilisation building that has roots in civilisations such as that of Babylon.

Professor Nyang talked of the immigrant experience, not unique to Muslims in North America, of the need to maintain an identity and the interaction of oneself with the 'other'. Name changing is a common survival device so that Muhammad becomes 'Mo' and was a stage in adjusting and assimilation, often at a cost to personal dignity. He said these type of Muslims can be referred to as '**Grasshopper Muslims**'. As Muslims have become more secure in North American society such name changing is becoming less common.

The message to Muslim youths from parents and elders was addressed through the concept of the 'myth of return' where parents assumed that the 'tape' that was running in their minds was the same that was running in their children's. They need to realise this is not the case and that the myth of return is false. Rather than looking back they need to understand that the country they are now living in is their children's country and they should take culturally what is acceptable from the West for their own advancement. Muslims who failed to accept this reality can be termed as '**Oyster Muslims**'.

The said leaders and parents also need to develop imaginative responses to institution building and influencing how Muslims are portrayed in textbooks, in the press and in the media. Alternatives to other mainstream

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activities should be developed. Where religious leaders are invited from overseas, they should be relevant to the needs of the youth, and when there are deficiencies these leaders need to be retooled for the new communities and cultures they purport to serve.

**History writing is no more objective than science**

**Dr Kamran Aghaie** looked at approaches to the study of Islamic history in the West and the approach of Orientalists in looking at non-Western societies. Islamic history is, as related by the Orientalists, influenced by their own motivations. Touching on the point made by Dr Nasr earlier, Dr Aghaie observed that history writing is no more objective than science. Very early Orientalism wrote Islamic history in order to discredit Islam in favour of Christianity, while later in the 17th and 18th Centuries the influence of Enlightenment ideas seemingly applied a level of objectivity, where studies of Islam were motivated by the need to criticise their own societies. The 19th Century saw writings that appeared to be infatuated with the East, a romantic mood was apparent that saw the East as exotic, primitive and natural compared to the West as being developed and superior. Social Darwinism was in play here. Orientalists were interested in looking at issues of tolerance and freedom as well as Islam as a derivative of Judaism and Christianity. Orientalists used text analysis, treating Islam as a 'dead' religion and they tried to get into the 'Muslim mind' assuming that there was an essential 'Muslim mind'.

The 20th Century into the cold war era did see changes with the development of sciences and more varied admission to enter these debates. The motivation for the Cold War era was a preoccupation with politics and with regions, contributing to the rise of the 'regional expert'. The 1980s and 1990s has seen a 'crisis of identity' in academia and where there has been a shift from a concentration on 'regions' to 'disciplines'. This is very important as it has

allowed for discipline-related critiques of work and the entry into the arena of personnel from the Islamic world that offers challenges to Orientalist approaches.

**Surveying the development of Islamic Architecture**

**Dr Akel Kahera** outlined architectural developments of mosques and places of gathering in Islam. While places of gathering and worship took as the central theme the concept of Tawheed as a central notion, architectural styles often took regional styles with the use of motifs and calligraphy. Islamic architecture borrowed from what was indigenous to the region so that both the dome and the arch are not indigenous to Islam, they were borrowed and enhanced.

Surveying the development of Islamic buildings in the USA, Dr Kahera pointed out that probably the earliest US Muslims were the slaves that had been brought from West Africa. This formed a community of practicing Muslims in the US. After World War II there was an influx of Muslims to the USA. Looking at three buildings built at different times in the 20th Century, the earliest buildings were built in a style that was Spanish-North African in style and was built using imported 'traditional' materials. A second wave of construction after the Gulf war saw buildings designed that used more modern materials and technology but keeping traditional features such the dome.

**Muslim physicians in an enviable position of offering much more**

**Dr Shaheen Etezadi Khalili** eloquently made a case for meeting the multifarious challenges facing a foreign female Muslim physician - 'a quadruple minority'. The issues covered ranged from ethical dilemmas of prescribing birth-control pills to unwed young women, euthanasia as well as the issue of hijab in the workplace. Her motivating presentation was peppered with personal anecdotes which suggested that while it was not easy, it was possible to be a practising physician as well as a practising Muslimah.

with determination and a thorough understanding of the world view of Tawhid, the Muslim physician is in an enviable position of offering much more in terms of holistic healing as many of her patients had found out.

**Need for a contemporary message to accompany the contemporary medium**

**Hassanain Rajabali** discussed the growth and importance of the internet for the Muslim community in North America and worldwide as a vehicle for dissemination of Islamic knowledge. It was vital to take advantage of this medium in order to counteract misleading and negative notions of Islam. Parents needed to instil a sense of personal responsibility so that children are aware of the dangers of material on the Internet as unsuitable material is always only a few clicks away. In his eloquent style, he expounded on parental responsibility in the training of the young Muslim mind. Echoing the sentiments of Dr Nyang, he stressed upon need for a contemporary message to accompany the contemporary medium i.e cyberspace.

**Muslims need to be cognisant of the correct yardstick in measuring success**

Summing up the proceedings, **Hasnain Walji** propounded that one who had no thoughts of yesterday, no challenges of today and worst of all no visions of tomorrow was in a state of existential purgatory. The object of the Conference was to evaluate the kind of challenges that the encounter of Islam and the West presented and seek ways and means to address these challenges. One of the most poignant issues emerged during the conference was, that as Muslims we need to be cognisant of the correct yardstick in measuring success. He reiterated the words of Dr Nasr that Islamic science is to understand God's wisdom and the pursuit of knowledge is in order to attain perfection. It is not about power. The deliberations and eloquent presentations all had a common thread: to merely look at our history as events,

(continued on page 33)



# THE WORLD FEDERATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The World Federation was represented at the third parliament of World Religions held at Cape Town, South Africa from 1 - 8 December 1999. South Africa is a home to many races, religions, traditions and cultural varieties which in its microcosm, not only symbolises hope but also provides challenges and opportunities for creative engagement by the religious scholars. Given the legacy of its history of apartheid rule and an extraordinary moral and spiritual victory over it, convening the parliament in South Africa was an inspiring setting. The Chairman of the Islamic Education Board, Haji Muhsin Jaffer, represented the World Federation in the parliament and also at the exhibition, held in the same centre, where the Islamic Education Board had a stall which displayed books and CD - ROM's on Islam.

(...from page 32)

literature as a list of poets and writers, art as a repository of calligraphy and architecture as a catalogue of monuments was to miss the point. A living culture demands that we have a proper perception of yesterday, in order to meet the challenges of today and help make visions for tomorrow. Inshallah.

### Acknowledgements

The Conference ended with an appreciation of the admirable efforts put in by the dedicated team of young volunteers under the able guidance of the Conference Director, Aftab Bhojani as well as the seamless manner in which the Master of Ceremonies **Syed Abbas Abedi** has conducted the proceedings.

The Islamic Forum gratefully acknowledged the generous sponsors without whose financial contribution it would not have been possible to hold such an event, and the advertisers whose support enabled the publication of the Conference Program Booklet, so painstakingly compiled by **Muhammad Iqbal Laljani**.

### The 3rd Parliament of World Religions

The parliament was formed to bring about better understanding and co-operation among different religions. It provides a forum to exchange views on matters of mutual interest and exhibit religious literature. The first parliament was held at Chicago (USA) in 1893. One hundred years later, in 1993, the second parliament was also held in Chicago and it was decided to hold the third parliament in South Africa.

Nearly 7,000 people of all faiths from all over the world attended the parliament. Nelson Mandela, the first President of the Republic of South Africa and Dalai Lama - among others - attended the parliament and addressed the participants. The working of the parliament centred around several seminars addressed by scholars from universities and leaders of different faiths from around the world.

Participants were able to touch their own beliefs and traditions at deeper levels and explore the origins, development, and perspectives of unfamiliar paths, thus paving the way for better understanding. The Muslim participation in the parliament and seminars was good with a number of Ulemas presenting papers at seminars. They also held discussions with leaders of other faiths and scholars from different universities.

### IEB EXHIBITS BOOKS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Islamic Education Board (IEB) of the World Federation was one of the four Muslim organisations that had a stall at Cape Good Hope Centre where the parliament session was held. More than 200 stalls were made available by the organisers for exhibition of religious books and literature.

For the Islamic Education Board, this exhibition provided an excellent opportunity to interact with participants and establish long lasting contacts with religious scholars. The response was

tremendous.

The IEB stall was inundated with visitors from Bosnia, Comoro Islands, China, India, Iran, Japan, Kenya, Mauritius, Senegal, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States of America as well as sizeable numbers from South Africa. Most of the visitors were professors and lecturers from many universities but there were also many teachers from local Muslim schools and madressa who took keen interest in madressa and children books. The Islamic Education Board could thereby bring to the attention of participants the availability of many important Islamic sources which many professors, lecturers, teachers and religious leaders were not aware of. More important, the IEB was able to make many personal contacts and provide them with an opportunity to obtain information and clarification on a number of Islamic subjects.

### Visits to Durban, Pretoria and Johannesburg

During his stay in South Africa, the Chairman of the Islamic Education Board, Haji Muhsin Jaffer, also visited Imam Hussein (a.s.) centre in Durban where he met many muballighs and had discussion on the role of tabligh in South Africa. He also visited Pretoria and Johannesburg where he met with many momeenin and had discussions on matters of mutual interest.

The volunteers who helped out in the exhibition did a wonderful job and the IEB has acknowledged the assistance and guidance of the following organisations :

1. Ahlulbait(A.S.) Foundation of South Africa
2. Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania
3. Bilal Muslim Mission of Kenya
4. Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an. Inc. New York (USA)



# A report from the Council of Gujarat presented at the Triennial General Meeting

The following report (partially edited) was presented at the 13th Triennial General Meeting of the Council of Gujarat which took place on 26th September 1999 at Mahuva, India:

The Council of Gujarat has been rendering services since last 12 years for the noble cause of upliftment of our brethren in different fields viz. religious, educational, medical, financial and social.

## Details Of Jamaats In Gujarat :-

Jamaat	Number Of Jamats	Towns Covered	Total Population (Apprx.)
K.S.I.	43	117	15,000
SADAT & S.I.	42	42	15,000
TOTAL	85	159	30,000

The Council has received overwhelming co-operation, encouragement and financial assistance from Institutions and generous donors from all over the world over the last 12 years. A statistical data of financial assistance provided is given as under :-

WORLD FEDERATION: 842.98 Lacs (US\$ 2 million)

NASIMCO: 96.15 Lacs (US\$ 229,000)

AFRICA FEDERATION: 20.44 Lacs (US\$ 51,000)

SAJJADIYYA TRUST: 239.10 Lacs (US\$ 570,000)

INDIVIDUAL DONORS: 372.21 Lacs (US\$ 886,000)

TOTAL: 1570.88 Lacs (US\$ 3,736,000)

**Education Aid Under Zainabia Child Sponsorship Scheme:-** In 1999, about Rs.57.00 Lacs (US\$ 135,714) was provided by the World Federation under Z.C.S.S. for educating 4466 students of Gujarat.

**Housing Projects:-** Housing is a burning problem. We have completed 29 Housing Projects and provided housing to 485 families (346 K.S.I. + 84 SADATS + 55 S.I.) while 5 projects (for 74 families) are under construction. There are still 400 needy families, who are yet to be provided this facility. Insha Allah we will be able to undertake this huge task with the assistance of our generous donors and Institutions.

**Medical Aid:-** We cannot afford to loose precious lives for want of money. In cases of emergency we try to help the poor and needy despite the lack of funds. We have insisted to all our member Jamaats to appeal to their members to put one Sadqa box in every house and business place, so as to enable them to be self-dependent for medical costs out of this collection. The Council of Gujarat has however to look into major life-killing diseases and emergency operations. This problem needs to be solved by raising permanent investment funds. We appeal to our well-wishers to extend their hands for this noble cause.

**Poor Widow Aid :-** We have been providing this to about 700 needy widows with the co-operation of Br. Fida Gulamhussein of Canada. The amount spent is over 16.8 Lacs (US\$ 40,000) per year.

**Water Supply Facility:-** Certain areas of Gujarat have water scarcity and our house-wives face severe difficulties in such areas. We have been trying to cope with the requirements. Through assistance we have purchased 60 hand-

pumps and 43 Electric Pump-sets for the poor.

This year due to less rainfall the condition has worsened. Most of the towns are facing an acute shortage of water supply. We have taken up a survey in this regard. It has been observed that water reservoirs are available in about 20 towns/villages under 40 to 60-ft. levels. Funds of about 10 lacs (US\$ 25,000) are required to meet this requirement.

**Samuh Shadi:-** The World Federation, with the co-operation of generous donors, arranged 18 programmes of marriages in which 569 marriages have taken place and 1138 families have taken part.

**NASIMCO Rickshaw Fund :-** Nasimco has provided Rs. 5.48 Lacs (US\$ 13,000) under this scheme.

**Bathroom and toilet facilities:-** We have provided this facility to 36 families and 150 applications are pending. (One unit costs Rs. 20,000 -US\$ 500).

**Sewing machines :-** With the assistance of Sajjadiyya Trust-CANADA, 200 machines have been provided to poor women on subsidised rates so as to enable them to become self-dependent in this industry. 300 applications are still pending.

**Cash Credit Co-operative Banks :-** We have four banks, the Adarsha Co-operative Bank in Bhavnagar and others in Talaja, Palitana and Mahuva. These banks give loans for business, housing, social obligations etc.

**Corpus Fund (NASIMCO Benevolent Fund and Mohamed Jaffer H.G. Khaki Fund):-** Amounts of Rs. 5.50 Lacs from NASIMCO and Rs.3.00 Lacs from Alhaj Mohamedjaffer H.G. Khaki have been received under this fund and placed in Fixed Deposit Reserves. Its income is utilised in Medical Aid and other welfare activities in case of deficiency in the concerned funds.

We are grateful to all our Institutions and our well wishers and generous donors, who have stepped forward *Le-Wajhillah* whole heartedly for the upliftment of our momeneen.

**GULAMABBAS N. BHURANI  
PRESIDENT**



## Council of Gujarat holds elections

The Thirteenth Triennial General Meeting of the Council of Gujarat K.S.I. Jamaat took place in Mahuva on 26 September 1999. One item on the Agenda was the election of new office-bearers for the term 1999-2002.

Janab Gulamabbas N.Bhurani (from Talaja) was elected unopposed as the President.

The President under powers vested in him as per the constitution, formed an Executive Body as under:-

### Vice President

Salimali P.Varteji, Bhavnagar.

### Hon. Secretary

Noorali S. Mukhi, Mahuva.

### Hon. Treasurer

Haiderali F.Merchant, Bhavnagar.

### Councillors

Shabbirali Minsariya, Talaja.  
Tanvir S.Merchant, Ahemadabad.  
Sarfraz S.Sherif, Ahemadabad.  
Gulamabbas A.Bhojani, Baroda.  
Mohamedjaved G.Dosani, Bharuch.  
Haiderali M.Merchant, Una.  
Dilawarali A.Rajani, Rajula.  
Abdulhusein Y. Madhwani, Gadhada.  
Daudali Daudani, Palitana.

### Hon. Office Secretary

M.D.Vakil, Bhavnagar.

### Executive Advisor to the President

Aunali Y. Salehmohamed.

For any assignment and/or project in Gujarat the following are the contact numbers:-

Contact Number Of President:-  
Phone (0091 2842) (O) 22067,  
22221, 22083, (R) 22267, 22879.

Contact Number Of Vice-President:-  
Phone (0091 278) (O) 431545,  
411562, (R) 421836, 413110.

## Bhavnagar Trust honours students

The Husaini Education and Welfare Society Trust in Bhavnagar and the Bhavnagar Madressa Fund organised a prize distribution ceremony for community students with merit on Sunday 11th July, 99 at Janab's Makan, Ambachowk, Khojawad, Bhavnagar. Maulana Ahmedali Abedi, the Principal of Najafi House, Mumbai and Aunalibhai Salehmohammad, the representative of the World Federation were present at the function.

The function started with Tilawate e Quran and translation by Madressa students followed by a short Dua by students of Bharatnagar Madressa. The Hon. Secretary then presented the yearly report of the Husaini Education & Welfare Society Trust and the Bhavnagar Madressa Fund. Hujjat ul Islam Maulana Ahmedali Abedi then addressed the gathering particularly emphasising on the need for the community to advance in the field of professional education.

Students who excelled in different faculties of education were then awarded. The performance statistics were as follows:

Std.	Percentage	No. of Students
I to IV	80% and above	83
V to VII	75% and above	42
VIII to X	70% and above	22
XII	65% and above	01
Graduation	60% and above	03

The above statistics include Zainabia Child Sponsorship Scheme (ZCSS) students also. In S.S.C (X) a total of 80 students from all over Gujarat appeared for examinations. Mohammad Komel Iqbalhusain of Jamalpur, Ahmedabad stood first securing 89.43% marks. In H.S.C. (XII), Burmawala Mohammadabbas Masumali scored 82.31% marks in science. He is a ZCSS student. Ravjani Sohil Husainbhai, also a ZCSS student, scored 72% in B.Sc. in industrial chemistry, achieving 8th Rank in Bhavnagar University.

In madressas, a total of 58 students from Diniyat STD I to VI secured 75% marks and above in Arabic and Diniyat. Internal exams were held by way of the "Haji Naji Tehsil e ilm e Deen Contest" from all over Gujarat. The student scoring highest in every Standard was awarded and the best overall student from all Standards, Gulnaz Nathani was presented with the 'Haji Naji Tesil e ilm e Deen Award'. She also secured 82% in the S.S.C. examination and is a ZCSS student.

The best Madressa was awarded with the "Adelji Dhanji Kaba Award". Five Madressas gained a 100% result, the criteria of performance being based on attendance, number of students and punctuality. Mrs. Shaheda Fatema NasirHusain of Pirana Madressa (near Ahmedabad) was announced the best mudarris.

Those who were awarded were delighted and the presentations surely encouraged them to elevate in their studies even more.



## ELECTION ROUND-UP

### Tanga



At the Annual General Meeting of Tanga Jamaat held on 14 August, 1999 the following were elected into office:

Mahmoud Y.J. Dhirani	Chairman
Mohamed R.M. Walli	Vice Chairman
Anverali A. Fazal	Secretary
Shabbir M. Sachoo	Joint Secretary
Mohamedbaker A. Manekia	Treasurer
Hasnain A. Hassanali	Jnt. Treasurer
Shabbir Alidina	Member
Mohamed J. Chandoo	Member
Mohsin G. Meghji	Member

### Kampala

The following are the new office bearers of Kampala Jamaat:

Mustafa Kanji	President
Mohamed Rehmatullah	Vice President
Pyarali Khimji	Hon. Secretary
Rifat Shaikh	Asst. Secretary
Mohamed Manji	Treasurer
Asim Morvi	Asst. Treasurer
Safdar Rahemani	Mukhi

### KSI Muslim Community of London

The newly elected Executive Committee for the years 1999 to 2001 of the KSI Muslim Community of London is:

Dr. Amir Lakha	President
Mohamed Lalji	Vice President
Mushtak Kassam	Hon. Secretary
Akhtar Jaffer	Asst. Secretary
Mohamedali Dharamsi	Hon. Treasurer
Abdul Nurmohamed	Asst. Treasurer

Committee Members:  
Mohamed Hussein Manek (Mukhi)

## Madagascar

The following are the newly elected Office Bearers of the Conseil Regional Des Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaat of Madagascar.

Mojize Khamis	President
Rossan Jamil	Vice President
Ikkal Socomo	Vice President
Bakar Vasram	Secretary General
Afzal Piarally	Joint Sec General
Mohib Pirbay	Treasurer
Rafik Djouma	Joint Treasurer
Badour Djaffar	Member
Razaly Khamis	Member
Sabir Rossanally	Member
Moize Sobafils	Member
Taky Dinmamod	Member
Rafik Ramdjee	Member
Yakat Kadaya	Member

## Edmonton, Alberta(Canada)

The following are the new Office Bearers of The Islamic Shia Ithna-asheri Association of Edmonton, Alberta:

Shaukat Moloo	President
Mohamed Bhimji	Secretary
Aliraza Rajani	Treasurer
Mahmood Jaffer	External Affairs Officer
Farid Dhalla	Program Organiser
Zuher Dhalla	Madrasah Counsellor
Kaniz Mavani	Chair -Ladies Committee

Trustees:  
Akber Walji Akber Bhimji  
Habib Dhalla Shaukat Moloo  
Mohamed Bhimji

Azadali Kassam  
Ali Akber Hussein  
Rafik Mawji  
Mohsin Kassam  
Nizar Chagpar  
Akbar Padhani  
Liyakat Jaffer

Trustees:  
Mulla Fidahussein Khaki  
Ramzan Dhanji  
Hussein J. Merali  
Abdulhussein Hassanali

## Bukoba

The following have been elected to serve in the managing committee of Bukoba Jamaat for the term 1999/2000:



Chairman--Jafferli Visram



Hon. Secretary---Liyakat Fazal

Jafferli Rajabali Visram Chairman  
Rustamali Hamzaali Moledina Vice Chairman  
Liyakat Fazal Alimohamed Secretary  
Murtaza Khalfan Joint Secretary  
Inayat Yusufali Rashid Treasurer  
Mohamedhussein S. Mulani Treasurer

Committee members:  
Gulamabbas Rustamali Ladh  
Murtaza H. R. Visram  
Firdon Amirali Moti  
Huseinali N. Ladha  
Husein P. Khalfan  
Husein Shivji Pirmohamed

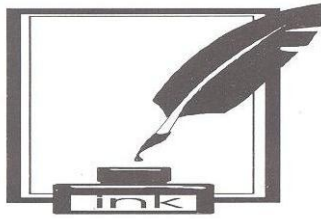
Councilors:  
Huseinali Ladha  
Husein Shivji  
Trustees were appointed for the term 1999/2003. The following were elected:  
Rustamali H. Moledina  
Iqbal H. R. Visram  
Gulamabbas R. Ladha.

### GCG, Mwanza

The Mwanza District Golden Crescent Group has been revived with the following being elected into office:

Cr. Zulfikar Karim  
Cr. Gulam Kara  
Cr. Amir Ahmed  
Cr. Mohamed Faiyaz Fazal  
Cr. Mohamed Jetha  
Cr. Sajjad Rai  
Cr. Murad Mohsin.





## Death Jottings

**inna lillaahi wa inna  
ilaihi raajiuun**

The following deaths have been reported since the last issue (Rabbi ul Awwal, 1420 A.H./July 1999--- Vol:31, No. 4)) of the *Federation Samachar* which carried death announcements up to 23 June, 1999.

**Marhum Hassanali Gulamali Jadavji**, Toronto, Wednesday 22nd December 1999, 13th Ramadhan 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Mariambai Kassamali**, London, Tuesday 21st December 1999, 12th Ramadhan 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Mohamedali Gulamali Ismail**, Dar-es-Salaam Tuesday 21st December 1999, 12th Ramadhan 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Naseem Rajabali Alidina**, Dubai, Saturday 18th December 1999, 9th Ramadhan 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Raziabai Anwar Mohamed Noormohamed**, Dar-es-Salaam, Friday 17th December 1999, 08th Ramadhan 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Hanif Hussein Ladak**, Moshi, Friday 17th December 1999, 08th Ramadhan 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Rukiabai Abdulrasul Hirji Walji**, London, Friday 17th December 1999, 08th Ramadhan 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Shirinbai Rajabali Rajpar**, Dar-es-Salaam, Thursday 16th December 1999, 07nd Ramadhan 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Sherbanubai Hassanali Bhanji**, Dar-es-Salaam, Saturday 11th

December 1999, 02nd Ramadhan 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Ahmed Raza Husain Karim**, Mombasa 7th December, 1999 28th Shabaan 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Gulamabbas Fazal Kassam**, London, Tuesday 7th December, 1999, 28th Shabaan 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Habib Hassanali Hasham**, Dar-es-Salaam, Monday 6th December 1999, 27th Shabaan 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Zahir Shaukat Gulamali** - Dodoma, Monday 29th November 1999, 20th Shabaan 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Sugrabai Ahmed Rashid** - Mumbai - India, Monday 29th November 1999, 20th Shabaan 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Maulana Mohamed Hassan Najafi** - Lucknow - India, Sunday 28th November 1999, 19th Shabaan 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Roshanali Rashid**, Karachi, Saturday 27th November 1999, 18th Shabaan 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Batulbai Hussein Fazal Rawji**, Birmingham, Thursday 25th November 1999, 16th Shabaan 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Fatmabai Mohamedali Muraj**, Moshi Sunday 21st November 1999, 12th Shabaan 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Sherbanubai Mulla Hussein Najafi**, Peterborough Tuesday 16th November 1999, 7th Shabaan 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Yusuf Musa Dhalla**, Dar-es-Salaam Tuesday 16th November 1999, 7th Shabaan 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Gulshanbai Mohamed taki Bharwani**, Toronto Sunday 14th November 1999, 5th Shabaan 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Najmabai Mohamed Visram**, Dar-es-Salaam Sunday 14th November 1999, 5th Shabaan 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Alidina Mohamed Pardhan**, Dar-es-Salaam Sunday 14th November 1999, 5th Shabaan 1420

A.H.

**Marhuma Sughra Bano, Karachi**, Friday, 12th November, 1999, 3rd Sha'baan 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Haji Hussain Ali Nanji**, Karachi, Tuesday 2nd November 1999, 23rd Rajab 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Ahmed Habib Abdalla Janmohamed**, Mombasa, Wednesday 20th October 1999, 10th Rajab 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Kulumbai Mohamed Jivraj** Dar es Salaam, Friday, 15th October, 1999, 5th Rajab 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Hasham Kermali Hasham**, New York, Sunday 10th October 1999, 29 Jamadi-ul-Aakhar 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Haji Akberali Gulamali Khakoo**, Tanga, Monday 4th October 1999, 24 J-Aakhar 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Mohamed Gulamabbas Alidina**, Mombasa on 27th September, 1999 J-Aakhar 16, 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Nargisbai Gulamabbas Sivjee**, Florida, Wednesday, 22nd September, 1999, 12 Jamadi-ul-Aakher 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Sakinabai G. Ebrahim**, Dar-es-Salaam on 20th September, 1999 J-Aakhar 9, 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Haider G. Asaria**, London, Saturday 11th September 1999, 30 Jamadi-ul-Awwal 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Mohamedhussein Rajab ali Gangji**, Dar-es-Salaam on 10th September, 1999 J-Awwal 29, 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Gulamabbas Suleiman Mohamed**, Dar-es-Salaam on 9th September, 1999 J-Awwal 28, 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Pyarali Fidahussein Patel**, Mumbai on Wednesday 1st September, 20th Jamadi-ul-Awwal 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Mariambai Mohamedali Rashid**, Mumbai on Sunday 22nd August, 1999, 10th Jamadi-ul-Awwal 1420 A.H. away in Mumbai, India and was buried in Mombasa on Monday, 23rd August, 1999.

**Marhuma Zainabai Hussein Mohamed Abdulrasul Rehmatullah** w/o/ Hussain Mohamed Fangani of

(continued on page 38)



(...from page 37)

Dar-es-Salaam in Karachi on Thursday 19th August 1999, 7 Jamadi-ul-Awwal 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Akber Hassanali Rajani**, America on Wednesday 18th August 1999, 6 Jamadi-ul-Awwal 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Haji Mustafa Sherali Rashid Alarakhia**, London, Tuesday 17th August 1999, 5 Jamadi-ul-Awwal 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Haji Mohammedjaffer K. G. (Kesaria)**, London, Monday 16th August 1999, 4 Jamadi-ul-Awwal 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Shireen Bai D/O Ghulam Hussain Indorewala W/O Ahmed Ali Indorewala**, Karachi, Saturday 14th August 1999, 2 Jamadi-ul-Awwal 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Haji Abdulrazak Gulamali Chandoo**, Dar-es-Salaam on Saturday 14th August 1999, 2 Jamadi-ul-Awwal 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Jenabi Kermali Sherif Jiwa**, Toronto on Friday 13th August 1999, 1 Jamadi-ul-Awwal 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Mahmoud Mohamed Michael Hamze**, Toronto, Ontario Thursday 12th August 1999, 29th Rabi ul Thaani 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Mohamed Raza Rashid**, Auckland, New Zealand on Wednesday 11th August 1999, 28 Rabi-ul-Aakhar 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Salim Mohamedjaffer Gulamhussein** - Dar-es-Salaam on Thursday 5th August 1999, 22 Rabi-ul-Aakhar 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Zainab-bai Abdullah Nasser Karim** - Mumbai on Wednesday 4th August 1999, 21 Rabi-ul-Aakhar 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Hasnain Akber Ahmed Kermalli** - Edmonton - Canada on Tuesday 3rd August 1999, 20 Rabi-ul-Aakhar 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Sakina Bahi Nazar Ali Haji**, Karachi, Wednesday 28th July 1999, 14th Rabi-ul-Aakhar 1420A.H.

**Marhum Haider Ali Karam Ali Nayani**, Karachi, Monday 26th July, 1999, 12th Rabi-ul-Thaani 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Haji Mussa Ali Jaffer**

## INNA LILLAHI WA INNA ILAHI RAJIUN

### Alhaj Ahmed Mulla Raza Husain Karim Alarakhia

It was with deep sorrow that the community heard of the demise of Alhaj Ahmed Mulla Raza Husain Karim Alarakhia of Mombasa on 7th December, 1999, 28th Shabaan 1420 A.H. Marhum who was 48 years died of a massive heart attack.

The late Ahmedbhai was an active member of the Golden Crescent Group (GCG) providing valuable social services. In his capacity as District Director of GCG, he inaugurated several pure water projects in various centers of Mombasa Township. Our Jamaat's two Mosques in Mombasa were also beneficiaries of his pure water distribution projects.

Marhum also served Mombasa Jamaat as a Honorary Treasurer and at the time of his death, he was serving his second term in the same post.

He leaves behind a son and daughter.

May Allah (s.w.t.) grant Marhum maghferat and rest his soul in the proximity of Chahardah Masumeen (a.s.) and grant his family solace to sustain this loss. Amen. Sura-e-Fateha.

**Firdovsi (Janab)**, Nairobi, Kenya Monday 26th July 1999, 12th Rabi ul Awwal 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Muhhamedreza Haji Suleiman Muraj, Moshi** on Thursday 22nd July 1999, 08 Rabi-ul-Aakhar 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Fatmabai Ali Hassan**, Dar-es-Salaam on Saturday 17th July 1999, 03 Rabi-ul-Aakhar 1420 A.H.

**Marhum Mohamed Saleh Suleiman Versi**, Dar-es-Salaam on Saturday 17th July 1999, 03 Rabi-ul-Aakhar 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Tamina-Fatema Dhalla**, Vancouver, Canada, Saturday 17th July, 1999, 3rd Rabi-ul-Thaani 1420 A.H.

### Tragic Accident near Lucknow

A tragic car accident took place on 28th November 1999 near Lucknow, in which a student of Jamia e Nazmia Arabic College, Syed Zaki Abbas died instantly. Several others were seriously injured.

Allama Sheikh Najafi, one of the prominent tutors at the Nazmia Arabic College died after receiving injuries. Allama's death is an irreparable loss to the College and to the entire Shia world.

Allama Najafi had studied in Najaf, and was a student of the great Mujtaheds of the Shia world like Ayatullah al-Hakim, Ayat ullah Shahrudi and Ayatullah El-Khui. In his tragic death, Nazmia Arabic College has lost a proficient teacher of Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh and Usool.

#### In this temporary world....

*Your aim (reward or punishment) is before you. Behind your back is the hour (of resurrection) which is driving you on. Keep (yourself) light and overtake (the forward ones). Your last ones are being awaited by the first ones (who have preceded).*

Hazrat Ali A.S.

**Marhum Salim Jaffer Ali Merali**, Dar-es-Salaam on Thursday 15th July 1999, 01 Rabi-ul-Aakhar 1420A.H.

**Marhum Iqbal Turab Hassanali Rajani**, Dar-es-Salaam on Friday 9th July 1999, 25 Rabi-ul-Awwal 1420 A.H.

**Marhuma Mariambai Abdul-Mutalib Hashim** Dar-es-Salaam on Monday 5th July 1999, 21 Rabi-ul-Awwal 1420A.H.

**Marhuma Mariambai Hassan Champsi (Mariam Doctor)**, Dubai on Sunday 4th July 1999, 20 Rabi-ul-Awwal 1420A.H.

**Marhum Yusufbhai Jaffer Ali Datto**, Toronto on Saturday 3rd July 1999, 19 Rabi-ul-Awwal 1420A.H.



**Mohamedraza Rashid  
of New Zealand**



Brother Mohamed Raza Rashid passed away in Auckland, New Zealand on Wednesday 11th August, 1999. He was the President of the Islamic Ahlul Bayt Foundation of New Zealand.

The suddenness of his death was profoundly felt by many who he had maintained closed contact with. Most recently he and Khalil Valji represented New Zealand Jamaat at this year's Supreme Council meeting in Zanzibar. This was the first time New Zealand Jamaat participated in the meeting.

Marhum was much esteemed in the community world-wide having also attended conferences of the World Federation. In New Zealand, he assisted the community to carry out religious activities in rented offices, warehouses and Community halls.

During his short stay in East Africa he visited various centres in Tanzania and Kenya to seek support for the first ever Shia Centre in New Zealand.

He will always be remembered for his unique modest personality, sincerity, dedication and love for the Community and as a true follower of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.).

The Shia Centre Project which he had embarked upon so earnestly was scheduled to be completed by November this year. It was at this Centre that he suddenly died while performing his honorary duties.

He is survived by his wife and four children. We pray that Allah (s.w.t.) grants Marhum maghferat and rests his soul in the proximity of Chahardah Masumeen (a.s.) and grants his family solace to sustain this irreparable loss. Sura-e-Fateha.

*Federation Samachar*

**Alhaj Mohamed Jaffer  
Kassamali Gulamhussein  
of Mombasa, Kenya**

The sudden demise of Alhaj Mohamed Jaffer Kassamali Gulamhussein at London on Monday 16th August, 1999 came as a shock to the community. He had served as the Vice President of Karachi's Mehfil-e-Murtaza and also assisted in laying the foundation for the Bilal Muslim Mission of Kenya. He also helped towards building the Mosque/Madressa and Jaffery Primary School on Mackinon Road, Kenya.

He will always be remembered for his unique personality, sincerity, dedication and love for the Community and as a true follower of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). May Allah (s.w.t) grant Marhum maghferat and rest his soul in the proximity of Chahardah Masumeen (a.s.). May the Almighty also grant his family solace to sustain this irreparable loss. Sura-e-Fateha.

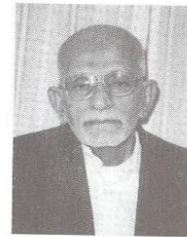
**Alhaj Abdulrazak  
Gulamali Chandoo,  
Zanzibar**

The Federation has learnt with sadness the demise of Alhaj Abdulrazak Chandoo in Dar es Salaam on Saturday, 14th August, 1999. The Late Abdulrazak Chandoo followed his family tradition by taking interest in communal affairs. He was a member of the Husseini Volunteer Corps and also served as the Hon. Secretary and President of Kuwwatul Islam Jamaat.

He will always be remembered for his unique personality, sincerity, dedication and love for the Community.

As the Community mourns the passing away of Abdulrazak Chandoo, we pray that Allah (s.w.t) grants Marhum maghferat and rests his soul in the proximity of Chahardah Masumeen (a.s.). May the Almighty also grant his family members solace to sustain this irreparable loss. Sura-e-Fateha.

**Alhaj Akberali Gulamali  
Khakoo of Tanga**



The Federation has learnt with deep sorrow the sad demise of Alhaj Akberali Gulamali Khakoo at Tanga on Monday 4th October 1999. Marhum was one of the founding members of Tanga Jamaat where he migrated from Muheza to Tanga in the 50's. He was a dedicated and selfless Community worker who served the Jamaat in various capacities. He was the Jamaat's President during 1967-69 and remained a Life Trustee of the Jamaat before retiring due to old age.

Marhum, even in his old age, was always available to give his to Community members. His family members now follow his footsteps.

May Allah (s.w.t.) grant Marhum maghferat and rest his soul in the proximity of Chahardah Masumeen (a.s.) and grant his family solace to sustain this loss. Amen. Sura-e-Fateha.

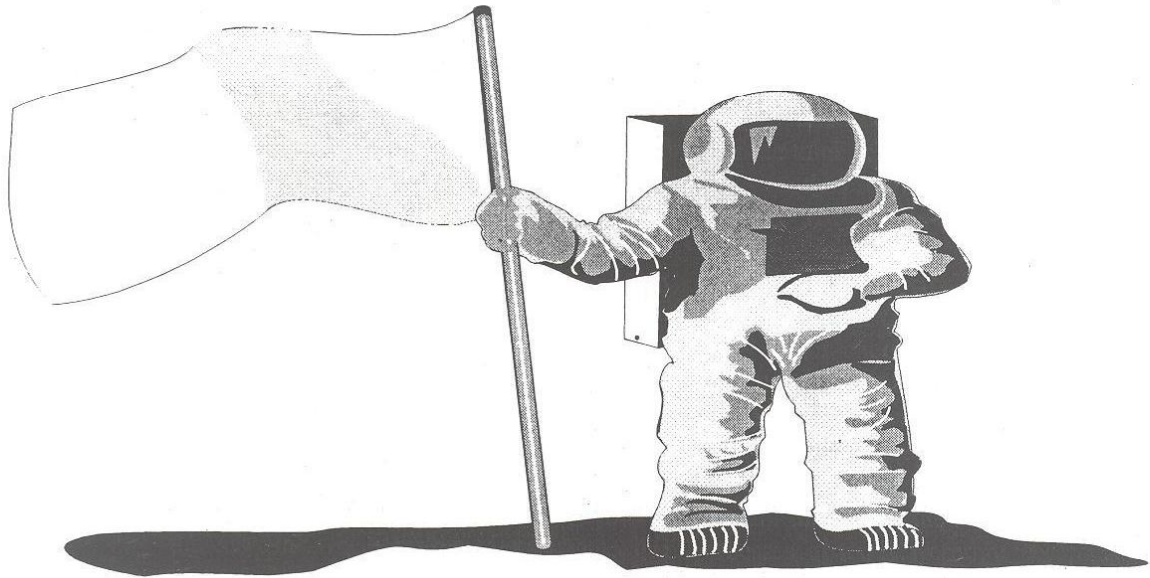
**Marhuma Maryam Hassan  
Champsi, Dubai**

The Past Chairlady of Zanzibar Hujjatul Jamaat, Marhuma Maryam Hassan Champsi, passed away in Dubai on Saturday 3rd July 1999, 19th Rabi al Awwal 1420 A.H.

Maryambai had also been a part time Madressa teacher for the students of our Community in Zanzibar for many years. She was also a Muliani who was readily available whenever required to recite majlises at our mehfiles in Zanzibar. To all who visited her in Zanzibar, they were never to be disappointed since she was an ever welcoming host. She was always ready to sacrifice her time, money and experience for all those around her. May Allah (SWT) rest her soul in eternal peace. Sura-e-Fateha.



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## The Federation Flag Day is of significance

Idd-el-Fitr is an auspicious occasion for offering thanks to the Creator for having provided us with strength and faith to complete the fasts of the Holy Month of Ramadhan. The next Eid is expected to be marked in Africa on 8th or 9th January, 2000. To co-incide with this noble day, the Africa Federation has called upon community members in Africa to enthusiastically pin the Federation Flag which will be on sale in the Mosque compound during the morning Jamaat Eid prayers.

By pinning the flag, members of the community are able to show a tacit commitment towards the Africa Federation at large and the common donning of flags also inculcates a sense of unity within the community.

The proceeds from the sale of flags helps to meet the administrative expenses of the Secretariat. However, financial benefits apart, the deeper meaning and effect of pinning the flag is that it conveys our silent prayer in unison: "*May our Organisation survive and thrive even after we are long gone and let our act be a witness that we too played our part, Amen.*"

The Flag Day also provides an opportunity to parents to enlighten their curious children about what the Africa Federation is all about. Contributions, large or small, are symbolic yet exhibit our feelings and sincerity.

Community members are requested to ensure that the Flag Day is marked with due esteem.

## Statistical information required on students pursuing higher education

Every year the Africa Federation endeavours to provide scholarship loans to our students to pursue higher education. In order to enhance future requirements of education in relation to our students, Jamaats are called upon to submit to the Secretariat of the Supreme Council, information of all our other students who from their own resources have secured admission for higher education in various institutions – local, regional and overseas.

This information will also enable the Council's Education Board to compile statistical data and records for future needs of our Community and will provide a good indication of the number of students of our Community pursuing higher studies at a given time.

## TAFSIR OF SURAH AL HAMD

In order to elevate the standards of Zakiri institutions and taking into account various resolutions passed by previous seminars and workshops, the Tabligh Sub-Committee has availed a series of lectures given by a renowned Islamic Scholar Allama Sayyid Zeeshan Haider Jawadi. These talks are on a Tafseer of Surah Al-Hamd in four video cassettes which is divided into seventeen parts.

All concerned Zakireen and Madressa teachers are requested to take full advantage of this offer. If any additional information is required, please contact the Chairman of Tabligh Sub-Committee of Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat, Br. Mehboob Somji on Tel: 115119 – Tabligh Office or email: [tabligh@raha.com](mailto:tabligh@raha.com).

The video cassettes will be made available to those who will respond.

## Bilal Muslim Mission of Kenya registers its domain on the Internet

On the advent of the auspicious month of Rajab 1420 A.H. the Bilal Muslim Mission of Kenya registered its domain on the Internet.

The Mission's personalised email address is [tableegh@kenbilal.org](mailto:tableegh@kenbilal.org).

## Fatima Panju excels once again

After having been awarded a certificate of merit for exemplary performance during her O' Levels by the Africa Federation, Miss Fatima Pyarali Panju pursued Business Studies by taking up the UK based ACCA qualification which is recognised around the world. She successfully completed it in a minimum time of 3 years.

It is an honour to announce that Miss Fatima Panju of Nairobi, also graduated as the top student, holding 1st place overall in Kenya, in the June 1999 examination. Congratulations.



## Away from home for 56 days... the Chairman visits different Jamaats worldwide

After recouping from his by-pass operation in Mumbai, the Chairman Mohamed Dhirani made various tours covering different Jamaats worldwide. He also attend the meeting of the Executive Council of the World Federation in Birmingham and the Annual Conference of Nasimco at Detroit, USA in July 1999 and the meeting of the Regional Council, Madagascar in August 1999.

The Chairman started his tours and visits from 8th July 1999 which lasted upto 3rd December 1999 just a week before Ramadhan. In all, the Chairman was constantly on the move and away from home for a period of 56 Days.

Here we briefly outline the details of his tours.

### EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING OF THE WORLD FEDERATION IN BIRMINGHAM

With the differences between WF and AF having been resolved, the Supreme Council attended the meeting of the Executive Council of the World Federation which was held at Zainabiya Centre, Birmingham on Saturday 10 July, 1999. The Africa Federation delegation consisted of Federation Chairman, Mohamedbhai G.M. Dhirani, President of Dar es salaam Jamaat, Asgherbhai Bharwani and Zulfikarbhai Khimji, ex Councillor from Nairobi.

In his review, the Chairman of the World Federation (WF) Mulla Asghar stated that the World Federation collected \$36,000 for assisting the displaced people of Kosovo. He also said that forty two families from Somalia have settled in the UK with their remobilisation expenses being borne by the WF. He also stated that there was a need for funds for education and medical assistance.

The Chairman of the Africa Federation, Mohamedbhai Dhirani, stated in his observations that whereas \$36,000

has been raised by the World Federation for the Kosovo people, more needs to be done for our desperate brothers who have been uprooted from Somalia. He stated that the United Nation agencies have raised more than two hundred million dollars to cater for the Kosovo people while our Somalia brethren have not benefited from any International aid. He then reminded the WF that its pledge of \$40,000 for Somalia families made in its Executive Council meeting held for the first time in Dar es Salaam in December 1995 has still not been met.

Referring to the Council of European Jamaats, the AF Chairman said it is essential for the Council to officially join WF as a member instead of remaining outside.

On another item of the agenda, the WF tabled a status report on Restructuring of the WF whereby it was concluded that there is no need for restructuring and that "we should not force change for the sake of change."

Reservations were expressed as to why for so many years WF had accepted the need for restructuring only to suddenly shelve this proposal. It was also noted that the proposed restructuring has led to the postponement of many Constitutional amendments in the past few years.

The meeting turned tense when the Hon Treasurer Alhaj Ahmed Daya was questioned about the accounts submitted by him. The Chairman of the Africa Federation commented that hukuk funds of khums, zakat, sadka, capital funds, etc. shown as the funds of the WF in the Balance Sheet were not proper and that they are the liabilities of the World Federation. He said that if these are taken as liabilities, then the financial affairs of the WF would not appear healthy.

The Hon. Treasurer did not accept these remarks and subsequently declared his resignation.

### NASIMCO CONFERENCE – DETROIT – U.S.A.

The Chairman of the Africa Federation, Mohamedbhai Dhirani was the sole representative from Africa who attended the the Nasimco Conference at Detroit on Saturday 17th July, 1999.

He observed that more time was spent on seminars and the inaugural open meeting where matters of interfaith were discussed. The Conference was confined to a period of three and a half hours.

During his visit the Chairman discussed many mutual points with the Chairman of Nasimco, Alhaj Gulamabbas Sajan and the President of Toronto Jamaat, Alhaj Ali Raza Rajani specially regarding settlement of our brothers uprooted from Somalia. Higher Education facilities for students from Africa were also discussed. The Chairman also addressed a congregation at Toronto Imambara where he emphasized the plight of our Somalia brothers and the need for higher education of our students. He also stressed the need to work together to uplift our communities throughout the world.

He then visited New York and Allentown where he met Jamaat officials. In Allentown he was shown the proposed site of the Al-Ahad Islamic Center.

### REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING – MADAGASCAR

The Chairman Mohamedbhai Dhirani accompanied by the Vice Chairman of the Supreme Council Alhaj Mohamed Pirbhai and the President of Dar es Salaam Jamaat, Alhaj Asgher Bharwani attended the meeting of the Regional Council of Madagascar held at the new Mosque/Imambara Complex in the Port city of Tamatavo from 17th to 19th September 1999.

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## Around Africa

(...from page 42)

Representatives, delegates and Councillors from all Jamaats in Madagascar were represented. Among the invitees were ladies whose contribution in discussions was notable. This is the first time the Regional Council invited ladies to participate in their meeting. The ladies were seated in the same hall with the gents but were all in full hijab.

The Chairman of the Regional Council Alhaj Moajeez Khamis, in his opening address, touched on many important issues pertaining to the needs of the Community. He touched on the economic situation in relation to our brothers, the need of higher education, social problems of marriages and the increasing number of divorces.

The Chairman of the Africa Federation also addressed the Conference and gave an overall picture of the Community worldwide explaining the needs of our brethren and how to tackle them. He also called upon the community to be united against outside forces.

The discussions, mainly in Gujarati, from both ladies and gents were lively and interesting and Madagascar Council is trying hard to achieve success in its projects.

In the meeting the Regional Council expressed its desire to host the next Supreme Council meeting in Madagascar. The Supreme Council is acting on this invitation.

### SECOND VISIT TO MADAGASCAR

The Chairman, Mr. Dhirani had to make a quick visit once again to Madagascar which spanned over three days from Friday 22nd to Sunday 24th October 1999. During this visit he attended the 56th Anniversary of the Faize Asghari at Morondava.

He was whisked from Antananarivo Airport by a five seater plane as he arrived from Nairobi. It was the night of 13th Rajab, the Wiladat of our first Imam Hazrat Ali (a.s.) that this celebration was held. Many families traveled from different parts of Madagascar to attend this function. Mohamedbhai was the Chief Guest

*Federation Samachar*



At the Dar-ul-Tabligh Office in New York. Form left to right, Sadik Jaffer, Murtaza Salehmohamed, Mustafa Jaffer, Mohamed Dhirani and Yusuf Somji.

and in his address to the the congregation, he reminded them that during the same occasion last year he and his delegation of 23 men and women had been in Kera Kutch.

### VISIT TO NAIROBI AND NAKURU

During this second visit to Madagascar the Chairman also stopped by in Nairobi to attend the thirteenth anniversary celebrations of the Haydari Madressa, Nairobi. (report carried elsewhere in this issue).

During this visit the Chairman also visited Nakuru with Supreme Council Trustee Alhaj Ramzan Mulla Nanji.

There he toured the Bilal Mission projects which include the boarding primary school and saw the progress of construction of the secondary school with boarding facilities. All the students are accommodated and fed in this institution and in addition to secular education, are provided with religious education based on the school of thought of Ahlul Bayt a.s. This Primary school has the best results in the district.

### VISIT TO MOZAMBIQUE

The first ever visit of a delegation from the Africa Federation visited Maputo and Nampula in Mozambique from Friday, 29th October to Wednesday, 3rd November, 1999.



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.

In the 1960s when Marhum Ebrahimbhai Sheriff was returning by ship from Madagascar it anchored at the Island of Mozambique but he was not allowed to disembark. However our Community members from Mozambique came to the ship by boat and Ebrahimbhai came down the stairs and had mutual discussions with them in that boat regarding religious and administration affairs.

The Community in Nampula is established since the last century and has its roots as old as ours in East Africa. Our contact with them had been only for Muharram when the Supreme Council provides the Jamaat with a

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Zakir.

In the past, a delegation from Bilal Muslim Mission headed by Hujjatul Islam Sayyid Akhtar Rizvi and accompanied by Alhaj Fidahussein Hameer and Alhaj Bwana Ali. H. Sheriff of Arusha visited Nampula for the purpose of tablighi activities and as a result a madressa is functioning there. Sheikh Abdulla Seif was running it until recently when he handed over the management to other Sheikhs.

Our Community previously undertook religious activities in a small bungalow and for the past many years a need was felt for the construction of a tailor-made Mosque, Imambara and Madressa. A plot previously obtained was taken away as no progress was made. A second plot was then obtained and this time the Jamaat is serious to develop this for the same purpose.

The visiting delegation perused the plan of the structure and also found construction having already commenced. The cost of the whole project will be approximately \$ 500,000 out of which \$ 250,000 has been pledged or contributed by our brothers in Nampula. If there is a need, the Supreme Council has assured that efforts will be made to collect the shortfall in East Africa.

The Supreme Council delegation included Chairman, Mohamed Dhirani, Vice Chairman, Mohamed Pirbhai and Anver Manekia plus the Chairman of the Madagascar Regional Council, Moajeez Khamis. The delegation was warmly received and accommodated at the residence of Dr. Mohamed Kanani a learned man and Alim who is a medical doctor qualified in Egypt.

The Chairman in his speech to the Community stressed on the need for our members to be in touch with our Community at large and insisted upon them to attend the next meeting of the Supreme Council. The Chairman of the Jamaat, Yusuf Nurmohamed Daya stated that until now they had been uncertain on the mode of operations of the Supreme Council but with the

(continued on page 45)



At the meeting of the Regional Council of Madagascar at Tamatavo. From left to right, Asgher Bharwani, President Dar es Salaam Jamaat, Mohamed Pirbhai, Vice Chairman of Supreme Council, Moajeez Khamis, President of the Regional Council, Baker Visram, Hon. Sec. of the Regional Council and Zaik, President of Tamatavo Jamaat.



Chairman of the Africa Federation addressing participants in the Regional Council Meeting at Tamatavo, Madagascar.



The Hon. Sec. of Tamatavo Jamaat welcomes participants to the Session.



The Chairman of the Regional Council of Madagascar, Moajeez Khamis addresses the Session.



## Around Africa

(...from page 44)

visit of the delegation their fears had been allayed. He assured the Chairman of the Africa Federation that an effort will be made to attend the next meeting of the Supreme Council.

After a three nights stay in Nampula, the delegation on their return journey, stayed a night in Maputo. They were the guests of Alhaj Yunus Merali previously of Kinshasha and of Alhaj Doctor Asgher Moledina previously of Kampala.

Until recently there were no Khoja Shia Ithnaasheri in Maputo but now there are at least about ten families settled here. Some of them emigrated from Kinshasha. Our religious functions are held regularly at the residence of Alhaj Yunus Merali.

Alhaj Yunus Merali has also established a full-fledged hall in Johannesburg where our religious functions are held regularly particularly in the months of Mahe Ramadhan and Muharram. The Supreme Council has for the last two years arranged for the posting of molvis to Johannesburg for Muharram majlises.

In Cape Town, we have our own Shia Centre under the banner of Ahlul Bait (a.s.) Organisation and in Durban, the Supreme Council has financed the purchase of buildings which are used as Shia centres.

The visit to Nampula and Maputo was very fruitful, it brought our Community closer and the delegation was able to have on the spot information on the conditions of our Community. Economically, the country is progressing and the Chairman has reported in his subsequent speeches to Jamaats he has visited that there are business opportunities available there which our members can take advantage of.

### VISIT TO ARUSHA, MOSHI, MWANZA AND BUKOBA

The Chairman was the Chief Guest at the first Graduation ceremony of our Jaffery Primary School at Arusha on Saturday 27th November 1999. He took advantage of this trip to also visit the Jamaats of Moshi, Mwanza and Bukoba.

For his trip to Arusha and Moshi he was accompanied with the Hon Secretary of Supreme Council, Asgher Dhanji and the Chairman of the Education Board, Asgher Manji.

The graduation ceremony at Arusha (detailed report carried elsewhere in this issue) was very impressive and programmes were organised on clockwise precision. The attendance of parents and students was very large and added glamour to the ceremony. Award certificates were handed over to the graduates and the Chairman spoke and emphasised on the need to take education seriously. He also congratulated the management of Jaffery Academy for the progress made which has enabled it to be the best school in the province. The secondary wing of the school has also been completed.

At night he addressed the Jamaat in a packed Imambarah. Here and in Moshi, Mwanza and Bukoba where he subsequently visited, the Jamaats arranged meetings with dinner and at all the places the Chairman spoke for nearly an hour to give full details of the current activities of the Supreme Council. He also mentioned of the prevailing economic situation in Tanzania and called for modest living. He also stressed on the need of higher education and on the need of good behaviour among our youths.

In Arusha, the delegation also visited both wings of the Jamaat's Jaffery Hospital and were very much impressed by its services which has made it very popular in the region.

In Moshi, the delegation visited the KCMC Hospital with its Faculty of Medicine at the Tumaini University where our three students are studying. The students are from Mombasa, Tanga and Dar-es-Salaam and are pursuing post-graduation optical studies. The yearly tuition fees and hostel charges amounts to only \$ 2,500 and the Supreme Council has encouraged our students to take up studies in this University. Following discussions with Moshi Jamaat, it has also allocated a flat in their building next to the mosque to accommodate students who wish to take up studies in other education institutions in Moshi. When

in Mwanza, the delegation was able to send one student to study for Form VI in Moshi with accommodation made available.

Similar to the educational facility at Tumaini University at K.C.M.C. Moshi, facilities in Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry are also available at the Muhimbili Medical Faculty of the Dar-es-Salaam University at a cost of around \$2,500 annually, the degrees of which are internationally recognized. It is indeed gratifying that many of our students have joined this college including a girl who is pursuing Pharmaceutical studies.

In Mwanza, the delegation visited the Jamaat's infrastructure which included the widows home, madressa and flats for the needy. The Jamaat's income generating housing complex was also visited. In all these projects the Supreme Council has given grants as well as loans to complete the project. In Mwanza, the delegation visited two private schools in which our Community is a member of the Board of Directors. A number of our students are studying in these schools, namely Victoria and Lake Schools. The management of Lake School showed the visiting delegation plans for the establishment of a University in Mwanza.

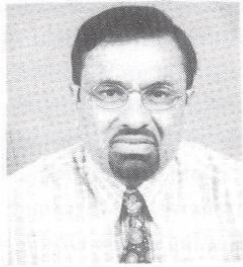
In Bukoba, the delegation had a fruitful meeting with the Managing Committee wherein many useful points were discussed.

In all the places visited, Community members and office bearers of the Jamaats extended a very warm hospitality. It was also very impressive to note that the Chairmen and office bearers of all these Jamaats are vigorously striving to uplift the Community in its secular and religious needs. May Allah (s.w.t.) reward all of them here and in the hereafter. It is our prayer that Allah (s.w.t.) in His blessings should strengthen the Unity of our Community and grant us progress to eliminate illiteracy and poverty.

In all, it was a hectic two months of travel for the Chairman but the visits helped to create new links and consolidate old ties. The international visits also helped to portray the Africa Federation to other Jamaats worldwide.



## Council appoints Khimji as Matrimonial Matchmaker



To facilitate and enhance communal marriages, the Supreme Council, in October 1999 appointed Zulfikar bhai 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.*

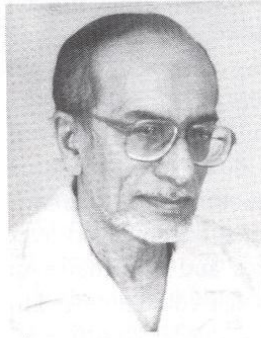
*I appeal for support from our community members world-wide and assure them that I will try to fulfil my duties to the best of my ability."*

Community members who wish to avail his services in this respect are advised to contact him at the following address:

**Zulfikar K H. Khimji,**  
P.O. Box 27730,  
**NAIROBI – KENYA**  
Tel: (005 2) 533370/532913/533467  
(Office)  
Fax: (005 2) 533369 (Office)  
Tel: (005 2) 571891 (Residence)  
Fax: (005 2) 571891 (Residence)  
Email: zulzazah@swiftkenya.com

*Federation Samachar*

## Legal appointment for Mohamedbhai Khalfan



The Chairman of the Africa Federation, Mohamedbhai Dhirani has congratulated Mohamedbhai A. Khalfan, a member of Dar es Sa-

laam: Jamat and former Vice Chairman of the Supreme Council, on his appointment by the Government as a member of the Users' Committee of the newly established Commercial Court in Tanzania. The Commercial Court has been established as a division of the High Court Legal System of Tanzania.

The Committee has been created under a new statutory provision in the judiciary system to bring together the State and the Civil Society in a joint venture for the first time in Tanzania. It was inaugurated on 5 November, 1999 by the Hon. Chief Justice of Tanzania, Francis Nyalali, and is empow-

erent court law, rules and management to achieve efficient and effective operation of justice in commercial cases.

The Tanzania Government has established the Commercial Court to lessen the pile up of commercial cases in the High Court in order to ensure judgement with least delays in the interest of the business community that is engaged in national economic growth.

A 12 man committee has been appointed which comprises of judges, attorneys from A.G. Chambers, advocates from the Tanzania Law Society and representatives from the business Chambers. The Committee is a new dimension to the Judiciary system not introduced anywhere in East Africa and not introduced in all the European countries. Mohamedbhai's appointment is by virtue of his position in one of the Chambers.

The welcome feature and benefit of the Commercial Court is the provision for "expert" assessors in the hearing of cases. A similar provision is intended to be introduced in other divisions of the legal system.

## World Federation provides medical aid to Zanzibar

During his visit to East Africa, Dr Ahmed Hassam, Chairman CETAB, Executive Councillor of the World Federation of K.S.I.M.C and a member of Medical Advisory Board took an opportunity to visit Zanzibar. Among the places he visited was the Zanzibar Government Hospital where he met the Director of the hospital and inspected the establishment. He subsequently recommended to the World Federation that they help the hospital with medical equipment.

Soon afterwards, the hospital was asked to send a list of their requirements and various equipment were sent to the Central Health Board (CHB) of the Africa Federation for onward submission to the hospital.

The presentations were made by the CHB when the last Supreme Council meeting was held in Zanzibar last April. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Africa Federation were also present during the presentation.

## WORDS OF WISDOM

- \* A diamond is just a piece of coal that is made good under pressure;
- \* The writer does the most who gives the reader the most knowledge and takes from him the least time;
- \* Life is like riding a bicycle. You don't fall off unless you stop pedalling.



## Haydari Madrassah celebrates 30 years

by Nairobi correspondent  
Mazahirali Alidina

On 20th October 1999, the Haydari Madrassah, Nairobi celebrated 30 years of establishment. From small beginnings the Madrassah has come a long way in terms of structure, number and progress.

The programme was held at the Jaffery Islamic Center, Lavington, and began at 10.00 a.m. with History Exhibition for ladies. At 10.30 a.m. the ladies gave way to the men and proceeded to the imambada for presentations by Madrassah students. The highlights of this programme included thought provoking plays featuring an Islamic court scene, a scene of Ghadeer, the journey of Bibi Nargis Khatoun from Persia to Medina, among others. With qasidas and plays the ladies programme was concluded by 1.00 p.m.

On the gent's side, the guest of honour was the Chairman of the Khoja Shia Ithna-asheri Supreme Council, Alhaj Mohammed Dhirani who arrived at the complex at 10.30 a.m. and was accompanied by the Headmaster of the Madrassah, Alhaj Aliraza Nanji for a tour of the History Exhibition, after which they proceeded to the imambada for the gent's programme.

The programme commenced with recitation of Quran by a pupil of the Madrassah, followed by qasidas and plays - which included: a play on jealousy, a classroom scene and a glimpse of the hardships faced by believers at the time of the oppressor Hajjaj.

The presentations stopped at Zuhr time for prayers after which the most exciting part of the programme took place. This was a balloon debate

## FATWAS FROM AYATULLAH AL-OZEMA AS-SAYYID ALI HUSSAINI SEESTANI

The Supreme Council submitted the following three questions to the Ayatullah and the replies received are outlined hereunder. The translations have been done by Hujjatul Islam Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Chief Missionary, Bilal Muslim Mission, Dar-es-Salaam.

### Q1. What type of Music is permissible?

Answer: *An (instrumental) music which has no affinity to the gatherings of sports and amusements is allowed for example military band and funeral band (a dead march) is lawful; also a classical tranquilizing music which has no affinity with gatherings of sports and amusements is lawful; otherwise it is not allowed*

### Q2. Is singing without music permissible?

Answer: *Song, all of it is haram. It means that amusing composition which is sung with the tunes used by people of sports and amusement; rather it is haram (on precaution), even those non-amusing compositions which are sung in such tunes.*

### Q3. Is the playing of the game Chess allowed?

Answer: *It is not allowed. And Allah (s.w.t.) knows (better).*

The following questions were presented personally by a lady from Madagascar who was previously prevented to see the face of her deceased male cousin. Ayatullah's replies are furnished for information.

### Q1. When a woman dies, is it lawful for a stranger man to look at the deceased's face and her two hand-palms (as it was lawful to him to do so in her life)?

Answer: *It is lawful.*

### Q2. When a person dies, is it lawful for his "mahram" to look at the deceased, at what was lawful to him to look at in his lifetime?

Answer: *It is lawful. And Allah knows better.*

The original questions and answers in Arabic are at the AF Secretariat.

which was presented by students of the graduation class of the Madrassah.

After this debate the gathering was addressed by the Chairman of Nairobi Jamaat, Alhaj Mohammed Kermali, followed by the representative of the Headmaster, Alhaj Raza Dato who spoke of the parents role in providing religious education for their children and how the Madrassah can assist

partly in this duty. The Chief Guest Alhaj Mohammed Dhirani then addressed the gathering and stressed on the importance of maintaining our culture and urged strongly for Gujurati to be taught in our Madrassahs.

In commemoration of this occasion, students and teachers of the Haydari Madrassah were presented with souvenirs. The programme was finally concluded with lunch.



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## Arusha Shia centre holds successful Exhibition

On 30th October, 1999 the Arusha Shia Centre held a majlis cum Exhibition Sale to mark the birthday of Amirul Moamineen Imam Ali A.S. The occasion was held exclusively for ladies and was well attended.

Along with food items, clothes and various household items, the Centre also had a stall to display and sale publications of the Bilal Muslim Mission. First hand comments have reported that never before have such a range of Kiswahili and English publications been on display to such a large gathering of ladies.

To encourage sales, publications were sold at subsidised prices and sales were encouraging. As a result of the encouraging sales, the Bilal Muslim Mission plans to display its publications in similar future events.

## Aunalibhai Salehmohamed appointed



The Africa Federation has appointed Aunalibhai Salehmohamed (pictured) to oversee its projects in India.

The Council is seriously considering the implementation of some projects there and has asked Aunalibhai to be its representative to ensure that earmarked projects are carried out as planned and allocated funds are utilised appropriately.

Aunalibhai has a vast experience in projects undertaken in India and has also been a regular participant in meetings of the Africa and World Federation.

*Federation Samachar*

# Africa Federation Web Page has a new look

Internet surfers who have recently browsed the Africa Federation's official Web Site <http://www.africafederation.com> will have noticed conspicuous changes. Beginning from 10 December, 1999 (1st Ramadhan, 1421), the front page of the site has been redesigned and almost all the incomplete loose ends on the site have been attended to.

The Africa Federation Web Page was launched in December, 1997 after being hosted on a temporary site for a few months. In the past two years the site has been gradually updated to include more information and the new-look site provides instant information on various matters relating the the Africa Federation in particular and the community at large. Over 10,300 Internet surfers have visited the site and the numbers are gradually increasing.

Want to know if the Africa Federation has come up with a new circular? Want to know if any community member has passed away today or recently? Want to read the *Federation Samachar* on-line? Want to know the e-mail address of a community brother in East Africa or the world? Want to refer to Islamic literature including the holy Qur'an, Nahjul Balagha or the rulings of the Marja? Want to be abreast with community news? Want to read important community magazines from around the world? Want to know the office-bearers of each of our Jamaats in Africa? Simply go on-line, press <http://www.africafederation.com> and you'll have immediate access to all this information.

The Africa Federation Web page essentially includes the following features:

- \* *Jamaat Homepages with basic information such as addresses and names of office-bearers.* (it is intended to create hyper-links when individual Jamaats create their own Web pages).
- \* *Information on the Africa Federation and our community in Africa;*
- \* *E-mail directory of our community in Africa and around the world;*
- \* *Photo gallery including eventful photographs;*
- \* *Circulars issued by the Africa Federation. These are put on air on the same day they are officially released;*
- \* *Community news updates;*
- \* *Federation Samachar -- current and past issues can be read on-line;*
- \* *Other community magazines -- links have been created to other community magazines around the world;*
- \* *Death announcements from around the world*
- \* *Dialogue section -- the Dialogue Section of the AF Web Page carries issues for discussion among community members. Surfers are invited to send in their opinions, comments or analysis of the subject under discussion.*
- \* *Islamic resources -- this section provides immediate access to the Holy Qur'an, Nahjul Balagha, the Shi'ite Encyclopedia and books like, "Then I was guided."*
- \* *Weekly thoughts which provide an insight on communal and general issues.*
- \* *Links to other sites like those of the World Federation, NASIMCO etc.*

The Africa Federation Web page is being handled by the following members:

Munir Daya (Web Manager)  
Fatema Alloo (Page designer)  
Mrs. Fatema Haji (Page inputs)  
Fatima Patel (Page inputs)

Jamaats, community groups or individuals who have newsworthy inputs can send in information to the Web Team by e-mail ([federation@raha.com](mailto:federation@raha.com)). For the dialogue section, the Web Committee is prepared to allow individuals to co-ordinate a debate on its site. Co-ordinators who wish to run a debate on the AF Site are required to submit their proposed topic to the Web Manager (e-mail: [samachar@raha.com](mailto:samachar@raha.com)).



# Mauritius Jamaat in perspective

.....*Supreme Council of Africa set the ball rolling in 1960*

The beginning of Mauritius Jamaat can be traced to the 1920's. Gatherings were then held at the residence of the late Haji Mulla Kassamally Esmael, who also recited majalis for the small Ithna Asheri community existing at that time. The Muharram majlises and occasions were then frequently attended by non Shias. The family of Late Kassamally Esmael is thought to have been among the first known Ithna Ashery families in Mauritius.

In early 1960, with the help and generosity of the Supreme Council of Africa, a plot of land was acquired in the city center of Port Louis where the construction of the Ithna Asheri Mosque took place. Zakirs were then called to officiate the daily religious activities of the community. The inauguration of the Mauritius Imam barghah was performed in 1963 by the Late Mohamedali Sheriff of Moshi who was then also the Vice President of the Supreme Council of Africa.

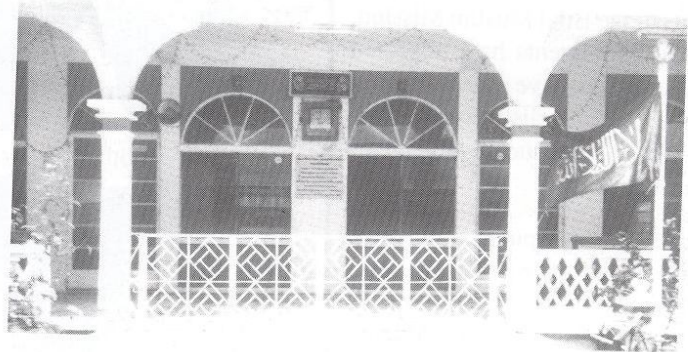
In 1974, construction of the Musafar Khana was made possible so as to benefit momineen who traveled to Mauritius. In 1975, a building housing the resident Maulana's residence and Madressa was put up. This construction was made in the memory of the Late Hasanali Pirbhai. In the same year, a new hall occupying the top floor of the Imambarghah was built for ladies and is now commonly known as Mehfil-e-Zainabia. The Mehfil's construction was made in the memory of Late Kassamally Esmael with a financial contribution coming in from Haiderbali Bhai Pirbhai.

The Ithna Ashery Jamaat owns a historical landmark in Mauritius called 'Kerbala' which is about a century old. This place was made in the remembrance of Imam Hassan (A.S.) and Imam Husein (A.S.) by the early Inidan immigrants in Mauritius. Today the 'Kerbala' in Mauritius is widely visited by all Muslims irrespective of their sectarian differences.

*Federation Samachar*



An exterior view of Mehfil-e-Zainabia



The Mauritius Imambarghah

Recently the Jamaat renovated its Moosafar Khana which now has four bedrooms with attached bathrooms.

The Madressa is run by the resident Alim and the Jamaat is planning to have a library where children and elders too can increase their knowledge of Islam. The Jamaat has sought help from other Jamaats and religious organisation for books and publications which can be kept in the library.

The Mauritius Jamaat currently has 200 members. It is run by a committee of seven members elected for a three year term. This present managing committee has been elected to serve until the first half of 2001. The Jamaat does not have any sub-committees.

Since the 1960s, Mauritius Jamaat was served by the following Presidents:

Late Haji Kassamally Esmael  
Late Hassanally Fazal  
Late Barkatali Gulam Husein Rajani  
Amirali Asser  
RazaHusein Kassamally Esmael  
Haiderali Hassanally Pirbhai (current President).

The current President is Haji Haiderali Pirbhai who is the longest serving President in the history of Mauritius Jamaat. He has been in office as President for nearly two decades and his current term ends in the year 2000.

The current office-bearers are:

President: Haydarally H. Pirbhai  
Vice President: Assenjeer Essoufali Moosajee  
Hon. Secretary: Dr. Amirali Asser  
Asst. Secretary: Mohamed Iqbal Kassamally Esmael  
Hon. Treasurer: Inayatoli Hassanali Pirbhai  
Member: Noormohamed Kassamally Esmael.

The address of the Jamaat is:

**Shia Ithna Ashery Jamaat,  
58, Sir Edgar Laurent Street  
Port Louis  
Mauritius.**

**Tel: (230) 241 0110  
Fax: (230) 454 3619  
Email: htl@intnet.mu**

Many of the Jamaat members are computer literate with at least 12 having internet addresses.



## Farewell to Sheikh Taskhiri and Sayyid Tabataba'i

The first Cultural Counsellor of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Dar es Salaam, Hojjatul Islam Sheikh Mohamed Jawad Taskhiri was recently given a farewell party by the Bilal Muslim Mission at the Al-Ghadeer Mosque in Temeke, Dar es Salaam. This was attended by office-bearers of the Mission, teachers and students as well as the Iranian community in Dar es Salaam including the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Dar es Salaam, Seyid Ali Saqaiyan.

After recitation of the Holy Qur'an and qasida, the Chairman of the Mission, Pyaralibhai Shivji elucidated on the keen interest that Maulana held in religious matters and in assisting the deprived. He also thanked him for his interest in the activities of the Mission.

Pyaralibhai then read a citation to Hojjatul Taskhiri which was presented by the Founder member of the Mission, Haji Fidahusein Hameer amid recitation of salawat. Sheikh Taskhiri thanked the Mission for honouring him and prayed for its future success.

At the same venue, the Mission also bode farewell to Hujjatul Islam Sayyid Muhammad Taqi Tabataba'i on 29 October, 1999. Sayyid Tabataba'i was recruited two years ago from the Organisation of Hawzahs and Madrasas outside Iran, to look after the Mission's Hawzah at Temeke. He started the Sazman-i-Madaris' syllabus, a 3 year duration course. He also revived the Boarding House, where 47 students are housed and provided three meals a day plus a monthly pocket allowance.

At the farewell function, verses from the holy Qur'an were first recited following which a student read a Risala in Arabic testifying their appreciation to the Sayyid. This was followed by a poem in his praise and speeches in Arabic and Kiswahili thanking him for services rendered. Arabic speeches were translated into Kiswahili by Sheikh Shabaan.

Prior to refreshments being served, lady teachers of the Mission's Primary School presented a gift to the Sayyid. The function was also attended by the Iranian Ambassador in Tanzania, Iranian brothers and teachers and students of the Hawzah.

Federation Samachar

## News from the Tanzania Bilal Muslim Mission Desk

### 'BABUL 'ILM' library opens

The Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania has opened the Babul Ilm Library at the Sikukuu Street in Dar es Salaam to encourage our Muslim brothers, especially youths, to develop a reading culture.

Reading religious and constructive literature has been greatly prescribed by Islam and the very first ayat of the Holy Qur'an commands **"Read in the name of Your Lord, who created you" (30:97).**

The Mission had for a long time been on a look out for a suitable predominantly Muslim area to have the library. It ultimately found a place just opposite the Jamaa Mosque Dispensary at a distance of only two minutes from the Manyema mosque.

The library is named after Babe Madinatul 'Ilm, Amiral Moamineen Imam Ali A.S., and opened on the birthday of the Imam, without any social gathering due to the passing away of the former Tanzania President, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. The Mission has the services of a Shia Sheikh, as a librarian, who is well versed in the Holy Quran, Hadith and Sihah and is able to discuss historical Islamic episodes with visitors.

The opening hours of the library are from 8.00 am to 12.00 noon and from 2.00pm to 6.00pm. The library is open on weekends but is closed on Mondays to allow the librarian to rest.

### At the 8th National Book Fair...

This year's National Book Week Fair was held from 28th September to 4th October, 1999 at the Arnatoglou City Hall in Dar es Salaam. The Fair was opened by the Tanzania Minister for Defence and National Services on 28th September, 1999.

The Bilal Muslim Mission once again participated at the Book Fair which was organised by the Publishers Association of Tanzania (PATA). About 45 local, national and international publishers took part in the Fair.

The theme of this year's Fair, which was the eighth to be organised, was "Books for all." The Mission displayed more than 105 titles of Publications and about 1000 people visited the Mission's pavilion daily. Titles which particularly impressed visitors include: *Kitabu cha Sala*, *Nyama ya Nguruwe*, *Ndoa Katika Islamu*, *Your Questions Answered* (all volumes), *Why Pray in Arabic*, *What a Muslim should know and believe* and *In defence of Islamic laws*.

At the pavilion, Islamic religious courses undertaken by the Mission were publicised. 37 people enrolled for the courses in Kiswahili, 12 enrolled for the English courses and 50 forms were collected by visitors to apply later.

In his closing speech, the Chairman of this year's Fair, Thomas Kamugisha urged the Government to establish libraries in urban and rural areas. The Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Relations, Emanuel Mwambulukutu closed the Fair on 4th October, 1999. When he visited the Bilal Mission's pavilion, a parcel of religious books was presented to him.





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## Ahle Bait (A.S) Propagation Organisation of Mauritius opens Centre and Jaffery Madrassa

Founded on 14th April 1996, the Ahle Bait (A.S) Propagation Organisation of Mauritius opened its Centre at Epidariste Trime street in the Capital City of Port Louis on 14th September 1999. The Managing Committee gathered on that night under the Chairmanship of its President Al Haj Raza Husain Kassamally Esmael to mark the occasion. The session started with the recitation of Hadise Kissa by Al Haj Husain Haji Ismail Maklai. The Secretary, Shabbir Husein Rajani then announced that the new Centre, besides being the Organisation's headquarters, will also house a Madrassa under the name of Jaffery Madrassa. The Madrassa, he added, will be operated under the aegis of the Organisation.

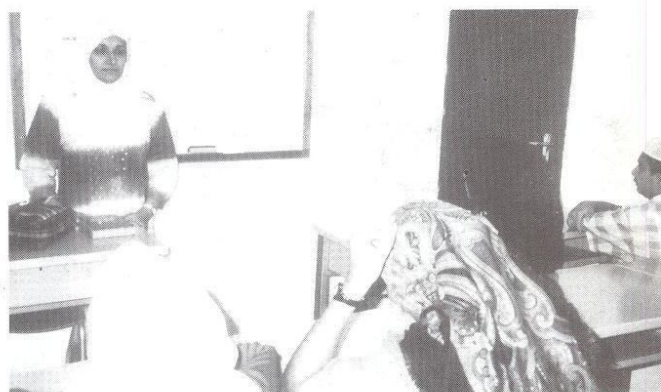
The Secretary also pointed out that the response for admission in the Madrassa was beyond expectation. Besides Shia students, application forms have also been obtained for non-Shia students. Madrassa classes started on 2nd October 1999.

The Organisation has meanwhile chalked out a programme whereby Islamic education will be imparted to mo'mineens of all ages. Gujrati classes are also being organised and are conducted by Husainbhai Haji Ismail Maklai for gents and by Mrs Tahera Kassamally for ladies. The latter is also conducting masael classes for ladies every Friday afternoon. Madrassa classes are being conducted by Mrs Tahera Kassamally, Mrs Hamida S Rajani, Mrs Shamim Gulam Husen, Mrs Sabira Gulam Husen and Miss Razia Bayjoo. Deeniyyat classes for Gents are being conducted by Mr Shabbir Husein Rajani every Wednesday night.

The new Centre also has a library which will be of great help to Madrassa students and to Mo'mineen attending courses in the Centre.



An external view of the Centre



Mrs. Tahera Kassamally conducting a course for students over 10 years.

## GCG Organises Sports Day in Mwanza



Mohamed Karim takes a leap during the Sports Day.



Chief Guest, Akberbhai Sunderji (right) with Mwanza Jamaat Chairman, Habibbhai Rai.

On 8th August, 1999 the GCG Sports Day was held at the Mwanza Orphanage and Clinic premises in Bwiru area, which is about a 10 minutes drive from Mwanza Town. The Sports Day was a great success with the children having a great day out.

The occasion started at about 9:45 a.m. with speeches by the Director and Sports Convenors. The sports events began at about 10:15 am. In all, 17 events were contested by 69 participants. The games were stopped at 12:45 p.m. for congregational prayers following which lunch was served. At about 2:15 p.m. the games resumed.

At the end of the day, token gifts were awarded to the various winners during the closing ceremony.



## World Federation extends Medical help to Mombasa Jamaat

During the visit of the President of The World Federation, Mulla Asghar to Mombasa last year and again this year, the Management Committee of Mombasa Jamat and the Trustees had a detailed meeting with him and various subjects were discussed like the spiraling cost of medical treatment and associated drugs.

Subsequently the World Federation agreed to take up a project whereby members are given some subsidy towards the cost of their drugs. Through this arrangement members of Mombasa Jamat have their medical costs subsidised by the World Federation which meets 1/3rd of the cost of drug prescriptions of patients. This arrangement is managed directly by the Mombasa Jamat.

Details of the project were worked out at a meeting between the Jamaat and Ahmedbhai Daya, former Treasurer of the World Federation. This meeting was attended by the Jamaat's medical practitioner and other health professionals of our Community. The project was put into action from June, 1999 and nearly £1500 per month is being paid by the World Federation towards this project.

Haji Ahmed Daya made it clear to the team of health professionals that he met in Mombasa that apart from being financially helpful to the project, the World Federation, with the help of the Medical Advisory Board, will be able to make an appraisal of the type of medical drugs being used and required by the Community.

### WORDS OF WISDOM

- \* One outstanding success can often cover a multitude of blunders;
- \* Education is a better safeguard of liberty than a standing army;
- \* You cannot build character and courage by taking away man's initiative and independence.

## Baker appointed to handle individual Samachar sales in North America



To boost circulation to individual subscribers in North America, the *Federation Samachar* Editorial Board has appointed Shabir Master Baker (pictured) of New York to solicit sales in American Jamaats.

He has already obtained a fair number of new subscribers at a special pro-

motional rate of US \$ 18 for four issues. This is comparatively cheaper than subscribing through the Africa Federation Web page because copies are sent under special parcel post rates by courier to Shabir in the week following distribution in African Jamaats.

Shabir can be contacted at:

**Shabir Master Baker**  
655 Evelyn Avenue, East Meadow  
New York 11554.

His contact numbers are:

**Cell: (516) 606-7060**

**Fax: (516) 409-0728**

**Email: SamacharUS@AOL.COM**

Meanwhile the North American issue of the *Samachar* continues to be printed in Toronto. This is printed for general distribution to all North American Jamaats by NASIMCO.

## Manji is "Insurance Man of the year"



At the Insurance Day held on 2nd September 1999, Inayat Manji (pictured) was declared "Insurance Man of the year" and presented with an appreciation award by the Insurance Institute of Tanzania.

Inayat is the Managing Director of Business Efficiency, a leading firm of insurance brokers.

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# 15 conquer the Kilimanjaro

*They set off with a strong wish to make it to the top. For days on end, the path climbing through forests, moorland and lava rock towards the sky offered only the silence of stones. Finally at dawn, between Gillman's point and Uhuru peak, the hikers crossed the sky look-out over an ocean of clouds. At an altitude of 6000 metres their dream became a reality and here they were as free as air and surely a woman in hijab at the top of Africa's highest point always helps to remind us of the liberty that Islam provides to our womenfolk.*

A group of 20 community members (9 ladies and 11 gents) set out to climb Africa's highest mountain, the Kilimanjaro from 9th October 1999 to 15th October 1999.

The expedition was organised by the Nairobi District Golden Crescent Group under Zulfikar Khimji, the past President of Nairobi Jamat. Participants of the expedition came from Kuwait, Dubai, United Kingdom, Mwanza, Arusha, Mombasa and Nairobi.

15 out of the 20 climbers successfully reached the summit with 10 getting up to the Uhuru peak (19,340 feet, 5,895 metres) and 5 to the Gilman's peak (18,640 feet, 5680 metres). The other five climbed up to H.Meyer Cave which stands at 16,995 feet (5,151 metres). The 15 successful participants were awarded gold medals by the respective Jamaats while the other five climbers were awarded silver medals.

Commenting on the climb, the expedition leader, Zulfikar Khimji said, "Marangu is the least difficult summit-bound path and the one that has the best facilities. It is also the most popular route. The climb is very gradual and presents no great difficulty.

From the entrance to the National park to the Mandara hut (2,700 m), there is a 4 to 5-hour walk. If you are in a good physical shape, keep going until you get to the Maundi Crater for the view over the valley, Lake Jipe and the Pare and the Usambara mountain chain. You should reckon a 5 to 7-hour hike to make the distance from Mandara to Horombo (3,720 m). If possible you would do well to stop over in Horombo for a day to get used to the altitude. It could be spent on a hike to Mawenzi (4,800 m), to be taken slowly, or on walks in the direction of Saddle.

*Federation Samachar*



Standing from left to right: Mohamed Ayaz (Arusha), Rizwan Safder Khimji (Mombasa), Mohamed Jawad Husein Pirbhai (Mwanza), Mustafa Mohamed Hassanali (Nairobi), Mrs. Noorjahan Sadiq Chagani (Arusha), Muftaba Hasanain Khimji (Nairobi), Husein Manji Pirbhai (Mwanza), Ms Shelina Gulam Janmohamed (London), Murtaza Karim (Kuwait), Imran Murtaza Karim (Kuwait) and Zulfikar Haiderali Khimji (Group leader, Nairobi). Sitting from left to right: Fehmida Mehboob Sajjan (Arusha), Mrs. Nurzehra Gulamabbas Khimji (Nairobi), Ms. Anjuman Muslim Khimji (Nairobi), Ms. Mubina Mohamed Hassanali (Nairobi), Sakina Mohamed Hassanali (Nairobi) and Aiemen Muslim Khimji (Nairobi).



From left to right: Mubina Mustafa Pirmohamed (Nairobi), Ali Dawood (Dubai) and Mustafa Amirali Pirmohamed (Nairobi).

From Horombo to Kibo hut (4,703 m), you can follow either the high path west of Mawenzi, or the low path that goes through Saddle. On the high path you get a view of the Zebra Rock after an hour's walking. On the low path, at around 4,300m, you absolutely must re-fill your gourd at the last watering place. You should allow between 5 and 7 hours for this path because it is slightly longer.

The last path of the climb is at night,

starting out from the hut at around midnight. The slope is steep but regular, and the path is clearly marked. At dawn, after a 5-hour hike, you will reach Gillman's point (5,685 m), the first summit on the edge of the crater. After another hour and half along the crater's rim which is gently sloping and snow-topped at certain times of the year you reach Uhuru peak, the summit standing at 5,895 m.

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The way down to Kibo hut takes 3 to 4 hours. From Kibo to Horombo, allow 3 to 4 hours. The next day, between Horombo and Marangu, you will need to reckon on a 6 to 7-hour hike to cover the 28 km down hill.

The only difficult aspect of the climb is altitude sickness. For this reason a climb taking 6 days enables you to become acclimatised and increases your chances of making it to the top. Remember, one must walk slowly and never push oneself too hard.

The Marangu summit-bound path which we used has been classified as an intensive use summit-bound hiking zone which draws up to 10,500 climbers a year."

On medical tips, Khimji said, "It is best to be in good physical shape before making the climb. Go on a fitness programme several months before departure: walking, running or cycling.

If you have any doubts concerning your ability to cope with high altitudes you should undergo a medical check up and an endurance test. You would be well advised to also make a dental appointment and to get all your vaccinations updated.

You should be aware of the risks associated with high altitude. Over 3,500 meters, headaches and nausea can occur. Making the climb over a period of six or seven days, spending several nights between 3,700 meters and 4,000 meters, will make the climb easier. It is important to drink a lot of water (4 to 5 litres per day) and it may be a good idea to take Diamox from the start (ask your doctor for details) that enables you to become acclimatised more quickly and limits the risks of pulmonary or cerebral oedema.

The symptoms of pulmonary oedema are characterised by difficulties in breathing, breathlessness, a persistent cough, and bleeding flame on occasions. The symptoms of cerebral oedema are characterised by headaches, un-coordinated movements and hallucinations. If symptoms such as these occur, you should immediately

## From flora, rocks and snow, the Kilimanjaro provides a stunning variety of different sceneries.



With the flora of the Kilimanjaro in the background, from left to right: Mrs. Noorjahan Sadiq Chagani who took proper care of all the ladies. She is also the headmistress of the Arusha Madressah, Zulfikar Haiderali Khimji (Group leader) and Husein Manji Pirbhai, a co-ordinator from Mwanza.



With a rocky terrain in the background, a group picture just near Horombo Hut which stands at 12, 500 feet. Some rocks have the shape of a Zebra and are therefore called "Zebra rocks."



Group leader Zulfikar Khimji at the summit with the stunning backdrop of snow. One would wonder --- is this Africa near the Equator?

climb back down to below 3,500 meters. Be warned! you may well be in top shape and still develop chronic mountain sickness. Taking it slowly and taking a rest after each lap, is the best way to enjoy the hike and you will make it to the top with reserves of energy left over.

Kilimanjaro is a majestic Mountain

that inspires fear, admiration, respect. So many people dream of reaching the summit. Many get there but some do not.

Everybody is entitled to his or her own small victory and to reach the summit is a dream come true. Congratulations to all the climbers and we hope many more will join the expedition next year.



## MOMBASA JAFFERY ACADEMY HOLDS GRADUATION DAY

The Mombasa Jaffery Academy held its annual graduation cum prize giving day on 22nd September 1999 in colourful exuberance.

The Headmistress of the school, Mrs. E. Gomes, welcomed the guest of honour of the occasion, Ebrahimibhai Jagani and highlighted the achievements of the school during the year, both in the educational and extra curricular fields.

She was pleased to present the excellent academic report of the school – the school achieved outstanding results in the 'O' and 'A' level GCE examinations of May 1999. In this respect, she conveyed her hearty congratulations to the students and their parents. She also thanked the secondary school teachers for their hard work and dedication to achieve this performance and the Headmistresses of Jaffery Primary and Nursery schools, Miss Chhaniyara and Mrs. Hatim and their staff who were instrumental in providing a good foundation to the students.

In the extra curricular field, the school won the inter-school cricket competition for the second consecutive year and notched the third position in the Coast National Age Group swimming competition organised by CASA among other achievements.

The Chairman of the Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri Education Board, Iqbalbhai Sunderji congratulated the headmistress, the teachers and students on the

excellent performance in the GCE examinations and other fields, and encouraged the students to scale to even greater heights of educational attainment. He was proud to say that the school has, besides other facilities, a unique Careers Resource Centre in Mombasa.

The guest of Honour, Ebrahimibhai Jagani, an ex-student of Alibhai Panju Primary School – one of the schools managed by the K.S.I. Education Board commended the school Boards for the initiative taken in expanding and improving education facilities over the years. He expressed pleasure on hearing the Headmistress' report of the excellent achievement in academics and hoped that the school would continue to progress to be the best school in Kenya.

Mr. Jagani advised students going overseas for further education to be on guard against temptations which could stray them from reaching their goals. He then presented a cheque to the school for the purchase of a computer for the Careers Resource Centre.

The graduates, dressed in graduation gowns, and the prize winners were then presented with certificates and awards, amidst cheers and applause.

Mr. Abwao, the Senior Deputy of the school then proposed a vote of thanks.

Earlier, the guests were entertained by students of the lower Grades with humorous poems and skits.

## Abbas Sherali attains ACCA honours

Abbas Raza Sherali of Dar es Salaam, a Higher Education Board student, secured top place in paper 4 of the June 1999 Association of Certified and Corporate Accountants (ACCA) examinations.

The ACCA course is a study of various subjects relating to accounting and finance. Qualification is bestowed on students after they pass all the subjects in the course. The Association is based in the UK but has examination centres in many countries including Tanzania. Sherali's achievement is a big feat considering that the same examination paper was attempted by students around the world, some of who go to Universities in the west.

The ACCA Correspondent in Tanzania, Eddy Mndolwa sent a congratulatory message to Abbas saying that "not only have you put Tanzania on the ACCA winners Road map, but also you have placed yourself on a winners list that will pay dividends in your future career."

## GCG - Nairobi District elects new office bearers

In a recent election of the Golden Crescent Group of Nairobi District, the following were elected as office bearers:-

DIRECTOR	-
Zulfikar Haiderali Khimji	
DEPUTY DIRECTOR	-
Murtaza Hussein Dhalla	
SECRETARY	-
Zulfikar Pyarali Nanji	
TREASURER	-
Mohamedraza Ramzan Nanji	
COMMITTEE MEMBERS	-
Shabbir Gulamabbas Khimji	
Mohamedali Mustafa M Khimji	
Abbas Hassan Nasser	
Zeeshan Sajjad Sajan	

## Editors meet.....



The *Federation Samachar* Editor, Munir Daya met the Editor of *Isna-asheri Masik*, Rafikbhai Lakhani in Mumbai in August, 1999. The two Editors had mutual discussions and agreed to allow news extractions. Pictured (in the middle) are Rafikbhai and Munir Daya with members of the *Isna-asheri Masik*.



## Arusha's Jaffery Academy organises first Graduation Day Programme

The first Graduation Day Programme for Seventh Graders of the Arusha Jaffery Academy was held on Saturday, 27th November, 1999 at 2.00 p.m. The Guest of Honour was Mohamed bhai Dhirani, the Chairman of the Africa Federation of the Khoja Shia Ithnasheri Community. He was accompanied by various dignitaries from the Ithnasheri community from both Nairobi and Dar-es-salaam. In all about 350 other guests and parents graced this historic occasion.

The programme began with prayers, a recitation from the Holy Qur'an as well as the National Anthem. Everyone present was asked to observe a minutes silence in memory of the late Mwalimu Nyerere following which children from the primary section presented various items such as speeches of thanks, a kiswahili poem an English Poem and a short play by the Prep Class.

After being formally introduced by the Chairman of the Academy, Amirbhai Somji the the Guest of Honour, Mohamedbhai Dhirani addressed the guests and students of Jaffery Academy. In his address, he emphasised on the importance of the acquisition of knowledge and provided excellent advice to Standard Seven granduants on how to tackle their lives in the years to come.

Prizes and trophies were then presented by the the President of the Arusha Jamaat to relevant students who excelled academically over the year. The guest of Honour then presented certificates to the grandaunts followed by an address by the Arusha Jamaat President, Mr Habib Yusufali in which he expounded on the importance of time and its usage.

Mr. Amir Somji, the Chairman of the Education Committee then addressed the audience. In his speech he spoke of the importance of exams as a step upwards along the ladder of education and achievement and also pointed out that the Jaffery Academy had reached

a major milestone in its history with the first graduation of the Standard Seven Students.

The foundation stone for the primary school was laid about 6 years ago and through enthusiastic efforts by Education Board members the school has grown from primary to secondary

level. In 1999 the Academy has added a Computer Room, Language Laboratory and a State of Art - Swimming Pool.

The two best boy and girl Abbasali Remtulla and Diete Orondo were given a shs 250,000/= voucher each to be claimed against their school fees.



A wing of the Jaffery Academy



With the best students (kneeling), Diete Orondo and Abbasali Remtulla are (from left to right) Asgherbhai Dhanji (Secretary, Africa Federation), Mohamedbhai Dhirani (Chairman, Africa Federation), Amirbhai Somji (Chairman, Jaffery Academy), Habibbhai Yusufali (President, Arusha Jamaat), Anverbhai Panjwani (Treasurer, Jaffery Academy) and Ali Seif (Committee Member, Jaffery Academy).



Mohamedbhai Dhirani addressing parents, invitees and students with some of the graduates in the background.



# Arusha Academy Chairman, Amir Somji talks to the *Samachar*

When driving back from a business meeting in Nairobi in the first week of October, 1999 I stopped by Arusha for a day. During my brief stay I had an opportunity to visit the Jaffery Academy twice.

The first impression one gets on entering the Academy is one which tells you that the place is well managed. The front garden lacked unkempt stretches and the invigorating breeze that normally prevails in Arusha at all times of the year made the plants look even more attractive as these swayed to and fro.

After signing the visitors' book, the headmaster Yakub T. Dalal explained to me the general activities of the school in the presence of treasurer Anver Panjwani. I was then shown the school's annual magazines, the first of which was printed in 1995, three years after its inauguration. The inaugural issue of the magazine had a befitting tribute to the first Chairman Mohamedali Chagani who passed away on 15 March, 1995. The 1997 edition of the school magazine carried a tribute to the second Chairman, Bashir Lalji who passed away while in office on 3 July, 1997 (27 Safar, 1418 AH).

After perusing the school magazines, I was taken around to some of the classes. Many of the teachers had left as it was past closing time but the black-boards and notice-boards showed how active the classes had been that morning. In the computer training room it was impressive to see over a dozen computers for children to use and learn from. The lady in charge advised me that in addition to teaching students the general usage of computers, upper class students are taught basic programming.

My second visit to the Academy was at about 10.30 p.m. in the presence of Chairman, Amirbhai Somji and other committee members including Anver



The Chairman of the School, Amirali Somji and the Honorary Treasurer, Anverali Panjwani with the *Samachar* Editor, Munir Daya during the interview.

Panjwani and Abbas Sheriff. Also present during this visit was the Arusha Jamaat President, Habibbhai Yusufali and Bwana Ali Sheriff. It was a bright night and we had a good look at the swimming pool under construction at the back of the school yard.

The pool that I saw was a rectangle dug out of the ground but it was easy to envisage what the pool would look like after installation of special pool tiles and lights. The pool is earmarked to be a professional one and should provide a good opportunity to students to exercise and to girls to swim in privacy. Adjacent to the swimming pool is the school's mini football ground and Amirbhai Somji advised me on proposed plans to expand this area further backwards if negotiations with some of our community members, who have adjacent plots, are successful.

The school is a pride of the community and during my stay I took the opportunity of asking Board Chairman, Amirbhai Somji a few questions. These follow:

**Daya:** *For how long have you been associated with the school? Please also tell us briefly about your past involvement in communal and non-communal social activities.*

**Somji:** Exactly two years in October, 1999. At community level, I was the Chairman of Arusha Jamaat from 1974 to 1976. I am also a Past Chairman of Kili Meru Gymkhana and am a member of the Jamaat's Medical commit-

tee. At non communal level, have been a Board member of the Arusha Meru Secondary School for the past 5 years. I am also the present Chairman of the Arusha Region Cricket Association. I am also a Past Chairman of the Tanzania Golf Union and a Past District Governor of Rotary International District 9210.

**Daya:** *The Jaffery Academy stands out among the best schools in Arusha region. Please enlighten us about its historical background.*

**Somji:** Our community felt the need for a good school for a long time but formerly the Government did not allow private primary schools and such we could only think of a Nursery school. In 1989 the Arusha Jamaat took a bold step and acquired a plot in the suburb of Arusha Township and soon the Hemani family offered to build the nursery school which is well known as the Hemani Nursery School.

This was the beginning of a chain development that showed the generosity, commitment and vision of the members of Arusha Jamaat. As the children finished the Nursery School we did not have a Primary school and so the mosque compound became the place of learning while at the same time Zuher Fazal of Leopard Tours donated a 2 and a half acre plot at Njiro. Permission was needed from the authorities and here Gulamhusein Mukhtar

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played a very important role and acquired the necessary papers following which construction soon started. Thereafter generous members of the community started contributing towards the building fund with the Africa Federation also giving us a helping hand. In September, 1993 the Standard 1 moved to the new premises.

**Daya:** *After the successful launching of the primary school, plans for accommodating a secondary school were not implemented for a number of years. Why was that?*

**Somji:** Having built the Primary school, planning for a Secondary school was delayed well knowing that we still had some six years before the students would need a secondary school. The time passed so fast and the then Chairman, Late Bashir Lalji in 1996 started working on the project. He sought and obtained donors bearing in mind that the Secondary School had to be ready by the year 2000 when our students would be ready to go to the Secondary School.

At this time Gulamali Esmail Thawer gave a generous offer to build the school but with a condition that the school be started in 1998 and not to wait till the year 2000. The Arusha Jamaat was very grateful for this philanthropic attitude and promptly accepted the well-intentioned offer.

With the Secondary school starting in 1998, it has given us a head start. It is a fact that had it not been for the generous donations received, the Jaffery Academy would not have bloomed into a beautiful complex in such a short time. Our gratitude must also go to the Africa Federation for their assistance and support.

**Daya:** *What syllabus does the school accommodate? Are lessons on 'Islamic teachings' provided as an optional subject or is 'Islam' part of the main syllabus? Does the school provide religious teachings for other Faiths?*



The Minister of Education, Juma Kapuya with the Headmaster of Jaffery Primary School, Yakub Dalal when he visited the Academy on 24 November, 1999.

**Somji:** The school is a secular English Medium school that follows the National curriculum. We have two prayer rooms for boys and girls and every Thursday there are religious classes for all religions.

**Daya:** *Please tell us about the extra-curricular activities at the Academy including the sporting activities that students are involved in.*

**Somji:** Along with normal classes there are interesting extra curricular activities such as cricket, netball, football, scouts and girl guides, remedial reading, indoor games, cookery, embroidery, knitting and first aid.

Students are sometimes also taken for day trips. Recently some students went to the Tarangire National Park while others went for a Mount Meru climbing expedition at the end of October.

**Daya:** *During my visit I noted that the Nursery School is situated far away from the Primary and Secondary School. Are there any plans to have the Nursery School moved to the new Complex?*

**Somji:** Yes there are. What we would really like to see is that the Nursery School moves nearer to the complex if not in the same compound and this is where we need to convince the owners of the plot next door to make this plot available to us.

**Daya:** *How many students does the school have?*

**Somji:** There are approximately 84 students in the Nursery school divided into Juniors and Seniors and totally they spend 2 years. There are 4 classes each with 21 students. The number of boys and girls are approximately equal. Out of these 30 percent are our children. After 2 years at Hemani they move to Primary School and spend one year in the Prep class before starting Standard 1.

In the Primary School there are 2 streams and the total number of students including the Prep is 457 of which 221 are boys and 236 are girls. An average of 28 students per class is maintained and in all about 28% are our children.

In the Secondary School we have 2 streams in both Form 1 and 2 and the total number of students is 68 of which 35% are from our community.

From next year the boys and girls will sit in separate classes starting from Standard 4 onwards and ties will be added to the boys' uniforms.

**Daya:** *Having told us about the students, please tell us about the teachers. How many teachers does the school have? Are these teachers suitably qualified to be able to provide a high standard of education?*

**Somji:** The Hemani Nursery School has 8 teachers plus the Headmistress. Four of the teachers here are qualified.

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## Around Africa (...from page 60)

The Jaffery Primary school has 27 teachers plus the Headmaster. Only two of the teachers are graduates, the rest are all qualified. The Jaffery High school has 8 teachers plus a Headmistress. All are qualified. We also have an Administrator, 8 administrative workers and 18 auxiliary staff for the three schools.

**Daya:** *How do the school's students compare academically with students of other schools? Is there any criteria, like examination results, for comparison?*

**Somji:** The school vies to provide students with a conducive environment to encourage them in their studies. For Standard 7, this will be the first time that we will be able to gauge our performance with other schools.

**Daya:** *Please tell us about the school's annual magazine. Has this been regularly published and are there any plans to improve, now that colour separation facilities are available in Tanzania.*

**Somji:** Yes, the school takes out a magazine every year and ofcourse there are plans to improve it especially next year when we celebrate 10 years of our existence. With you having such confidence in the school we hope to call on your expertise to assist and I have no doubt that you will co-operate. See what you have done to the *Federation Samachar*, which now portrays a completely different image.

**Daya:** *Please tell us about special projects undertaken this year and of new projects in the pipeline including the swimming pool that is under construction.*

**Somji:** In 1999 we have established a computer room fully equipped and donated in memory of our last Chairman, late Bashir Lalji. The language laboratory locally purchased will soon also be functional. The biggest project taken up this year is the swimming pool and this has given us some sleepless nights. This is expected to be ready on the 15th of November, 1999. We are grateful that we could get a soft loan that will be repaid in five years.



Secondary students at work

**Daya:** *Are there plans in the future to provide Advanced level studies at the Academy?*

**Somji:** As we enter the millennium we will be looking into building the Form five and six on the same compound and we hope that members of our community in East Africa and overseas will assist us. All our community Federations and Councils, including NASIMCO, the World and Africa Federations, have been emphasising endlessly on the importance of education and we do hope our proposed project will give them an avenue to support financially.

**Daya:** *When I recall my visit to the Academy, I can still reminisce the greenery and general cleanliness of the compound. Presumably you have a maintenance officer cum gardener who maintains the school ground. Are students involved in general chores to keep the school clean? How does the Academy deter students from littering the compound?*

**Somji:** Yes, we have a very good gardener and his supervisor is Bwana Ali in honorary capacity. Every year we make sure that we have a vote in the Budget called the Green Vote. We do not have chores for the students to clean the school but they are told in no uncertain terms not to litter.

**Daya:** *Please tell us how pressing is this honorary involvement. Please also tell us something about your committee members.*

**Somji:** I get pleasure serving in my capacity as Chairman of the Education Committee and I have a very fine

team that works tirelessly. I am thankful to them as each one performs his duties meticulously.

The Education Committee is appointed by the Arusha Jamaat management committee and they appoint the Chairman. There are 6 members and one member is from the management committee and the management has never refused whenever we need additional members. The two-year term runs concurrently with that of the Management Committee of the Jamaat.

The present committee includes 8 members including me. They are: Ali Seif (Secretary), Anver Panjwani (Treasurer), Abbas Sheriff, Dr. Mohamed Dhirani, Mahmood Remtulla and Murtaza Versi (Committee members). Fayaz Dhirani is the liaison person from the Management Committee and Bwana Ali Sheriff is present by invitation.

We meet every two weeks during the school term and every three weeks during holidays. On average we meet about twenty times a year.

**Daya:** Any parting comments?

**Somji:** This interview with the *Federation Samachar* has come at an opportune moment as it is the first time since inception that the Primary school is having the Graduation Ceremony on the 27th November, 1999 with the Chairman of the Africa Federation, Mohamedbhai Dhirani to be the guest of honour. The interview should give your esteemed readers a good background to the school when they read about the Graduation ceremony.



# In perspective ---- the *Nai Misid*, Hujjatul Islam Jamaat of Zanzibar

by Abdulrazak Sheriff Fazal

We were seated at the breakfast table in the lobby of International Hotel, Zanzibar (formerly the Chambavima Dello) when my sister from the States raised the alarm, "soon we'll be departing and we're yet to see Nai Misid and visit Nai Chungani". Thereupon we rushed off.

The early morning showers had left the streets sodden and an overcast sky gave a rather gloomy and sleepy look. Passing through the narrow lanes remarkable for their unevenness, depressive stone houses, shabby graffiti and Indo-Arab multiculturalism we found ourselves amid moulds of the dilapidated Dato Hemani Girls School that once had been under the trusteeship of Nai Misid. My sister sighed for the school in which she had studied. It was difficult to believe that once this very place was our own Jangbar.

Further down through the gully of Dr. Menezes' clinic (of the colonial days) and via the once bustling Golarana Dello the Nai Misid minara in all its loneliness glared longingly at us, and also evident was the forlorn ladies imambara evoking sadness. Its memory lingered on.

On the eve of seventh night of Muharram the ladies imambara would be a hive of activities with the organizers busy threading jasmine and rose petals, preparing mehndi, arranging thals and lighting candles. Then little girls carrying green flags, candles and mehndi plates over the sides of which hanged jasmine sehras would walk to and fro while the ladies with thals of fruits, dry fruits, siro and coconut pieces along with boiled grams and sugar lumps moved around encircling the girls, and chanting 'Mehndi bane Kassimki, Jo lati hai Sakina'. It used to be so ceremonial and moving, and done in grand style. Ah for those days of Nai Misid in Zanzibar!

Nai Misid or Hujjat Jamaat had a mysterious aura about it. Even today to many its foundation remains mysterious. We need dig deep into this. Basically Khojas are of Hindu Lohana

*Federation Samachar*



The three *Nai* Alims (left to right): Agha Muravvij, Aqa Raza and Agha Najfi listening to majlis by *Junni's* Husain Rahim.

origin from Cutch and Kathiawar converted by Pir Sadruddin into the Muslim Sect of Shia Ismailism. Later dissidence erupted within the Khojas and the devout Shias separated themselves adopting the truer version of the Shia mazhab-Ithnaashrism. Incidentally the Kuwwat Jamaat of Zanzibar was the first ever Khoja Shia Ithnaashri Jamaat founded in 1882 when the Khojas of the subcontinent were still facing stiff opposition to establish their separate identity.

Initially the Zanzibar Khoja Ithnaashries numbered only a few hundreds, and considering their new national and religious status having emigrated from India and also proclaimed the new faith, they ought to have had strong bond and unity among themselves. It was therefore ironic that they splitted within eight years.

Perhaps the Jamnagri Khojas had felt insecure as they were outnumbered by the other Khojas who also dominated the Kuwwat Jamaat Committee under the auspices of Sayeid Abdulhusain Marashi. Around that time appeared on the Zanzibar scene Molvi Gulamhusain (Seyyed Aqa) from Hyderabad, India, whose personality and preaching power emotionally overwhelmed the Khoja Ithnaashries, and in particular the Jamnagris who found solace in him. Untowardly a series of unwarranted misunderstandings resulted in the eventual formation of Hujjatul Islam Jamaat. It was the indelible mark. Its initial membership

was hardly 100 members and prominent among them were the Jamnagar families of Lakha Kanji, Ali Mohamed Khalfan, Abdulrasul Dato, Mohamed Sheriff Dewani, Ali Dungersi, Karim Alarakhia, Dewji Dhanji and some others.

A vast plot was obtained in one corner of Sokomohogo/Mkunazini over which the Nai mosque structure found its place and its foundation stone laid in 1890 by none other than Molvi Ghulamhussain. Attached to the mosque were two huge imambaras, for both ladies and gents respectively. One of the highest donors was Saleh Lakha Kanji who is believed to have spent his entire wealth on financing Nai Misid. Also its kabrastan plot was procured around Mwembeladu.

Initially there was nothing like president but trustees or mutwallis, and a mukhi, who were powerful and held in very high esteem. It was only later on the formulation of constitution that the post of president and other office bearers came into being. Some of Nai's presidents included Abdulrasool Khalfan, Abdulla Khalfan, Ahmed Lakha, Ahmed Dato, Ramzan Khamis Damji, Anwer Hassan Virjee, Hussain Hassam Nasser, Yusuf Hassam Nasser, Mussa Gulamhussain Lakha, Yusuf Salehmohamed, M.A.Rasool, Hussain Remtulla, Pyarali Giga, Akbar Nasser Thawer, Yusuf Karim Allarakhia, Jaffer Karim Jetha and Abbas Mohamed Sheriff.

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Such was the intensity of misunderstandings between the Nai and Junni members initially that they not only boycotted each others mosques but even avoided to enter into wedlocks. There was even dispute over certain property. After the Second World War things improved and when Nai's president Abdulrasul Khalfan died in 1944 while still in office both Nai and Junni in rare unity closed business on the funeral day.

The Nai folk with his sobriety exuded lot of discipline. Some Nai progeny rose to great prominence. Ahmed Abdulrasul Lakha and Anwer Hassan Virjee became members of the Zanzibar Legislative Council, Ahmed Abdulrasul Datoos was made the Commissioner of Customs and Abdulrasul Dewji Dhanji the Secretary at the Secretariat.

Nai Misid assumed this air of nobility, a la Shahi Darbar, which some mistook for snobbery. There was an event, which produced a strong feeling of dissatisfaction among a few members over a sensitive issue, and this even resulted in a few prominent families joining the Kuwwat Jamaat.

However nobody could deny Nai Misid's discipline which lent quality to it. Its best example was the office downstairs. Its head clerk was Rajabali Nathoo (Rajju). Nai Misid's religious activities and immense properties demanded lot of administrative and accounting work. All credit therefore to the indefatigable Rajju whose almost 40 years of devotion and dedication inspired real admiration and respect for him. The board downstairs would be promptly chalked with notifications of the events and also listings of various expenses. It was just remarkable. Even today some of the records are still there. Interestingly Rajabali Nathoo was a Cutchi, and so were a few of the Nai Misid office bearers (Mutwalli/Mukhi/ Kamrio/President) like Khamis Damji, Ramazanali Khamis Damji, Hassanali Khamis Damji and Yusuf Salehmohamed Karachiwala, and the man who gave Nai Misid its fabulous minara, Mohamed Rhemtulla Merali (Mammu Hariri), too. They all had linkages with the Jamnagris.

The long flight of wooden steps ascending to the corridor and imambara generated awe inspiring feeling. The corridor gallery from the top viewed the ample sahan beneath it. The immensely oblong imambara with its row of windows provided Nawabi spectacle resembling those of Luknow and Hyderabad. The imambara would be whitewashed regularly and its spacious floor laid with brand new Persian and Kashmiri carpets of varied colours and designs, and also with straw mats. Its ceiling displayed its row of fans, elaborate lights and gorgeous chandeliers with the captivating range of engravings and tinkling glass pendants. The front corner occupied probably the largest replica of the Karbala mausoleum with zarihs of Imam Husain and other Shohadas donated by Ismail Subzali Thawer.

Muharram would always be emotionally charged. The imambara emanated air that was filled with the fragrance of attar, udi, asmini and roses. Noticeable from the second night were the white alams of varying size fixed to the two embroidered horizontal black velvet banners in such a way as to project a semi circular shape, and placed on either side of the mimber. On the fifth night appeared bigger alams with varieties of panjas, like those seen in Hydrabad imambaras and probably brought over from there, and wrapped in colorful satin and velvet with silver and golden threading that gave them a glittering look. The audition, the color, the pattern, the effects and the fragrance provided splendors to the fully packed imambara, and its audience spellbound, listening to the majlis. What glory! Seventh night onwards the laash, alam and julo shabihs took shape, and awaited with fervency. The gam and the wailing thereby heartrending.

The climax was Ashura day when amid cries of 'Ya Husain' Imam Husain's laash shabih with two pigeons placed on it and Zuljanah wrapped in blood spotted white piece adorned with arrows, armour shield and a heavy pure gold sword would be brought in to the imambara. Thereafter the alams would be removed and brought into the middle while the circum saf moved around briskly. Later the alams gradually one by one

would be taken away and lowered through the imambara window onto the sahan below where they were declodded, their panjas detached, and wrapped in a white cloth like kavan over which attar got sprinkled (alam thanda). It was so emotional and moving. Also the dim lit Shame Gariba saddened the proceedings which culminated in a processional rite of 'Wa Askara' yells by the small girl with her hairs loosened and a kuza in her hands while the other ones holding candles walked behind her. The older boys carrying flags followed and the audience chanted 'Ay Shiaun imshab, shame garibanast' in unison. The joint recital 'Bade kate shah garduse atithi sada, shamia bastando bazu Zainabo Kulsum' by Husain Datoos and Yusuf Karim Alarakhia marked the end.

Another eventful month was Ramadhan. On entering Nai Misid there is another smaller staircase on the right leading to the mosque, which is on the lower level compared to the imambara. After dipping the legs into the water the larger marbled hoz (fountain) containing an attractive black fish and reflecting light blue water is reached, and from where we step onto the sahan that leads to the beautiful mosque which always reminded of Ramadhan when it would be humming with excitement and buzzing with activities. As usual after darsa duas would be recited. Thursday nights feasted off dakhus consisting of pilao or bhunni khichri and dahi (curd) right there in the sahan unlike the amaal nights when the nyaz were held at the imambara. On the amaal nights the packed mosque and sahan echoed with the chants 'Astagfirullaha rabbi wa atubu ilayh' and leading among those who chanted the loudest were Habib Karani, Ramazan Khamis Damji and Musa Datoos. It had a vibrating effect. Even today when an old timer visits the mosque it ought to remind him of those nights, and the echo felt. On the 23rd night 100 rakat namaaz was as good as a must and during its half session fresh orange juice and tea served. The shabe kadr amaal stretched up to 27th Ramazan when Ismail Subzali Thawer traditionally volunteered dakhu as well as iftar for both Nai as well as Junni members.



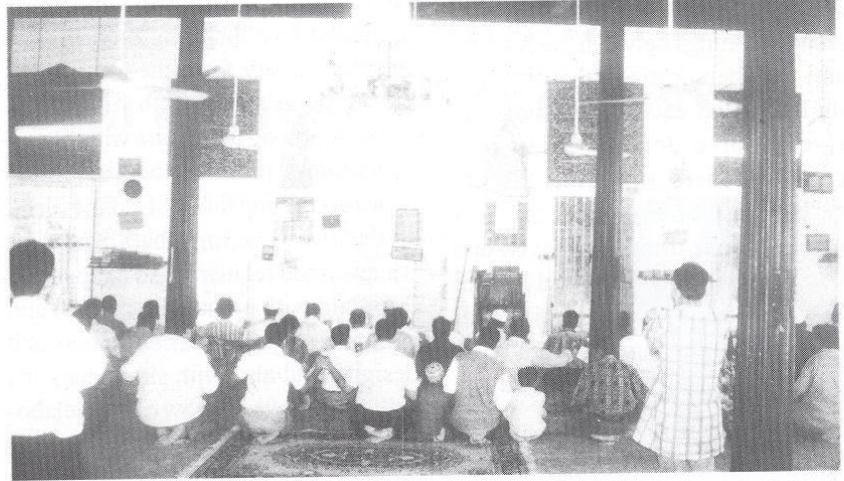
(...from page 63)

The minara, built in the 1940s and raised on the corner of the sahan is Zanzibar's landmark and in fact one of its highest structures. It commanded spectacular view. The staunch Habib Karani climbed up to its top twice daily, noon and dusk, to deliver the call for prayers (azan). The minara would become the center of attraction on the eve of eid when many climbed it to view the new moon. Even then the dakhu spree did not end. The final one came on the eid night itself from Hassanali Dossa who treated the gathering after the eid amaal with pilao na halua. On eid morning after the eid namaaz the humble Agha Muravvij would mildly start his khutba in Gujarati with the delivery "Aje eidno divas che, aje khushino divas che". The khutba was followed by ziyarate Varisa by the lovely voiced Hassanali Dhalla. Then began the usual eid greetings in the mosque and the sahan with mostly the kissing of hands among each others rather than the mere shake hands.

Another event celebrated with great festivity in the earlier days was eide Zahra or the ninth Rabiulawwal khushali. A grand feast used to be held at Saunbaag on Hollis Road which was under the trusteeship of Nai Misid. Saunbaag was a recreational spot where many community members gathered on khushalis and holidays, recited maulud and held feasts.

Zanzibar was really amazing. While Junni was reputed for Julus, Husain Day and Khushali Bankro Nai was renowned for its inner extravaganzas. One of those was the Hazrat Abbas nyaz that had to coincide with the Hindu month of Asad. It was customary of Nai or the particularity of the traditionalists Jamnagris. In fact on that day Nai would be bursting with curiosity and projected a different look as the gathering abounded in Junni members. In the earlier days the sumptuous thal contained as many as seven types of mithais – ladu, mesu, jalebi, santa, gagan santa, monthar and the garnished gevar along with vara chatni and khao saag. What jahojalali! All those who donated towards the nyaz fund would later receive mithai in accordance with their contribution, the

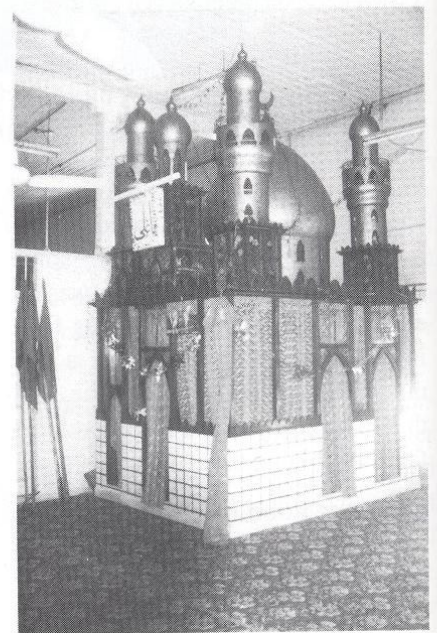
*Federation Samachar*



**Namaze Juma at the beautiful *Nai* Mosque.**



**The *Nai* Minara commands a spectacular view**



**Probably the largest replica of the Kerbala Mausoleum occupying the pride of place at the *Nai* Imambara.**

higher the contribution the more the mithai. Rajabali Nathoo and Mohamedali Merali accompanied by the workers Musa and Mbrisho who carried those big kikapus (baskets) would go from house to house delivering the mithai packet.

The extraordinary *Nai* kitchen located downstairs at the back was an institution in itself. It gave off a fragrant aroma. With its dhegs, kitchenware and cutlery, and its chief chef Musa and assistants Mbrisho, Hamisi and others, it was all the time bustling with activities. The workers peeled away vegetables, grinded spices and grains, received fresh supplies of meat deliveries and carried out all sorts of cooking activities. Once the food was

cooked the crane lifted up the dheg through a hatch made for the purpose onto the corridor at the far end of the imambara, and Rajabali Nathoo and Mohamedali Merali would then dish it out. The *Nai* kitchen dished out mouth watering delicacies, which to this very day remain unmatched, be it the delicious khichro, tasty kalio or appetizing biryani. One of *Nai*'s specialities was its saffron sharbat served with nyaz during noontime and which we used to sip from the thick and colored metallic bowl, another *Nai* Misid peculiarity. Also peculiar were the dark brown colored metallic mugs for drinking water, and the solid metallic thalies in which food was served.

**(continued on page 65)**



(...from page 64)

Throughout the twelve nights of Muharram thalies would be served at Nai Misid, either siro dengu or kalio pau. The afternoon nyaaz provided other varieties including the ever popular daal gosh. Notables among those who served included the father and son pair of Karim Allarakhia and the jovial Gulam Karim Allarakhia. Even aged 80 and more Karim used to be so active and hectic running here and there that he shamed even the youths. There were other elders also like Mukhi Fazal Kassam Chandoo or Mukhi Fazal Megji or Mukhi Nasser Thawer or Mukhi Ismail Virjee who with a bucket of saag moved round the imambara. There was even the Abbas Volunteer Corpse. What is heartening today is that even 40 years since then the volunteers Murtaza Ahmed Lakha and Jaffer Rajabali Nathoo can still be seen wholeheartedly serving nyaz till the very end, wherever they may be.

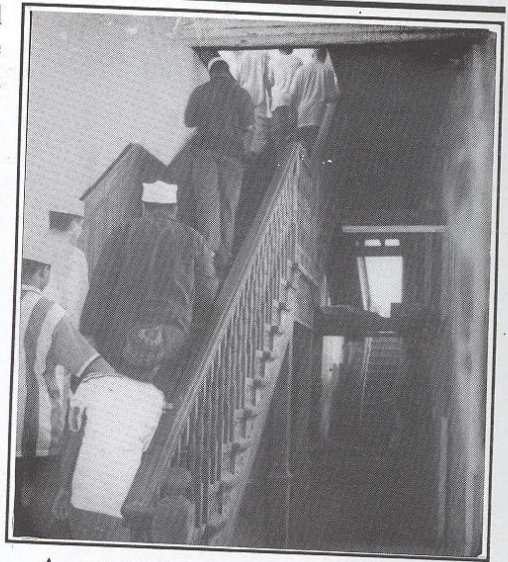
There was also Yusuf, another of those Karim Allarakhia sons, who specialized in making sharbats. His thick creamy milk (sharbati ya maziwa) and juices made from oranges and madafu came to acquire a taste of their own. The high flavored hot tea, coffee and cocoa was served in beautiful Chinese or English cup saucers which on different occasions varied in size and shape. On khushali nights attar would be applied on the hands and the solid silver container with burnt udi (sandalwood) in it taken to one and all who raised their hands over it palming the fragranced smoke which spiraled upwards. The children would look pleased with the handkerchief presented to them. Indeed everyone had his presence felt, and towards the end offered hot saffron milk stuffed with pistachio and almonds in colorful cup saucer or the choicest ice cream with wafers in glass goblet. It was a shahi treatment that lent credibility to the status of Nai Misid and its arty crafty crockery.

One of the contributors to Nai Misid's immense wealth was Nasser Noormohamed Kasmani who boosted its coffers tremendously. At one stage it had about 150 houses under its trusteeship of which more than 100 belonged to Nasser Noormohamed. No

doubt Zanzibar's Hujjatul Islaam Jamaat then was the richest jamaat in the Khoja Ithnaashri world.

One of the properties under Nai Misid's joint trusteeship was the magnificent Nasser Noormohamed Dispensary. Its functioning and administration was testimony to its discipline. Mohamedali Merali and the bespectacled pipe smoking Alimohamed would attentively peer through the thick register and pick the patient's card from the pile of cards, and also deliver the respective number tag which had to be strictly adhered to. There was no favoritism. The smiling doctor checked with caring intention. He hardly injected and there was no commercial motivation. The dispensary was charitable and the charges minimal. X-rays, blood-test or for that matter the complicated illnesses of today were not heard of, and in fact life expectancy two fold higher than today. The common prescription was puri (powder) and the colored medicine. The compounders Husain (Madawa) and Fida Mamu Molu would then carefully grind the tablets into puri, prepare the colored mixtures into medicine and label the doses on the bottle. The fever vanished within no time. The most arduous job was Hasani's, the ever efficient male nurse whose small room was at one end of the dispensary. He would apply colorful medicine on a cut or a boil, and then bandaged it up with his unique way of tightening the knot. He would even hand over a small pack of malam (ointment) if prescribed. Also the bandage had to be changed on regular bases when he would vigorously clean the wound. The cut or boil healed in few days time. The dispensary was meant for all the Khojas.

For that matter the members of the other sect also frequented Mehfile Muhibbane Husain at Mtendeni, which thus came to acquire the name Mehfile Private. It was also run by a member of the other sect, Abdulrasul Pira, who converted himself only later on joining Nai Misid, and hence the mehfil came to be associated with Nai Misid. Eventually it was managed by the residents of Alladinjo Maro who



A group of Bahrainis ascending the long flight of wooden stairs on their way to Nai Imambara.

held majlises there in the late afternoons of Muharram.

Another mehfil to be served with the members of Nai Misid was Mehfile Panjatan located on the outskirts. Initially it was Ali Kermali and later the brothers Mohamedali and Abdulrasul Karim Jetha. Its evening majlises in Moharram recited by Mulla Suleman (Mulla Karo) were well attended and its speciality was vara chatni nyaaz, but the favorite of all was its muthia, which drew bigger crowd. Its striking feature was Mohamedhusain Kermali Dharamsi (Babu Dharamsi) standing beside the water filled drum and graciously offering water in the metallic cups. From there many packed themselves inside Mohamed Pira's matwana to be dropped at Junni Chungani for majlis and chai na Marie biscuit.

The Nai members always exalted at the majlises of the three generations of Seyyed Aqas, Ghulamhusain, Nisarhusain and Raza. I vividly recall Seyyed Aqa Raza's visits sometime in the late 1950s and later in the early 1960s when his highly emotional rendition had the Nai imambara vibrating, and the congregation spellbound. It was extraordinarily out of this world. Strangely Seyyed Nisarhusain was succeeded as peshimam by the majestic Agha Sayyed Najafi Marashi who got associated with Nai Misid when he happened to be the son in law of Agha Seyyed Abdulhusain Marashi.

(continued on page 67)





**The progeny of  
Nai Misid pio-  
neers pictured  
around 1925 in  
'Saun Baag.'**

**Back row (l.tor.)  
Jaffer Ali  
Dungersi,  
Mohamedali  
Merali  
Rhemtulla,  
Rajabali Nathoo,  
Musa Dattoo,  
Ahmed  
Abdulrasul  
Lakha, Ahmed  
Dattoo,  
Mohamedali  
Rhemtulla Merali  
(Mamu hariri)  
and Musa  
Gulamhusein  
Lakha.**

**Centre (l. to r.)  
Unidentified,  
Karim  
Allarakhia,  
Sayyed Aqas  
Molvi  
Gulamhusain and  
Nisarhusain,  
Nasserali Fazal  
Sheriff,  
Mohamedhusein  
Ali Dungersi.**

**Front (l. to r.)  
Unidentified,  
Unidentified,  
Mohamedali  
Fazal Sheriff,  
Unidentified,  
Husain Nasserali  
Fazal and  
Mohamedhusain  
Saleh Lakha.**



(...from page 65)

Eventually came the humble Agha Muravvij who unlike all the other Aghas of Zanzibar had no inherent connection whatsoever with Seyyed Abdulhusain Marashi or Sayyed Husain Shustari.

The majlis reciters besides Sayaed Aqas through Nai Misid's long history included Abdulrasul Lakha, Abdulrasul Dato, Dewji Dhanji, Hassanali Dori, Abdulrasul Dewji, Ahmed Lakha, Ahmed Dato, Mohamed Sheriff (Master Sheriff), Raza Karim and Sheni Lakha. In Muharram the services of Mustafa Bhallu and Abdulrasul Bhallu (Datchu) of Junni were sought to fervently lead the saf matam.

The veteran Karim Allarakhia excelled at the recitation of jiski majlises held at the deceased's residence on the night of the burial and attended by almost everyone. The death announcement would be heralded by the powerfully voiced Dharamsi's frightful and loud cry of "Makamte halo bhai" which sent shudders down our spines. Downstairs at the residence white cloth would be covered on the wall or furniture and fatehakhani held for three days attended by the community members who paid their respect reciting the qoran juzu. There was nothing like mayyat committee at Nai Misid. Individuals merely volunteered to give ghusle mayyat and notable among them were Husein Mhegji and Ladhu Gariali. The ghusal would normally be given at the residence and also the janaza cortege proceeded from the house rather than the mosque. The lonely widows with no kith and kin or no means of support would be made to live in bewakhana located in one corner of Kiponda/Malindi and built in 1932 by a prominent Nai member Mohamed Allarakhia Shivji (Mammu Chiku).

The marriage ceremonies called for elaborate preparations and ceremonies. Also vanjas, dalias, vikubas and langilangis consumed aplenty by the family members, friends and acquaintances. On the wedding

night the garlanded groom would be escorted to the mosque for nikaah and then backwards to his house by a large group chanting asalamualaik under the direction of Maalim Saif. In the very early days the groom was made to wear sherwani and golden satined pagri (turban), hold sword and ride on a horse, and also the jamaat elderlies made to wear the pagri. The ladies would gather at the bride's residence from where at around midnight they accompanied the heavily clad bride to the groom's house. It would be a slow march through the Zanzibar gullies and the neighborhood awakened by the ever youthful Bi Remi led mamas' loud shrieks and cheery singing of 'maso maso manangu usimone maso'. The mamas would also be carrying over their heads the precious dej that included costly ornaments. And imagine that without any form of security. That was Zanzibar at its best.

We were entirely lost in the past and right there before us stood the desolate Nai Misid. It was haunting and provided fundamental pathos. Our eyes were filled with tears. The cruel time had brought the end to the glory in Nai Misid. Its great decors may still be there but the old touch is missing, in fact they are now falling into decay. Its tiny jamaat, which is reduced to almost nonentity, still abides by its legacy and traditions. It is run by Abbas Mohamed Sheriff and patronized by Zulfiqar Habib Karani who from Dar es Salaam tends to finance nyaaz every now and then. The small attendance comprises mainly Bahrainis but that liveliness of the past when there were almost 1000 members remains no more.

Time was running short and we had to reach Nai Chungani. In the past we walked towards Mwembeladu hospital from where a narrow lane would take us to the kabrastan. That route is gone now and we had to be driven to Gamboo Police Station from where one elderly African man escorted us to the site of the once Nai kabrastan which had a number of graves on both the sides of the narrow passage that passed through it. We would visit it on almost

every Thursday, Ashura evening and the early morning of eids.

In one corner there stood the sheltered spot where namaze janaza used to be performed. On Thursdays hadise kisah and marshia would be recited there and chai na samosa served when the neighboring African children collected themselves to fetch their share. By its side was the well from where the caretaker Mze Husaini would draw water into the buckets to be poured over the graves. Around there were trees and their leaves fluttered, and the birds twittered. All of that remained no more and the entire site transformed. In its place is laid a newly built mosque by the nearby African residents. All the graves had disappeared except one or two broken ones with their bricks scattered here and there, and that was where we recited fateha and yasin.

As we sailed off from Zanzibar its picturesque scenery was apparent and even affording us the view of the Nai Misid minara in the far distance that seemed bidding us adieu. Interestingly today the majority Zanzibar Ithnaasries, wherever they may be, are in complete ignorance of their ancestry. What an irony that the Zanzibar influence after three generations succeeded in obliterating the supposed ancestral feud but failed even after the lapse of six generations to resolve the Nai-Junni differences. We are about to see the millennium end and seemingly the concerned authority also intent on Nai's merger. Whatever that be, it is a humble plea from the old timers to whosoever to preserve its sanctity and guard its memorabilia.

What a remarkable history! Just like its Junni counterpart Nai also has its paradoxes and surprises. Its contents have been based on insights and reminiscences. My special thanks to brother Sajjad Musa Lakha for some of the recollections. And of course to my old mother who from her bed keeps visualizing Nai Misid with nostalgic recounting of its glory. May God bless them.



## Education Board provides details of three Tanzania Universities

The Education Board of the Africa Federation has suggested three local Universities where students in East Africa can consider pursuing further education. The Universities which have been mentioned in the Board's November, 1999 newsletter are the University of Dar es Salaam, the Tumaini University in Kilimanjaro region and the Zanzibar University.

For the **University of Dar es Salaam**, the deadline for submission of application forms is 31 December, 1999. The telephone numbers for the University are 410500/1-9.

**The Tumaini University** (Kilimanjaro Christian Medical College) offers Diploma, Certificate, Post Graduate and Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree programmes. For the MD programme applications are invited from October to December each year. Further enquiries can be made through:

The Director,  
P.O. Box 3010, Moshi, Tanzania.  
Tel: (255-55) 54377/83  
Fax: (255-51) 54381  
Email: jhunter@maf.org

Students interested to go to Moshi can contact the Education Board for more details on issues like accommodation etc. The Education Board's telephone numbers are: (255-51) 150897 or 150964. Its Email contact is: federation@raha.com.

**The Zanzibar University** is a private institution which offers the following degree courses:

- \*The Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA Marketing)
- \* The BBA (Accounting and Finance)
- \* Bachelor of Law and Sharia.

This University, in co-operation with the Netherland's based Euro-African Management Research Centre (EAMARC) has established a centre for small business development, which is called the Zanzibar University Centre for African Business Research and Development.

Further enquiries can be channelled to:

The Zanzibar University  
P.O. Box 2440, Zanzibar.  
Tel: 054-232642; Fax: 0811-338174  
Email: zanuni@twiga.com

## Ahle Bait (A.S) Propagation Organisation awards competition winners

On 7th August 1999, the Ahle Bait (A.S) Propagation Organisation of Mauritius organised a Prize Giving Ceremony at the Yusuf Ali Hall, Khadafi Square, Port Louis, to reward winners and participants of a Written Quiz Competition. The Competition was open to all children of the Community and sixteen entries were received.

The Ceremony was attended by all participants accompanied by their parents. The Programme was chaired by Brother Hassan Abbas Adamjee and started at 3.30 p.m with recitation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an by Miss Farheen Fatemah Rajani who is five years old. Soon after, Mr Adamjee welcomed all to the ceremony and expressed appreciation of the Managing Committee to the good response by the participants in the competition. Adamjee attributed praise to the parents, especially mothers who spared time to enable their children to participate. Adamjee also stressed on the importance of secular and Islamic education saying that the community should never sacrifice children's Islamic education because of Secular education or vice versa.

Husain Bhai Maklai then recited a Qaseeda in praise of our Holy Prophet Hazrat Mohammad Mustapha (S.A.W). Tahera Kassamally Esmael then addressed the gathering. She too talked about the importance of Education for our children. She announced that with the collaboration of the Managing Committee of the Organisation, she would start a Madrassa where Islamic education would be imparted to children. She invited all mothers present to get their children enrolled.

Masoomally Vallimohmed of Madagascar then recited Qaseeda and he was followed by Hisham Abbasse Kassamally who recited a Qaseeda in Praise of Imam Husain (A.S) in French. Miss Narjis Fatema Kassamally Esmael and Sadaf Fatma Gulam Husen also recited a Qaseeda in Praise of Imam Husain (A.S).

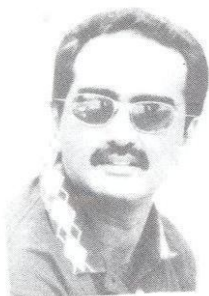
Shabbir Husein Rajani, the Secretary of the Organisation then address the gathering. He stressed on parents to encourage and teach their children the recitation of the Holy Qur'an and Namaz as from a very young age saying that it is essentially the responsibility of parents to start the education of their children at home. Brother Shabbir then invited Brother Hassan Abbas Adamjee to announce the results of the competition.

Thirteen participants obtained prizes from Husain Bhai Maklai, Masoomally Vallimohmed and Goolam Husein Kassamally Esmael, the Assistant Secretary of the Organisation. Two Runner Ups were also awarded and they are Miss Fatema Abdoola Cassim and Miss Sadaf Fatma Gulam Husen. They were offered their prizes by Brother Hassan Abbas Adamjee, the Chairman of the Ceremony. Finally Shabbir Husein Rajani awarded the winner of the competition who was Miss Narjis Fatema Kassamally Esmael.

A special Appreciation Award was also presented to Mrs Tahera Kassamally Esmael for her devotion in organising the programme and her initiative for establishing the Madrassa. Finally Masoomally Vallimohmed of Madagascar closed the programme with Salaams and Doas. Refreshments were then served.

The Ahle Bait (A.S) Propagation Organisation of Mauritius has in the past organised several essay competitions on occasions like the Birth Anniversary of the Holy Prophet (SAW), the Birth Anniversary of Hazrat Ali (A.S.) and the Martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.).





Nairobi's Aasif Karim (36) announced his retirement from competitive sports in August, 1999 upon return from England where he captained the Kenya National team for the Cricket World Cup.

The news of his retirement after two and a half decades of an illustrious sports career was given prominent foot-age by the Kenyan press and media.

For the two decades he played cricket Aasif was an automatic choice for the Kenya national team. He made his debut in 1980 during a tour of Zimbabwe and subsequently played in all the ICC Trophy tournaments in 1986 (England), 1990 (the Netherlands), 1994 (Nairobi) and 1997 (Malaysia).

He first captained Kenya in 1993 against Zimbabwe in a match which the Kenyans won. In the next few years he played for the national team but not as captain. He retained his captainship in 1997 when Kenya was granted a One Day International (ODI) status.

He remained captain when Kenya hosted Zimbabwe and Bangladesh in a tri-nation tournament and when they toured India in 1998 for another tourney featuring the hosts and Bangladesh. Kenya then registered a milestone victory over India in the preliminaries but lost to them in the final.

The same year Kenya under Karim went to the Commonwealth Games in Malaysia. There they lost to New Zealand and Pakistan but beat Scotland. Karim remained captain during the tour of Kenya by MCC last January which Kenya won 4-0. His captaincy continued during a tri-nation tournament last February in Bangladesh which Zimbabwe won. Here Kenya beat Bangladesh in their home ground for the first time.

During the 1996 World Cup on the sub-continent, he emerged the fourth most economical bowler of the tournament. He was then Vice Captain of the team which notched a memorable

*Federation Samachar*

## Asif Karim bids farewell to cricket

*...from father to two sons, the Karims have left an indelible mark on the Kenya Sporting scene.*

victory over the West Indies. He has always played for Jaffery's Club and is the only Ithna-ashery player to have played in the Cricket World Cup.

Aasif attributed his retirement to having played competitive cricket for too long (he was the longest serving player on the team) and said he needed more time for his family and business. Karim is married to Nazneen and they have three children, Fatema, 10, Irfan, 7, and Zainab, 2.

During his 25 years of tennis and cricket, he always strove to remain at the very top. At the tender age of 12, Karim won the Coast Open under-12 tennis title in 1975. He won several other junior titles including a prestigious trophy in 1981 contested by 16 top Kenyan players. The same year he represented Kenya on a tour of Europe for a competition in the junior circuit which availed him an opportunity to watch the French Open.

His excellence in tennis accorded him a scholarship to Howard University, Washington DC where he obtained a Bachelor of Business Administration degree. He went to the USA in 1981 and stayed there until 1985. Between 1981 and 1983, he pursued studies at the Palm Beach Junior College in Florida while the next two years were spent at Howard University.

On return he set up Aristocrats Insurance Brokers. On the sports field he went on to win the Kenya Closed tennis singles and doubles titles in 1987. The following year he was in Kenya's Davis Cup team against Egypt in Cairo. The same year he also captained the Kenya tennis team to the second President's Cup in Nigeria.

Aasif also plays social golf and in 1991 he got a hole-in-one when playing as a marker in Mombasa. After his announcement to retire, the Chairman of the Africa Federation, Mohamed bhai Dhirani sent him a letter on behalf of the Supreme Council commending him for his unique achievements and called on him to guide our community youths to excel in sports.

### A SPORTING FAMILY

His elder brother, Aarif, was stronger in tennis and Aasif had to wait until he went to the USA for him to win the Coast Open, a title he held a firm grip on until moving to Nairobi in 1991. Aarif was the Coast champion in 1978 and 1979 before heading to the US on a tennis scholarship.

When in action, the Karim brothers were a delight to watch and their 1985 Coast Open doubles victory is particularly memorable. The Karim youngsters continued where their father, Yusuf Karim, left. Their father dominated the Mombasa Residents Tennis Cup for 25 years from 1951 and 1976.



### Yusuf Karim during his hey days

In tennis, Yusuf Karim played for Kenya against Egypt in 1975 and was also a member of the cricket team of Kenya Asians which played their South African counterparts in 1958.

He won the Mombasa Tennis Singles Championship 17 times, doubles 12 times and Mixed Doubles 10 times. His record in the Kenya Coast Open Championship was equally outstanding. He won 13 Singles titles, 8 Mens Doubles titles and 4 Mixed Doubles titles. In 1964, he won the Singles, Doubles and Mixed Double titles in the Tanzania Open Championship.

Yusuf was a self-made tennis champion and his 17 successive Singles Titles in the Mombasa Championships is perhaps a world record. He was once nominated Tennis Player of the Year and was awarded the "Dunlop Vase" by the Kenya Lawn Tennis Association.

In cricket he captained Jaffery Club's First Eleven side for some years and in volleyball he was an outstanding player in the centre with a regular place in the Club's First Eleven.



# Nayani wins First Mobitel Millenium Rally

Driving a Nissan Silvia 200SX, Hussein Yusuf (Jettex) and navigator Akhtar Nayani won the First Mobitel Millenium Rally which was contested by 23 cars from Kenya and Tanzania. The three day rally covered a distance of 1500 kms. of which 750 km. covered competitive stretches including the notorious Usambara Mountains.

Akhtar Nayani (43), son of Shaukatali and Fatma Nayani is married with three sons and a daughter. He said the rally was tough and tricky and it wasn't easy competing against experienced Kenyan drivers with better vehicles.

Akhtar began his rallying career in 1987 and has participated in over 26 rallies. His record as a Navigator is:

**With Hussein Yusuf (Jettex):**

- 2nd. --- Nat. Rally Championship 1993
- 1st. --- Nat. Rally Championship 1994
- 1st. --- GT Mount Meru Rally 1994
- 1st. --- TOTAL Morogoro 500 1994
- 1st. --- 7UP Usambara Rally 1994
- 2nd --- Coca Cola Safari Rally 1996
- 2nd. Overall --- 1996 Championship
- 1st. --- 3rd. Vimto Rally DSM. 1997
- 2nd.-- Arusha Motor Sports Club 1997
- 1st.-- Arusha 500 Motor Rally 1998
- 1st. -- Morogoro 500 Rally 1998
- 2nd. --- Sunvic 500 Rally Arusha 1999

**With other drivers (in brackets):**

- 5th.-- Bobby Soap Safari Rally in 1987 (M.T. Virani)
- 2nd.--Fahari Bottlers Ltd. (TMSC) in 1988 (M.T. Virani)
- 2nd. -- Heart Foundation Motor Rally in 1988 (M.T. Virani)
- 1st. -- Baisakhi Motor Rally in 1989 (M.T. Virani)
- Finisher -- Tanzania 1000 in 1990 (M.T. Virani)
- 3rd. -- Baisakhi Motor Rally (TMSC) in 1991 (M.T. Virani)
- 4th. -- Finisher 7th. Safari Rally AAT in 1993 (M.T. Virani)
- 4th. -- Finisher Bobby Safari Rally in 1993 (M.T. Virani)
- 6th. -- Agip 500 Motor Rally in 1998 (M.Zaki Fazal)
- 3rd. -- Mohamed Virani Memorial Rally in 1998 (Kirit Pandya)

**National Standings (AAT):**

- 1st. -- National Rally Champions 1994
- 2nd. -- National Rally Champions 1996



**Winners Akhtar Nayani (right) and Hussein Yusuf**

1st. -- National Rally Navigator 1998  
The National Rally Championship is contested through a points system.

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.

Akhtar also plays squash and previously played cricket for Union Sports Club.

## Hasnain Khalfan excels in cricket



Born on 7th October 1979 in Dar es Salaam, Hasnain Aunali Khalfan (pictured) started his cricket career at the early age of 13 at the Al Muntazir Islamic Seminary. He later played for the Aga Khan Mzizima Secondary School. He is also a keen soccer player and a great goalkeeper.

Hasnain joined Union Sports Club in 1995 having been encouraged by cricket stalwarts like Mohamed Nathoo, Bashir Tejani, Abdulrasul Bhalloo (Uncle Datchu) and Mahmood Rahim. He also recalls recent support and encouragement from senior cricket players like Jimy Peera, Ibarahim Jacksi and Shakir Sherali.

Hasnain is an attractive player to watch. He thoroughly enjoys chasing runs and is a good medium pace bowler and a vigilant fielder. He is a role model for other youngsters and

upcoming players in the community.

At national level, Hasnain made his debut with the Tanzanian National under 19 Cricket Squad at a tournament in Nairobi in February 1997. The squad played against Denmark, Kenya and Uganda. Tanzania lost all three matches but Hasnain cherishes the first experience he gained on the International Cricket scene.

In October, 1999 Hasnain represented the Tanzanian National Cricket Team in the Quadrangular Cricket Tournament held in Dar Es Salaam. Tanzania won the prestigious trophy and Hasnain was presented the "Man of the Match Award" for his superb innings against the Malawians.

Hasnain currently captains the Union "A" team in Dar Es Salaam. When asked about his Cricket Career, Hasnain admits he loves cricket but gives priority to his studies. He is presently studying for his "A" levels at the West London Learning Centre in Dar Es Salaam and thereafter aims to pursue "Post Graduate" studies in computer and information science.



## Union win Re-Union football tournament

The Re-Union Jamaat which consists of about 1500 members hosted a historic football tournament from 20 July, 1999 to 30 July, 1999 wherein three teams took part, namely Union Sports Club from Dar es Salaam, Madagascar and Re-Union. Re-Union is an Island in the Indian Ocean near Mauritius and some distance from Madagascar.

A farewell ceremony was organised for the Union team on 19th July, 1999 during which the Vice-Chairman of the Africa Federation, Mohamedbhai Pirbhai called on the team to uphold sportsmanship and to be good ambassadors. This ceremony was also attended by the Chairman of the Ithnashery Union, Mohamed Nathoo, Union Sports Club Chairman, Naushad Ladha and various officials of the Dar es Salaam Jamaat. All traveling players and officials attended this ceremony.

Matches were played on a league basis with a rule that penalties would decide a drawn game. In the first game Union played Madagascar. The score after 90 minutes was 2-2 and after the penalty shoot-out Union won 4-2.

The next day Union played against Re-Union and won 3-2 to emerge champions. Madagascar were runners-up after they beat Re-Union.

On the day after the final, the Union team was taken on a tour of Re-Union Island by the President of the jamaat, Raza Ally Asgaraly. At night the presentation ceremony was held at the Imam Barghaa wherein the winners were awarded and appreciation gifts were shared.

As Re-Union and Madagascar are islands off the African continent, they conveniently referred to the Union team as "Africa".

The Union team returned to Dar es Salaam after spending two nights in Mauritius and one night in Nairobi.

*Federation Samachar*

## Community Golfers excel.....

### Raza Virjee wins two titles while....

Raza Virjee, a committee member of Dar es Salaam Jamaat and former Chairman of the Tanzania Golf Union, bagged two golf titles in a span of 42 days. He first won the Business Machines Tanzania Limited golf tournament on 3 October, 1999 and then went on to win Senior Golfers Association (SGA) shield sponsored by the Dar es Salaam based CATS Group on 14 November, 1999.

The 64 year old Virjee won the BMTL trophy by playing seven strokes under par net 133. His handicap was then reduced from eleven to nine and yet he was not deterred and went on to win the Seniors SGA title by carding a gross score of 160 and 142 points net. The Seniors tournament was open to golfers over 50 years of age who had actively played golf for at least 10 years.



Young at 64, Raza Virjee with the BMTL trophy

## ....12-year old Sarfaraz Daya clinches Dutch championship



On 25 September, 1999, Dar es salaam based Sarfaraz Daya fired a career-best seven under par net 63 strokes to win the Dutch Golf Cup competition at the Gymkhana Golf Course. The gruelling one-day extravaganza attracted a bumper field of 150 players.

Sarfaraz started playing golf about nine months ago and began with a handicap of 36 which was then reduced to 24 after he won the Saba Saba Juniors Golf title in July, 1999.

Playing off a handicap of 24 in the Dutch tournament, the 12-year-old Sarfaraz carded a massive seven under par 67 net after grossing 43 at the end of the first nine holes. He hit a total of five pars, three of them in the first nine holes, to win the title. Following his win, his handicap was further chopped to 17 and only recently was reduced further to 15.

For his win, he was awarded two free air tickets to Europe along with a number of other trophies.

In December, 1999 Sarfaraz was also adjudged as the best Junior player in the four-day Tritel sponsored Kobe Golfing Society Tournament for which he was awarded a putter by the Guest of Honour, Tanzania Prime Minister, Frederick Sumaye. In addition to golf he also is a regular swimmer and plays squash, table-tennis and cricket.



# Wife Abuse in the Muslim Community from a North American perspective

by Kamran Memon

*The Muslim community has shamefully tolerated wife abuse for a long time. How much longer will Muslim families (and therefore the Muslim community) be weakened by wife abuse? How much longer will abusers be allowed to run free and unpunished in the community? How much more abuse will Muslim women have to endure before the community decides that enough is enough?*

Wife abuse has hurt many Muslim women, destroyed many Muslim families, and weakened the entire Muslim community. How much longer can Muslims afford to look the other way?

**“And among His signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and he has put love and mercy between your (hearts)...” Qu’ran 30:21**

*“I recommend that you treat women with goodness. The best of you are those who treat their wives the best.”* Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him)

Unfortunately the abuse of many Muslim women at the hands of their own husbands in North America is hidden and ignored by the community. Domestic violence is the single major cause of injury to women in America. “Nearly one quarter of women in the United States - more than 12 million- will be abused by a current or former partner sometime during their lives,” according to the American Medical Association; and, despite Islamic teachings of justice and compassion, many Muslim women in the United States and Canada are no exception.

Based on information from Muslim leaders, social workers, and activists in North America, the North American Council for Muslim Women says that approximately 10 percent of Muslim women are abused emotionally, physically, and sexually by their Muslim husbands. (There are no hard numbers, because community leaders haven’t taken the well-known problem seriously enough to research.)

Wife-abuse, which stretches across all

ethnic, racial, educational, and socio-economic lines in the Muslim community, results in severe emotional and physical pain for many Muslim women, a stacking up of sins for many Muslim men, and thereby creating many weak, unhappy Muslim families that fail to contribute adequately to the development of the Muslim community and the rest of North American society.

Despite the severity of the problem, the Muslim community has largely closed its eyes and devoted very few resources to helping the victims and stopping the abusers.

This is doubly unfortunate because family violence is one of America’s most critical health problems (according to the American Medical Association and the U.S. Surgeon General), and Islamic leadership is needed to deal with this crisis but is vividly absent.

## FORMS OF ABUSE OF MUSLIM WOMEN

“Domestic violence is an ongoing, debilitating experience of physical, psychological, and/or sexual abuse in the home,” says the American Medical Association. Although Islam promises women protection from such problems, the reality in many Muslim homes is different.

The most common form of abuse is emotional and mental abuse. In Muslim homes, this includes verbal threats to divorce the wife, to remarry, or to take the kids away if she does not do exactly as she is told; intimidation and threats of harm; degradation, humiliation, insults, ridicule, name-calling, and criticism; false accusations and blaming her for everything; ignoring,

dismissing, or ridiculing her needs; neglect and the silent treatment; spying on her; telling her she is a failure and will go to hell; twisting Islamic teachings to make her feel worthless because she is a woman; restricting her access to transportation, health care, food, clothing, money, friends, or social services; physical and social isolation; extreme jealousy and possessiveness; lying, breaking promises, destroying trust; etc. Emotional abuse can take place in public or at home.

Although it’s completely contrary to the example of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, the Muslim community nonetheless tends to dismiss the seriousness of mental abuse, rationalizing it as a petty argument between husband and wife, and saying it’s not serious unless he hits her. In reality, mental abuse does severe psychological harm to many Muslim women. It destroys their self-esteem and makes them question their self-worth; some have mental breakdowns and go insane.

Furthermore, psychological abuse can lead to physical abuse. Physical abuse includes pushing, shoving, choking, slapping, punching, kicking, and beating; assault with a weapon; tying up; refusing to help her when she is sick or injured; physically throwing her out of the house; etc. Physical abuse escalates in frequency and severity.

The third form of abuse is sexual abuse, involving forced, violent sex. For example, a wife may not want to have sex for health reasons, but the husband may force her anyway.

These three forms of abuse are usually related and occur over a long pe

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## Women

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riod of time. Muslim men, just like non-Muslims, often start with mental abuse and work their way up. Muslim women need to recognize the signs of escalating abuse.

### Why Do Some Muslim Men Abuse Their Wives?

There are a number of factors that make many Muslim men abusive. Abusers are often part of a cycle, picking up the habit after watching their own fathers abuse their mothers. And their own children learn this abusive behavior and abuse their wives. (This is an important point because the longer the Muslim community tolerates abuse, the longer it will be passed on from father to son, from generation to generation.)

For cultural reasons, some Muslim men accept the idea that it's normal for a man to hit his wife and that she is no more than a piece of his property.

Some Muslim husbands abuse their wives as a result of frustration resulting from economic hardship, political oppression, problems with the children, or an inferiority complex.

Some abuse their wives because they want them to be more "modern" and less Islamic by removing their hijab (Islamic dress), while others are abusive because they want the opposite.

Some Muslims with superficial ties to Islam don't know that abuse is unacceptable due to their weak faith, poor Islamic knowledge, and lack of interaction with the Muslim community.

Tragically, some Muslim men actually use Islam to "justify" their abusive behavior. Focusing on rituals, considering themselves to be Islamically knowledgeable, and disregarding the spirit of Islam, they wrongly use the Qur'anic verse that says men are the protectors and maintainers of women to go on power trips, demand total obedience, and order their wives around. They disregard the Islamic requirement for the head of the household to consult with other members of the family when making decisions.

Then, if their wives dare to speak up or question their orders, these men

misinterpret a Qur'anic verse that talks about how to treat a disobedient wife and use it as a license for abuse.

In reality, the Qur'an and Sunnah provide clear instructions on what procedures a husband must use in conflict situations where the husband is innocent and the wife is rebellious and at fault. The first step is a peaceful discussion between the two of them about the problem and solutions.

This is intended to soften hearts and eliminate misunderstandings. If this doesn't work, the next step is for the husband to tell his wife his expectations in a firm, decisive manner. If the rebelliousness and disobedience continues, the husband is supposed to leave the bed, which is really a punishment for both of them for not being able to resolve their differences. If that fails to solve the problem, representatives of both sides meet to try and arbitrate. As a last resort, if he thinks it will prevent divorce by letting the wife know how serious he is, the husband can use a light slap on the hand or shoulder but not on any other part of the body, and it shouldn't leave a mark or scar. Anything beyond this is Islamically prohibited.

This procedure is to be followed only when the wife is the cause of a serious problem and the husband is innocent, compassionate, and well-behaved. If the husband is the cause of the problem, he has no right to do any of this.

Unfortunately, Muslim wives often accept un-Islamic treatment from their husbands because they don't know their Islamic rights, and they don't realize their husbands are crossing the Islamic line.

Abusive men completely disregard the Islamic teachings of kindness, mercy, gentleness, and forgiveness, just as they disregard the example of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, who never hit a woman and was extremely gentle and compassionate with his family.

### WHY IS HELP SO SCARCE?

One problem is that many Muslims don't want to get involved in the "private" family affairs of other Muslims. Rather than enjoining good and for-

bidding evil, rather than trying to stop abuse in a friend's or neighbor's family by offering to mediate between the husband and wife or by encouraging them to speak to Muslim counsellors, many irresponsible Muslims close their eyes and pretend they don't know there's a problem. So the abuse goes on.

Another reason why abuse isn't stopped is that many abused Muslim women simply don't seek out help. They're afraid that if their situation becomes public they will lose their privacy because Muslims gossip so much, and they fear the abusers will become more hostile when the negative publicity gets back to them. Furthermore, many abused Muslim women remain silent because they lack confidence in themselves and believe that they somehow deserve the abuse.

Abused Muslim women also keep quiet out of a feeling of hopelessness and a belief that no one will help them, out of financial dependence on their husbands, out of a desire to keep homes together for the children's sake, or out of love for the abusive husbands. Other Muslim women accept the abuse as a fact of life and learn to live with it.

Of those who reach a breaking point and seek help, many Muslim women turn to imams but often find them unhelpful. Imams often tell these women to be patient and pray for the abuse to end. Some imams make the abused Muslim women feel guilty, telling them they have brought the abuse upon themselves and instructing them to go home and please their husbands. Other imams, who are sincerely but mistakenly misinterpreting Islam by putting the importance of family privacy above any harm that might come to the individual woman, tell the women it is wrong for them to discuss their problems with anyone other than their husbands. The imams's reactions stem from ignorance, cowardice, or friendship or blood relationship with the abusive husbands. Relatively few imams have had the wisdom and courage to tackle the problem head-on. As a result of this, many abused women don't bother turning to imams for help.

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Looking for other sources of help, many abused Muslim women have turned to relatives only to be told to accept the abuse because making a big deal out of it could hurt the relatives' family honor and reputation.

Finding many imams and relatives to be more cruel than Islamic, abused Muslim women often turn to Muslim female activists and Muslim women's organizations for help. While these activists are often untrained in crisis intervention, they get the abused women out of their houses and hide them until Muslim men can be sent to try to reason with the husbands. They often collect money from other women to give to the abused women until it's safe for them to go back home. When continued attempts to salvage the marriages have proven futile, these activists counsel the abused women on how to get out of their marriages.

As for national Islamic organizations, most have largely ignored the issue of wife abuse, neglecting to highlight the problem and solutions during national conferences or to devote resources to helping abused Muslim women.

Because the Muslim community often leaves them to suffer, many abused Muslim women turn to shelters run by non-Muslims for help thereby portraying an ugly picture of Islam. Going to non-Muslim shelters can result in social workers taking children away from troubled Muslim homes if they think it is better for them to be in a more stable environment, which often ends up being a non-Muslim home.

Many women go even further, leaving Islam altogether because the Muslim community fails to live up to the Islamic promise of protection, brotherhood, and sisterhood.

### The Community's Role

The Muslim community has clearly failed in its obligations to protect many Muslim women and to bring many cruel Muslim men to justice. The community needs to deal much more effectively with wife abuse in order to stop the immediate suffering of people in abusive situations and to help build healthy Muslim families.

First, the community must accept the fact that there is a problem and that it doesn't know how to deal with it.

Then a core group of trusted, active Muslim men and women in each North American city, who are committed to ending wife abuse in the Muslim community and to strengthening Muslim families, must become knowledgeable about Islamic guidelines on the family and be trained in crisis intervention and counseling. (Unfortunately, some community "leaders" will be too ignorant or arrogant to seek such training; but they must not be allowed to get in the way.)

Since there aren't yet many Muslims qualified to teach crisis intervention and counseling, several Muslim women throughout North America have started learning these techniques from non-Muslim social service agencies (listed in the phone book under wife abuse, domestic violence, or crisis intervention). Other Muslim women and men need to follow suit. Whatever they learn from these agencies should be cast in the light of their Islamic knowledge of properly functioning Muslim families.

Once they know what they're doing, members of core groups across the continent should recruit and train others in their communities in crisis intervention and the Islamic perspective on the family. There should be a network of at least 100 trained counselors in every major North American city. A list of trained Muslims and their phone numbers (or one Muslim hotline number) should then be circulated throughout the community in each city so that abused women know whom they can turn to for meaningful help. (Most of women approaching the network initially will be physically abused Muslims. Victims of mental abuse are less likely to reach out at first because many have become accustomed to the abuse and accept it as a way of life. But educational programs at community gatherings — explaining what Islamic family life should be like and explaining that there is help available for abused women — will let emotionally abused Muslim women know they have a way to stop the pain.)

These trained Muslims should give

abused women shelter (at people's homes or at community facilities, such as a rented apartment) for periods ranging from several days to several months depending on the extent of the abuse, while counseling them. (Beyond this, taking into account the fact that many Muslim women will still turn to non-Muslim shelters because they don't want to deal with the Muslim community or because the community program is not big enough to help them, the Muslim community should sensitize people running non-Muslim shelters to the particular needs of Muslim women; and trained Muslims should visit the shelters regularly and constantly remind shelter operators that they are available to help whenever a Muslim woman comes in.) While caring for the abused women, the trained Muslims should counsel the abusers separately, making them aware of the reasons they abuse, of the fact that their actions are truly harming their wives, that such behavior is completely un-Islamic, and that God will hold them accountable.

After separate counselling, the next step would be joint counselling for the husband and wife, and then counselling for the entire family. The objective should be to heal the family, but divorce may be necessary.

Another option, that some Muslims in New York have tried, is to punish Muslim men for their abusive actions. A "security force" warns, and then beats up, if necessary, Muslim men who continue beating their wives. Usually the abusers get the message; this is the only language many of them understand. Some men have to be beaten before they wake up and are ready to listen to rational, Islamic arguments. Police and psychiatrists may have to be involved in severe cases of chronic abuse.

Community education is an indispensable factor on top of all this. Starting today, throughout the process outlined above, community leaders and other concerned Muslims need to educate people — about the problem and about efforts to help victims and prevent future abuse — through Friday khutbahs (sermons), educational seminars,

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## Women

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preachings and workshops. These educational programs can themselves reduce abuse by letting people know the community isn't going to tolerate it anymore.

Furthermore, the community needs to establish classes to teach Muslim men, young and old, how to be proper husbands and fathers and to teach Muslim women, young and old, how to be proper wives and mothers.

Many Muslims don't know their rights and obligations in these roles. In addition, in order to prevent future family problems, parents and community leaders must teach children and young adults to be compassionate, to value the family, and to resolve problems in an Islamic, non-violent manner.

It's also important for Muslims to go into field like psychiatry, women's issues law, social work, and counselling. No Muslim community in any North American city has taken all these steps. Unfortunately, the entire plan could take years to implement (that makes it all the more necessary to start immediately.) When these steps are taken, abuse should decrease if not stop!

### DO YOU REALLY CARE?

It sounds like a lot of work, but the problem is serious enough to warrant a lot of work. The Muslim community has shamefully tolerated abuse for a long time. How much longer will Muslim families (and therefore the Muslim community) be weakened by wife abuse? How much longer will abusers be allowed to run free and unpunished in the community? How much more abuse will Muslim women have to endure before the community decides that enough is enough?



## Recipe corner

### Bread Halwa

#### Ingredients

White bread 10 slices

Milk 2 cups

Ghee 5 tsp spoons

Butter 3 tsp spoons

## FROM THE NAHJUL BALAGHA-SERMON 198

*Containing advice given by Amir al-mu'minin to his companions*

### About Prayer

Pledge yourself with prayer and remain steady on it; offer prayer as much as possible and seek nearness (of Allah) through it, because it is, (imposed) upon the believers as (a) timed ordinance (Qur'an 4:103). Have you not heard the reply of the people of Hell when they were asked: *What hath brought you into the hell? They shall say: We were not of those who offered the regular prayers* (to Allah)! (Qur'an, 74:42-43). Certainly, prayer drops out sins like the dropping of leaves (of trees), and removes them as ropes are removed from the necks of cattle. The Messenger of Allah - the peace and blessing of Allah he upon him and his descendants - likened it to a hot bath situated at the door of a person who bathes in it five times a day. Will then any dirt remain on him?

Its obligation is recognised by those believers whom neither the adornment of property nor the coolness of the eyes produced by children can turn away from it. Allah, the Glorified, says:

*Men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverteth from the remembrance of Allah and constancy in prayer and paying the poor-rate; ...* (Qur'an. 24:37)

Even after receiving assurance of Paradise, the Messenger of Allah - peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants - used to exert himself for prayers because of Allah, the Glorified's command.

*And enjoin prayer on thy followers, and adhere thou steadily unto it, ...* (Qur'an, 20:132).

Then the Holy Prophet used to enjoin his followers to prayer and exert himself for it.

### About the Islamic Tax (zakat)

Then, Islamic tax has been laid down along with prayer as a sacrifice (to be offered) by the people of Islam. Whoever pays it by way of purifying his spirit, it serves as a purifier for him and a protection and shield against fire (of Hell). No one therefore (who pays it) should feel attached to it afterwards, nor should feel grieved over it. Whoever pays it without the intention of purifying his heart expects through it more than its due. He is certainly ignorant of the *sunnah*, he is allowed no reward for it, his action goes to waste and his repentance is excessive.

### Fulfilment of Trust

Then, as regards fulfilment of trust, whoever does not pay attention to it will be disappointed. It was placed before the strong skies, vast earths and high mountains but none of them was found to be stronger, vaster, or higher than it. If anything could be unapproachable because of height, vastness, power or strength they would have been unapproachable, but they felt afraid of the evil consequences (of failure in fulfilling a trust) and noticed what a weaker being did not realise it, and this was man.

*... Verily he was (proved) unjust, ignorant.* (Qur'an, 33:72)

Surely, Allah, the Glorified, the Sublime, nothing is hidden from Him of whatever people do in their nights or days. He knows all the details, and His knowledge covers them. Your limbs are a witness, the organs of your body constitute an army (against yourself), your inner self serves Him as eyes (to watch your sins), and your loneliness is open to Him.

till slight brown.

Add milk, sugar to the fried bread pieces and continue heating.

Add 3 more tsp spoons of ghee and keep stirring, till the ghee sucks out.

Add butter at last, and add fried cashewnuts. Serve hot. If ghee is not sufficient add some more.



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## SOME HEALTH GUIDELINES FOR RAMADHAN

*This article submitted by Gulamabbas Dhala, Los Angeles provides useful advice on how to avoid some common problems encountered in Ramadhan. If followed, it would enable one to fast comfortably and enjoy fully the spiritual benefits of Ramadhan.*

During the holy month of Ramadhan, our diet should not differ very much from our normal diet and should be as simple as possible. The diet should be such that we maintain our normal weight, neither losing nor gaining. However, if one is overweight, Ramadhan is an ideal time to normalise one's weight.

In view of the long hours of fasting, we should consume slow digesting foods including fibre containing-foods rather than fast-digesting foods. Slow digesting foods last up to 8 hours, while fast-digesting foods last for only 3 to 4 hours.

\* Slow-digesting foods are foods that contain grains and seeds like barley, wheat, oats, millet, semolina, beans, lentils, wholemeal flour, unpolished rice, etc. (called complex carbohydrates).

\* Fast-burning foods are foods that contain sugar, white flour, etc. (called refined carbohydrates).

\* Fibre-containing foods are bran-containing foods, whole wheat, grains and seeds, vegetables like green beans, peas, sem (papry), marrow, mealies, spinach, and other herbs like methie, the leaves of beetroot (iron-rich), fruit with skin, dried fruit especially dried apricots, figs and prunes, almonds, etc.

The food eaten should be well-balanced, containing food from each food group, i.e. fruits, vegetables, meat/chicken/fish, bread/cereals and dairy products. Fried foods are unhealthy and should be limited. They cause indigestion, heart-burn, and weight problems.

### AVOID....

- \* Fried and fatty foods.
- \* Foods containing too much sugar.
- \* Over-eating especially at sehri.

*Federation Samachar*

\* Too much tea at sehri. Tea makes you pass more urine taking with it valuable mineral salts that your body would need during the day.

\* Smoking cigarettes. If you cannot give up smoking, cut down gradually starting a few weeks before Ramadhan. Smoking is unhealthy and one should stop completely.

### EAT.....

\* Complex carbohydrates at sehri so that the food lasts longer making you less hungry.

\* Haleem is an excellent source of protein and is a slow-burning food.

\* Dates are excellent source of sugar, fibre, carbohydrates, potassium and magnesium.

\* Almonds are rich in protein and fibre with less fat.

\* Bananas are a good source of potassium, magnesium and carbohydrates.

### DRINK.....

\* As much water or fruit juices as possible between iftar and bedtime so that your body may adjust fluid levels in time.

### CONSTIPATION.....

Constipation can cause piles (haemorrhoids), fissures (painful cracks in anal canal) and indigestion with a bloated feeling.

**Causes:** Too much refined foods, too little water and not enough fibre in the diet.

**Remedy:** Avoid excessive refined foods, increase water intake, use bran in baking, brown flour when making roti.

### INDIGESTION AND WIND...

**Causes:** Over-eating. Too much fried and fatty foods, spicy foods, and foods that produce wind e.g. eggs, cab-

bage, lentils, carbonated drinks like Cola also produce gas.

**Remedy:** Do not over-eat, drink fruit juices or better still drink water. Avoid fried foods, add ajmor to wind-producing foods.

### LETHARGY ('low blood pressure').....

Excessive sweating, weakness, tiredness, lack of energy, dizziness, especially on getting up from sitting position, pale appearance and feeling faint are symptoms associated with "low blood pressure". This tends to occur towards the afternoon.

**Causes:** Too little fluid intake, decreased salt intake.

**Remedy:** Keep cool, increase fluid and salt intake.

**Caution:** Low blood pressure should be confirmed by taking a blood pressure reading when symptoms are present. Persons with high blood pressure may need their medication adjusted during Ramadhan. They should consult their doctor.

### HEADACHE.....

**Causes:** Caffeine and tobacco-withdrawal, doing too much in one day, lack of sleep, hunger usually occurs as the day goes by and worsens at the end of the day. When associated with "low blood pressure", the headache can be quite severe and can also cause nausea before Iftar.

**Remedy:** Cut down caffeine and tobacco slowly starting a week or two before Ramadhan. Herbal and caffeine-free teas may be substituted. Reorganise your schedule during Ramadan so as to have adequate sleep.

### LOW BLOOD SUGAR....

Weakness, dizziness, tiredness, poor concentration, perspiring easily, feeling shaky (tremor), unable to perform physical activities, headache, palpitations are symptoms of low blood sugar.

**Causes in non-diabetics:** Having too much sugar i.e. refined carbohydrates especially at suhur (sehri). The body produces too much insulin causing the blood glucose to drop.

(continued on page 78)



(...from page 77)

**Remedy:** Eat something at sehri and limit sugar-containing foods and drinks.

**Caution:** Diabetics may need to adjust their medication in Ramadan, consult your doctor.

### MUSCLE CRAMPS...

**Causes:** Inadequate intake of calcium, magnesium and potassium foods.

**Remedy:** Eat foods rich in the above minerals e.g. vegetables, fruit, dairy products, meat and dates.

**Caution:** Those on high blood pressure medication and with kidney stone problems should consult their doctor.

### PEPTIC ULCERS, HEART BURN, GASTRITIS AND HIATUS HERNIA.....

Increased acid levels in the empty stomach in Ramadhan aggravate the above conditions. It presents as a burning feeling in the stomach area under the ribs and can extend upto the throat. Spicy foods, coffee, and Cola drinks worsen these conditions.

Medications are available to control acid levels in the stomach. People with proven peptic ulcers and hiatus hernia should consult their doctor well before Ramadhan.

### KIDNEY STONES...

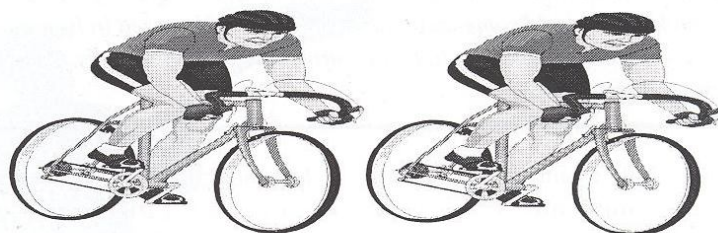
Kidney stones may occur in people who have less liquids to drink. Therefore, it is essential to drink extra liquids so as to prevent stone formation.

### JOINT PAINS....

**Causes:** During Ramadhan, when extra salah are performed the pressure on the knee joints increases. In the elderly and those with arthritis this may result in pain, stiffness, swelling and discomfort.

**Remedy:** Lose weight so that the knees do not have to carry any extra load. Exercise the lower limbs before Ramadhan so that they can be prepared for the additional strain. Being physically fit allows greater fulfilment, thus enabling one to be able to perform salah with ease.

# How to stay fit



The level of fitness for physical work and exercise is an important determinant of cardiovascular health and longevity. It can be improved by a physically active life-style and regular exercise and can be objectively measured on a treadmill. But, for all practical purposes, if you can walk uninterruptedly and without difficulty 1 mile (1.6 km) on level ground at a brisk speed (120 paces per minute), your fitness level is adequate for the health of your heart.

It means that both the heart and lungs, on which longevity mainly depends, are in good shape and well conditioned. It has been proved beyond reasonable doubt that physically fit people live longer and have minimum of health problems, especially those related to the heart. Physical fitness is even more necessary for those who suffer from hypertension, diabetes, obesity, angina or those who have had a heart attack. It is therefore important for you to keep yourself at an adequate level of physical fitness.

### Risk Reduction

The reduction of risk to the heart obtained by physical fitness is substantial. Different studies put it at 40 to 65 per cent. It is no less, probably more, than the one obtained by stopping smoking.

All persons who improve their level of fitness improve their cardiovascular system irrespective of their age and baseline fitness level. It is, therefore, never too late to make a start with a physical-fitness programme.

What physical fitness does to your heart: What do you gain by making and keeping yourself physically fit? By giving enough exercise to the heart and lungs, you open up the lung alveoli (air spaces) and, therefore, maximise oxygenation of your blood. You improve lipid profile; blood sugar is kept at a healthy low and the likelihood of blood clotting is reduced.

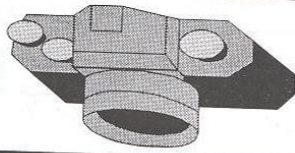
Blood pressure and body weight remain under control. Stress levels are reduced; you eat better and sleep better. All these changes prevent the development of ischaemic heart disease.

On top of this, you open up the collateral channels of blood in the heart and thus keep it ready to meet any challenge from coronary thrombosis, if it does occur.

To keep yourself physically fit, you do not need to exercise excessively. In fact, excessive exercise is counter-productive and harmful. What you really need is moderate exercise. Moderate exercises can be performed by simply walking or by cycling or by becoming members of health clubs.

When one sits at home regularly watching television, one forgets that the body (especially with age) becomes more vulnerable to diseases. Exercises help to trim one's body into ideal or better fitness.





# DOWN MEMORY LANE



A group photograph of Kilimeru Gymkhana dating back to the year 1969 when they won the league trophy the very first time they participated. Sitting (from left to right): Bashir Tejani, Amirali Somji, Noorali Jethabhai, Ali Sheriff, Shakir Moledina. Standing (left to right): Late Azad Kermalli, Habib Yusufali (current Jamaat President), Anverali Panjwani, Late Raza Versi, Hussein Walji, Late Yusuf Sheriff, Raza Pyarali and Late Bashir Lalji.



This is a 1932 picture of our community in Pemba provided to us by the courtesy of Alhaj Najafbhai Tejani. The original photograph has faded but we have tried to reproduce this to the best possible quality. Individuals in the picture could not be identified in person. Those who feature in this photograph include Hassanali Mohamed Walji, Mulla Hassanali Dori, Habib Hasham Chatoo, Rashid Allarakhia, Mohamed Shivji, Mohamed Allarakhia Janmohamed, Abdulrasul Nathoo, Mohamedhusein Habib Hasham Chatoo and Abdulrasul Walli Khatau.



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From the Islamic



Press

# Muslims in East Africa Develop Their Own Higher-Education Options

Islamic universities are gaining a foothold in East Africa, where higher education is becoming increasingly privatized and diversified. The region's minority Muslim population has long been marginalized in terms of formal education, Islamic scholars say. Now, with many new private higher-education institutions opening across the region — including some affiliated with organized religion — the scholars say that establishing their own universities is the only way to insure that Muslims will be able to enjoy the educational opportunities available to others.

The progressive scholars who are in the forefront of those efforts aim to make the new Islamic universities in East Africa centers for what some of them call a dynamic encounter between Islam and modern, secular disciplines. The model is the Islamic University in Uganda, founded 11 years ago by the Saudi Arabia-based Organization of the Islamic Conference. Now the idea is taking hold in other countries.

On the predominantly Muslim island of Zanzibar, a part of Tanzania, the newly opened University of Zanzibar, while not openly Islamic, is financed primarily by an Islamic charity. In Mozambique, private organizations are completing plans for an Islamic university in the northern part of the nation.

Muslims in Kenya have discussed the idea of opening an Islamic university since the 1970s. Such an institution has yet to be developed, but the idea is getting more currency. Justin Irina, secretary of the Commission for Higher Education in Kenya, calls it "thoroughly justified."

Muslims are in the minority in all East

African countries. Actual population statistics are hotly debated; in many African countries, census data are politically sensitive and not always fully disclosed. Generally accepted estimates, however, put the Muslim population at 10 per cent in Uganda, 30 per cent in Kenya, and 40 per cent in Tanzania.

Although Islam first came to East Africa with Arab sea traders more than 1,000 years ago, scholars say European colonialism conferred a distinct advantage on converts to Christianity, creating a social imbalance that exists to this day. For example, in Uganda — where Islam was spread by traders, not missionaries — Islamic education was limited to basic Koranic schools, where the sacred text was taught. Christian missionaries, meanwhile, were establishing a network of schools designed to provide an education in general subjects as well as in religion. The missionaries insisted that the British colonial government itself not develop or support any secular or pluralistic school system, thus granting Christians an effective monopoly on formal education in the country, according to Abdu Kasozi, a professor of history in Uganda.

Muslim parents for many years perceived Christian schools to be innately hostile to their own religion, he says, adding that as a result, many Muslims did not attend school and fell far behind their Christian counterparts. Muslim students have yet to catch up.

Inadequate educational preparation, not outright religious discrimination, is why Muslims are not better represented at Uganda's state-run universities, scholars say. Admission procedures at Uganda's national university,

Makerere, where Mr. Kasozi taught for 14 years, have "always been fair," he says. "Yet social and structural problems may bar certain people. Higher education in Uganda is not equal." Islamic universities like the one in Uganda are trying to solve the problem by providing a broad-based education for Muslims. "Muslim-university graduates can play an active part in East African society," says Mr. Kasozi.

The rector of the Islamic University in Uganda, Mahdi Adamu, says the institution aspires "to train the youth to live in the modern world without losing faith. "The best way to shield a Muslim student is to expose him or her to secular education," he says. "Then he will know its beauty and ugliness, its strength and weakness." Mr. Adamu compares this strategy to theories of sex education — more information leads to more-mature decisions. He invokes a passage from the Koran: "Let there be no compulsion in religion. Truth stands out clear from error."

David Sperling, a professor of Islamic history at the University of Nairobi, says the trend now is to mix secular and religious education. "Most intellectuals in the Muslim world say that one has to know about the secular world."

In a paper arguing for an Islamic university in Kenya, Mohamed Hyder, a former Nairobi professor, says rekindling Islam's intellectual tradition in Africa — which stretches back to some of the world's first universities, in Morocco and Egypt — should be a high priority for East African Muslims. "There is an urgent need to marry Islamic scholarship with mainstream

(continued on page 82)



global scholarship," he wrote.

But how to put such ideas into action can be tricky. The Islamic University in Uganda enrolls more than 1,100 students, 95 per cent of them undergraduates, in five faculties, or schools: arts and social sciences, education, management, science, and Islamic heritage. In some disciplines, an Islamic perspective is brought in through separate courses, says Mr. Adamu, the rector.

Students in political science, for example, take a class on "Islamic political thought." In the social sciences, according to several department heads, Freud and Darwin are discussed alongside Islamic concepts of human personality and creation. In economics, students learn Islamic views on interest, taxes, and insurance.

The curriculum of the Islamic University in Uganda is now 70-per-cent secular and 30-per-cent Islamic, according to Mr. Adamu, who is a former president of Nigeria's state-run, Islamically oriented Usmanu Danfodiyo University. "Ideally, it would be 50-50," he says. "But experts in Islamicized disciplines are very few. You can count Muslim professors in Africa on your fingertips, and those are all well-placed and not easy to get."

The Ugandan institution often finds itself competing for faculty members not with other universities, but with East African governments, which are anxious to strike a religious balance in their cabinets and official appointments, and so always seem to need highly educated Muslims. Because of the dearth of Muslim professors, the university often hires Christian or secular lecturers, who generally lean toward a more secular curriculum.

In fact, non-Muslim students and faculty members play an active role in the university, in keeping with its policy of non-discrimination. About 10 per cent of the students are Christian. Non-Muslim students and staff members are expected to follow the "basic rules of sharia," or Islamic law, just like their Muslim counterparts. Women must cover their hair, and mixing between the sexes for other than academic reasons is not allowed.

Chris Obore Oriko, a Christian who is a second-year student in mass communications, says he found the social rules and Islamic education difficult at first, but now finds them reasonable, even helpful. "I feel I can work in both a Muslim and a secular environment, and it will be an advantage to me as a journalist — I can portray both sides better," he says.

Mr. Adamu says the Islamic University in Uganda is planning to expand both its campus and its enrollment, to 10,000 students. He wants to increase the enrollment of women, from 30 to 50 per cent of the student body. Inadequate dormitory space has limited female enrollment thus far; women are required to live on the campus.

Uganda's government has assisted the university, donating 300 acres of land adjacent to the current campus, in addition to a prime piece of property in downtown Kampala, the capital, where the university is completing construction of a 12-story building that will be rented out as office space to generate income. The university also has begun asking students to pay fees to cover a small part of the cost of their education.

At one time, all the university's funds came from the Organization of the Islamic Conference, says Mr. Adamu. The level of that support has been unchanged for a decade, however, and is not enough to support the expansion plans.

At the same time, financial support from Saudi Arabia and other wealthy Muslim countries often comes with an expectation that the institutions will espouse a rigid form of Islam, which sometimes conflicts with the more relaxed version practiced in East Africa.

Observers both inside and outside the universities say some independence from the oil-rich Persian Gulf states would be good for East Africa's Muslim institutions. Diversifying the sources of support for the Islamic universities, they say, could enable the region's Muslims to build a distinctive set of higher-education institutions.

(Courtesy: *The Chronicle of Higher Education* November 19, 1999).

## Listen to Youth, Annan Tells Adults on World Aids Day

Adults should spend more time listening to young people in order to break the "conspiracy of silence" over AIDS, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said in a message to mark the 12th Annual World AIDS Day.

Noting that 16 million people have already died of AIDS and 34 million are infected with HIV, Annan said "working with people under 25 is perhaps the best hope we have today of bringing the epidemic under control."

The United Nations held conferences and other events on World AIDS Day as part of its campaign against the disease which claimed a record 2.6 million lives this year. The World AIDS Day is marked on 1 December every year since 1998.

Echoing the theme of the day, "the children left behind", Annan said that "a staggering 11.2 million children — nine in ten of them from Africa — have been orphaned by AIDS since the epidemic began" in the 1970s.

According to an AFP report from Geneva, half of those infected this year are under the age of 25, he said. "They will probably die before they turn 35," he added. "They will leave behind children who not only face a future as orphans, but often the added burdens of poverty and stigma.

"Stressing that young people are at grave risk, Annan said "adults spend too much time telling young people what to do without listening to what they need: affection, close bonds with adults, and education." Those who are ignorant about the disease can do nothing to protect themselves, he said.

Annan also urged people to fight "the culture of shame", saying: "Hiding AIDS behind a curtain of stigma helps to spread it. Speaking out about AIDS helps slow it down."

(Courtesy: *Tehran Times*, 2 December, 1999).



# THE ROLE OF THE MARJA

by Hujatul Islam Wal Muslimeen Shaikh Shabbir Maithami of Qum.

"The Role of Marja", has been a subject of heated discussions. Many people have expressed their views openly, some trying to seek clarification and some trying to clarify. May I express my views:

The first point to be clarified is that Islam is a practical religion sent by Allah (S.W.T) through the Prophets and Masumeen(A.S) for organizing the life of human beings.

The Last Prophet of Islam (S.A.W.W) performed three main duties, namely:

1) As a preacher of religion: He passed the message of the Creator and invited people towards Islam. He mainly performed this duty during his stay in Makkah and continued doing it after migration to Madinah. This we call it as tabligh, in which he used to call people towards Allah (s.w.t.) and tell them their duties i.e. explaining the laws of Islam.

2) As a ruler of the first ever Islamic state: After migrating to Holy Madinah he created the first ever Islamic state ruling in accordance with Islamic laws. Although this was different to the governments existing during those days but even then this Islamic State was recognized by many empires of that time. This duty was known as Hakim and he had full authority to run an Islamic state according to the laws of Islam and the needs of the day. He used to order muslims to prepare for war, send his representative for collecting zakat, send his ambassadors to different empires etc.

3) As a Judge or Qazi: After establishing the Islamic government he began settling the differences between people, advising some and punishing others who violated the laws of the state.

Thus, the Holy Prophet was a messenger, a ruler and a Qazi. Imam Ali (A.S) was to follow him in all the three duties but was not allowed to do so for 25 years. Later on he was requested, rather forced, to perform these duties. Of course, during those 25 years he

performed his duty as a muballigh along with many other duties but he was kept away from the other two which were authoritative.

His son, Imam Hasan (A.S) was forced to give up his Imamatus and thus once again incompetent people came in.

From the time of Imam Hasan (A.S) all the Imams performed their duties as muballigh but were denied the opportunity of ruling the ummah or becoming Qazi al Quzat (Chief Justice).

Masumeen (A.S) themselves guided the people and prepared scholars who could travel and pass the true and real message of Islam.

They were taught and trained in such a way that they could extract the laws from the basic teachings and solve the day to day problems of those muslims who could not travel to the center of Islamic Studies.

One of the earliest instances of, preparing students and asking them to guide people, tell them their duties and extract the laws from Quran and sunnah, found in the history is that of Aban-Ibn -Taglib, who was a companion of the three Imams namely Ali Ibn Al Hussain, Mohammed Ibn Ali Al Baqir and Jaffer Ibn Mohammad Al Sadiq(A.S.) According to Najashee (372 - 450 A.H.) in his book named Rejal-un-Najashee (reprinted in "1407 A.H." authenticated by Ayatullah al uzma Shubairee Zanjanee, page 10), Imam Jaffar Al-Sadiq (A.S) orders Aban- ibn -Taglib: "Sit in the mosque of Madina and give fatwa to people surely I like to see among my followers men like you".

This hadees clarifies a lot of confusion regarding the validity and beginning of taqleed and its importance because Imam (A.S) orders him to sit in the mosque of Madinah even though Imam (A.S) himself is present there.

Along with the Masumeen (A.S) introduced to momineen, some of their students were scholars who could be referred to for solutions to problems

related to Islamic duties.

Some of them were: Younus Ibn Abdur Rahman, Ali Ibn Hadeed, Zakaryya Ibn Adam, Mohammed Ibn Muslim Saqafee, Zurara Ibu Aaun, Abu Baseer lais Muradee, Buraid Ibn Muaviyyah Ajalle. (refer. Vasael us Shia Vol.18 P.103.)

Masumeen (A.S) during their life time guided the scholars in understanding the Holy Quran, Sayings of Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W) and their own sayings, and taught them the ways to extract the laws of Islam from these sources and how to resolve, if they found, any contradictions. (Refer. Vasael us shia Vol. 18 from page 75 - 89,48 Hadees.)

This clearly shows how Masumeen (A.S) trained their students so that they could extract the laws of Islam from its basic sources and solve the problems of momineen, related to their Islamic duties.

Imam Jaffar Al Sadiq (A.S) used to tell his students, "We give you the basis and it is your duty to find out its branches."

Here we conclude, that one of the responsibilities of mumineen is to gain knowledge, so that they themselves find out their duties after extracting the laws of Islam, from Quran and Sunnah, once they have learned the way of doing it.

If all the momineen could not do it themselves, as it has always been, then some should go to the center of Islamic studies and after reaching the level of Feqahat should return to their community to pass on the real message of Islam and solve their day to day problems, through their Ijtihad.

To this effect there is a clear order from Allah (s.w.t.) in Holy Quran (chapter 9, verse 122): "**And it does not beseem the believers that they should go forth all together: why should not then a company from every party from**

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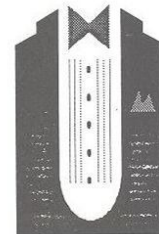
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(...from page 83)

*among them go forth that they may apply themselves to obtain deep understanding in religion, and that they may warn their people when they come back to them that they may be cautious?"*

Unfortunately, we deem this to be the duty of some one else and stay clear from the clear order of the Holy Quran which is not a fatwa or verdict from a mujtahid or hakim.

Coming back to the point, one of the responsibilities of learned people also known as fuqaha or mujtahedeen is to understand the basis of Islam, and solve the problems of mumineen related to their Islamic duties. This is the first type of responsibility performed by the Holy Prophet (SAWW), Imam Ali (AS) and all the Masumeen (AS). It does not need any power or authority, but needs a deep insight.

The second important responsibility relates to whom authority should be given to make rulings. First this was performed by the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.), Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (A.S) after he was kept away for 25 years from ruling the Umma and then by Imam Hasan (AS) until he was forced to step down. During the days of the Masumeen (A.S.) it was their duty and no one was allowed to do so without their permission.

The question arises whether after the great occultation (ghaibat e kubra) Islam and Masumeen (A.S) have left the ummah without clear instructions about the ruler and the way he should rule or did they guide us ?

If they guided us what was the line of action set by them? Who is supposed to rule the ummah as there is no direct connection with Imam e Zaman (a.f.).

As far as our "aql" (faculty of reflection) is concerned we find the following options regarding the personality who can rule the ummah:

1) Any one who takes over the control. (As is the case in ahl ul sunnah, they consider such a person as Wali ul Amr).

2) A practicing momin. The second option is further divided into two:

a) a practicing momin whether he has any deep vision in Islam and teachings of Ahl ul Bait (A.S).

b) a practicing momin who has a deep vision in Islam and its teachings and can extract the laws of Islam from the basis explained by the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) and the Ahl ul Bait (A.S).

The conclusion is left to readers! However the point should not be neglected that this duty requires a deep insight in Islam along with power, authority, management and intense studies of the political affairs of the Ummah and the world.

Another duty performed by Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W) and Imam Ali (A.S) was that of resolving the differences and punishing criminals according to Islamic laws.

Once again these duties were either to be performed only by Masumeen (A.S) or with their permission during the days of their presence and after occultation there were three possibilities:

a) nothing to be done, just wait for the Imam (A.S.) to come and resolve the differences and punish the criminal,

b) anyone in power is allowed to perform these duties.

c) this duty should be given to those who have deep understanding of Islam and can extract the laws of Islam and apply them from the basis explained by Masumeen (A.S). ( Refer, vasaal us shia Vol. 18 page 1 - 591).

There are more than 1800 hadees from Masumeen (A.S) regarding justice, judge, style of imparting justice, prescribed and un-prescribed punishments etc.

As far as the resolving of differences is concerned no power is needed and when the two sides accept a person as the judge it can be done easily.

But when it comes to punishment especially a capital one, then a real power is needed and without having a proper government and judiciary system it is almost impossible.

So, there are three main duties;

1) Explaining the laws of Islam regarding Ibada, dealings and organization of society, the person performing this duty is commonly known as mufti or

marj'a.

2) Ruling the ummah, and taking care of it. Such a person is known as vali-alfaqqeh, vali Amr or Hakim e Shariah.

3) Doing justice by resolving the differences and punishing the criminals. Such a person is named as Qazi. (Judge).

Here we conclude that, the duty of a marja is to give fatwa only which in itself involves very heavy responsibility, and does not have any other duty like that of solving day to day social, economical and political problems. It is the duty of vali al amr who is the leader of the ummah and the Qazi has to take care of the judiciary system of the Ummah. If however, the marja and vali alAmr or Hakim e shariyyat and the Qazi are the same then his duty becomes many fold otherwise every one has his own duty to perform. **The common factor among all the three is that they have deep insight and vision in religion and can extract the laws of Islam from:**

1) Holy Quran.

2) Sunnah which includes.

a) Sayings of Masum (A.S.)

b) Action of Masum (A.S.)

c) Silence of Masum (A.S.).

The basic qualification of all the three is known as "Ijtihad" and their title is "Mujtahid". May I now answer a few questions generally asked by Mumineen regarding this discussion.

**Q.1) Why should we do taqleed?**

**Ans.** All mumin have been made responsible by Allah (s.w.t.) to perform some duties, for fulfilling these we have to;

1) Know the exact responsibilities, from its resources.

2) Perform them.

For knowing them either one should learn and develop the deep understanding of these duties from its resources or depend on those who are capable of extracting them and have done it, as our Imam (a.s.) have guided us to do so.

**Q.2) Every one is responsible for his own actions! How we can depend on another person who has developed the deep vision commonly known as mufti or Marja.**

(continued on page 86)



**Ans.** Yes! Every one has to reply for his own actions, whether he performed them correctly or not, but as far as the understanding of the duty is concerned we have been given a choice either we ourselves become mujtahid or depend on another Mujtahid who has worked hard in this field.

If we select a Mufti or Marja to follow then once again we are answerable to Allah (S.W.T) regarding our selection, but once we are satisfied that we have selected the correct person then we don't have to answer whether he extracted the laws correctly or not. Of course! We are answerable on whether we followed them correctly or not.

**Q.3) If someone can't become mufti or Mujtahid or Marja and is unable to select one, then what should he/she do ?**

**Ans.** As he is responsible for fulfilling his duties, the only way left for such a person is to perform his duties with precaution commonly known as "Ehteyat".

**Q.4) Why is it necessary, for a person who himself wants to become mufti to go to a centre of Islamic studies and study subjects like Arabic with all its branches, logic, fundamentals of Islamic Jurisprudence, Hadees, Holy Quran with all its branches (Tafseer, taveel, nasiqh, mansuqh...), History, Philosophy etc... Why can't we extract the duties to be performed by us from the translations of the Holy Quran and Hadees.**

**Ans:** Although this answer needs another complete article explaining the method of extracting Islamic laws from its sources and for gaining knowledge the person has to go to the centre where he can get the knowledge, the simple answer is that when someone will extract the laws from translations this will again be a sort of taqleed this time of the translator and not of a qualified person of the field called Mufti or a Marja.

**Q.5) Isn't it so that the idea of vali e faqeeh or Hakim e Shariyah was generated through the Islamic revolution of Iran and no one had**

**discussed or accepted it before?**

**Ans.** As I have discussed in my article that even if none had discussed it before, our Aql guides us towards it. (Refer letters of Imam Ali (A.S.) Nahajul Balagah. Which is full of guidance to his wali and hakim (Governors).

Of course many of the great ulemas have discussed it before which includes Sheikh Mufeed, Shahe'ed Awwal, Shahe'ed Sani, Sheikh Murtaza Ansari (R.A.) and many others have discussed this in their main books, of course no one except Imam Khomeini(r.a.) got a chance of applying it.

**Q.6) Does every one accept wilayat al faqeeh or Hakim e Shariyyah or are there some Mujtahid who disagree?**

**Ans.** The basic vilayat is accepted by all Mujtahid. That is why they have used the word Hakim - e - shariyah or wali al Amr in chapters of Zakat, Khums, Talaq, Amr bil Maroof wa nahi anil Munkar, Jihad and Qaza (Justice). Every Marja uses these terms in his Tawzeeh (book of Islamic laws) for at least 50 times or more.

They are of the opinion that the duty of collecting Zakat and Khums is of the Hakim, the talaq at times can be read by a Hakim without permission of the husband. Essentially justice should be provided by a Hakim or with his permission.

Marhum Ayatullah al-uzma Syed Abul Qasim al Khoi (R.A) one of the great Marja of our time and also Ayatullah al Uzma Seestani one of the present marja have used the term of Hakim in their tauzeeh ul masail for more than 70 times.

**Q.7) What about akhbari ulama, how can you reply them?**

**Ans.** At a certain stage some of our ulema started the discussion that the hadith should be taken as it is and we should not interpret it or make conclusion from it. For example if Imam Sadiq (A.S) wrote on the kafan of his son Ismail, who died during the life time of Imam (A.S), Ismail yashhadoo i.e. Ismail bears witness ... that! now even if X,Y orZ die we should write

Ismail yashhadoo and not x, y, yashhadoo or so and so yashhadoo...

Although they opposed the interpretation or conclusion of hadith by the faculty of intellect (aql), if we are to see their books we find that they have actually been doing so (interpreting hadith by the faculty of intellect) not only in their fiqh books but also in the books of hadith compiled by them. Refer to the book of Allama Hur e Amallee who is one of the akhbaree aalim and he has done the same in his book wasail ush Shia many times.

Other than that if this argument of the Akhbarees had been a natural thinking then it would have prevailed over the ijtehad school of thought, where as we find a very few following that school of thought and that also not in the Center of Islamic studies.

**Q.8) Is it necessary that a Marja should be an Irani or Iraqi or a syed only or anyone else also can become a Marja ?**

**Ans.** That is not so. Who ever studies and works hard with sincerity he gets the results. It is unfortunate that for years and years in our history very few people have gone to the Center of Islamic education and they also did not try to reach the higher levels. Rather after studying for some time they were forced to leave their studies due to the pressure of the family or community and thus did not reach the level of Ijtehad .

In the end, I pray to Allah (s.w.t.), that he may guide us to the right path and give courage to some of us to study in the Center of Islamic studies, nowadays located in Qum, so that more of us can become mujtahids. By becoming mujtahids we can help solve the problems of the community and society while living with them.

#### Quotable Quotes

*"If you want your children to turn out well, spend twice as much time with them, and half as much money on them."*

*"Ability may get you to the top, but only character will keep you there."*

*"Life is like a ten-speed bike. Most of us have gears we never use."*



# Family Status: A Plea for Islamization of Knowledge

by Sayyed Q.M.M. Kamoopuri, Ph.D., Dar Es Salaam

Muslims are unanimously eyed as having dominant position in terms of material wealth. Muslims constitute 1/5th of the total population of the world i.e. larger than the combined population of United States, Western Europe and Japan. They rule the land that stretches over three big continents covering the area of more than half of the inhabited world. They control the most strategic land routes, major water-ways and vast continental air mass that forms over the interior of their territories. They occupy more than 50 seats in the General Assembly Sessions of the United Nations i.e. almost 1/3rd that is required to have a quorum. They represent 1/15th of the global GNP i.e. three times as large as that of China.

It is of interest to note that only the defence expenditure of Arab nations (not the whole Muslim world) is 50 billion dollars per annum, which is twice the defence budget of China, the largest nation in the World. This can be all summed up in Past American President, Nixon's words: 'the life-line of the gigantic industrial World is in Muslim hands.'

This is crystal clear. The major oil reserves i.e. the heart of the Industrial world is buried beneath the feet of the Muslims. Out of the world's total oil reserves (900 billion barrels), the Middle East has 64% (576 billion barrels) of oil deposits. USA and Canada together have only 32 billion-barrels (4%). The whole of Asia excluding the Middle East and the Asian part of Russia possess only 4% (36 billion barrels).

In OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) which controls and regulates the world's oil business, 10 out of 13 members are Muslim countries. Thus without any doubt we have the Power House of the World

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which moves the 'wheels' of the industrial nations in all directions.

This was greatly realized by the whole world in October 1973 when suddenly oil prices were sharply increased by the Arabs. The immediate effect was that almost every service sector, especially the manufacturing industries, were totally paralysed due to the short supply of industrial blood. United States was one of the hardest hit because of its unquenchable thirst for energy. Japan and West Germany were the next victims because they both depend totally on Arab exports. In Japan, the oil crises precipitated to the extent that even such common commodities as soap and toilet papers were suddenly in scarce supply. The Gasoline stations in some countries were directed by the government to close down their normal business on Sundays and public holidays. The social activities, recreation centres, clubs, parks, restaurants and casinos were badly affected by these restrictive directives.

The most lasting impact of the 'Oil Crises' was the change of manufacturing patterns of cars. The Americans turned their faces to Japan to import smaller and more fuel-efficient cars instead of buying their own larger and heavy oil consuming automobiles. This gave a terrible blow to American Automakers - the world's largest automarket.

The industrial world is also dependant on our mineral resources i.e. besides our oil wealth we also have huge amounts of minerals without which the Industrial world can not survive. However through incredible developments in the western world, the real beneficiary who virtually receives the full benefit of our resources is the West. The prosperity of the Industrial world

is largely due to the Arab's wealth. It is interesting to know that the West is robbing us from both ends. They buy the raw materials from us at a very cheap rate and then sell their Industrial products (manufactured from our raw material) at exorbitant prices.

Though rich we remain deceived despite the the blessings and great favour bestowed on us by our Lord. The primary reason for this is that we lag behind in the field of specialised knowledge. We have no scientists, economists or technologists who can monitor our natural wealth. Illiteracy has become a characteristic feature of Muslims with little variation among Muslim countries. Out of thousands of scientists, we can not mention even two names of Muslim scientists who have international repute.

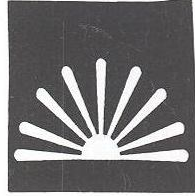
The millions of great discoveries and useful inventions, which have revolutionised the world, are associated with Jews, Christians, Hindus and atheists but none with Muslims. We can hardly find few Muslim scientists who are internationally recognized for their achievements and monumental contributions in the advancement of science and technology. (Late Prof. Abdus Salaam is the first and the only scientists from the Muslim world who has received the world's most prestigious award - The Nobel Prize. He was the President of Third World Academy of Science and Director of the International Centre for Theoretical Physics, Italy.)

What is the major cause of our backwardness and incompetence in intellectual endeavors? The answer is very simple. In our large blessed Muslim world of enormous resources, we have not established even a single learning

(continued on page 89)



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institution within the framework of Islamic belief, which manifests the infinite spectrum of knowledge. There is not a single Muslim country which has national commitments to acquiring of and enhancing scientific knowledge. There is no realisation that higher education can be applied to resolve our numerous problems. This can be understood if we analyse this problem at our community level.

For instance, in this small community of ours in Dar Es Salaam, we have talents for imports, export business and many other relevant potential methods of acquiring huge and quick money, but we certainly do not have any declared policy for comprehensive education. There is no policy to attract our brighter intellects to the academic professions. We think that our huge bank accounts can save us and our generations in all circumstances. Such concepts have kept us in a state of stagnation for the last many decades. The enemies of Islam take the advantage of this gloomy outlook and propagate that Islam is the cause of stagnation. They tell our youths in their institutions that Islam has nothing to offer to intellectuals. This is utterly wrong!

One proof that I can give at hand is our glorious past. Barely a hundred years after the Prophet's departure, the Muslims under the guidance of the infallible Imams made incredible achievements in almost every branch of knowledge. They established institutes of advanced study; they acquired an ascendancy in the sciences and technology that lasted up to around 1450 AD.

Jabir - ibn - Hayyan (known as Gabber by the West) a student of Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S.), was one of the greatest chemists of all times. He made experimental contributions of the highest order in organic chemistry. Ibn-al-Haitham (Alhazen) 965-1039 AD. was also a renowned physicist, recognised by all Western Scientists till today. He enunciated the laws of inertia, which later inspired Galileo and Newton to discover the fundamental laws of physics. He was the first man to conceive the idea of the Aswan

Dam but could not construct it because the technology of his time was not developed enough to bring his scientific ideas into practice.

Al-Biruni, Ibn-I-Sina (Avicenna) and many other Muslim intellectuals also developed the edifice of science which was then extended by Western scientists to its present dimensions. Almost all Western Scholars acknowledge the immense contributions of Muslim scholars in the development of science. They admit that modern science is the most momentous contribution of Islamic Civilisation. For instance, Briffault, a Western scholar writes "What we call 'Science' arose as a result of new methods of experiment, observation and measurements, which were introduced into Europe by the Arabs."

The impetus given by the Prophet (S.A.W.W.) and his noble progeny greatly motivated the Muslims for scientific endeavors. They laid the foundation of astronomy, physics, biology, geology, physiology, anatomy, mathematics, and meteorology and thereby extended the domain of human knowledge. In this short paper it is by no means possible to analyse the impact of Islamic Civilisation on Western Scholarship. But it is a matter of sincere research and serious investigation as to how after all the monumental contributions which our great ancestors had made in almost every field of science, we have acquired a conservative and rigid approach in our learning institutions. How the enthusiasm, dynamism and the great sense of wonder disappeared from us. Those who know the infrastructure of Islamic epistemology will agree with me that the word 'ILM' has much wider dimensions than its synonyms in English and all other languages. The words, 'knowledge' or 'science' used for 'Ilm' in English falls short of embracing the long-range aspects of 'Ilm' and its undetectable boundaries. The hadith in which the Prophet said himself "the City of Ilm" precisely elaborates its infinite dimensions.

In conclusion, I invite our intellectuals, leaders and active community members to make collective efforts to do something within the sphere of our

influence. Let us consider the vital issue of education in its Islamic perspective and in response to the inevitable demands of fast changing times.

We all know that Islam covers the entire spectra of time and controls each and every aspect of human life of varied interest. It is therefore important to review our systems and activities from time to time within the Islamic parameters to meet the new challenges of the changing world. In this regard the first and foremost is to modify our learning institutions to abide by strictly Islamic manners so as to accommodate the legitimate demands of our time.

Some years ago a small project of this type was started by the Bilal Muslim Mission in Dar Es Salaam. This involved a comprehensive school in which courses covering both religious and secular subjects are taught. This is very important from the viewpoint of the Tableeghi Mission.

Often in the present enlightened world our Muballagheens have to face the highly educated people who come from different faculties of specialised knowledge. In order to have an impressive and balance communication with them, our Muballagheens should also have the same level of academic credentials with a proportionate degree of intellectual background.

For the couple of years, our community leaders and reformers are showing a great concern over the deterioration in spiritual values of Muslim society. It is good sense of realisation but it is not enough to document the abuses. We have to find out the root cause of the problems if we sincerely want to bring some positive changes.

I believe the major cause of our problems is the Western education system which we have adopted in our schools. To rescue our youths from being ensnared and to bring them into a healthy atmosphere, we need comprehensive Islamic Schools that provide both secular and religious knowledge. The success of this project depends upon the co-operation of our leaders and community members around the world.



# CASE FOR SURVIVAL

## The Challenge facing the Community in North America

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

By Hassan Ali M. Jaffer, Mombasa

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

"It was late Haji Dewjibhai Jamal – a Khoja gentleman, who went to Iraq and requested Shaikh Zainul Abedeen Mazindarani for an Alim. He selected Mulla Qadir Husain, one of his pupils for the important task of preaching.

"He brought Mulla Sahib from Kerbala to Bombay where amidst hardship and torture, he dedicated his life to the noble task of preaching and at the risk of his life constructed Imambargah and Mosque in Bhimdi and Malegaon.

"Mulla Sahib neither feared 'Dalaale Qatelaan' (swords) nor was he convinced by 'Baraheen-e-Saate'aa' (gold coins). He preached at the risk of his life and cared not for his livelihood. Having full trust in the Omnipotent he passed a very simple life with tattered clothes and ordinary diet.

"It was Mulla Sahib who by his ceaseless efforts brought about in the Khoja community a mental revolution - a task much more difficult than anything else especially in the field of religion – removing the false beliefs and replacing it with by sound foundation of true basic ideology. On this base was erected a huge structure by his well-known pupil, Haji Gulamali Haji Ismail, popularly known as "Haji Naji" who, through his pen services for more than half a century served the community scattered over Kutch, Kathiawar, Gujrat, Bombay, Africa, Aden and Mukalla.

"His pen services are translation in Gujrati language of Arabic, Urdu and Persian books on various topics of religion. Some of these books are (now) translated into English language by Peermohamed Ebrahim Trust, Karachi, e.g. Kulsum ki Qismat, Ahwalunnisa, Khairunnisa, Shehzadi Hur and Zehra Bano etc.

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"Chiraghe Hidayat of Mulla Sahib, a book of fundamentals and tenets is popular even now among the Shias and serves as an authentic book for religious knowledge both for children and adults.

"The Ithna-asheri creed of the Khoja community is therefore primarily under the obligation of Haji Dewjibhai Jamal and secondly under the unforgettable obligation of Mulla (Qadir Husain) Sahib which is even now continuing through the books published by his devoted pupil late Haji Naji Saheb – (may God bless them.)

"His other notable pupils were – Noor Mohamed Meghji, Haji Dewjibhai Jamal, Khalfan Ratansi, Aladin Gulamhusein, popularly known as AIN-GHAIN.

"Killu Khataw – a martyr in the way of Allah was his another well known pupil. He (Killu Khataw) acquired his elementary knowledge from 'Chiraghe-Hidayat' and then from Mulla (Qadir Husain) Sahib himself whom he used to visit with full zest at mid-nights for the purpose (of learning)."

### Goal - preservation and promotion of faith

With this historical background in mind, it will be recognized that the establishment of the Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim Community has essentially been for the preservation and promotion of the Shia Ithna-Asheri faith.

We must never lose sight of this innate reality. Initially, the separation from the Ismaili community was limited to a very insignificant number. In his autobiography, Mulla Qadir Husain gives an interesting account of the number involved. Over the decades, more and more Ismaili individuals and families were attracted towards the Ithna-Asheri faith, thanks essentially to the great role played by the writings of late Haji Gulamali Haji Esmail of "Rahe Najat" fame and the

numerous writers, Mulla and Zakirs produced by the Khoja Community in India and in Africa. Additionally, the open door policy of the Community in inviting their compatriots to Majalis and to social functions and the enthusiasm shown by the individual members of the community in striving to win over their kith and kin towards their faith played a complimentary role in attracting more converts. It was a gradual and arduous process, which lasted until the end of the Second World War. It stopped more due to the restraint imposed upon the followers of the Aga Khan in associating with the Ithna-asheri religious activities.

The dispersal of this small Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Community from India took place in various stages. The initial stage was the movement from Kutch, Kathiawad and Gujarat to Bombay and Karachi. Phase two was further movement towards the latter half of the last century to East Africa, Burma and Aden. After the second World War, 1939-1945 and the independence of the Indo-Pak sub Continent in 1947, in the aftermath of the partition of India, a further wave of migration of Khojas took place from Cutch, Kathiawad, Gujarat and Bombay to Karachi in Pakistan, while some found their way to the Persian Gulf and Europe. Few also ended up in North America. With the influx of migrants from India, the Karachi Jamaat of a few thousand soon grew into the largest Jamaat of around 30,000 today.

With the subsequent liberation of the African Colonies in 1960's, arising out of the ensuing political upheavals, another wave of movement from the Continent of Africa and also from Aden took place, which resulted in further dispersal of the Community to the Four Corners of the Globe. Today, members of the Khoja Community are to be found in New Zealand, Australia,

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## Analysis

(...from page 90)

Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Eastern and Central Africa, the Middle East, Scandinavia, Europe and North America. Of late, there has also been some movement towards South America and Russia.

Despite this widespread dispersal of the Community and the organized manner in which they endeavor to conduct their affairs, the number of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslims world wide today is estimated at around 110,000 only. The highest figure banded around is 125,000.

After moving from India to Africa, as the economic condition of the Community settled in Africa improved, with the passage of time, links with mother India were greatly loosened, especially after the first world war, 1914-1918. Unlike the Hindu Community who maintained close links with their compatriots in India and continued to attract more and more migrants from India to Africa, most of the Muslim communities in Africa retained very little contact with India. By the end of the Second World War in 1945, the Community in Africa was very much self centered and to a great extent, if not completely, estranged from their kith and kin living in India.

On the other hand the Community members in India were also too pre-occupied with the upheavals arising out of the independence struggle and the tragic aftermath of the partition of India to be concerned about their relations in Africa. This attitude of disconcern continued for long even when political upheavals in Zanzibar and Uganda seriously affected the community members in Africa. This sense of apathy reflected the level of the disorganised state of the community in the sub-Continent. While allowance must be made for the traumatic experience that many community members had to endure following the partition of India and its consequent effect on the development and progress of the community into the modern age, it will be recognised that the democratic process under which the Community members in Africa, Europe and North America operated and as the Karachi Jamat is now operating following the emergence of late

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Hamidali Bhojani, the structured organisations of the community in India and Pakistan were, more often than not, mouthpiece of few power barons while the distraught docile silent majority watched passively. Positive forward-looking leadership and productive involvement of the community members at grassroots level was virtually unknown. That such state of affairs helped to generate sense of estrangement with the rest of the community worldwide is understandable.

It was only after the formation of the World Federation in 1976, when some positive links with the Indo-Pak sub Continent were revived. The World Federation under the spirited leadership of Mulla Asgher paid a vital role in the formation of the Gujrat Federation and in bringing the world community closer to each other. Mulla Asgher also succeeded in centralising the resources and planning which led to channeling much needed assistance to the disparate and disorganized community of around 20,000 Khoja Shia Ithna-asheri scattered in Cutch, Kathiawad and Gujrat.

Education and welfare services initiated by the World Federation have not been restricted to the Khoja Community in western India but has been widely dispersed among the non Khoja Shia communities in Maharashtra, Hyderabad, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal, in addition to the various parts in Pakistan also.

At last the small but economically better off overseas community members did something to atone for their years of neglect and indifference displayed towards their less fortunate kith and kin in the Indian sub-Continent. This belated sense of awareness is gratifying. It is only to be hoped that at a time when the world is moving towards corporate approach, the community will continue to work collectively instead of promoting any egocentric individual pursuits. Experience has shown that uncoordinated individual initiatives have often led to unnecessary duplication and wastage.

Following the migration of the Community members from Africa to Europe, North America and elsewhere, regrettably, members of the Khoja community appear to be repeating the

historic folly of their ancestors. With the passage of time, the community settled in different parts of the world tend to get more and more estranged from each other once again. While personal family contacts with compatriots in India and Pakistan are very limited as a result of the prolonged estrangement, links between the community members settled in Africa, the Middle East, Europe and North America and in Australasia and the Far East, are also fast loosening.

The situation is further aggravated by certain parochialistic tendencies. Regrettably, this unfortunate trend is especially noteworthy among certain factions of people who profess to be of East African origin. While the protagonists of the policy for some estrangement advance some justifiable excuses and one could at times understand their misgivings, if not sympathise with them, local situation in North America especially calls for much more broad-minded outlook and a sense of understanding, tolerance and sacrifice. If this trend of estrangement is allowed to continue, it does, in a long run forebode greater danger for the survival of the community in North America. Similar dynamics are at work in Europe also where the situation is further aggravated by the fact unlike North America where the common language is English, Europe with its patchwork of separate nations and different languages present a much more complex situation.

Added to these trends, what is generally not recognized is that many Khojas of this age are not individually operating within the traditional watertight compartments? Today there is much intermarriage in the community in all parts of the world, including in the otherwise highly traditional Indo-Pak sub Continent and in Africa. More and more boys and girls from the Khoja Community are marrying into non Khoja, Shia and Sunni Muslims of Indo Pak origin and also into Shia, Sunni and even non Muslim communities of Indo-Pak, Irani, European and African societies. In this respect the ethnic barrier has come down. Increasingly, even the religious barrier is being breached.

(to be continued in the next issue)



# Caution against innovative rituals in the name of Islam

During the time of Hazrat Ibrahim a.s. the tribes from the neighboring regions would visit the Ka'ba and perform pilgrimage at the invitation of the Prophet and in the manner taught by him. Glorification of Allah s.w.t was central in the rites of pilgrimage as it is today.

However, over centuries since then, the shaitan through his whisperings to the religious elders of the time caused people to be misguided in their performances of pilgrimage in small but sure periodical dozes.

Eventually, the rites and rituals of pilgrimage in terms of glorification of Allah s.w.t. became subverted. The devout led by their religious leaders lost along the trail of time all the perception of any difference between the darkness of ignorance and the light of truth. Where there were factions, the differences were in the degrees of misguidance.

The "Tawaaf" continued in the pilgrimage as before but this was around the Ka'ba adorned with lines of idols. The pilgrims had indecently the minimum of body-covering. The "zikr" was replaced by noisy whistling.

The innovative new rituals that crept in were made to appear so original and divine that nothing was found amiss by the religious elders, most of whom were also at the same time, the tribal elders.

Such was the period of "Jahaleeyat" in which a pilgrimage centred around "Shirk" when  
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the holy Prophet was made to announce his mission.

According to the warnings in the holy Qur'an, shaitan will never cease or fail in his plans to direct mankind towards "Shirki" and "nifaq". According to the Qur'an, his effective venue is along the "Straight Path"— (siraat-el-Mustaqeem) where he continues to successfully meet the believers of the time, including our time, as his victims, except a few who are steadfast (mukhliseen)

As mankind continues to gain in knowledge about its existence and surroundings which can lead it to the truth about its Creator, shaitan continues to apply newer sophistication to counter the gain.

Therefore, when Allah s.w.t. warns us repeatedly against the Shaitan as our open enemy, the warning mainly applies to those who are in the straight path and the most vulnerable would seem to be those among the Islamic scholars and religious leaders

Does not the Qur'an explain as a lesson to us, the Ummat of the holy Prophet, that the divergent views and the divisional religious factions did not arise among the Bani Israel through their religious scholars until they had gained the knowledge (of truth) from the divine revelation that is, until the shaitan found them on the Right Path?

There are always times when we as Muslims find that we are divided on religious issues or on our

devotion to Islam instead of being united Muslims before others. It is important to pause and think at each such time whether shaitan is behind this in order to guide us through the trap of mis-guided religious over-enthusiasm and devotion.

Shaitan employs human agency as its effective megaphone. In this respect, our Islamic scholars have to be even more alert and cautious.

The moment of fear and caution arises when people in majority begin to side with what they are told to be the "right" when they themselves have no or little inkling of what that "right" is. This is no different from the Jahaleeyat of the olden days.

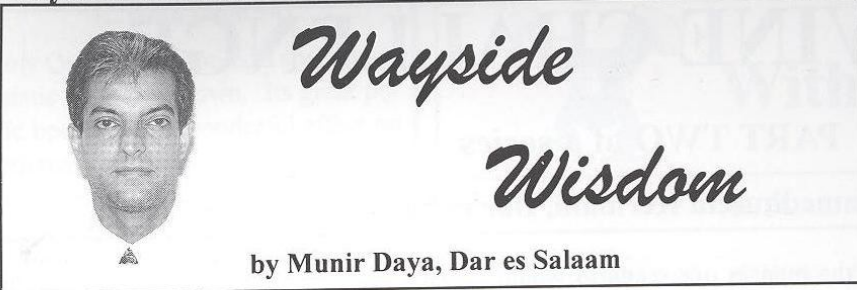
## A new column for our esteemed readers

**Beginning from the next issue--- the *Samachar* will feature a new series of articles from Syed Tazheed al-Hasan of the The Bountiful Path, USA. His preliminary article questions: Who am I? with ample references to ayats of the Holy Qur'an.**

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## Happiness is derived from deeds rather than wealth

There is a parable that relates about two houses which were located on one street next to each other. One was a big, neat and elegant house belonging to a wealthy person and the other was a small, dirty and ugly house belonging to a poor person.

One day the owners of the two houses were walking on the street when suddenly they were stopped by someone who granted them a wish each. The rich man said, "I wish to have children so that I can bring them up with love and provide them with comforts, luxuries and good education." The poor man said, "My greatest wish? I wish I had more money because my children are naturally so clever and yet I do not have enough funds to provide them with good education."

The rich man was not satisfied with his affluence and the poor man was not satisfied with simply having children. Each had a different desire and their answers truly portrayed the nature of human-beings, that of not being content with what Allah (SWT) blesses us with.

Is someone living in a luxurious bungalow furnished with all modern day amenities plus a new and expensive car, a large bank balance and a spate of other luxuries, a happy person? Not necessarily. In life, true happiness does not come

to those who, after attaining a goal, sit down to enjoy its fruits. This is because a few days later, boredom begins to set in after the initial euphoria of one's success. Happiness is a by-product of doing something and once the doing stops, happiness takes to wings.

So, how can one be continuously happy? By fixing a new goal, once a goal has already been achieved, and going after it with all the vigour, innovative spirit, zest, competitiveness and enthusiasm that one can command. However, most people think otherwise. They mistakenly think that by resting on their laurels they will have unending happiness which is however not true.

Happiness in life sets in by setting for oneself a higher and better goal, and striving for it, reaching it and then going in for still newer and higher goals. By setting higher goals there is an excitement in life of chasing something rather than living a dull day in and day out life.

One of the traits of happier people is that they don't think they have done their best yet. In fact, the moment a creative person says he is satisfied, he is finished. Because like life, which never stops, happiness has to be that way. It lies in movements not at the physical level only but at the mental and spiritual planes as well.

However simply setting targets is

not enough. One's objectives in life should be to vie for personal success that should be inter-related with the needs and care of the society one lives in. The more outgoing, helpful and concerned one is about fellow human beings, the happier one becomes. Selfish people are hardly ever happy.

In Sermon 16 of the Nahjul Balagha, Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) has rebuked misers. He says, "You spend no wealth in the cause of Him Who gave it, nor do you risk your lives for the sake of Him Who created them. You enjoy honour through Allah among His creatures, but you do not honour Allah among His creatures. You should derive lessons from your occupying the places of those who were before you and from the departure of your nearest brothers."

Being helpful, generous, loving and compassionate are qualities that go together. These qualities must be cultivated but generally all God fearing persons develop these qualities out of religious teachings. As a matter of fact, the really happy people are the God fearing people who get their joy from living truthful and constructive lives. Some people attain such spiritual levels that they truly despise wealth as being a distraction from a truthful and happy life!

In life, if one simply fixes goals for one's own benefit, one becomes egocentric. Egocentrics often lose out on true happiness because in truth, people who move from goal to goal and success to success, distribute their surplus wealth for the welfare of the needy. They bring comfort and succour to the less fortunate and are responsible for funding institutions of higher learning, hospitals, and so on, thereby enriching the quality of their own life and that of the community around them.



# THE DIVINE CHALLENGE

## PART TWO of a series

by Mohamedhusein Kermalli, Dar es Salaam

In the first part of this series of articles on the Divine Challenge (*Federation Samachar* Vol. 31 No. 3 April, 1999), we first looked at several "Ayat" containing the challenge and then briefly discussed various aspects of the challenge. One of these aspects is the linguistic, rhetorical beauty which has a tremendous force to penetrate into the hearts and minds of people who understand the language and have studied the Message it contains.

### THE FORCE

In order to get an idea of this great force, let us consider a scenario in which a man of great magic letters who is also a great philosopher and a thinker of world-wide reputation, comes up to claim that he has a universal message to guide mankind in all aspects of human life – physical, mental, spiritual, social, political, economic, applicable both to this life on the earth and the next life in the hereafter. He wants to convey this message to all mankind, irrespective of their station in life and levels of intellectual attainment – the highly educated and the illiterate, people of all shades of thought, every community and class of people the world over of the present and all future generations to come until the end of the world.

This man who wants to convey such an all-embracing worldwide message, both text-wise and language-wise would necessarily need to have a complete knowledge of the nature, mentality and characteristics of people of different classes, races, traditions and ideologies. Moreover, he would also need to know the nature of inter-relationship and interaction between different people and also that of man and his environment, the beginning and end of human life on the earth, the first and the final cause of the universe of which man forms a very small and minute part.

On top of this all-embracing knowledge,

the man in our scenario would also need to have the rhetorical and linguistic capacity to be able to express his views and knowledge in such a far reaching manner that they would be understood and appreciated by every human being irrespective of his standard of intellectual attainment, throughout all ages. It is obvious that such a limitless knowledge and power of expression is beyond human capacity. The work of such a nature would be the last work with regard to ideas and thoughts as well as linguistic excellence - a word that expresses a lofty idea in such a way that even the most simple and illiterate man would understand its outer meaning while a highly accomplished and educated person would appreciate the inner depth of its meaning. Moreover, it has got to have the force and power to enter into the hearts of people and create an everlasting impact on their minds. The Qur'an does exactly this and goes beyond it to get the hold on our minds. How does it do it? Let us briefly look at its unique qualities by which it achieves its aims.

### METHOD OF APPROACH

The Holy Qur'an is unique in its method of approach and presentation. Contrary to the common method used by human authors of systemic treatment of topics, the Holy Qur'an expressly states that it has adopted a special and singular method of its own. It changes topic frequently, shifting from one subject to another, often returning to the previous subject and repeating deliberately, with a particular aim in view, the same subject over and over again in a unique manner with a different rhythmic and recitative form which renders it quick to learn, understand and remember.

Therefore it is common to find verses on the subject scattered throughout the Holy Qur'an in various chapters and various places. The Holy Qur'an in

Chapter 6, "Al-An-Aam" (The Cattle), Verse 65 says: "... see how we repeat the revelations (signs) so that they may understand." Again in Chapter 17 "Bani Israel" (The Israelities), Verse 89, the Holy Qur'an says: "And indeed we have repeatedly displayed to the people in this Qur'an every kind of example, but most of them are inclined to denying it.

It is therefore evident that the Holy Qur'an has already provided an answer to the claim of people who say that it contains inconsistencies, breaks up subject matter at random and repeats them over and over again. The Holy Qur'an convincingly explains the reason of this being the way to stimulate the human intellect to reflect on the Unity in variety and the harmony in diversity found in the Holy Book.

The Holy Qur'an discusses each topic in different chapters and various rhythms changing the focus frequently to create a lasting impression in our minds. It is this variety that adds to its unique beauty and matchless eloquence. A person reciting the Holy Qur'an effectively in front of an intelligent audience, while passing through these different rhythmical pitch, creates in his mind and in that of his audience a peculiar kind of awe that affects the mind and body of both the reciter and the listener. In Chapter 39 "Az-Zumar (The Companions), Verse 23 of the Holy Qur'an declares:

*"Allah (s.w.t.) has sent down the best recital, a Book consistent in its parts, repeating the subject matter, at the recitation of which the skins of those who fear lord shiver/shake (with fear) and their hearts incline towards the remembrance of Allah".*

### LINGUISTIC STYLE

Therefore, in order to achieve the effect described in the above verse, the

(continued on page 95)



## Religion

(...from page 94)

Holy Qur'an has adopted a special linguistic style of its own. Its great poetic beauty has a wonderful effect on both the reciter and listener. Its verses have been referred to as a great symphony which has no parallel in any other literature. The Holy Qur'an has a natural melody inherent and intrinsic in its every word and verse. This fact was discovered by the great musician Gilles Gilbert who was convinced after a thorough study of the Holy Qur'an that the Book could be nothing but the divine revelation of Allah (s.w.t.). He subsequently became a Muslim and gave up music.

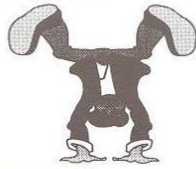
But it should be understood that the Qur'anic recitation is essentially different from music. The former is of Divine inspiration while the latter of Satanic invention developed extensively by human beings. Whereas music rouses human emotions and has a detrimental effect on mental health because of its adverse effect on nerves, Qur'anic recitation has an impact altogether different.

The Qur'anic recitation involves the reciter and the listener in the significance of revelations both spiritually and intellectually. Each moment of the recitation evokes the moment of revelation. Yet the feeling that it evokes is not of joyful ecstasy (intense delight) and entertainment but that of subdued sadness. That is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) is reported to have said, "*The Qur'an was sent down in sorrow, therefore weep when you recite it. If you cannot weep then show sadness in your face.*" This effect of bringing out tears from the eyes of the reciter and the listener is indicated in Chapter 19 "Maryam" (Mary), Verse 58: "... when Allah's signs were recited to them they fell down prostrating (in obedience) and weeping."

In Chapter 8, "Al-Anfaal" (The Spoils of War), Verse 2, the Holy Qur'an says: "*Verily, the believers are those whose hearts become thrilled when Allah is mentioned and when His Signs are recited to them they increase their faith and in their Lord they trust.*"

We will discuss more of these unique qualities in the next issue of the *Samachar*.

*Federation Samachar*



## With a light touch

### ACTUAL NEWS ITEM:

When two service stations in Ionia, Michigan, refused to hand over cash to an intoxicated robber, the man threatened to call the police. They still refused, so the robber called the police and was arrested.

### PRISON AS COMPARED TO WORK

In prison, you spend a majority of time in an 8x10 cell. At work you spend most of your time in an 8x10 cubicle.

In prison you get three meals a day. At work, you only get a break for one meal and you have to pay for that one.

In prison you get time off for good behavior. At work you get rewarded for good behavior with more work.

In prison you can watch tv and play games. At work you get fired for watching tv and playing games.

At work you must carry a security card to unlock and open all the doors yourself. In prison, a guard locks and unlocks all the doors for you.

In prison you get your own toilet. At work you have to share.

In prison they let your family and friends visit you. At work you're not even supposed to speak to your family and friends.

In prison all expenses are paid by taxpayers with no work required. At work you get to pay all the expenses to go to work and they deduct taxes from your salary to pay for prisoners.

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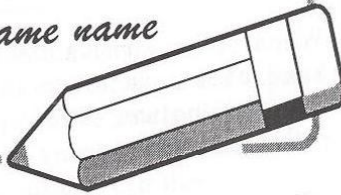
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## Your Questions Answered

by Maulana Sayed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi  
from his book by the same name



# Religious implications of Nationalised Houses....

**Q.** In Tanzania on 22nd April, 1971 a law was enacted and assented to by the then President of the United Republic of Tanzania which was called the 'Acquisition of Buildings Act, 1971.'

By virtue of the said law, Parliament empowered the President to acquire, if in his opinion it was in the public interest to do so, property including buildings, residential, commercial or industrial whose cost of construction or rental value was more than one hundred thousand shillings.

Under this law almost all buildings owned by individuals or companies were acquired (nationalised) by the Government. There was a provision for compensation but very few were paid and many of those who were paid were not in accordance with the law. The legal requirement was that the compensation be fair, adequate and prompt. Some were paid after 5 to 10 years but not adequately while others have not been paid at all.

Now the problem we face is this:

a] If the owner of an "acquired" property has not been paid any compensation, can a tenant occupying such property prior to acquisition continue to occupy it and pay rent to the government?

**A.** If it is possible to contact the

original owner, then the best course is to obtain his permission to live in that house either free of charge or by paying some token rent. If it is not possible to contact him or if his identity or present address is not known at all, then the occupier should pay every month some amount (according to his ability) as its rent and give it to a poor Shi'a as *Sadaqah* on behalf of the original owner (this reply is based on the fatwa from the late Sayyid Al-Khoui).

b] Can a tenant of such acquired property take "goodwill" or "key-money" and with the consent of the Government transfer it to a third party?

**A.** I could not find any such provision in the books of the mujtahideen of either the past or the present.

c] Can a broker or lawyer charge fees on such transactions of an acquired property where compensation has not been paid?

**A.** Apparently, no one is allowed to deal in a Ghasbi property, and fees or commission obtained from such a deal will not be lawful.

**Q.** Does Islam allow euthanasia (i.e.. making it easy for a sick person to die).

**A.** It is not allowed. If the patient

commits it himself it is suicide; if some one else does so to him, it is murder.

**Q.** Say someone suffers from an incurable disease and he prefers to die rather than continue living a painful life. If this patient requests a doctor or physician to give him medicine to end his life, can the doctor or physician accede to such a request?

**A.** No. If he accedes to such a request and administers the medicine by his own hand, he will be guilty of murder. If he gives the patient the medicine and the patient takes the medicine by his own hands, it will be suicide and the doctor will be guilty of helping in the suicide.

**Q.** If a patient is kept alive only with the help of some medical equipment and if the doctor is sure that the patient can never be cured, is it allowed for him to remove that equipment from the patient so that he may die and be saved from pain?

**A.** The detailed answer may be understood from the answer to the previous question.

**Q.** Is wasting time forbidden (Haram)? If not, why do many people say that we are not allowed to play games like cards (without money), draughts etc. the reason, they say, is because of wasting of time.

**A.** Islam only allows games or sports which help to build or increase one's body and mental strength. These include almost all outdoor games.

So far as playing of cards is concerned, if a game is generally played for gambling purpose, then the game is 'haram' even if you play it without gambling. This is because playing creates and increases familiarity with the game which could then tempt one to eventually also gamble.





## BAHLOOL PROVES THREE FACTS

Abu Hanifa was once teaching Islamic beliefs to his students. He was arguing and challenging the validity of some of the statements which had been proclaimed by Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as). Bahlool happened to be present as well. Abu Hanifa proclaimed that he could not agree with the three understated statements as made by the Imam.

The first one was that "Allah can never be seen." According to Abu Hanifa it was impossible for a thing to exist and yet be invisible!

The second thing that the Imam had stated was that "Satan (devil) will be thrown in the inferno of Hell which will scorch him bitterly." Abu Hanifa argued: "How was it possible for fire to hurt 'fire', the fact being that Satan was created from fire itself!"

The third statement of the Imam was that "Man alone is responsible for his actions and Allah - the most powerful - has nothing to do with his actions." "How is it possible, when Allah alone guides the destiny of man without Whose will nothing can happen?" This was Abu Hanifa's third challenge.

As soon as the speaker, Abu Hanifa, had made these three criticisms, Bahlool got up, took a piece of brick and aiming at Hanifa, let it go and cracked Abu Hanifa head.

Bahlool was caught and taken before the Caliph for punishment. In his defence, he pleaded that he had done nothing else except reply to the three criticisms which Abu Hanifa had made against the Imam.

The Caliph asked him to explain as to how and why he chose to reply by hitting and injuring Abu Hanifa. Bahlool said, "This man claims that if God is there, then he must be seen. He is now complaining of pain in his head due to the brick having hurt him. If the pain is definitely there, can he show me

where it is? Well! just as pain can be there without being seen Allah also exists without being seen."

"Secondly, he says that fire cannot burn fire. It is a fact that man is made out of clay and this brick with which I hit his head is also made out of clay. If clay can inflict pain and hurt clay, why can't fire do the same to fire?"

"The third thing he says is that man is not responsible for his own actions but Allah does all things. If this is so, then why does he want justice from you and why does he want me to be punished for hurting him? He might as well transfer the punishment to Allah Who,

according to him - is responsible for all the actions of man!"

Everyone in the court was stunned at this and Abu Hanifa was dumb founded. So Bahlool was released without any punishment.

Thus, while some Muslim sects believe that Allah can be seen, perhaps on the Day of Judgement, the Shia Muslims say that Allah is the Creator of everything; He was not created and as such he has no body like us that can be seen. If we can still believe in unseen things like air, electricity and human soul, why can't we believe in the unseen God?

If we are responsible for our actions and are to be punished or rewarded accordingly, then it is only fair and just that Allah should not manipulate or compel us to do things but leave us alone to act the way we see it fit, and be answerable for those actions ourselves.

## PRIZE CROSSWORD

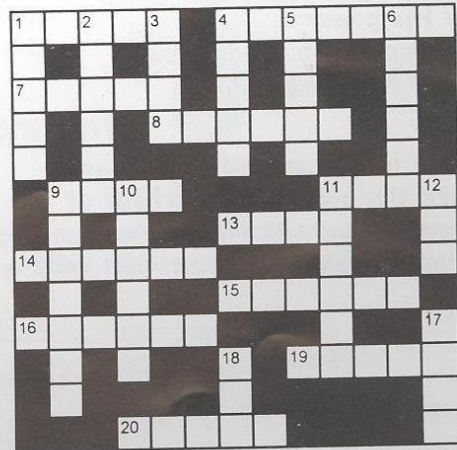
Entries to the Prize Crossword should be sent to Prize Crossword, Africa Federation, P.O. Box 6710, Dar es Salaam. The first two winners will be awarded a prize of TShs. 20,000/- each (or equivalent). Entries with name and address details should be received by 15 February, 2000.

### Clues Across:

1. Garden of Lady Fatima that was stolen from her (5)
4. Name of Imam who was martyred (7)
7. Going round the Kaaba (5)
8. Language of Qur'an (6)
9. Father of Habil and Kaabil (4)
11. Men are not permitted to wear this (4)
13. We must \_\_\_ our face in wuzu (4)
14. Promise! Promise! (3,3)
15. Taking bath according to the Islamic Shari'ah (plural) (6)
16. Name of Allah (SWT) referring to Him as 'The Exalter.'
19. He used to recite Azan during the Prophet's time (5)
20. Repentance (5)

### Clues Down:

1. Obligatory on one of the Idds (5)
2. A Prophet of Islam (6)
3. Imam Ali had his office here (4)
4. Term used for things not permitted



- in Islam (5)
5. Title of our sixth Imam (5)
6. One of the holy revelations (6)
9. The world Hereafter (7)
10. It is part of Hajj to stay here (6)
11. To take something without permission (6)
12. Animal that is *Ayne najis* (3)
17. A religious scholar (4)
18. *Ahl al Ki* \_\_\_ -- the followers of divine books

(Solution in the next issue)



# Nahj al-Balaghah for Children

## introduction

Through the courtesy of the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly, Qum we welcome you to a selection from the Nahj al-Balaghah, the world of Imam Ali, may peace be upon him. This is a small selection from the great collection of speeches, sermons, letters and sayings of the Imam, next only to the Qur'an in its beauty.

This work, which is one of the masterpieces of Arabic prose, is difficult to translate, especially for children. These small passages are a small window into the great world of Imam Ali, peace be on him, who was the most perfect of human beings after the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his Household.

## the creation

He made the creation  
without any example and without the  
advice of a counsel  
or the assistance of a helper.

(Sermon 155)

## the earth

He created the earth and  
suspended it,  
retained it without support,  
made it stand without legs,  
and raised it without pillars.

(Sermon 185)

## the winds

He brought out the creation  
by His power  
and made the winds blow  
With His compassion.

(Sermon 1)

## the moon

Then He decorated the heavens  
with the stars and the light of the  
meteors and set the shining sun and the  
bright moon in an orbit that rolls around.

(Sermon 1)

## A TRAIN CRASH IN THE MAKING

The man applied for a job as a signalman for the local railroad and was told to meet the inspector at the signal box. The inspector decided to give him a job quiz, asking: "What would you do if you realized that two trains were heading towards each other on the same track?"

The man said: "I would switch one train to another track."

"What if the lever broke?" asks the inspector.

"Then I'd run down to the tracks and use the manual lever down there," answers the man.

"What if that had been struck by lightning?" challenges the inspector.

"Then," he continued, "I'd run back up here and use the phone to call the next signal box."

"What if the phone was busy?"

"In that case," the man argued, "I'd run to the street level and use the public phone near the station."

"What if that had been vandalized?"

"Oh well," said the man, "in that case I would run into town and get my Uncle Leo."

This puzzled the inspector, so he asked "Why would you do that?"

"Because he's never seen a train crash."

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Dear Children,  
Send us your stories and we  
will carry them in our forth-  
coming issues. Editor.

---

## Lesson from a Centipede

by Zuhayr Daya, Age: 11 years

The word "cent" comes from the Latin word "centum" meaning hundred. In this short story an effort has been made to use most of the 'cent' words that have something to do with a hundred.

In an old house there lived a man and his child. The boy hated insects yet he kept this one centipede in a bucket inside the house. This surprised his father but he just accepted this as being one of the stranger things of life.

One night the child joined his father

to watch a documentary about a Centurion. In this documentary there was a lot of fighting and the Centurion had a habit of tossing a cent coin before deciding whether or not to attack the enemy. The boy got scared by the violence and developed a high body temperature that was over 40 degrees centigrade.

His temperature was so high the next morning that he could not move a centimeter. He remembered that it was his father's birthday and that he had

reached a century. For his centenary the boy gave the bucket containing the centipede to his father and said, "Daddy if the centipede can walk with 100 legs, so can you after becoming a centenarian."

When it comes to age, 'centi' may sound too many. But there are people who have even lived 128 years. So to someone who is hundred, you can always tell them that they might have another 28 years to live. And more, if they break the record.





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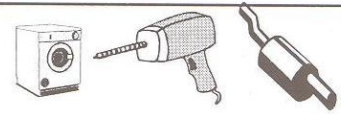
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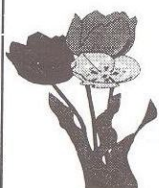
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## Preparing for Death

“Suppose you learn today that you have only one more day to live; you’ll die tomorrow. How will you spend your last day?” This interview question was posed long before the age of the mass media. The interviewer approached prominent scholars and people known for their virtuous lives with the idea that he would compile their answers in a book to provide readers with inspiration for the most important virtues.

But the most inspiring response came from the person who did not provide a wish list of virtuous deeds. He was the great muhaddith Abdur Rahman ibn abi Na’um and he replied: “There is nothing that I could change in my daily schedule learning that it is my last day. I already spend every day in my life as if it is going to be my last.”

Death is the most certain aspect of life. Over 6000 people in the world are reported to die every hour. These are people of all ages, dying of all causes. Some of these deaths make headlines but the great majority die quietly. Yet everyone enters his or her own grave alone at a time appointed by God.

*“O mankind! If you are in doubt concerning the Resurrection, then lo! We have created you from dust, then from a drop of seed, then from a clot, then from a little lump of flesh shapely and shapeless, that We may make it clear for you. And We cause what We will to remain in the wombs for an appointed time, and afterward We bring you forth as infants, then give you growth that you attain full strength. And among you there is he who dies young, and among you there is he who is brought back to the most abject time of life, so that after knowledge he knows naught!”*[Al-Haj 22:5]

We see it happening all the time. Yet it is amazing how we feel that it won’t

happen to us. At least not anytime soon. We bury our own friends and relatives but think that we will live forever. Our attitudes about death defy all logic. In a way we recognize it and even plan for it. We take out life insurance policies. We may do estate planning. Businesses and governments have contingency plans to carry out their operations in case of sudden loss of their leaders. But this is recognition of death as an end point of this life. Where we fail is in recognizing it as the beginning of another life that will never end and where we’ll reap what we sow here.

A central teaching of Islam is that it is our recognition of and preparation for that eternity that must separate those who are smart from those who are not. As the Prophet, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam said: *“Truly smart is the person who controlled his desires and prepared for life after death.”*

There is a moving story about Bahlool, who, in his innocence seems to be on the opposite end of the scale of worldly-smartness. Khalifa Haroon ur Rashid had given him access to his court probably because his naiveté was a source of entertainment to him. Once the Khalifa gave him a walking stick saying, “It is meant for the most foolish person in the world. If you find a person more deserving of it than yourself, pass it on.” Several years later Haroon ur Rashid fell seriously ill and no medical treatment seemed to work. Bahlool visited him and inquired about his condition. The conversation went something like this:

**Haroon:** “No treatment is working. I see my final journey ahead of me.”

**Bahlool:** “Where are you going?”

**Haroon:** “I am going to the Other World.”

**Bahlool:** “How long will you stay there? When will you come back?”

**Haroon:** “No one ever comes back from that world.”

**Bahlool:** “Then you must have made special preparations for this journey. Did you send an advance group to take care of you once you arrive?”

**Haroon:** “Bahlool, you have to go there alone. And no I did not make any preparations.”

**Bahlool:** “Ameer-ul-Momineen! You used to send troops to make extensive preparations for you for even short trips. Now you are going to a place where you’ll live forever but you have made no preparations! I think I have found the person more deserving of the stick that you had given me some years ago.”

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**It is indeed a very wise person who spends every day of his life as if it is going to be his last day.**

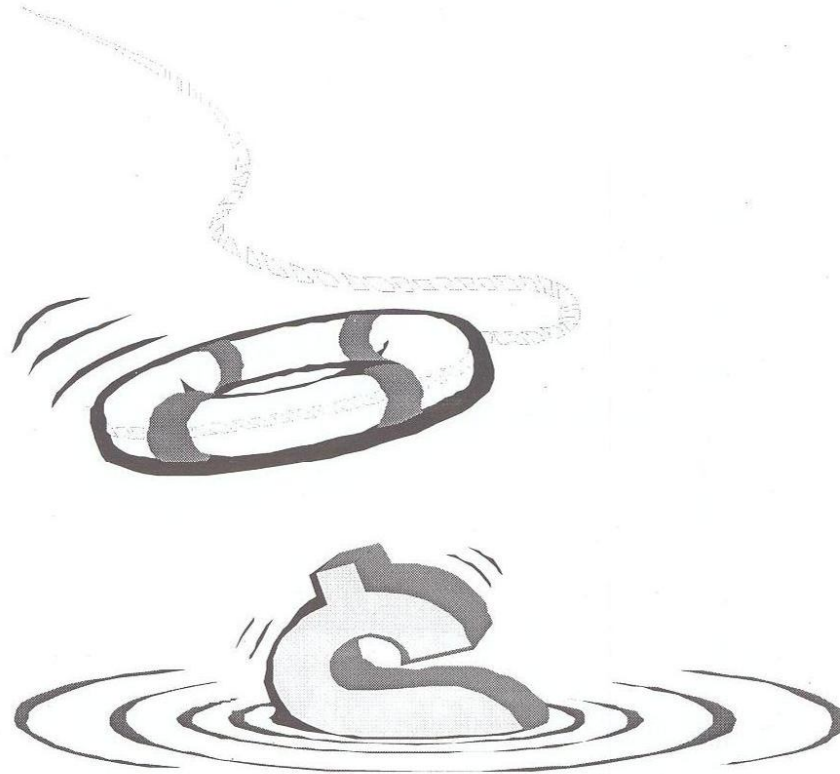
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This story speaks to all of us. We may not be kings but we do plan our trips of even a few days very carefully. How about preparing for the journey into eternity? How about making the concern for the Hereafter the cornerstone of our lives here? Actually, that concern can change our lives here as well. This world is an abode of deception. Here we are not punished the moment we commit a sin. This fools us into thinking that we can get away with it. Remembering death is the antidote for that deception. A person who remembers that he will have to stand before his Creator and be accountable for his actions simply cannot defy God!

In the story of Pharaoh, we learn that when he saw death approaching he declared belief in the God of Moses. Before that he had been fooled by his apparent power. His repentance came too late but it did show how his arrogance and intransigence evaporated when faced with the certainty of death. It is amazing how a lot of our own “confusions”, frivolous arguments, excuses (for why we cannot do this or avoid that), or plain laziness can melt away when we visualize ourselves in our grave! Death settles lot of arguments. It is indeed a very wise person who spent every day of his life as if it was going to be his last day.



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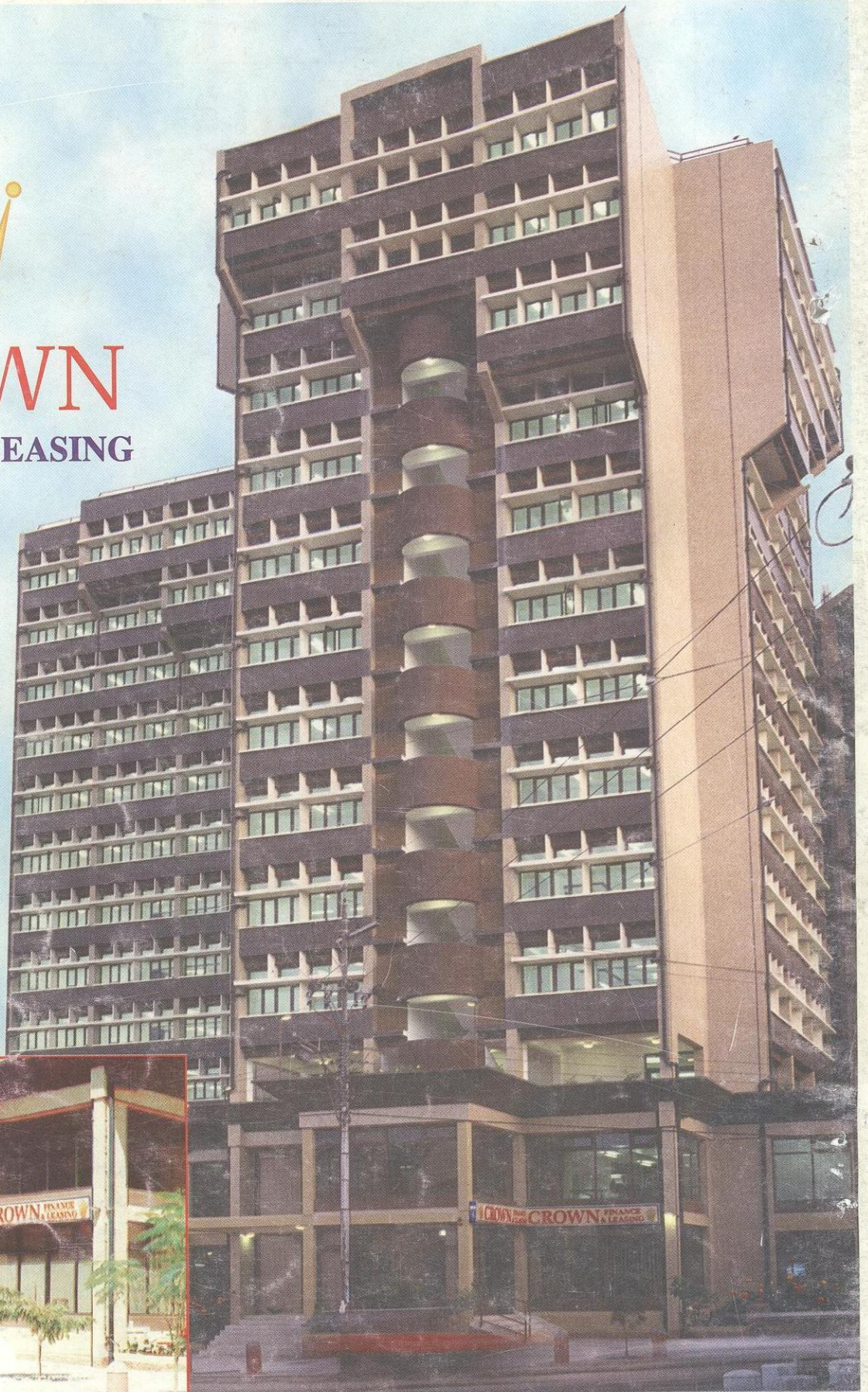
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